

# Encounter with Student Success Scholarship Committee Report

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## **Origin of this Report**

College and university administrators, faculty and staff continue to strive to provide the best academic and social experiences for students. Hence, at the end of the Fall 2013 semester, President Hagan's office established a committee made up of seven faculty and one dean to 1) review literature on High Impact Practices (HIPs) and recommend a set of HIPs for infusion into CSU Dominguez Hills' core values and mission, as well as institutional learning goals and objectives, and 2) propose strategies for exposing students to multiple opportunities for participating in HIPs and for making HIPs a campus-wide initiative. This committee, known as the Encounter with Student Success (ESS) Scholarship Committee, will be abbreviated as the ESS Committee throughout this document.

For the reader who is short on time, following is an **Executive Summary** of the *Encounter With Student Success Scholarship Committee Report*. The **Main Report** follows, with a more thorough discussion of the literature review, findings and rationales.

# Executive Summary

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## Encounter with Student Success Scholarship Committee Report

To summarize the recommendations of the Encounter With Student Success (ESS) Scholarship Committee, CSUDH should adopt the following as its “signature” High Impact Practices (HIPs): Learning Communities; Effective Advising; Service Learning; and Undergraduate Research. In terms of class requirements, all incoming freshmen should complete UNV 101 plus at least one other specially-designated HIP course (Service Learning or Undergraduate Research), as explained on the following pages. Moreover, the campus adoption of the four HIPs must be done in a sustainable way

To the extent possible, our recommendations attempt to utilize currently existing offices and practices rather than creating new mechanisms. CSUDH already has many effective HIPs in place, and we see this document largely as a way to highlight and organize them.

This Executive Summary has two major sections: **Student Success Recommendations** and **Recommendations for Sustainability**. Within this Executive Summary, each lettered subsection makes a brief recommendation, with an abbreviated explanation following.

### Student Success Recommendations

#### Learning Communities

The literature makes it abundantly clear that students and faculty thrive when they feel a greater sense of an academic community. We present three major recommendations along these lines.

**CSUDH should require all freshmen to take UNV 101 as the one and only means of satisfying Area E of the lower division General Education package.**

The research literature well-documents the effectiveness of UNV 101-type courses as effective means of establishing a formative experience and developing learning communities. Reviving UNV 101 will bring students together with a common educational experience. However, the UNV 101 class needs to be more than a “how to be in college” class. The Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies should have the charge of ensuring that the revived UNV 101 class involves students in critical thinking and writing, community engagement, and other HIPs. For students to benefit fully from this type of class, the enrollment cap should not exceed 25.

**The General Education (GE) Committee should have the charge of investigating which GE classes may profitably “link” with UNV 101.**

The linking and cohorting of classes, both within a single semester and across multiple semesters, help to establish student learning communities. It might make sense, for example, to link a UNV 101 class with another lower-division GE class. Or perhaps two other GE classes would make a strong sequence. This is the spirit of the First Year Experience, which

was initiated at CSUDH during the 2013-14 academic year. The GE Committee, as the existing authorities on GE curricula, should decide whether any such linkages would prove manageable and effective.

**CSUDH should continue to expand its efforts to develop faculty learning communities.**

Just as students benefit from learning communities, so do faculty. Many campuses have active faculty learning communities that research and discuss HIPs with institutional support (such as small stipends); CSUDH could do the same. Doing this will inform more faculty about HIPs and spread their practice across campus. The Faculty Development Center and the newly-created Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity would be good resources for this endeavor.

## Advising

Effective advising stands as one of the hallmarks of any first-rate academic institution. Currently, a separately-appointed Task Force on Advising has the task of studying advising practices closely and making their own recommendations. Therefore, we keep our remarks in this section fairly brief. However, we do have three recommendations.

**CSUDH should continue and expand its “intrusive advising” practices.**

Our incoming freshmen, many first-generation college students, often lack the savvy to navigate their own educational paths. Intrusive advising (i.e., institutionally-initiated, based on monitoring of student performance) therefore becomes essential. Here we note two particular needs along these lines:

- Undeclared students need even further advisement. Students who have not declared a major tend to drop out at a higher rate than those with a declared major. Perhaps a stricter set of registration holds placed on students who have not declared a major, forcing students to visit the University Advisement Center (UAC) and/or the Career Center would help.
- The usage of an “Early Warning” system should expand. Currently, the EOP program has an early warning system, where instructors of EOP students submit evaluations to the EOP Office throughout the semester, indicating students with poor performance and/or attendance. The EOP Office then calls the students in for advising. If the University Advisement Center possessed sufficient staffing, a similar practice could extend to the broader student body.

