

Campus Retention Workgroup

A quick overview

Why Does Retention Matter?

Political

- Federal scrutiny on retention and time to degree.
- An abandoned proposal from governor tied funding to graduation rates.
- Retention and 4-year graduation are on President Napolitano's radar, too.

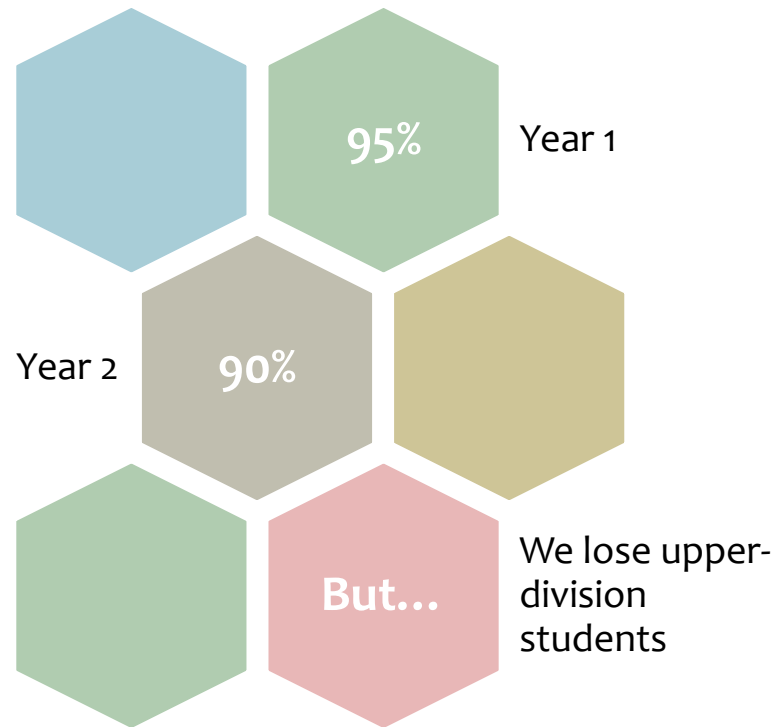
Financial

- Dropouts cost California nearly a half billion dollars per year.
- Huge savings if we really make 4 years the norm.
- Huge savings to students, too, as national education debt reaches new highs.

Social Justice

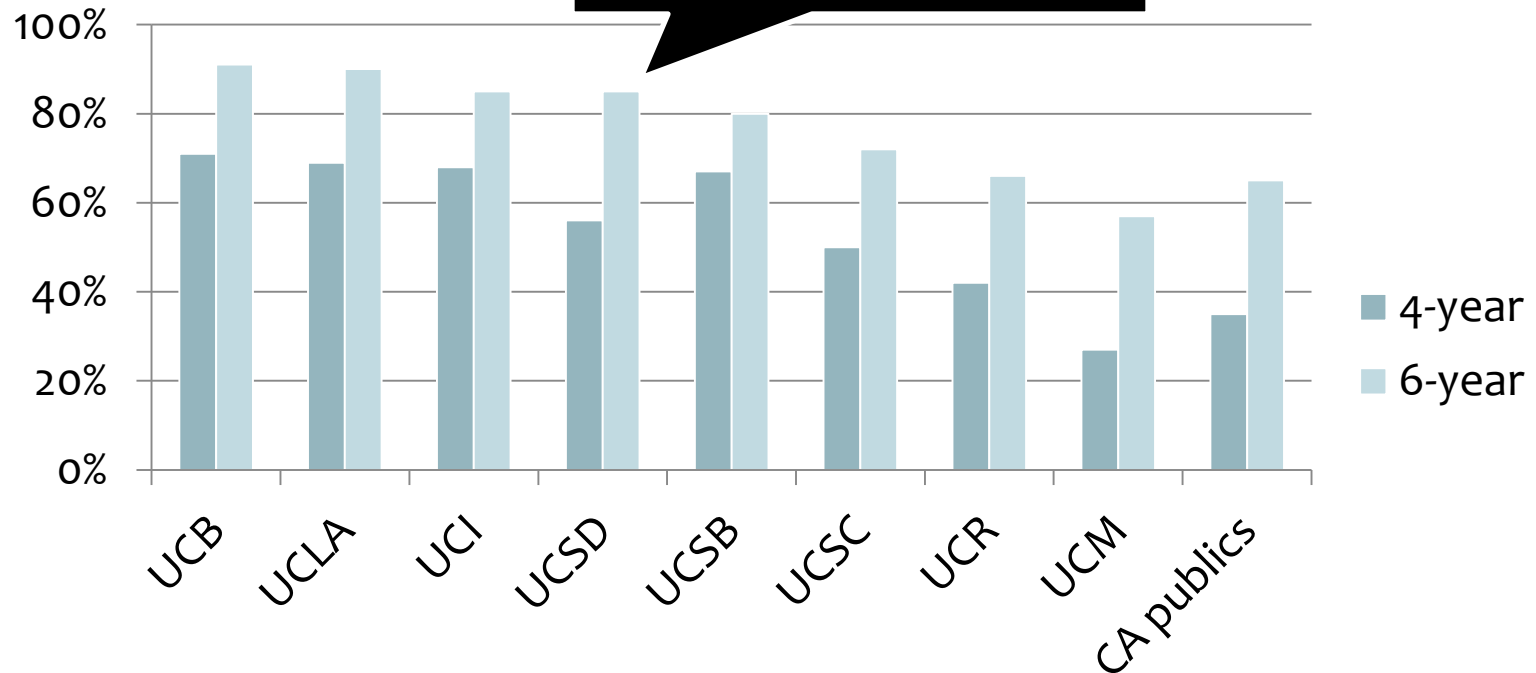
- Persistent differences in outcomes create social inequities

