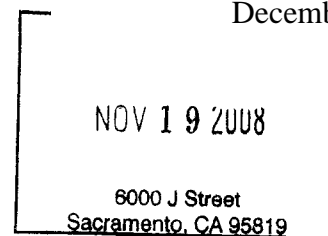




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Attachment B
Faculty Senate Agenda
December 4, 2008



November 19, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bruce Bikle, Chair
Faculty Senate

FROM: Joseph F. Sheley, Provost

Lori Varlotta, Vice President for Student Affairs

SUBJECT: Student Retention Task Force

In line with earlier messages to the Academic Community and in direct pursuit of Priority One of the University's *Strategic Plan*, we are writing to seek the Faculty Senate's assistance in selecting faculty members to serve on a Retention Task Force (RTF). RTF represents one among many collaborative efforts by the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs to "foster an academic and campus-life culture whereby recruitment, retention, graduation, and student success in all its forms are embraced and pursued as the responsibility of the entire campus community -- faculty, staff, students, and alumni" (*Strategic Plan*). The University seeks, by 2012-13, increases in six-year graduation rates of first-year students from 41 percent to 46 percent and in four-year graduation rates of third-year transfer students from 57 percent to 62 percent.

RTF will be composed of ten members, *five faculty members recommended by the Faculty Senate and five staff members from the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs*. We have asked Laureen O'Hanlon and Mary Kirlin (members of the Strategic Planning Council), and Jeff Clark (Student Academic Success and current member of our retention work group) if they would be willing to serve on RTF. Each said yes, and we would hope that the Senate would view their participation favorably and recommend two other faculty members to join them. RTF participants would also include Ed Mills (Associate Vice President, Student Affairs), Marcellene Watson-Derbigny (Director, Student Academic Success), Beth Merritt Miller (Director, Academic Advising Center), Jing Wang (Director, Office of Institutional Research), and Larry Glasmire (Director of Special Programs and Enrollment Analysis).

Specifically, RTF will examine data provided by the Office of Institutional Research, interview University personnel most active in retention efforts, and review contemporary "best practices" regarding retention and progress to graduation. RTF will then provide recommendations (many of which will involve policy falling within the purview of the Faculty Senate) to the Provost and the Vice President for Student Affairs regarding measures by which to increase the retention and graduation rates of our students.

Memo to Bruce Bikle
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RTF will begin its work on December 12, 2008 (an orientation meeting) and submit its recommendations to the Provost and the Vice President for Student Affairs, with appropriate and considered input from the Faculty Senate and other members of the campus community, by April 15, 2009.

Regarding retention efforts, to date, the Academic Affairs-Student Affairs collaboration has resulted in:

- *An enhanced mandatory orientation program for freshmen.*
- *Continued mandatory advising program for freshmen.*
- *Improved student services for freshmen and transfers.*
- *Further developed learning communities.*
- *Probation-intensive advising and “intrusive follow-up” for second-year students (probation is the major predictor of attrition).*
- *High risk groups and others targeted for “early alert” interventions by Student Affairs personnel.*
- *Ongoing consideration of implementation strategies for the University’s “developmental advising” policy (Dec., 2007) by a joint committee of faculty members and Student Affairs professionals.*

What remains to be done?

1. RTF should **review retention and advising efforts to date and provide counsel** where necessary.
2. Beyond current efforts to retain “at-risk” first- and second-year students and devise implementation priorities regarding our “developmental advising” policy, RTF should **explore other avenues by which to focus the University’s (particularly academic departments’) attention on student retention and graduation success**; these might involve curricular or other academically-related changes as well as advising initiatives.
3. While a number of specific “early alert” actions have been implemented by units within the Office of Student Affairs, RTF should **explore methods by which to establish “early alert” processes within academic departments**; these might involve curricular or other academic matters.

We appreciate the Faculty Senate’s attention to these matters and welcome ideas by which to further the work of the Retention Task Force described above.