Re-imagining the First Year of College at CSUN:  
Matador Momentum Progress Report, February 2017

Website: http://www.csun.edu/matador-momentum
Contact: cheryl.spector@csun.edu

A. Institutional Intentionality

1. Data Analytics: leverage currently implemented platforms, integrate analytics into decision making; expand the scope of analysis to target all populations of students and all segments of student life. Data Champions program rolled out in all academic colleges. Status: well under way.

2. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP): reduce the threshold for continued financial aid to remove unnecessary impediments while maintaining alignment with regulations for SAP. Implementation requested for end of spring 2017 semester. Includes plans to study the impact on persistence graduation. Status: awaiting final approval, Feb. 2017.

3. Review campus communications and support efforts to perform local (department, office, individual) communications makeovers.
   a. Letters to students on probation were revised and sent out in summer 2016. Status: complete.
   b. Letters to students from Financial Aid letters and letters to graduate students on probation revised and sent out fall 2016. Status: complete.
   d. Widely publicize the Undergraduate Studies student advising checklists: laminate them; hang them in the LRC, various labs, other places where students congregate. Update them regularly. Status: under way.

4. Partner with University Marketing to mount a student success campaign: permeate the culture with information about resources to provide support, welcoming, and belonging.
   a. Targeted campaign emphasizing summer degree completion for students within 6 units of graduating. Status: expected to launch in Mar. 2017; awaiting final approval.
   b. Broader campaigns to promote student success for all students. Status: awaiting final approval.


6. Dr. David Yeager gave the February 2017 Terry Piper Lecture at CSUN on “The Psychology of Academic Achievement: How Belonging & Mindset Influence Student Success.” Status: faculty and staff are talking about how to apply his research on campus.

7. Encourage and promote student help-seeking.
   a. Use the Learning Habits work as a springboard. Status: under way.
   b. Consider creating a new webpage (such as www.csun.edu/help) to provide students with easy access to campus resources of all kinds. Status: new idea, Feb. 2017.

8. Incorporate a new pagelet in the student portal to enable single-stop on-campus job-seeking. Status: launched as a portal tab available only to undergraduates in Feb. 2017; next steps: upgrade to a pagelet and extend to graduate students.


B. Curriculum

1. Expand CSUN’s ExCEL program (now used widely in Developmental Math) to other high D/U/F classes such as Math 140). Status: fall 2016 data are promising; request to expand the workshops will go out in early spring 2017.


3. Develop a training course or module on financial literacy; make it mandatory for all students, not just those receiving Financial Aid. Consider embedding it in summer Early Start math and/or writing classes. Consider additional modules dealing with academic integrity and the Career Center’s Pathways. Experiment launched in summer 2016 Early Start math. Status: pending.

4. GI 2025 initiative tapped the Learning Resource Center to take the lead on student success modules. Status: under way.

5. Rename the “undeclared” major as “exploratory.” Status: completed in fall 2016.


7. Develop “meta-majors” (Mata-Majors?) with a well-defined yearlong pattern of courses for new freshmen to prevent “choice paralysis” and encourage timely graduation. Jan. 2017: joined a larger effort shared among several Cal State campuses. Four MM team members participated in a January 2017 CSU Meta-Majors conference (San Francisco). The MM team leader is co-chairing the campus-side meta-majors group (with the AVP of Student Success). Status: preliminary discussion only.

8. Require University 100 (or the equivalent student success class, such as a suite of courses introducing first-year students to discipline-specific research) for all first-time freshmen. Progress will depend on how Meta-Majors are constructed. Status: preliminary discussion only.

9. Develop versions of U100 for first-time transfer students. Status: preliminary discussion only.
C. Faculty and Staff

1. Teach faculty how to help students learn how to utilize faculty office hours for success. Status: ongoing, with presentations and workshops given at several 2016-2017 campus events, and materials posted on the Matador Momentum website.

2. Data literacy campaign to expand the use of data analytics for student success (EAB, Map Works, and Student Success Dashboards). Included as a key part of the 2016-2017 Provost’s Professional Development Series (for chairs, associate deans, deans, and others). Status: well under way.

