

California State University San Marcos  
**Closing the Achievement Gap**  
*Delivery Plan Report*

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**3) Target for freshman graduation rate by 2015:** 45%

**4) Targets for URM freshman graduation rates by 2015 (closing the achievement gap):** 45%

**5) Targets for increasing graduation rates among transfer students from 2012 through 2015:**

<b>2012:</b>	<u>67.4%</u>	<b>2014:</b>	<u>69.9%</u>
<b>2013:</b>	<u>68.9%</u>	<b>2015:</b>	<u>71.4%</u>

**6) Target for increasing URM transfer graduation rates from 2012 through 2015 (closing the achievement gap):**

<b>2012:</b>	<u>67.4%</u>	<b>2014:</b>	<u>69.9%</u>
<b>2013:</b>	<u>68.9%</u>	<b>2015:</b>	<u>71.4%</u>

**7) Specific action steps to be taken by Cal State San Marcos to result in these improvements:**

- a) Continue to expand Summer Academy, EOP's Summer Bridge, and launch Summer Start in Summer 2010 for incoming first-time freshman.
- b) For Fall 2010 and beyond, the First-Year Council and the College of Arts and Sciences will work together to ensure adequate scheduling capacity of first-year courses.
- c) For Fall 2010 and beyond, the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis (IPA) will provide instructional units with data about student course needs to help departments build schedules that facilitate graduation.
- d) For Fall 2010, generate data on 6-year graduation rates by major and establish process for addressing program specific issues.
- e) For Fall 2010, develop a communication plan to better inform students about their academic standing and the services available to assist them in making timely progress in earning their degree.
- f) By Fall 2011, implement block registration for first-time freshman in the most popular majors, including undeclared.
- g) By Spring 2011, implement an early warning system for first year students and expand to all students by Spring 2012, e.g., mid-semester progress reports and phone-a-thons to first year students, etc.
- h) By Fall 2013, modify the registration process so that students can register for courses only if they either need no remediation or if they are also registering for the correct remedial courses
- i) Implement and assess Supplemental Instruction programs in math and science.
- j) Increase professional development opportunities for the instructors of first year students.
- k) Increase professional development opportunities to help faculty meet the needs of "at risk" students.
- l) Develop clear articulation and distribution of General Education Learning Outcomes.
- m) By Fall 2010, complete Lower Division Roadmaps (LDRs) for all majors, refer FY students to these in advance of orientation, and use these at FY orientations and other venues; ensure easy access to LDRs on the website; create an interactive website for students to track their progress in completing courses, etc.
- n) Build connections between first year students and the University as recommended in the Foundations of Excellence Report:
  - 1. Determine how faculty would like to be involved in the First Year (other than providing instruction). What partnership opportunities with other units are possible/feasible? What can these other units do to facilitate involvement?
  - 2. Explore developing partnerships with employee organizations for involvement in activities that would support URM students.
- o) By Spring 2010, create a First Year webpage that includes all of the materials and services that first-year students need to succeed; develop a plan for keeping this website maintained.
- p) Establish, refine and maintain learning communities.

- q) Work with units that sponsor co-curricular programming (e.g., Arts and Lectures) in their promotional efforts to specifically target first-year students and to include language that emphasizes diversity in the programmed events.
- r) Develop and promote strategies to encourage students to take the ELM and EPT exams earlier.

## **8) Specific steps to be taken in**

### **a) January 2010**

1. Delivery team drafts and circulates a “Closing the Achievement Gap” project management matrix, identifying action steps, delivery times, and individuals/departments accountable for organizing and reporting on action steps.
2. Introduce “Closing the Achievement Gap” project at Academic Assembly at the beginning of the semester.
3. Work with First-Year Council (FYC) and involved departments to set goals for summer programming, as described above in action step (a).
4. Begin conversations between FYC and College of Arts and Sciences about Fall 2010 freshman classes.
5. IPA representative will meet with College Associate Deans to determine information needed for action step (c).
6. FYC previews the new FY student website under development – action step (p).
7. A FYC action team holds a pre-semester retreat for all of the instructors of GEW 101 (the A2 Written Communication course at CSUSM)

### **b) February 2010**

1. Develop draft plan for action step (a).
2. Complete draft schedule scenarios for fall 2010 freshman courses.
3. Hold town hall/campus forum on Closing the Achievement Gap.
4. Roll-out of the new FY student website for action step (p).

