Highly Valued Degrees at California State University, Long Beach

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- Master’s large
- Urban comprehensive
- Los Angeles metropolitan area
- Very popular: 84,000 applications for UG admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Head count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alaska American</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African Americans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low-Income</td>
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<td>Disabled</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>Veterans</td>
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HVDI Goals

• To increase college retention and completion rates overall and for all student ethnic, gender, and major subgroups
  – Institution-wide initiative
  – Inspired by the 2005 Graduation Rates national study led by AASCU (with Education Trust)
Results: Teaser

• More than 20% gain in baccalaureate graduation rates
• More than 3000 additional students on track to graduate
• Gains NOT due to increased selectivity
• Gains occurred during the great recession and major cuts to CA higher education budgets
Strategies

• Communication
• Organization
• Data
• Budget
• Advising
• Support services
• Enrollment management
• Curriculum & pedagogy
• Tenure track hiring
• Collaboration with local partner institutions
Strategies: Communication

• HVDI is the defining initiative for the entire university
• Supported by each president (all 3!)
• Appears often in senior level communications
• Appears in key communications from president and provost, e.g., convocation, commencement
• Invoked as key principle in decision making: “what would be best for students?”
Strategies: Organizational

- Project infrastructure with senior, cross-campus participation
- Accountability
- Setting completion goals for colleges
Strategies: Data Driven

• Developing retention and completion metrics
  – for freshman and transfer
  – drill down to colleges and departments
  – drill down to student demographic groups
  – Inventing a native junior metric

• Metrics usable by colleges and departments
  – Retention rates and numbers
  – Completion rates and numbers
  – Achievement gaps
Strategies: Budgetary

• Student success priorities despite budget cuts
• Leadership commitment
• Prioritizing the schedule of classes first in university budgeting
  – Negotiation with Admin and Finance Division
  – Assuring colleges that all filled classes would be funded
• Prioritizing funding for advising
  – Increasing advisors during budget cuts
• Prioritizing funding for student support programs that move completion
  – supplemental instruction
  – Tutoring
  – learning communities
• History
  – Activities initially supported by resources marshaled by the academic division
  – With Great Recession, state funding lost but replaced by a new Student Success fee
Strategies: Advising

• Orientation required of all new undergraduates
• Expanded advising
• College advising centers
• College advising plans
• Early assessment for learning disability
• Advisor-facing electronic advising tools
  – Education Advisory Board predictive analytics
  – Advisor note sharing software
• Student-facing electronic advising tools
  – Enhanced graduation check
  – Interactive student graduation planners
Strategies: Supports

• Learning communities
• Supplemental instruction
• Pre-freshman year remedial intervention
• Men’s Success Initiative aimed at African American and Latino males
• Early assessment for learning disability
Strategies: Enrollment Management

• Development of enrollment planning projection tools at all-university level, interpolated to colleges and departments
• Assertive oversight of course offerings to ensure elimination of bottlenecks
• Developing tools to predict course demand
• Holding associate deans accountable for effective enrollment management
• New admissions: Major specific admission and major declaration criteria
Strategies: Curriculum & Pedagogy

• Curriculum streamlining (including reducing units to degree)
• Academic policies designed to keep students on track for graduation: super-seniors, repeat-delete
• High impact practices: study abroad, service learning, active learning
• Identification of low completion courses
• Redesign of gateway courses, most recently using digital learning technologies
Strategies: Tenure Track Hiring

• Most recently, infusion into the faculty tenure track hiring process greatly enhanced attention to hiring faculty best suited for working with an increasingly underrepresented, first generation, and low income student population
  – Decanal leadership
  – Student Success statements
  – Oversight of questions by Provost
  – Oversight of hiring process by Provost
Local Collaboration

• Long Beach College Promise Partnership, nationally recognized partnership
  – CSULB
  – Long Beach Unified School District
  – Long Beach City College
• Since 1994
• Focused on increasing local college participation
• CSULB is extremely popular
  – more than 84,000 applications for undergraduate admission for Fall 2015
• Easily possible for CSULB to
  – become highly selective
  – ignore local access
• Because of the College Promise Partnership, CSULB continued policies that guarantee college access to qualified local high school graduates
• CSULB remained accessible for local students, who are quite diverse
• K-12 improvements In the past 10 years
  – N of students from the local school district coming to college doubled
  – Proportions fully college-ready from tripled
Far from Selective...