1st & 2nd year retention are great. How can we have a problem?



UCSD graduation rates don't fare well in comparison with our peers

We're 4th overall, and in 5th for 4-year rates!



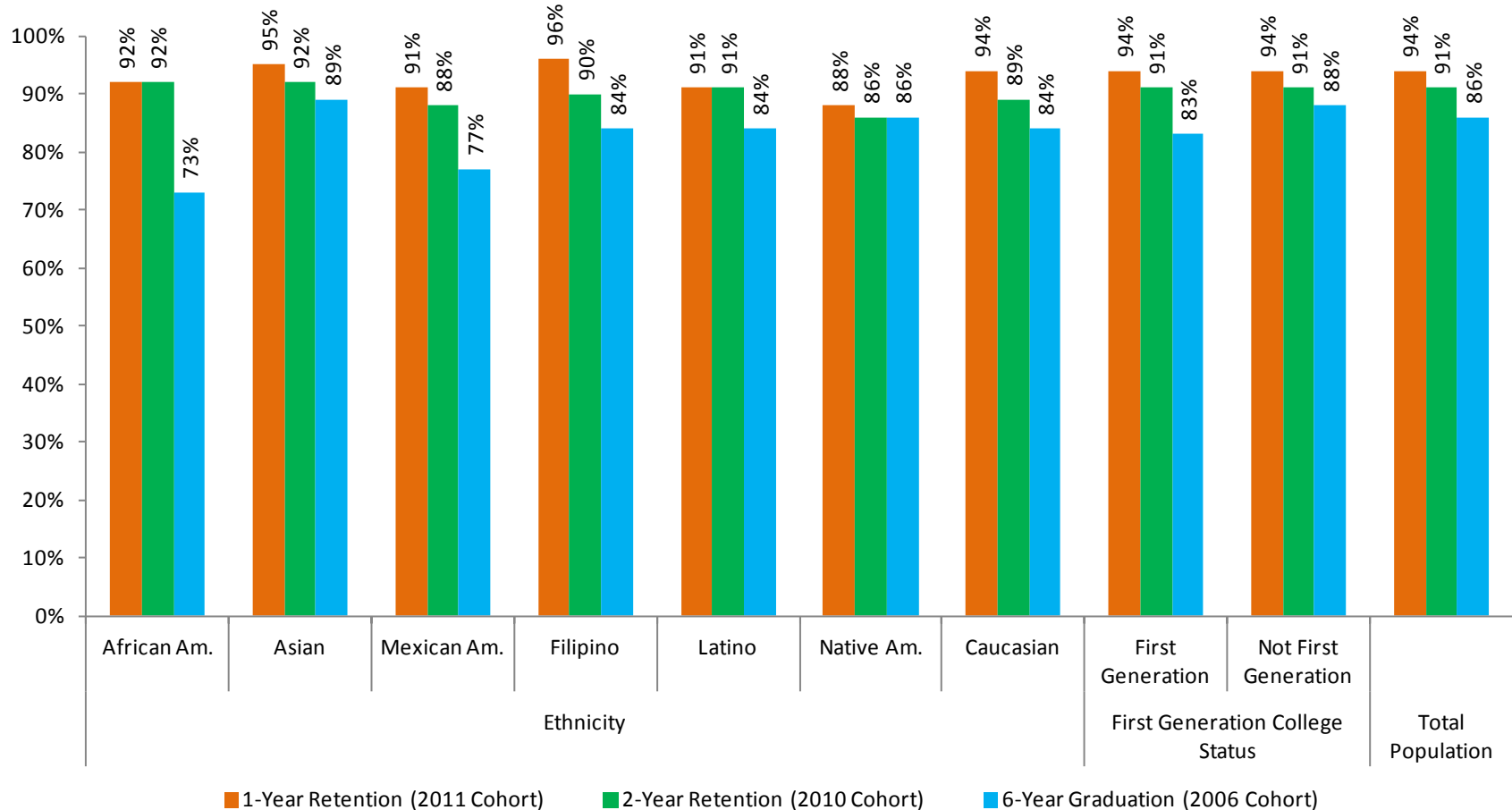
Focusing on student retention

* Multi-strategy approach

- * Campus-wide Retention Summit, 2011
- * Standing Committee on Retention, 2012
- * Focus Group Project, 2012
- * Examining current UC San Diego student data
- * Researching promising practices at peer institutions

Graduation Rates of African American and Mexican American Students are Below the Mean

UCSD Retention and Graduation Rates, First-Time Freshman Cohort



So we put together a focus group to learn about our students

Questions posed to Focus Group Participants:

- What were at least three **challenges** or **barriers** you faced during your first and second years?
- What **proportion of students** like you do you think experience these barriers or challenges?
- What **knowledge** or **strategies** do students need to overcome the challenges and barriers you identified?
- What **changes** can **UC San Diego make** to help students overcome the challenges and barriers you identified?
- What is **currently working at UC San Diego** to help students like you overcome the challenges and barriers you identified?

The planning and execution of the study involved people from across campus.