### **c) March 2010**

1. FYC will submit timeline for action steps (j)-(l), (o), and (q)-(s).
2. Delivery team will assess the extent to which colleges are using information supplied by IPA to develop fall schedule—action step (c)
3. Plan for action step (a) completed and submitted to delivery team.

## **CSU San Marcos Plan for Closing the Achievement Gap Narrative**

### **Delivery Team**

The CAG Delivery Team brings together key representatives of Student Affairs (Vice President and Associate Vice President for Student Academic Support Services), Academic Affairs (Academic Senate Chair, Provost, and Associate Vice President for Academic Programs), Institutional Planning and Assessment (Research Analyst), and Institutional Technology (CMS Project Director). Each participant represents an area that is integral to the success of our plan for closing the university's achievement gap.

### **Improving FTF Graduation Rates**

In response to a growing first-year cohort, in order to meet campus strategic goals, and in preparation for our 2009 WASC Educational Effectiveness Review, CSUSM has invested considerable energy assessing and making plans for improving our first-year programming. The most visible manifestation has been our participation in a national program—Foundations of Excellence in the First Year (FoE)—during the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 academic years. As part of this program, we conducted an extensive self-study of students' first year at CSUSM, which identified both areas where we exhibit "best practices" and areas for improvement. Because our own data and national research show a correlation among first-year practices, retention to the second year, and graduation, the recommendations from our FoE participation provide a starting point for our plan to improve FTF 6-year graduation rates.

The major recommendation from our FoE participation was the formation of a First-Year Council (FYC) to better coordinate first-year activities across the campus. This Council includes individuals who are responsible for orientation, advising, first-year courses, remediation, assessment, and special academic and student life programming. A number of the action steps listed in our plan will be undertaken or overseen by the First-Year Council and its members. The FYC's chair, David Barsky, Associate Vice President for Academic Programs, is a member of our campus delivery team and will play a key communication role between the FYC and the delivery team.

Although a successful first year is the foundation for future academic success at the university (i.e., graduation), our plan also includes actions beyond the first year. Two areas we will address are course availability and advising. Budget reductions obviously impact our ability to add monetary resources to these areas. Thus, we are looking to ways in which we can improve communication about student course needs and progress toward degree through the timely generation of data and leveraging CMS/Peoplesoft resources. Two members of our delivery team—Pat Morris, research analyst in Institutional Planning and Analysis (and a core member of the FoE team), and April Grommo, campus project director for CMS—will play a key role working with colleges and other units on campus in improving our efficiency in course delivery and advising.

### **Improving Transfer Graduation Rates**

Improving efficiency in course delivery and advising will also be key steps in improving our transfer graduation rates at the “macro” level. At the “micro” level, we will conduct a study of which degree programs have the lowest 6-year graduation rates and have them develop specific plans to address issues that students face, which may include more efficient course delivery and/or advising to direct students to majors that are better suited to their strengths and life goals.

#### **Addressing the Gap Between URM Students and Non-URM Students**

Although Cal State San Marcos has a slight gap between URM and non-URM students, we will continue to address this gap through our current efforts at addressing remediation. These efforts have proven very effective, and, thus, we are not developing additional action steps in this area at this time. However, we will regularly track the data so that we may develop additional steps as needed.

#### **Trajectory**

Students entering CSUSM in Fall 2009 and beyond are those who will most benefit from our action steps, we believe that our graduation rates will show only slight improvement over the next two to three years, and that major impact will be in the fourth and fifth year.

#### **Next Steps**

Our first step will be to develop a project management matrix that assigns responsibility for particular action steps to particular units or cross-unit groups and establishes timelines for progress, completion, and communication. As this overarching step is completed, we already have groups such as the First-Year Council working on specific steps in our action plan.