3. Produce campus resource overviews for faculty and staff including how-to sessions for using the campus early warning system. Status: preliminary discussion only.

4. Dissemination of culturally competent teaching strategies and approaches. Status: May 2016: the Office of Student Success Innovations sponsored a showcase that included this topic. the office of Faculty Development initiated a year-long (AY 2016-2017) faculty learning community on this topic.

5. Disseminate best practices for providing feedback to students that facilitates positive change. Status: this topic was part of the Matador Momentum presentation at the January 2017 Faculty Retreat. Materials are posted on the MM website.


8. Collect and disseminate ways that staff can contribute actively and individually to student success. (Examples: in an elevator, ask students, “what class are you off to?” On the phone, smile, even when answering with your standard office greeting. Participate in OSSl’s CSUN Connects Project.) Possible focus: the importance of respect? Check in with the College of Health & Human Development to see how they’re already doing this. Enlist the help of senior administration to make sure that staff are afforded time to participate in these initiatives where relevant. Status: new idea, Feb. 2017.

   a. RIO workshop sponsored by University Counseling Services
   b. Identifying sources of psychological friction for CSUN students: bringing David Yeager’s work home to our campus.
   c. Publicize Suicide Prevention Training workshops for faculty and staff.

D. Students

1. Reexamine current recommendations for freshman unit loads: 12 units vs. 15 units x 8 semesters = 4-year graduation. Make 15 units the new default; advisors will retain their current authority to recommend or make exceptions. By spring 2017, 16 units were available to all students in good standing at registration. More for freshmen and graduating seniors. Address unit load in the Student Success campaigns. Status: well under way.

2. Reach students with the launch of the “Finish with Fifteen” / “Think 30” units per semester/annually campaign. Status: awaiting final approval.
3. Adapt “My CSUN Bucket List” app, originally unveiled at AppJam 2016. Status: Student Involvement and Development will implement this as a digital list at Grad Fest and for graduating seniors in spring 2017.

4. Financial support for students:
   a. Offer a graduation incentive (free tuition/fees) to students who could finish their degrees in summer 2017 by taking 6 or fewer units. Funding from GI 2025. Status: launching for summer 2017.
   b. Offer a “Pell Plus” micro-grant to help Pell Grant recipients stay on track for graduation. Status: pending.
   c. MataCare emergency grants available to provide temporary financial support to students upon application. Funded by contributions from alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends of the university. Status: implemented in Feb. 2017.

5. Develop a residence hall themed community just for transfer students. Residence Life has approved this in principle. Status: preliminary discussions continue.

6. Enhance the culture of success and “belonging”
   a. Expand and/or replicate the Camp Matador experience. Status: requires additional funding.
   b. Develop a video on belonging for students to include physical, emotional, and academic well-being. Status: under way; currently seeking a new student partner for the project.
   c. Collect and publicize student stories to promote success. Use Portfolium as well as the Matador Momentum website to collect and display the stories. Use the StoryCorps app to help collect the stories. Include responses to “Who at CSUN helped you succeed?” in the stories. Status: new idea, Feb. 2017.


8. Provide a peer mentor or other mentor for every freshman. Status: pilot project for spring 2017, with funding from GI 2025. Mentors have been trained and are reaching out to 145 students identified through MAP Works who are enrolled in 5 gateway courses. Mentors will use the app OrgSync (renamed MataSync) to support their work by exchanging key dates and campus events to be shared with their student mentees.

9. For first-time transfers: develop an online orientation and enhance in-person orientation. Status: offering new in-person orientation dates and times (including Saturday and evenings) in summer 2017. Online orientation requires more funding than is currently available.

10. Include parents in outreach so more FAFSA documents get filed accurately and on time. Target Parent Day (and the College of Education’s “Focus on the Family”?). Status: pending.

11. Consider offering the WPE portfolio course—a last-chance equivalent to the Writing Proficiency free to selected seniors who have satisfied all other remaining graduation requirements. Status: new idea, Feb. 2017.