## **The University Advisement Center should resume its practice of having Faculty Advisors.**

In years past, the UAC had many faculty advisors (such advisors got a course release in return for a certain number of weekly hours). This should resume. It will benefit the campus by re-investing the faculty in the HIP of effective advising. It will also benefit students because faculty can often provide more specific advice on academic majors than staff. Research has shown that a key element in student success is having students select a major of interest; students are more vulnerable to drop out when they remain in Undeclared status.

## **CSUDH should institutionalize a system of peer mentoring.**

Students often learn best from each other. Some departments (e.g. Psychology) currently have effective systems of peer mentoring; this can expand. For example, sophomores, juniors, and seniors could serve as peer mentors for students taking UNV 101 (as previously recommended in subsection a). These peer mentors could enroll in a class (call it UNV 301) and earn Service Learning credit for their efforts (see subsequent section on Service Learning). The mentors will benefit from the engagement and service they provide, and the mentees will benefit from the role modeling and wisdom of their (slight) elders. The Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies could explore this idea more thoroughly.

## **Service Learning**

CSUDH has long valued service learning, and rightly so. It has an effective Service Learning, Internship and Civic Engagement (SLICE) office, and we could build on their spirit and efforts.

Before discussing service learning (and for that matter, undergraduate research) at length, however, it makes sense to discuss Writing Intensive (WI) classes. The literature confirms time and again that WI classes stand as a powerful HIP. CSUDH clearly has recognized this for many years: we have a WI requirement on our campus that students complete two WI classes to graduate. A campus committee determines which classes count as WI, and these classes bear a WI designation on a student's transcript.

In actuality, the campus has not enforced the WI requirement very well in recent years. But it should; in fact, this should hold a high priority. We do not elaborate more on WI classes in this document, as the system and rules already fully exist, and it just remains to enforce them.

For present purposes, though, we want to draw upon some of the ideas of the WI program and extend them to the valuable HIP of service learning.

## **CSUDH should develop the notation of "SL" to mark service learning courses on student transcripts.**

Students who participate in service learning courses should receive recognition for this, and CSUDH can show its commitment to service learning by designating certain classes as SL. This SL designation would show on students' transcripts, just as WI does now.

**CSUDH should create a UNV 301 class bearing the SL designation.**

This idea arose earlier in the peer mentoring section (f). Students who successfully mentor UNV 101 students should earn SL credit. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies can decide whether the UNV 301 should extend to other service learning environments beyond the UNV 101 mentoring experience.

**CSUDH should encourage departments to have their applicable current (and future) courses bear the SL designation, as authorized by the University Curriculum Committee (UCC).**

Many departments already have classes that could qualify as SL classes. UCC, in conjunction with SLICE, should develop some straightforward criteria for SL designation. UCC should then set up a fast-track mechanism to approve worthy SL classes, so that the classes may show on students' transcripts as quickly as possible.

**The General Education (GE) committee should decide if and how other GE courses might deserve the SL designation.**

Of course, students (and the community) would benefit from more than one exposure to service learning. The GE Committee can decide whether opportunities for SL credit exist within the GE package (subject to UCC approval; see part b above). The Committee might even decide whether including service learning as a GE objective makes sense.

## **Undergraduate Research**

The University has shown its commitment to the HIP of undergraduate research through the recent creation of the Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity. We believe that the following ideas will strengthen this commitment.

**CSUDH should develop the notation of "UR" to mark courses that involve undergraduate research, scholarship, or creative activity on student transcripts.**

Students who participate in undergraduate research courses should receive recognition for this, and CSUDH can show its commitment to this activity by designating certain classes as UR. The UR designation would show on students' transcripts, just as WI now does. Note that the ESS Committee intends the UR designation for classes in which students work in close conjunction with a faculty member conducting research or scholarly work; a class that has students write a research-oriented term paper would probably not qualify as UR.

**Departmental 497 (Directed Reading) and 498 (Directed Research) courses should automatically bear the UR designation.**

All departments have a 497 and/or 498 on their books; this provides a perfect opportunity for students to earn UR credit as they work with their professors on a research project.

**CSUDH should encourage departments to have their applicable current (and future) courses bear the UR designation, as authorized by the UCC.**

Many departments already have courses that could qualify as UR classes. UCC, in conjunction with the Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity, should develop some straightforward criteria for UR designation. UCC should then set up a fast-track mechanism to approve worthy UR classes, so that the classes may show on students' transcripts as quickly as possible.