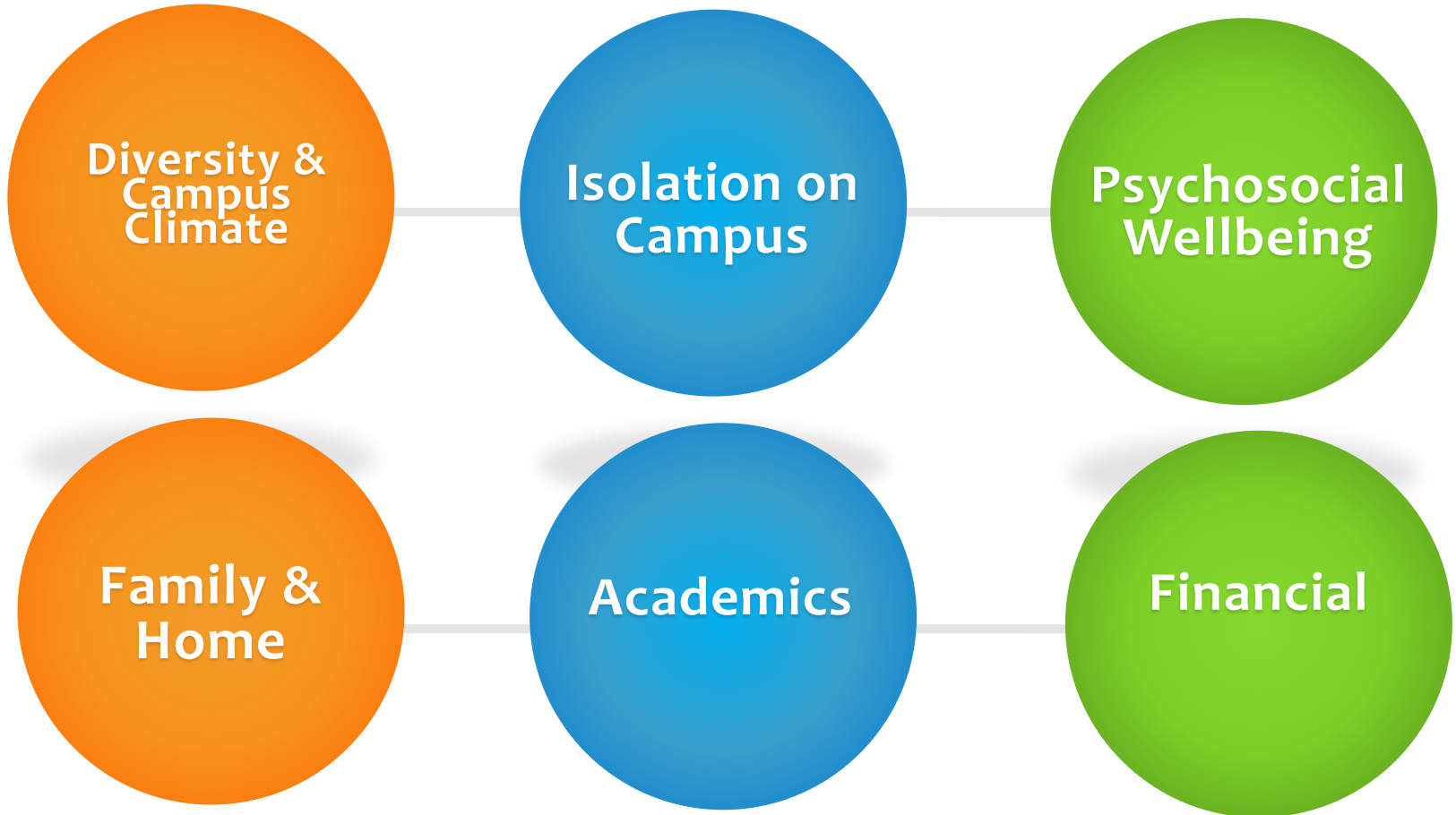
Planning Committee:

- * **Bill Armstrong**, Student Research & Information
- * **Cynthia Davalos**, VCSA
- * **Doug Easterly**, Muir College
- * **Kathleen Johnson**, Academic Affairs
- * **Makeba Jones**, Education Studies
- * **Reina Juarez**, Counseling & Psychological Services
- * **Emily Marx**, Center for Student Involvement
- * **Gennie Miranda**, Jacobs School of Engineering
- * **Gary Ratcliff**, Student Life
- * **Sonia Rosado**, Muir College
- * **Penny Rue**, VCSA
- * **Edwina Welch**, Cross Cultural Center

Facilitators

- * **Frida Alvear**, SPACES
- * **Timothy Borch**, Admissions
- * **Haydee Cervantes**, Chicano/a Arts & Humanities
- * **Veronica Henson-Phillips**, Office of Graduate Studies
- * **Mentha Hynes Wilson**, Marshall College
- * **Anthony P. Jakubisin**, Sixth College
- * **Reina Juarez**, Counseling & Psychological Services
- * **Alejandra Sotelo-Solis**, Center for Student Involvement
- * **Kelly O'Sullivan**, International Center
- * **Agustin Orozco**, OASIS
- * **Patrick Velasquez**, OASIS
- * **Laci Weeden**, Parent & Family Programs

Findings: Six Common Challenges Identified by Students



Family & Home Challenges

Family Pressures: Major expectations, getting married, pressure to come home for family events/ emergencies, fear of family members being deported

First Generation: Explaining college to family, lacking guidance on course of study for career, lack of support of those who've gone before you

Home Sickness

Feeling out place when returning home

Financial Challenges

Having to Work: finding a job, having trouble accessing campus resources because you have to work

Mastering time management

Lack of financial stability

Worried about student loan debt

Diversity & Campus Climate Challenges

Culture Clash: Living with different roommate with different backgrounds, different economic backgrounds adjustments, different than majority culture

Institutional Perception of Minority Status: University not believing in me and my capabilities

Lack of Critical Mass: Faculty, students, Teaching Assistants, general role models

