AY 14/15 SDSU Enrollment, Retention and Graduation Report

Jointly produced and approved by the
Academic Policy and Planning Committee and Undergraduate Council

In the past decade, San Diego State significantly increased the overall six-year graduation rate while narrowing the achievement gap. We accomplished these major gains through a combination of implementing policy changes, assuring access to classes, raising student expectations (e.g., unit loads), and providing support to student populations who have benefitted from learning communities, supplemental instruction, targeted advising, and engagement in high-impact practices. Notably, these major gains were accomplished while state support declined markedly and as our student body became more diverse, both ethnically and socioeconomically.

This AY14/15 Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation (ERG) Report:
1. Summarizes efforts to produce a more integrated and timely overview of ERG data,
2. Highlights key trends and patterns in ERG data focusing on recent years,
3. Shares recent graduation targets for SDSU developed by the Chancellor’s Office, and
4. Suggests a suite of opportunities and strategies to increase the four-year graduation rate while closing the four-year achievement gap, as we also continue our commitment to high levels of academic achievement.

I. A New Integrated Approach to UC and APP Reporting: Over the 13/14 academic year, Academic Policy and Planning (APP) and the Undergraduate Council (UC) collaborated with Academic Affairs to produce a compendium of enrollment, retention, and graduation measures, many of which are disaggregated with respect to admission status (e.g., Local Area, Non-Local Area, Out-of-State, and International), ethnicity (i.e., American Indian, African American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, Filipino, Multiple Ethnicities, White), and economic status (i.e., Pell-eligible). This initial AY13/14 ERG Compendium comprised 111 pages of graphs and data tables and was finalized in April 2014. The compendium was designed to be readily updated each year after census, and thereby provide a centralized and comprehensive resource for the production of annual reports for the UC, APP, and the Presidential Enrollment Management Advisory Committee (PEMAC) of campus and community representatives. Building upon the efforts, the AY14/15 ERG Report was recently produced and serves as the source material for the next section of this report.

Our APP and UC collaborative efforts also highlighted the complementary nature of our ERG-related charges from the Policy File: For APP, to “annually review the previous year’s outcomes as well as any enrollment management changes proposed by the administration” and, for UC, to “produce an annual report on retention and graduation during the fall semester.” In the spirit of providing a more integrated overview of student success, APP and UC have jointly
produced this report and recommend that By-Law and Policy File language be modified to codify the production of such a single integrated report.

2. An Overview of Key ERG Findings: The ERG Report provides a comprehensive overview of enrollment, retention, and graduation data. Highlights drawn from this data, with parenthetical reference to the corresponding ERG Compendium page on which the data appear, follow:

Undergraduate Unit Load:
- New FTF average fall unit load increased from 14.2 to 14.8 over the last five AYs. In contrast, new transfer student average unit load varied around 13.0 units over the last four AYs. (ERG-18)
- A disparity in average fall unit load above is also present across student levels, with juniors and seniors taking roughly one unit less than freshman and sophomores. (ERG-19)
- Since the % enrollment is only 0.3% less than the % FTES for Students of Color, the above unit differences among FTF/transfers and student levels appear more related to these factors than to ethnicity. (ERG-20)

FTF Enrollment:
- Compared to non-local students, local students had the same HS GPA, lower SAT Math by 34 points, and lower SAT Verbal by 34 points. (ERG-25, 26)
- As since F09, resident FTF Students of Color outnumbered Other Students (i.e., white, other/not stated/international) at 58.8%. (ERG-30)
- Local area FTF Pell-eligible students continued a decade-long increasing trend at 49.0% for F13, whereas non-local students showed a slight decline to 28.4% from what was previously an increasing trend at a decreasing rate of 14.8% to 30.0% through the previous five years. (ERG-34)
- Early Start for local students starting in 2010 essentially closed the proficiency gap between local and non-local students. (ERG-38)

FTF Outcomes After One Year:
- After a previous maximum divergence of up to 12% lower one-year continuation rates during F07 for local students compared to non-local students, FTF continuation rates between the two nearly converged by F10 and have thereafter shown slight parallel variations over time. (ERG-53)
- FTF one-year continuation rates generally show progressive increases across all ethnicities for students of color since 1996, and total Students of Color surpassed All Others by 0.1% in F13, essentially closing this achievement gap from a historical high of 6% between Students of Color and All Others. Note that the relatively large year-to-year variations for some ethnicities (e.g., American Indian, Pacific Islander) are largely attributable to their relatively small population sizes. (ERG-56)
• FTF GPA after one year remains relatively lower for local students (0.30 units lower), males (0.21 lower), and students of color (0.10 lower). In addition, academic probation rates after one year remain relatively higher for these same groups (i.e., 5.4% higher for LA, 3.0% for males, and 2.6% for students of color). (ERG-59, 60)

FTF Full-Time Graduation Rates:

• Continuation or graduated after Years 1 to 6 by local/non-local, gender, and ethnicity all tend to show increases within categories and decreases in achievement gaps through time. (ERG-61, 62, 63)
• Similarly, FTF 4-, 5-, and 6-year graduation rates by resident, local/non-local, and ethnicity show mostly net increasing trends through available time intervals, with some deviations including non-resident students (especially international with caveat of small population). Notably, as 4-year graduation rates for students of color and All Others have both increased over time, the All Others rate has increasingly outpaced the students of color rate, leading to a widening of an achievement gap of 12.1% for the Fall 2010 cohort (ERG-64 through ERG-69)

3. Expectations for SDSU from the Chancellor’s Office: Recognizing that California will need more college-educated citizens in the future to meet the demands of the state, Tim White, California State University Chancellor, has announced CSU Graduation goals for 2025. While each university has been provided with specific targets, such as those below for SDSU, the overall goal for the CSU is to increase the six-year graduation rate to 54%.

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<th>CSU Freshman Graduation Rate Goals for SDSU Campus</th>
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<td>**Baseline Rate (2009 Cohort)</td>
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<td>6-Year Graduation Rate Goal</td>
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<td>(2019 Cohort)</td>
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<td>4-Year Graduation Rate</td>
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<td>(2021 Cohort)</td>
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Transfer Graduation Rate Goals

| 4-Year Graduation Rate         | 79%                    | 6%        | 85% |
| (2021 Cohort)                 |                        |           |     |
| 2-Year Graduation Rate         | 36%                    | 8%        | 44% |
| (2023 Cohort)                 |                        |           |     |

Freshman Achievement Gap Goals

| 6-Year URM/non-URM Graduation Rate Gap Goal (2019 Cohort) | 7% | 50% | 3% |
| 6-Year Pell/non-Pell Grant Graduation Rate Gap Goal (2019 Cohort) | 5% | 50% | 2% |
4. **Opportunities for Improving Student Retention, Graduation, and Achievement:** Our progressive improvements over time in graduation and retention rates can be attributed to a variety of policy changes and targeted interventions with specific student populations. As we continue to strive to improve these various measures, we must appreciate that any improvement in such percentage-based measures must be gained without a decrease in either program quality or student achievement. Below we list some opportunities at the course, program, and university level with the appreciation that the development and implementation of many of these will require engagement, buy-in, and support from all three levels.

**Course-level Opportunities:**
- Examine classes with traditionally high DFW rates to understand the nature of the challenges to student achievement and address course-specific challenges through appropriate changes that will improve retention and graduation while maintaining (or even increasing) achievement; such changes could include course redesign, supplemental instruction, and learning analytics.
- Implement additional tutoring and mentoring within courses and the broader university through such mechanisms as the Writing Center and in-development Math Center.
- Promote and support the development and integration of High Impact Practices as appropriate within courses (e.g., community-based service learning, writing-intensive courses, undergraduate research and scholarship, collaborative assignments), especially in those courses that typically fall within students’ first 45 units.

**Program-Level Opportunities:**
- Promote and support program-centered discussions on the shared responsibility of students, programs, and the broader university in student retention, graduation, and achievement. Such discussions would help faculty understand how students enter their programs, why they persist or depart from their programs, and what actions and adjustments could improve their retention, graduation, and achievement. We would recommend piloting this approach with five to ten programs, with a refined process eventually integrated into the established Academic Program Review.
- Focus the role of evidence-based, action-oriented program assessment and periodic academic program reviews as mechanisms for improving the student learning experience and thereby students’ engagement and achievement, which in turn should improve graduation and retention rates across the university. Such efforts should include direct examples of student work that established expected and exemplary levels of student achievement.
- As within courses, the development and integration of High Impact Practices should also be promoted and supported at the program level (e.g., capstone courses, study abroad, internships, etc.)
University-Level Opportunities:

- Develop an integrated outreach and advising program for non-transferring students who depart after one semester or one year in good academic standing, with the program triggered on evidence of non-enrollment, ideally prior to start of classes.
- Modify the leave of absence procedure so that students must file for a leave if they stop out for one or more semesters. This process would establish the student’s reasoning and, while ultimately respecting their request, provide the opportunity to present alternatives or initiate a plan to return.
- Increase the availability and efficacy of financial aid counseling for students with financial holds. Pilot efforts in this area have already brought 17 students back to campus. Scholarship funds could be targeted to support students close to graduation.
- Continue to address bottlenecks and backlogs in course availability across disciplines through a course scheduling approach that develops steady-state course offerings that can meet student demand based on a four-year graduation plan. Strategic application of student success fee funds for critical faculty hiring would play a natural role in this endeavor.
- Engage in “intensive advising” for students who have earned more than 150 units and for students who have earned over 100 units but who are taking leaves of absence. As noted above, advising these students can help them complete a degree in a timely manner.
- Analyze the historical retention and graduation rates of students who maintained pre-major designation with 70+ units to assess the degree to which such student swirls negatively impacts time to degree; engage faculty in developing solutions for completing degrees in more timely manner.