### **The Big Idea**

Scholars agree that students need multiple exposures to HIPs, and that individual classes may involve more than one HIP. With our suggestion of reviving UNV 101 and creating the SL and UR designations, we have this major idea in mind:

**To graduate, a freshman must complete UNV 101 as well as one separate course bearing either the SL or UR designation.**

We recommend that the current WI requirement (two courses) stand untouched; WI does not figure in the statement above. Implementation of the above "big idea", then, ensures that all students will have, at a minimum, four HIP experiences: UNV 101, two WI classes, and either an SL or a UR course.

## **Recommendations for Sustainability**

Instituting HIPs will do little good if we cannot sustain them. The entire academic culture at CSUDH needs to embrace and integrate these HIPs. In particular, we need faculty buy-in, which will be ameliorated by a certain level of institutionalization. We offer suggestions along those lines here.

**CSUDH should establish a standing Student Success Committee.**

A university-level committee, consisting of 2-3 members from each college, would meet from two to four times a semester. A Faculty Development Center representative could lead this committee. The committee would discuss HIPs and their implementation practices in the various colleges, thereby forming a faculty learning community of sorts. The Student Success Committee would be a valuable institution for sustaining a campus culture of best practices for students.

**HIPs should become part of the Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) process.**

The "Teaching Effectiveness" section of the WPAF of faculty going through the RTP process should have the addition,

“Indicate and explain how your classes incorporate High Impact Practices (undergraduate research, service learning, etc.)”

Such an addition will require faculty to consider HIPs seriously on a regular basis, as they will form part of the evaluative basis. The Faculty Development Center will need to make strides so that faculty members understand HIPs and their importance in the RTP process.

### **Assessment of student success initiatives**

Like any other valued University enterprise, periodic assessment of student success initiatives will be necessary to evaluate their efficacy and make ongoing recommendations to maintain/improve their quality. We expect that the institutionalized HIPs will be subject to periodic assessment as part of internal and external (e.g., WASC accreditation) assessment programs. Assessment of these research-supported practices—and the student success initiatives themselves—should be judged favorably by accrediting bodies.

# Main Report

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## Introduction

### High Impact Practices (HIPs)

In 2008, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) published a report on successful educational practices that prepare college students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, titled *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*. The report was the product of a decade-long initiative of the AAC&U, called Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP). The primary author of the seminal 2008 report was noted higher educational researcher George D. Kuh.

Using nationwide data that was collected through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Kuh showed a high degree of correlation between student participation in certain practices and favorable educational outcomes. These desirable outcomes include student intellectual development and statistical improvements to student retention and graduation. These especially effective activities have been coined High-Impact (Educational) Practices, or HIPs. Kuh (2008) found that HIPs benefit all students, including underserved students who may enter with lower entering academic test scores than non-underserved students. Kuh identified a number of HIPs which have been recognized in the educational literature during the past few decades:

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects

### Defining Student Success

To begin, it is important to note that the definition of “student success” is not universal. Tinto (2012) states that student success generally includes the reduction in time to graduate, increased persistence and retention rates, and the attainment of relevant competences, knowledge



and skills. The literature tends to quantitatively report student success in terms of retention, graduation, grade point average, and access. Some definitions of success emphasize the achievement of a college degree, but obtaining employment after graduation is paramount to our students, as well.

Learning is obviously central to student success, but so is campus climate, supportive mentoring, and cohort engagement. There are numerous factors that challenge students to succeed. Finances (i.e., paying for college) are one obstacle for our students. Many, if not most, of our students work jobs to lessen the financial barrier which impedes their progress. Other obstacles include large class sizes, limited course offerings, and availability of faculty and staff to support students' needs.

It may be broadly suggested that only students may define their individual goals and evaluate their own successes, but such a vague interpretation provides no insight for systemic institutional improvement. Completion of a baccalaureate degree is a substantive achievement, although the quality of learning should not be discounted. It is also arguable that the completion of a four-year degree in today's employment climate is not a sure indicator that a student will be "successful"—such a broad perspective of success clearly extends beyond the domain of the campus environment.

Ultimately, definitions of student success depend upon the institution, its mission and vision, student population, and specific needs of the students in competing in the global economy (Tinto, 2012). Each university must focus its efforts around the culture, curriculum, teaching, and pedagogical approaches to engage its students on a path towards success. In our changing world, technology, science, environment, and intercultural disciplines influence what and how we teach our students. Demands to measure student success are then necessarily elevated beyond whether students simply graduate, to whether they are prepared to contribute and succeed in a changing modern society. Are our students achieving the level of preparation needed in terms of knowledge, capabilities, and personal qualities that will enable them to contribute in a rapidly changing world? Encouragingly, Tinto (2012) reports that most people who complete a postsecondary degree or certificate program do better in *every* aspect of their personal and professional lives.

