DATE: April 29, 2010

TO: City College of San Francisco Community

FROM: Dr. Don Q. Griffin, Chancellor

RE: Student Equity and Achievement Gap

As you know, the College has been working towards narrowing the student achievement gap for many years. More recently, debate on the topic heated with the proposed February 2010 Equity Resolution and Student Equity Hearings. All constituencies of the College have been calling into question what more can be done by our faculty, classified staff, and administration, to better serve our diverse student body. Given that student achievement gaps exist nationally, statewide, and locally, we must continue to find new ways to address the issue as well as maintain the successful methods in which we are already engaged.

I initially planned on providing a revised Equity Resolution for the Board’s consideration in April. This revision received many hours of input from the College’s constituencies and various stakeholders. However upon reflection, I have decided to create a special task force to strategically work on the planning and assessment of our intervention efforts, and to assist in the implementation of those plans with the various College divisions and departments. This task force will be prepared to provide regular reports to the full Board and Board committees beginning in June 2010.

Nonetheless, over the last two months we have had more time to reflect and recognize past accomplishments and shortcomings in this area, and identify improvements and plans in Student Services and Academic Affairs that we can implement immediately, or as soon as possible.

The following items have widespread support among campus constituencies and will be implemented immediately, or as soon as possible, in time for the Fall 2010 term, unless indicated below.

A. Student Services

1. Plan for improving student access to financial support
   a. Shortening the length of lines and offering more time-efficient ways for students to get financial aid information
      • Institute alternative methods for students to get answers to questions (such as web-based interactive support, a financial aid phone support line, student ambassadors answering some questions from students in line, etc.)
      • Offer financial aid info/services adjacent to counseling, matriculation and other student services
b. Making the hiring process for students more fair and efficient
   • Significantly shorten the length of time it takes to hire/process student workers in lab and work-study jobs, especially at the beginning of the semester
   • Require that all student jobs be advertised in advance as a condition of receiving lab/work-study funding

c. Removing barriers for AB540/immigrant students to apply for scholarships and on campus jobs
   • Establish a higher percentage of on campus jobs that are paid by stipend or scholarship (as the Associated Students currently does)
   • Begin intensified fundraising efforts for scholarships for AB540 students
   • Review policies in the scholarship office to ensure equal access for AB540/immigrant students

2. Plan for improving access to student services

   I strongly support efforts to combine student services into “clusters” of related services in more centralized locations on campus, including in the new Multi-Use building and in the soon to be vacated space in Cloud Hall and other areas. This priority will also continue on an ongoing basis, as we identify space needs in the immediate and near future.

B. Academic Support / Curricular Changes

1. Plan for improving first-time students access to classes
   • Increase number of seats for first time students in basic skills classes
   • Establish working group to explore and make recommendations regarding priority registration for first semester students from SFUSD and for international students

2. Improving student success in English and Math course sequences

   I will work with the task force and Department Chairs to develop and bring forward a plan for improving student success in the English and Math sequences, especially for students who place into Basic Skills. Such a plan will address the length of the sequences, access to classes, grading options, and placement tests. The proposed plan will be developed before the budget is passed for 2010-2011, so that appropriate resources can be set aside to implement the plan in time for Spring 2011.

Items that are integral to ongoing efforts to eliminate the achievement gap are:

   • Reviewing and updating the College’s State Equity Plan last submitted in March 2005 and continuing to update and refine the annual CCSF Student Achievement Gap and Social Equity Report to inform and guide planning and implementation
   • Continuing support of retention programs such as LSN, APASS, TULAY, PUENTE, African American Achievement, Math Bridge, Bridge to Biotech, MESA/STEM, the WRITE PLACE, etc.
   • Continuing support of faculty professional development activities such as the Basic Skills Faculty Colloquia, DCC sponsored Student Learning Outcomes Workshops, Multicultural Infusion Project, and FLEX. As state funding improves we will increase support for professional development activities in this area
   • Identifying and securing sources of income like the Basic Skills Initiative and Communities Learning in Partnership (CLIP) funding that will assist City College in achieving these goals without taxing our already stretched budget
I believe everyone is committed to narrowing the achievement gap and addressing student equity issues. The plan and process must be one that is continuously developed and referenced as the College moves forward in its decision making processes.

As a College we are committed to, and by implication recognize in our Vision Statement and Strategic Priorities, the critical problem of student equity and the achievement gap. Please join me to make CCSF a leader in narrowing the achievement gap. Addressing student equity and the achievement gap requires engagement, collegiality, compassion, respect, courage, and boldness coupled with educational pragmatism, and a reinvigorated sense of mission and leadership. Above all, let’s focus primarily on student success and achievement, which has always been at the heart of everything we do at City College of San Francisco. I am confident that we will meet this challenge.

Dr. Don Q. Griffin

Chancellor