

**Facilitating Graduation Peer Team Site Visit**  
**Take-aways**  
**December 11, 2006**

Five themes emerged in the dialogue with the peer visitors and the comments are organized accordingly. **Language in bold indicates FGSC's response to each item, along with point-person(s) suggested for follow-up.**

**Student Life, Retention, Pathways to Graduation**

- They were impressed with the large number of GEL students we serve and the positive data we have for students who take the GEL course vs. those who do not. **It would be desirable to expand offerings to enable as many first year students as possible to take GEL.** [David Barsky]
- The also indicated that there is no central space for students to meet other students, hang-out between classes, etc. They suggested that even while we are in the planning stages for a permanent solution (such as building a Student Union), that we need to find an interim solution for this important issue. **The campus should approve a strategic budget request to add seating and shade structures around the Library plaza.** [Gary Cinnamon]
- The issue of bottleneck courses was noted, particularly courses that serve as prerequisites and that are offered only once a year. Students who do not pass the course cannot take the course again for another year, which substantially delays their graduation. **Colleges should be encouraged to identify bottleneck courses and offer them regularly.** [Deans and department chairs]
- Students noted that a lot of information is covered in the first-year new student orientation program resulting in information overload. It was suggested that we consider a two-day orientation in order to step back from the compression effect and to make orientation more robust. It was also suggested by the peer team that we need to consider paying faculty to attend orientation to ensure more faculty involvement. **The Orientation planning group should consider expanding and/or restructuring orientation activities, and should involve the provost and deans to explore ways to encourage faculty to be involved (including appropriate compensation).** [Dilcie Perez]

**Use of Technology**

- The team stressed the importance of training everyone to use the new degree audit system, particularly faculty. **Once the degree audit program is fully functioning, the degree audit team should develop a plan to provide faculty training and access to degree audit tools.** [Wayne Veres]

## Peer visit take-aways

- While the team was impressed with the use of technology to support learning in the classroom and noted the enthusiasm that faculty have for it, they stressed the importance of institutionalizing a reward system into the RTP process to encourage the use of technology by faculty. **The Provost should work with the appropriate Academic Senate standing committee to explore the degree to which this truly applies to our campus.** [Emily Cutrer]

## Strategic Planning/Dashboard Indicators

- It was suggested by the team that we engage faculty more in our retention and graduation efforts on campus as there was not a strong sense of their involvement in these initiatives. **This could be a focus for the Facilitating Graduation Steering Committee in the spring, especially as facilitating graduation issues are relevant for the WASC conversation.** [Emily Cutrer and Gilbert Valadez]
- It was suggested that the dashboard indicators be used more at the departmental levels for data driven planning purposes at all levels of the institution. **IP&A could increase their outreach activities to raise awareness of the analytic tools they have developed.** [Matt Ceppi]
- It was suggested by the peer team that we pursue some official data as to why students are leaving the university. **IP&A is considering working with Registration and Records to develop an exit survey for this purpose.** [Matt Ceppi and Darren Bush]

## Advising Strategies and Practices

- Faculty seem to be out of the loop on academic advising and one faculty member says he focuses on career advising rather than academic advising. **It was noted that the faculty group who interacted with the peer visitors was not truly representative of the many faculty who are engaged in our advising model.** [Susan Mitchell]
- Students noted that in some cases they would like more readily available advising and that it takes two weeks to get an appointment to see an advisor in COBA. It was suggested that we look at accessibility for advising appointments. **Advising staff should continue to assess availability of advising appointments as the student population grows.** [Susan Mitchell]
- One team member noted that while our model for advising is highly centralized, degree audit will decentralize advising. They urged us to consider other models of advising when our technology is better integrated into our campus to support it. **As a campus we're committed to continuously evaluating our operations, services, and practices. We expect that the continuation of the implementation process for the degree audit will undoubtedly prompt a review of our advising model and practices.** [Susan Mitchell]

## Peer visit take-aways

- We were also urged to develop a stronger culture of evidence in advising. What data do we have about the new model? What are we doing to benchmark the effects of advising on retention and graduation? **This would be an excellent topic for the Facilitating Graduation Steering Committee to focus on in the spring.** [Emily Cutrer and Gilbert Valadez]

## Faculty Resources

- The peer team noted that there seems to be significant faculty strain over resources and also noted the high percentage of adjunct faculty on our campus. **The impact of a high percentage of adjuncts on faculty advising should be taken into account when planning for future growth of the faculty.** [Emily Cutrer]