It was the charge for the ESS Committee to recommend the most meaningful combination of steps to enhance student success at CSUDH. Doing so required coming to an understanding of what was meant by "success," but this is a Gordian knot; no stringent definition of student success can incorporate all possible aspects in which students succeed, or clearly indicate how a university can track the success of its aggregate body of students. Accepting this intractability, the opinion of the ESS Committee is that CSUDH students should have an undergraduate educational experience which includes student success elements which are readily measurable *and* those are difficult to quantify. These divergent student success indicators were dually considered when the ESS Committee began to develop its recommendations for student success at CSUDH.

## Student Success Indicators

- **Student Retention (Persistence):** Entering college students remain, re-enroll, and continue their undergraduate education. (For example, first-year students return for their sophomore year.)
- **Educational Attainment:** Entering students persist to completion and attainment of their degree, program, or educational goal. (For example 4-year college students attain the baccalaureate degree.)
- **Academic Achievement:** Students achieve satisfactory or superior levels of academic performance as they advance through college. (For example, students avoid academic probation or qualify for academic honors.)
- **Personal Development:** Students develop as “whole persons” as they progress through and complete their college experience. This outcome consists of multiple dimensions of development, described as intellectual, emotional, social, ethical, physical, and spiritual development.
- **Student Advancement:** Students proceed to and succeed at subsequent educational and occupational endeavors for which their college degree or program was designed to prepare them. (For example, students are accepted at graduate schools or enter gainful careers after completing their baccalaureate degree.)

## CSUDH Demographics & Rates

These data were compiled from the *CSUDH Enrollment Facts Bulletin (Fall 2013)*.

### Ethnicity (Undergraduate)

American Indian/Alaskan Native 0.2 %  
Asian 10.2%  
Black/African American 17.9%  
Hispanic/Latino 57.7 %  
Native Islander/Other Pacific Island 0.4%  
White 10.5%  
Two or more races 3.1%

### Preparation Rates – First Time Freshmen

Needs both English & Math remediation 49.1%  
Needs English remediation only 19.8%  
Needs Math remediation only 11.6%  
Prepared for both English & Math 19.5%  
Average High School GPA: 3.07

### Freshman Cohort – One Year Retention Rate

Fall 2012 78%

## Background for Recommendations

There is a wide range of valuable features listed in the educational literature. Kuh (2008) and Schneider (2008) state that it is vital for HIPs to become integrated, required programs, rather than optional activities. Tinto (2012) also notes that it is critical for selected HIPs to be integrated in a systematic way across an institution; the cogent integration of a *modest* number of HIPs is probably superior to an uncoordinated, simultaneous implementation of a large number of singularly-proven HIPs; much of the success is a function of intelligent integration rather than mere existence of numerous activities. Based on the research, Kuh (2008) asserts **undergraduate students should be exposed to two or more HIPs (one during the first year, another during a subsequent year [in the major])** for meaningful influence.

The HIPs recommended for CSUDH build upon campus programs which currently exist—or have been in recent existence—at CSUDH. Essentially, these are the particular practices which represent, in the ESS Committee’s opinion, maximal compatibility with existing campus programs. Furthermore, these recommendations offer significant potential for positive student outcomes and those practices which mesh nicely with the existing unique campus culture of CSUDH. It should be mentioned that there is only a modest subset of potential practices mentioned here; this is not because these recommendations form a mature, complete suite, but rather that there is a realistic practicality in starting with a limited set of new initiatives, then proceeding over time, via appropriate assessment of successes/challenges. To ensure sustainability, we want these fundamental practices to become well-rooted before we try to expand their reach.

Proposed HIPs were also considered in light of the mission of CSUDH. The University’s mission is to provide education, scholarship and service that is accessible and transformative. CSUDH’s core values include accountability, collaboration, continuous learning, rigorous standards, proactive partnerships, respect, and responsiveness. For each recommended HIP, the committee has listed a CSUDH core value that the recommendation especially honors, though all of the recommendations are effectively linked to all of CSUDH’s core values.

Ultimately, the ESS Committee weighed the successes of specific HIPs discussed in the educational literature with existing programs on the CSUDH campus, considering those practices which seem especially tractable for the unique culture of CSUDH. Additionally, the critical influence of faculty on student success yielded additional recommendations focused on faculty, to ensure campus sustainability. The recommended program enhancements are organized in two categories, **Student Success Recommendations** and **Recommendations for Sustainability**.

## Student Success Recommendations

The four categories of recommendations encompass **Learning Communities, Advising, Service Learning** and **Undergraduate Research**.

