

# Commuter Student Success

## Strategic Planning Year End Report

During the 2013-2014 academic year a strategic planning committee comprised of students, faculty and staff met weekly to create a series of recommended goals and outcomes regarding commuter student success at San Diego State University. This document outlines the recommendations made by the committee and the progress on the implementation of these recommendations. In September 2013 the committee was charged to:

*“Promote commuter student success based on results of an in-progress needs assessment by the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, with relevant support and resources and in association with the established Commuter Student Lounge of the Aztec Student Union.”*

## 2013-14 Accomplishments:

### **Developed *Success Pathways* for commuter students by creating a sense of academic connection through small group cohorts designed for commuter student success.**

- a. Developed the capacity for *all* (approx. 450) remedial commuter students to be served by a success pathway and/or learning community (success pathway is defined by any intentional program designed to provide freshman transition support in small group settings – examples include MESA engineering, EOP, athletics, etc...)
- b. Continued to develop learning community packages for remedial students, major-based learning communities for college ready students, and freshman seminar “stand alone” options for success programs (EOP, MESA Engineering, Harambee, etc.)
- c. Introduced new models for delivering freshman transition courses through:
  - i. Linked courses (Gen Ed, Supplemental instruction, University Seminar)
  - ii. Employed Graduate Teaching Assistants
  - iii. Mixed lecture and break-out discussion models
  - iv. Fostered faculty involvement in stand-alone seminars for college ready students
  - v. Provided learning communities that last the entire freshmen year and foster connections that last through the entire college career

### **Created a “Home Base” by opening the Commuter Resource Center in the Student Union which increased commuter-student personal and academic connection to the campus.**

- d. Launched “One Stop Shop” for commuter questions/resources
- e. Monitored high traffic hours of usage, adapted schedule
- f. Hired sufficient Staffing to support the resource center, programming, communication and assessment programs
- g. Connected with student organizations with high numbers of commuter students
- h. Provided assistance on transportation and parking challenges
- i. Held welcome receptions for the new commuter resource Center (January 22, 28 & 29, 2014)

### **Cultivated co-curricular programming & lifelong learning through educational activities that support the unique needs of our commuter population(s).**

- j. Promoted high impact practices
- k. Increased awareness of campus resources and involvement in student life
- l. Supported leadership, diversity & arts programming for commuters
- m. Used the LIFE 101 Residential Education Model to provide a framework for programming

- n. Established an incentive-based Commuter Club printing and copying program
- o. Develop new ways for commuter students to interact with campus services
- p. Provided “commuter connections” programs for incoming college students

**Constructed a centralized communication plan that provides commuters with a “one stop shop” for all commuter programs and resources.**

- q. Centralized website/online location with an “umbrella” approach
- r. Published a collaborative commuter life brochure
- s. Integrated social media strategies
- t. Conceptualized a commuter student “safe zone-type” program

**Created an annual evaluation plan with appropriate metrics.**

- u. Created a needs assessment survey
- v. Assess Commuter Student Success
- w. Assess Commuter Student Involvement -Curricular and o-curricular activities
- x. Create a coding system to track commuters by the type of commuting student
  - i. Residential (lives on campus)
  - ii. Commuter (commuting from home)
  - iii. Off Campus Commuter (lived one year on campus now living off campus)
  - iv. Transfer Commuter
- y. Assessed commuter student membership/participation with student organizations
- z. Assessed commuter student learning and compare to residential student learning and needs

**Facilitated shared governance for commuters by building a strong commuter voice in Associated Students and in student life.**

- aa. Created a Commuter Life Advisory Board to continually plan and review new programs
- bb. Facilitated the founding of an A.S. Commuter Student Board

**Impact:**

Opening the Commuter Resource Center marks a significant stride forward in meeting the needs of a previously underserved yet large percentage of our student body. Engaging them more fully in the academic and co-curricular life of the University breeds higher levels of achievement, satisfaction, persistence, and self-authorship. For those enrolled in commuter learning communities: Casa Azteca, Aztec Freshmen Connection and Compact Scholars Learning

Communities, the current data demonstrates higher grade point averages, more units completed and far lower rates of academic probation than non-participating peers. A total of 250 spaces in learning communities have been created for the Fall 2014 for commuter students with remedial education requirements. These packages include a 3-unit general education (GE) course, 1-unit supplemental instruction course, 3-unit RWS course, 1 unit summer orientation seminar and a 1-unit fall freshman transition course. The following departments provided class sections:

- Sociology – 8 sections of ~15 students for a total of 125 students
- Psychology – 4 sections of 15 students for a total of 60 students\*
- Political Science – 4 sections of 15 students for a total of 60 students
- RWS – 16 sections of ~15 or 16 students for a total of 250 students

*\*Psychology will provide a face-to-face class for the commuter learning communities as the hybrid- online sections have also had a high failure rate (25%).*

A total of 200 Compact Scholars learning community student spaces have been created for the Fall 2014 (college ready.) These class packages include a 3-unit RWS or Math class and a 1-unit supplemental instruction course.

### **Next Steps:**

- Secure permanent base-budget funding to support 450 commuter students both college ready and remedial to replace CSU Chancellor's Office grant of \$290,000
- Pursue *required participation* in learning community packages for all remedial students with the support of Academic Affairs
- Escalate early alert and other intrusive academic interventions to boost achievement
- Expand number of academic departments supporting learning communities
  
- Continue to assess/refine/expand "success pathways" for commuter students