Summary of Input from *Adviser Voices on Persistence and Graduation* Focus Groups

Participants were divided into two focus groups. Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education, Richard Hughey, and Academic Advising Coordinator for Undergraduate Education, Stacey Sketo-Rosener opened the discussion by presenting to their respective focus groups on the Undergraduate Student Success (USS) Team and success and retention at UCSC . The USS Team will be reviewing student success/retention data and research from both UCSC and external sources going back as far as 2000. In addition to this, they will be soliciting input from a variety of constituents within the university, including through focus groups, such as these. All of the proposed initiatives and ideas will be compiled into one document that will be reviewed by the Success Team and pared down to a small number of high-impact initiatives that are most relevant to UCSC. They also discussed UCSC's retention and graduation rates across a variety of demographics, predicted rates, reasons for attrition, and critical success factors. All of the resources, meeting notes, and working documents for the USS Team are posted at the Success website: ue.ucsc.edu/success.

 The focus groups were asked two questions: 1) *What impedes student success regarding timely progress, student retention, and graduation?* and 2) *What changes would have the most impact on student success?*

The following ideas came out of the discussions of the two focus groups:

1. Offer more classes or spaces in required and foundation courses (including Spanish). This should include offering courses more than once a year.

2. Offer classes at off-times (for student convenience).

3. Develop a campus-wide waiting list policy that is implemented uniformly across campus and can be used to assess demand for classes.

4. Offer more tutoring (peer) to students in first year writing courses, and smaller class sizes.

5. Build in pre-requisites for high F/W/D upper division courses that lower division students take to fill GE requirements. For example, Econ 1 and upper division art history.

6. Consider offering lesser majors for difficult majors such as Econ and PBSci majors.

7. Extend enrollment period from one to two weeks to allow more access to advisors.

8. Refer students who are undeclared or did not make their major to the career center to help assess their interests and strengths to match with our majors.

9. Create a comprehensive program to help students who did not make their major find a new path and become engaged and enthusiastic about it.

10. Reduce bureaucratic hurdles that require students to get quarterly signatures for vet form; declaration form should suffice for vets. Devise a way for these things to be done online.

11. Fix the swap function in the electronic course enrollment.

12. Give students more clear and advanced notification of the reduced financial aid over the summer.

13. Implement more upper division to lower division student mentoring.

14. Do more pre-college testing to figure out optimal career paths.

15. Calibrate expectations/explain the research university setting.

16. Start early - plan for the next step after undergraduate degree.

17. Increased internships and on campus jobs.

18. Advertise 'what UC is' in admissions process. What is the value of the institution for any given student, what will an education at UCSC get them? The culture on the campus (a very unique one) is not always communicated to incoming students.

19. Add a course for incoming students on life skills - how to plan for future, identifying resources on campus. Some of this is being addressed by First Year Experience course set to pilot in Spring, also by a 1-credit course offered through the Career Center course but only 75 spaces are available per year (offered to 25 students each quarter, priority given to seniors).

20. Make sure online resources are present and accessible. Would be nice to have a centralized resource site but that is a complicated concept given the multitude of related but separate sites.

21. Enhance sense of pride, community, and belonging in students, starting by ensuring these are present and visible within and between faculty and staff.

22. Offer workshops on money management and loan repayment, broaden direct contact/education with upper division students.

23. Increase intrusive advising in flagship courses and other areas. (Currently, without placing a formal hold, response rates to departments from students on probation is very low.)