## 1. Learning Communities

Core Values: Accountability & Responsiveness

### Student Learning Communities

Based on Kuh's (2008) observation that university students should be exposed to (at least) one HIP during the first year, the ESS Committee accordingly recommends **the reinstatement of UNV 101** for freshmen students. This introductory course, if appropriately recast, can promote academic excellence and stave off student attrition with its cohorted approach, while addressing the important topics of college orientation, study skills, advisement/mentorship, and major selection. This will get first-time students involved in HIPs from the very beginning.

The research literature well-documents the effectiveness of UNV 101-type courses as effective means of establishing a formative experience and developing learning communities. Reviving UNV 101 will bring students together with a common educational experience. For this reason, **the ESS Committee believes CSUDH should require all freshmen to take UNV 101 as the one and only means of satisfying Area E of the lower division General Education package.** Approval of this streamlining of Area E will certainly require the involvement and agreement of the GE Committee.

In its reinstated form, the UNV 101 class needs to be more than a "how to be in college" class. The Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies should have the charge of ensuring that the revived UNV 101 class rigorously involves students in critical thinking, writing, community engagement, and other foundational skills. For students to benefit fully from this type of class, the enrollment cap should not exceed 25.

The linking and cohorting of classes, both within a single semester and across multiple semesters, helps to establish student learning communities. It might make sense, for example, to cohort a UNV 101 class with another lower-division GE class. Or perhaps two other GE classes would make a strong sequence. This is the spirit of the First Year Experience, which was initiated at CSUDH during the 2013-14 academic year. The GE Committee, as the existing authorities on GE curricula, should decide whether any such linkages would prove manageable and effective. **The GE Committee should have the charge of investigating which GE classes may profitably "link" with UNV 101.**

### Faculty Learning Communities

Through our readings of authors such as Tinto (2012) and Kuh (2008), and attendance at the 2014 Lilly Conference on College & University Teaching, it was impressed upon the ESS Committee that faculty play a fundamental role in student success that is difficult to overstate; faculty are the key conduits of High Impact Educational Practices. Accordingly, the Faculty Development Center (FDC) is a critical indirect element for fostering student success at CSUDH. As such, we recognize that the FDC will be the lead body in supporting faculty to create

pedagogies and classroom cultures that promote student success. Some of these improvements will be nourished through the formation of faculty learning communities (FLCs).

Since communication among faculty members is valuable for a thriving academic career, we suggest the development of faculty learning communities to encourage communication and collegiality among faculty across disciplines. At a minimum, we conceptualize FLCs in three topical areas: **research, high-impact practices, and course development and assessment**. We anticipate that the FDC will serve as a central clearinghouse for these cooperative efforts.

### **Research FLC**

We suggest the development of a FLC that promotes faculty research. This community will encourage faculty with similar interests coming together to discuss current research efforts. In particular, it could help identify areas for interdisciplinary research; it would be valuable if new interdisciplinary collaborations could develop. This faculty learning community can be developed in conjunction with the NBS Advisory Council on Research (ACR) and the newly-created Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity, as faculty research is a necessary prerequisite for undergraduate research.

### **High Impact Practices FLC**

We recommend the development of a faculty learning community on the topic of HIPs and other best practices that facilitate student learning, retention, and graduation. This learning community would engage in readings similar to that of the ESS Committee and offer information and suggestions to the Student Success Committee (see **Recommendations for Sustainability** section).

### **Course Development & Assessment FLC**

A third learning committee focusing on course development and assessment might also be developed. This FLC would be a resource for new course development, as well as the sage assessment of courses so that they might be appropriately redesigned and improved. Regarding HIPs in courses, there might be a portion of overlap between this FLC and the High Impact Practices FLC, which is positive for broadening faculty communication and connectivity.

## **2. Advising**

### **Core Values: Accountability & Collaboration**

Although not an official HIP offered by Kuh (2008), we suggest frequent advising as an HIP for CSUDH. It is recognized that a key component to undergraduate student retention relies upon meaningful and frequent advising sessions; Tinto (2012) dedicates an entire chapter to the importance of sound advisement. Student advisement can come in the form of student-employee conversations (where “employee” includes staff advisors and faculty), as well as peer advising. It is the ESS Committee's opinion that a two-pronged advising approach bears the greatest likelihood for sustainable success. The first prong is traditional advisement in formal sessions.

