

Student Success

The CSU Graduation Initiative - an Update



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Spring 2010 Retreat



CSU Graduation Initiative

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About

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The CO Team

The CO Team consists of four energetic, dedicated, and forward-thinking people who are committed to the project's success. The Team is responsible for overall management of the Graduation Initiative and is charged to support the campuses as they pursue and fulfill their goals. Each team member will have communication tasks with the campuses, participate in planning workshops and campus visits, and develop reports to the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, and the Executive Council.



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Chancellor's Office Graduation Initiative Plan - 1



Campus Plans

- CSU Bakersfield
- CSU Channel Islands
- CSU Chico
- CSU Dominguez Hills
- CSU East Bay
- CSU Fresno
- CSU Fullerton
- Humboldt State University
- CSU Long Beach
- CSU Los Angeles
- California Maritime Academy
- CSU Monterey Bay
- CSU Northridge
- Cal Poly Pomona
- CSU Sacramento
- CSU San Bernardino
- San Diego State University
- San Francisco State University
- San Jose State University
- Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
- CSU San Marcos
- Sonoma State University
- CSU Stanislaus
- ▶ Chancellor's Office

Chancellor's Office

Chancellor's Office Plan

The CSU Graduation Initiative commits us to systematically discovering and dislodging the roadblocks to our students' success, now and for the rest of their lives. The Chancellor's Office team has developed a systemwide plan, largely influenced by the campus plans, to improve graduation rates and close achievement gaps.

We are committed to serving our students better and will use this plan as our guide. This is a living document, intended to be updated frequently as we solicit feedback and continue to learn. We anticipate several iterations of this plan over the course of the initiative.

[CO Graduation Initiative Plan](#)

(In folder of retreat materials)



The CSU Graduation Initiative strives to raise the freshman six-year graduation rate by eight percentage points by 2015, and cut in half the existing gap in degree attainment by CSU's underrepresented minority (URM) students.

This initiative is closely aligned with the priorities set forth in *Access to Excellence*, the CSU, Strategic Plan. It also builds on previous systemwide projects to promote graduation, including:

- Campus Plans for Facilitating Graduation Coded Memo – August 2, 2005
- Reports of the CSU Task Force on Facilitating Graduation – June 2002

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The CO Team will divide its time into two separate types of support activities:

1. **Project Management** - The CO Team estimates that it will spend roughly 80% of its time providing leadership, tracking progress, conducting campus consultations, benchmarking innovative practices across the CSU and across the nation and ensuring consistent stake holder communication.
2. **Systemwide Actions** – The CO Team estimates that it will it will dedicate roughly 20% of its time to identifying, launching, and managing a variety of systemwide projects to facilitate graduation and close achievement.

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Strong project management will be critical to the success of this initiative. In its work with campuses, the CO Team will utilize a methodology of careful planning, data-driven target identification, analysis of outcome metrics, consistent routines, and frequent updates to project plans. This approach includes:

- identifying targets with measurable goals,
- creating plans which are used to manage delivery toward our goals
- setting key milestones and trajectories, and
- focusing on problem-solving and corrective action where necessary along the way.

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In pursuit of the GI goals, the CO embraces the following **principles**:

- Strongly promote campus-based decision making.
- Be highly inclusive in developing strategies for systemwide programs and policies.
- Work with campuses to make data-driven decisions wherever possible.
- Be uncompromising regarding quality. Real student success means a complete degree, with the full set of intellectual tools demanded by the 21st century work and life.
- Support activities with positive impact.

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To help drive progress and deliver results requires us to continuously and rigorously answer the following **questions**:

- What are we trying to do?
- How are we planning to do it?
- At any given moment, how will we know we are on track? How do we know if we are succeeding?
- If not, what are we going to do about it? How will we change things?
- How can the CO Team help?

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Critical elements in developing a culture of graduation include:

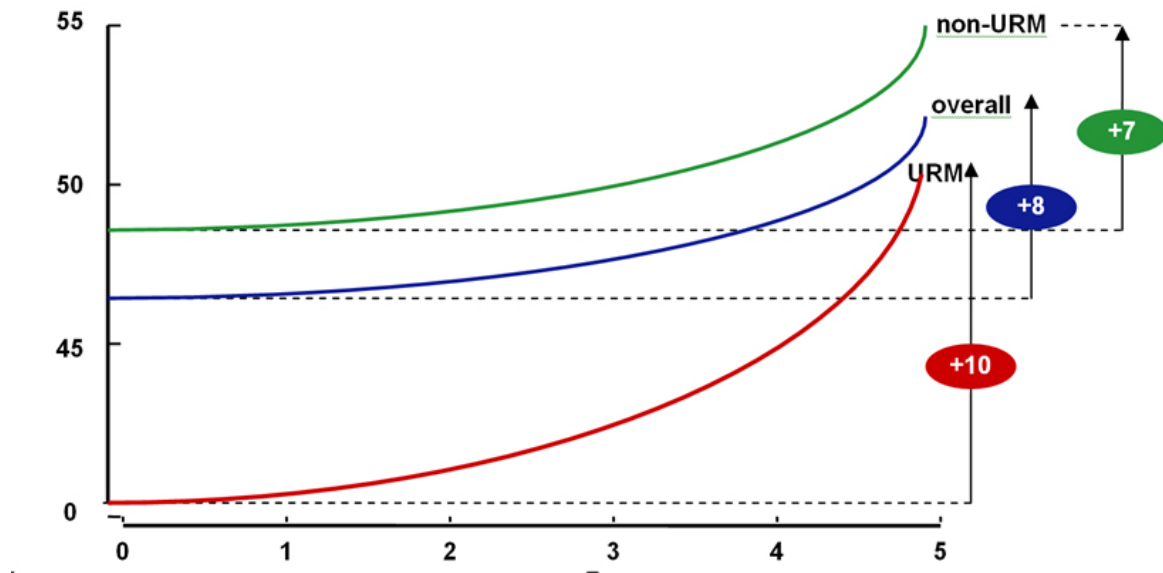
- Ensuring campus leadership (Presidents and Provosts) support
- Encouraging faculty support
- Generating momentum and building routines to maintain accountability and focus
- Communicating with stakeholders
- Using data where possible while acknowledging that many aspects of GI may be more art than science
- Developing accountability through measuring outcomes; analyzing and documenting success on pre-agreed-upon metrics.

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Systemwide Graduation Rates Targets

As a system, the CSU commits to raising its graduation rates and halving its achievement gap as follows:



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Systemwide Graduation Rates Targets

Although comparisons across state systems are imperfect, EdTrust has suggested that the Maryland and the CUNY systems are especially comparable to the CSU:

Graduation Rates	URM	non-URM
CSU Goal, 2016	51%	55%
CSU, Fall, 2007	38%	53%
CUNY, Fall, 2007	35%	50%
Maryland, Fall, 2007	46%	57%

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Systemwide Actions to Increase Graduation Rates and Narrow Gaps

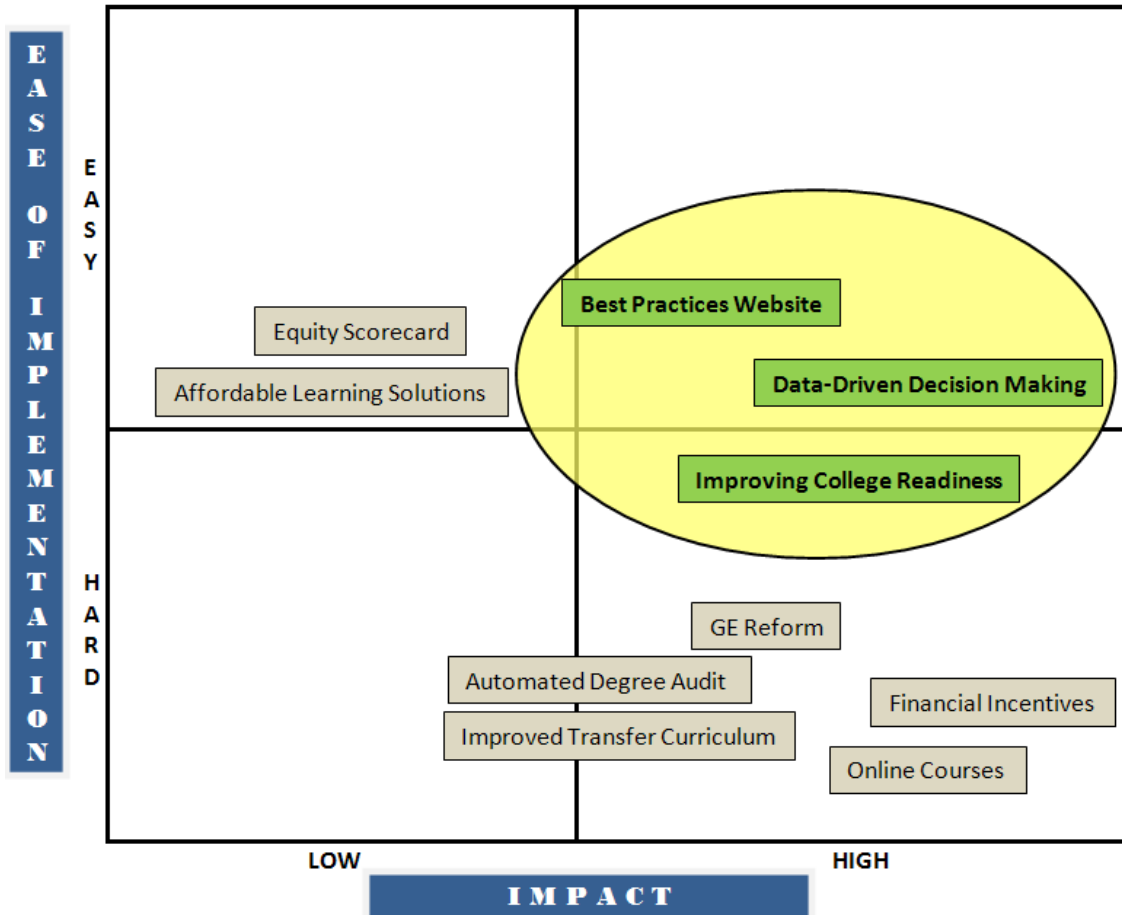
CSU campuses possess inherent differences in serving unique mixes of student populations with distinctive barriers to graduation. These obstacles vary from campus to campus, but several broad patterns are discernable:

- **Engagement:** students don't feel a sense of belonging at the university and/ or they don't see enough value in a college degree to place it above competing priorities .
- **Readiness:** students aren't academically prepared for college-level work.
- **Scheduling:** required courses aren't available when and where the students can take them, and students fail to enroll in the right courses.
- **Finances:** students can't afford to remain enrolled.

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Impact and Ease of Implementation of Systemwide Actions



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Systemwide Actions to Increase Graduation Rates and Narrow Gaps

Other possible actions representing opportunities to improve graduation rates and/or reduce the achievement gap:

- **Making Excellence Inclusive** – designed to help colleges and universities fully integrate their diversity and educational quality efforts and embed them into the core of academic mission and institutional functioning.
- **Reduction in Units to Degree** – better communicate how many units are required for each degree.
- **Community College Outreach to Promote Seamless Transfer** – focus on improving the way students experience the transition from CC to CSU.
- **Common CSU Course Numbering** – give students a clearer sense of which courses will count toward their degree after transfer.
- **Universal CSU Calendar** – accommodate students who ‘swirl’ among multiple CSU campuses.

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Risks, Challenges, and Barriers to Success

There are several risks that have the potential of derailing progress on the Graduation Initiative:

- **Budget**– Most campuses have proposed thoughtful solutions that do not require significant additional funding to improve their GI performance.
- **Metrics**– Campuses have been encouraged to develop their own metrics for assessing the impact of their programs on graduation rates.
- **Resources**– Graduation rates and lowering achievement gaps are top priorities in Access to Excellence. In many cases, the objectives of the GI require minimal adjustment of daily tasks and duties.
- **Trust**– is something that must be earned over time. The focus of this initiative is shared by faculty and administrators across the CSU.

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Risks, Challenges, and Barriers to Success

There are several risks that have the potential of derailing progress on the Graduation Initiative:

- **Momentum**— This is a six-year initiative. The Board of Trustees, Chancellor, and campus presidents have all committed their extended support and leadership to the Graduation Initiative.
- **Quality** – The CSU is committed to providing students with a high quality education. Safeguards include Access to Excellence priorities, program reviews, and accreditation standards.
- **Access**— The CO team will actively monitor campus enrollment practices to ensure compliance with CSU admission policies.
- **Feasibility**— Is it feasible to reach the new stretch targets? Targets have been set based on comparisons with ‘peer institutions’ for each of the 23 campuses. Targets are challenging but realistic goals.

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In Conclusion

The Graduation Initiative commits us to systematically discovering and dislodging the roadblocks to our students' success, now and for the rest of their lives.

Historical changes in California's population compel us to better serve the students we've most often failed: underrepresented minorities, the economically disadvantaged, and the first generation to college—at a time when the intellectual demands of the world have never been greater.


We are committed to serving our students better and will use this plan as our guide.

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Welcome to the CSU Graduation Initi...

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CSU Graduation Initiative

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Welcome to the CSU Graduation Initiative

The CSU Graduation Initiative strives to raise the freshman six-year graduation rate by eight percentage points by 2015-2016, and cut in half the existing gap in degree attainment by CSU's under-represented minority (URM) students. Involving all 23 CSU campuses, the Graduation Initiative encourages campuses to establish graduation targets comparable to the top quartile of national averages of similar institutions, and to close the URM achievement gap through a series of carefully planned activities.

Currently fewer than 50% of our students graduate in six years. Every interrupted education is a lost opportunity for the student, the student's family and community, and the state. **We face a moral imperative to serve our students better by helping more of them complete the college educations that prepare them for full and productive lives.** The Graduation Initiative commits us to systematically discovering and dislodging the roadblocks to our students' success, now and for the rest of their lives.

Upcoming Events

- [Leading Indicators Meeting \(Southern California\)](#)
Thursday, June 24, 2010
- [Campus monthly updates due](#)
Friday, June 25, 2010
- [Leading Indicators Meeting \(Northern California\)](#)
Friday, June 25, 2010

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<http://graduate.csuprojects.org/>



CSU Graduation Initiative Website