- During the period that CSULB has been working on the Highly Valued Degree Initiative
  - Average entering academic qualifications have remained flat
  - Student diversity increased dramatically
    (~33% Latino/a, ~25% Caucasian, 20% Asian, 4% African American, 1% Native American, 5% International, 10% unknown or declined to state)
  - Student poverty has dramatically increased
    (66% receive financial aid and more than 50% low income by federal guidelines)
Results

• In just over a decade
  – 6 yr first time freshman graduation rates have risen from below 40% to 65%
  – Transfer graduation rates have shown similar increases
  – Gains have reached all ethnic and gender subgroups
    • Latino rate +20%
    • African American rate +22%
    • Asian rate +23% in eleven years

• However, achievement gaps remain and are a continuing focus of attention

• Since 2005, gains that have occurred compared to what would have occurred at the 2004 rates:
  – 444 more students entering as freshmen graduated
  – 1,607 more students entering as freshmen retained
  – 482 more transfers graduated
  – 571 more transfers retained

Tech Note: Since 2005 three freshman cohorts have had time to complete the full 6 years. CSULB admitted 13,067 freshmen in those cohorts and graduated 6,952 within 6 years. This is 444 more students than would have graduated had the graduation rate stayed at the 2004 cohort rate. In the subsequent five cohorts that have not had time to complete the full 6 years, CSULB admitted 20,408 freshmen and retained 14,671 to date. This is 1,607 more freshmen than would have been retained had retention rates stayed at the 2004 cohort rate. A similar analysis for transfers suggests that 482 more have graduated and 571 have been retained than would have occurred at 2004 cohort rates.
Results, Summary

• >3,000 students completed or are on track to complete – who would not have been on track absent institutional improvements

• Continued rises in retention rates indicate that gains are likely to continue
Global Context

- College educated workforce is vital to national economic competitiveness
- The U.S. has slipped badly in preparing college graduates
  - U.S. now about 15th in the world among young adults in OECD nations in “tertiary completion”
  - South Korea’s college completion rate among young adults is nearly double the U.S.
  - China is building universities rapidly
  - Middle east is building university cities
  - Europe’s Bologna initiative is aimed at cross-border mobility of college educated workers
- Recent WSJ: one reason U.S. unemployment remains high is jobs taken by well-educated legal immigrants
Global Context, con’t.

- Realizing all this, President Obama called for improved college completion
- California Public Policy Institute report: state will be significantly short of baccalaureate educated workers by 2025
- Obama’s goals cannot be met without CA (1/7 students in U.S. higher education); CA cannot succeed without the California State University, largest baccalaureate producing system in the nation. The CSU cannot succeed without large urban southern campuses like Long Beach
- Efforts to advance the national completion agenda are central to President’s strategy to boost economic competitiveness
- Large AASCU institutions across the nation are all vital
Take Aways

• Leadership commitment to student success as THE top priority
• Budgetary commitment to full schedule of classes and support services
• Project organization involving entire campus at leadership & unit levels
• Communication saturates entire campus with student success message
• Adequate advising ratios & organized advising system
• General student support programs: orientation, campus life, Ed Opp., Learning Assistance, etc.
• Specialized support programs: Men’s Initiative, Women’s Resource Center, Veterans, HSI, etc
• Institutional data capabilities to track and evaluate retention, graduation with drill down to units and student subgroups
• Nuanced data capabilities: program evaluation, surveys, focus groups
• Faculty hiring, tenure policies that brings student success front and center
• Faculty development messaging success & improving pedagogy (including digital tools)