Informal advisement is also greatly encouraged. Indeed, the frequency of advisement is a highly-important factor for the ultimate benefits students reap from advisement. Kuh (2008) artfully describes the importance of sustained advising,

“Advising is no longer a once-a-semester meeting with the person the student hardly knows, but an ongoing set of conversations about issues students are facing in real time.” (p. 14)

With frequent (at least once per semester) formal advisement sessions, students can help ensure that course selections each semester are meaningful, and that they take the most efficacious path through their curricula. The “formal” partner in the advisement may sometimes be University Advisement Center (UAC), but it is critical that faculty in the major also maintain frequent, personal communication with their students. Indeed, we recommended a formalization of Faculty Advisors in the UAC.

### **Faculty Advisors**

A number of years ago on the CSUDH campus, faculty advising fellows worked alongside full-time advisors in the University Advisement Center. This model recognized the professional expertise that disciplinary faculty could bring to encounters with inquisitive students. Equally important, it provided the way to train faculty on university admissions and general education requirements. Faculty advisors brought this broad information back to their respective departments where the information could be disseminated to colleagues and enrich the advising process for undergraduate majors in the department. Faculty advisors received three units of reassigned time per semester for their part-time efforts in the University Advisement Center.

The ESS Committee believes that this broader model of student advisement is superior to the "professional advisors only" implementation which is currently in place in the University Advisement Center. It is useful to have seasoned, full-time advisors employed at the UAC, but there is also a place for at least a modest (2-4) number of part-time faculty advisors. The faculty advisement appointment should be temporary and rotating to maximize faculty exposure to the advisement process.

The reestablishment of faculty advisement in the University of Advisement Center would help to strengthen the all-important link between student success and the regular, sustained advisement that they receive. Tinto (2012) asserts that the majority of transformational experiences students undergo originate in the classroom, which, if true, underscores the importance of student interactions with faculty. It is universally understood that good advising improves student retention, and since faculty have the most routine university contact with students, it is important that faculty be equipped to provide knowledgeable advising. Thus, excellence in advisement should be a tenet of faculty professional development.

An important bonus of frequent advisement is that undeclared students can receive key feedback concerning a narrowing of their potential majors. In this regard, we recommend that

students in the *undeclared* status be subject to “intrusive advising” (i.e., institutionally-initiated, based on monitoring of student performance). We note that it has been the ongoing policy of the UAC to place advisement holds on undeclared majors, and that policy should continue. But the objectives of such intrusive advising should expand beyond helping students register for their next semester’s GE courses.

### **Intrusive Advising**

Educational research has clearly shown that one of the factors for student attrition is the absence of a clear academic purpose (i.e., no declared undergraduate major). Deciding upon the academic major, and an accompanying career, is a daunting task for many undergraduates. Yet it is undesirable for students to complete their first two years of general education coursework and to then be in the position where they are still undeclared.

Tinto (2012) and O’Donnell (2013) adopt the philosophy that the institution has a tangible academic responsibility to admitted students: effectively, “Once we admit them, it is our responsibility to go to great lengths to ensure their success.” This mantra justifies the performance of intrusive advising. For instance, students who have unexcused absences are actively contacted by faculty and/or student affairs as to the reason for the disappearance. At first glance, this level of oversight might seem more suited to secondary school juveniles than college (young) adults, but the psychological impact of such “early warning systems” is genuine; students are less likely to drop out with intrusive monitoring. It is likely there is an underlying reason for the absences, and an intervention could be a useful step for institutions to ultimately improve retention. Such early warning systems were mentioned in the 2009 report, *CSUDH Graduation Initiative: Closing the Achievement Gap (2010-2015)*, using the software program STARFISH.

Intrusive advising could expand into major and career selection, which could involve UAC Faculty Advisors as well as the Career Center. In the abovementioned 2009 report, it was previously suggested that undeclared sophomores should undergo mandatory advising. One of the advisement functions would be to help students reflect upon their interests and explore potential careers. According to the report, each student would complete career exploration surveys known as CAPS (Career Ability Placement Survey) and CISS (Campbell Interest and Skill Survey). These steps seem prudent, and could even be a part of the UNV 101 curriculum. The existing campus Task Force on Advising and the Office of Student Affairs might be in the best position to further consider these implementations.

### **Peer Advisors**

Even in the presence of structured advising—within the offices of faculty and/or the University Advisement Center—a valuable source of information and inspiration for students can be the recommendations of their peers. This well-known relationship was examined by Tinto (2012). The peer-mentor experience can be rewarding for both mentor and mentee. One ESS Committee idea is for sophomore or junior students to voluntarily serve as peer mentors for

undeclared majors and/or students enrolled in UNV 101. Orchestration of this peer mentoring could be a form of **Service Learning**, and is discussed in the following section.

### 3. Service Learning

Core Values: Proactive Partnerships & Respect

In higher educational research, service learning has emerged as a powerful HIP. Dominguez Hills has a strong history of incorporating service learning into coursework, and has been recognized by both the Chancellor's Office and the White House for excellence in this area. Due to the existing campus culture and receptiveness to service learning, the ESS Committee recommends service learning experience for students prior to graduation. Students would satisfy the service learning requirement by successfully completing a course with a service learning component. Across campus, there are a number of courses which currently implement service as a substantial learning modality. Such courses would be ripe for certification and initially populating the service learning course menu. Approved courses could be listed in the Schedule of Classes with an “SL” footnote, just as Writing Intensive courses are currently listed with a “WI” footnote. It is expected that the existing Center for Service Learning, Internships, and Civic Engagement (SLICE) would be instrumental in providing guidance for the acceptance of service learning courses and the “SL” annotation, although we expect that actual course approval would fall under the auspices of a dedicated committee and/or UCC.

Importantly, peer mentorship would also count as service learning. Student credit for mentorship could be coordinated by having mentors enroll in a new course, perhaps numbered and named UNV 301, Peer Mentoring. This course could be credit-bearing, and perhaps reside as an elective within GE Area E. Expectedly, there would need to be established guidelines and expectations for peer mentors, which would be embedded in the UNV 301 curriculum. Perhaps the actual peer mentorship could be the course project within UNV 301; the first portion of the semester could be dedicated to mentor training, and the latter half of the semester would involve service to one or more mentees. The “matchmaking” process could be accomplished within the UNV 101 classroom environment.

The training and oversight necessary for the UNV 301 course would need to be coordinated by a university body: the UAC, Career Center, and/or SLICE, although perhaps some academic departments would choose to undertake this responsibility. Regardless of the overseeing agency, the important aspect is that peer mentorship would be a sustainable and viable HIP for both mentor and mentee.

In summary, service learning would be institutionalized as an upper division HIP at CSUDH. The upper division HIP requirement could either be satisfied by taking a course with the SL footnote (in the Schedule of Classes)—one of which might be UNV 301 (Peer Mentoring)—or by performing undergraduate research.



## 4. Undergraduate Research

Core Value: Rigorous Standards

A strong culture of undergraduate research has blossomed on the CSUDH campus, as evidenced by a steadily increasing number of Student Research Day participants each year. Consistent with the recent establishment of the CSUDH Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (OURSCA) the experience of undergraduates performing research alongside faculty has been widely and transparently recognized as a highly-effective HIP for undergraduate settings. Like the writing intensive (WI) and proposed service learning (SL) designations, it would be valuable to have courses designated for their undergraduate research (UR) content. It is expected that the Office of Undergraduate Research would become the administrative body which evaluates and approves the UR designations for specific courses. Since research requires a level of background knowledge, focus, and discipline, it is expected that most, if not all, UR-designated courses would be upper division courses in the major.

However, the majority of undergraduate research is performed outside the classroom. In those circumstances, students could receive UR course credit from their research advisor within existing departmental 497 (Directed Reading) or 498 (Directed Research) courses (e.g., ENG 497, EAR 498, etc.). Every department has these courses on the books, and they could be automatically annotated with the UR designation. Or perhaps there could be UR transcript notation made as a result of presentation at Student Research Day. This is an administrative topic best suited for OURSCA and/or the Office of Admissions and Records.

### The Big Idea: Summary of Recommended Graduation Requirements Involving High-Impact Practices

Based on extensive research, Kuh (2008) reports university students should be exposed to two or more HIPs during their undergraduate careers: one during the first year, another during a subsequent year (in the major). Accordingly, the ESS Committee recommends **the reinstatement of UNV 101** for freshmen students. This mandatory course, if appropriately recast, can promote academic excellence and stave off student attrition with its cohorted approach, while addressing the important topics of college orientation, study skills, advisement/mentorship, and major selection. This will get first-time students involved in HIPs from the very beginning.

The integration of a second HIP into the curriculum would involve service learning and/or undergraduate research. The ESS Committee recommends that **students would have to successfully complete at least one SL or UR course during their undergraduate careers**. It is expected these courses would be taken after the freshman year. For service learning—particularly peer mentoring activities—the SL course would probably be ideally taken during the sophomore-junior years, while undergraduate research is probably better suited to junior or senior standing. However, exceptions might exist, and the Committee does not feel compelled to

recommend that class standings be enforced; effective advisement (another previously discussed HIP) can probably steer students to the appropriate time of participation.

The establishment of the SL/UR graduation requirements is not intended to be punitive. Rather, the service learning and undergraduate research activities are valued and documented HIPs, and these two activities seem particularly well-suited to the CSUDH culture of civic engagement and hands-on learning. Supportively, O'Donnell (2013) states,

...bringing HIPs to scale doesn't mean inventing them from scratch, or even convincing our colleagues of their merit; we're well beyond that. Instead it means making them visible, credit-bearing, and funded, so they count toward our degrees. It means making them legitimate. (p. 16)

The fact that the SL and UR designations will exist within existing required/elective courses should not hinder timely graduation. Tinto (2012) devotes an entire chapter to the importance of high expectations being set for students; when students are challenged, they rise to the occasion. A service learning or undergraduate research requirement—on top of enforcing existing requirements for Writing Intensive courses—would clearly demonstrate that students being expected to meet a higher academic standard during their undergraduate careers. Kuh (2013) recommends that the merit and completion of HIPs should become an explicit discussion item between advisors and advisees, so that students recognize the high expectations which exist, and the value which is being added to their undergraduate training. An ambitious infusion of HIPs into the undergraduate curriculum can only benefit the success of CSUDH graduates, and service learning and undergraduate research seem to be HIPs that are same particularly well-suited to our campus.

## **Recommendations for Sustainability**

### **Student Success Committee**

Core Value: Collaboration

It is important to keep the student success conversations on-going beyond the limited term of the ESS Committee. To do so, we suggest the formation of a university-level Student Success Committee. This committee would have 2-3 representatives from each college, perhaps being led by a representative from the Faculty Development Center. To jumpstart the process, there might be value in having some ESS Committee members represented on the initial Student Success Committee.

There would be 2-4 meetings of the Student Success Committee per semester. The service of the Student Success Committee would be to consider best practices for student success, and new paradigms for the university. The college representatives might also share feedback and ideas gleaned from colleagues in their respective colleges, and it is expected that they would be able to disseminate ideas to their respective departments. Faculty terms should be

on a 1-2 year basis so that participants have sufficient time to get grounded in the practices, and perhaps experiment with some of them in their own classrooms. Membership should be rotating so that a larger number of faculty have the opportunity to study, contribute and take ownership of campus HIP initiatives.

## **HIPs in the RTP Process**

Core Values: Accountability and Rigorous Standards

To help ensure that HIPs become an established element of CSUDH academics, the ESS Committee recommends explicit acknowledgement of them in the Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) process. The inclusion of the topic would probably fall under the existing “Teaching Effectiveness” section of the Working Personnel Action File. The inclusion might require cooperation with the California Faculty Association for the appropriate scope and tone. The ESS Committee suggests appending one sentence to the existing instructions for the Teaching Effectiveness section, to potentially broaden the spectrum of the narrative:

“Indicate and explain how your classes incorporate High Impact Practices (undergraduate research, service learning, etc.).”

In other words, we are not advocating a new HIP section for RTP files, but rather the addition of this sentence to the existing prompt for Teaching Effectiveness. The Faculty Development Center will need to make strides so that faculty members understand HIPs and their relevance to effective teaching.

## **Assessment**

Core Values: Accountability and Responsiveness

Assessment is an important condition for student success, promoting reflection and improvement for both students and faculty. Assessment must be frequent, early, formative as well as summative. It has been said that to facilitate change, assessment should provide dissonance between what the party thinks they know and what they actually know.

Like any other valued University enterprise, periodic assessment of student success initiatives will be necessary to evaluate their efficacy and make ongoing recommendations to maintain/improve their quality. Entry level quantitative data (i.e., admissions data) should be known for the freshman class and transfer students. Perhaps there is a way to acquire detailed, summative assessment data on the specific role of CSUDH HIPs on student classroom performance and their overall undergraduate experience—this is in the spirit of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Students who complete UNV 101, service learning, and undergraduate research experiences could be polled to determine their self-assessments of the value and impact of these activities upon themselves. Were the learning communities rich enough? Did they HIPs remain omnipresent during the students’ undergraduate careers? Students could also comment on the stimulus of intrusive advisement—was it helpful or antagonistic?

Faculty data for the effectiveness of student success initiatives will also be valuable. Faculty might be directly involved in the implementation of HIPs through their individual instructional practice, as advisors, and through voluntary experiences with FLCs and/or the Student Success Committee. Tinto (2012) argued that faculty were the most vital agents for HIPs, and it will be important to analyze faculty perceptions of the successes and challenges of various student success initiatives.

Naturally, we expect that the institutionalized HIPs will be subject to periodic assessment as part of internal and external (e.g., WASC accreditation) assessment programs. Assessment of these research-supported practices—and the student success initiatives themselves—should be judged favorably by accrediting bodies.

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