Psychosocial Wellbeing Challenges	Isolation Challenges
<p>Social: Seeing familiar faces, choosing roommates, Finding people who relate to your situation (first generation)</p>	<p>Feeling Alone/ Belonging: Tokenism in the classroom and dorms, Lack of ethnic or racial housing themes, Unfriendly culture</p>
<p>Asking for Help: Learning how to ask for help, feeling overwhelmed</p>	<p>Isolation Off-Campus: Hard to find a place to live where you feel safe, Can't relate to UTC/La Jolla community</p>
<p>Validation: Don't belong here, Not feeling valued or taken care of, I don't matter</p>	<p>Intersectionality: Compounding identities – Race, Sexual identity, Economic class</p>
<p>Anger and Frustration: Overcoming anger, Feeling frustrated at the system/ bureaucracy</p>	

Academics Challenges

Studying: Knowing how to study, how to find study groups, starting with bad academic habits

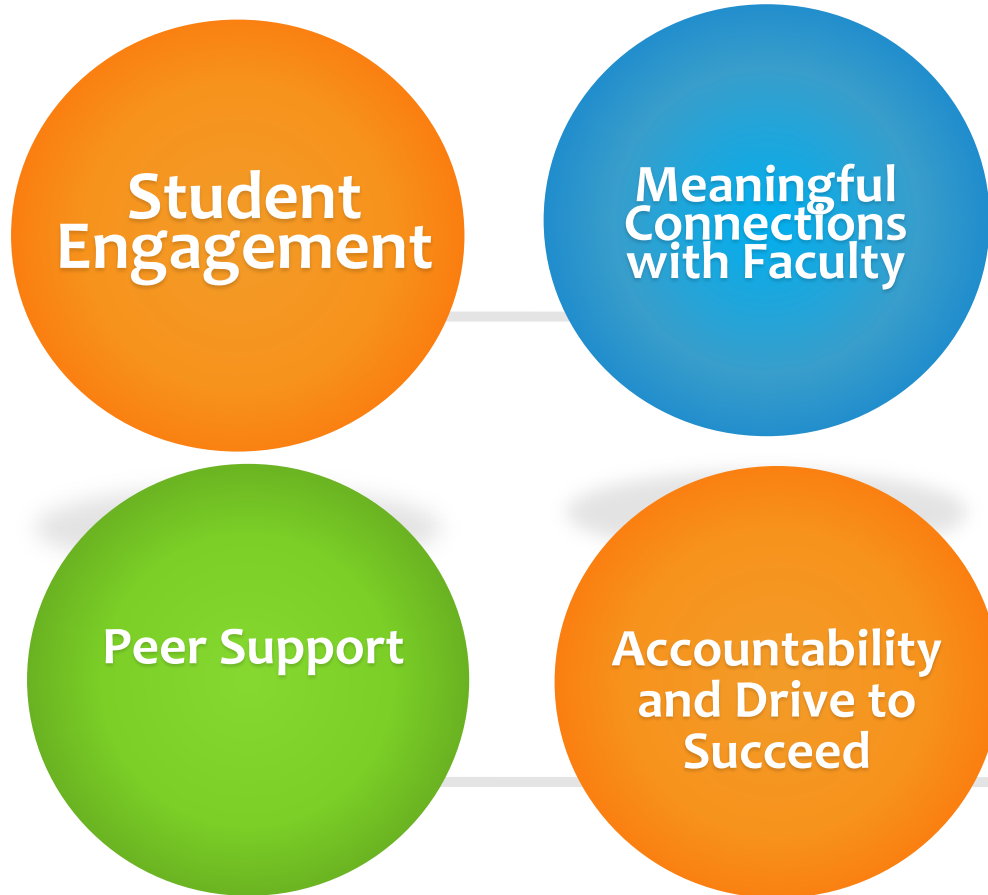
Professors/ TAs: No faculty mentors of color, not being able to relate with you

Academic Rigor: Lack of help with transition from lower division to upper division, lack of prior academic prep, quarter system too fast

Classroom Dynamic: Competition within the classroom, huge class size, grading curves

Support: Don't know who to ask for help, academic advisors not approachable, Lack of peer support

Themes in a similar qualitative study



Palmer, R.T., Maramba, D.C., and Holmes, S.L. (2011). A contemporary examination of factors promoting the academic success of minority students at a predominantly white university. *Journal of College Student Retention*. 13(3) 329-349.

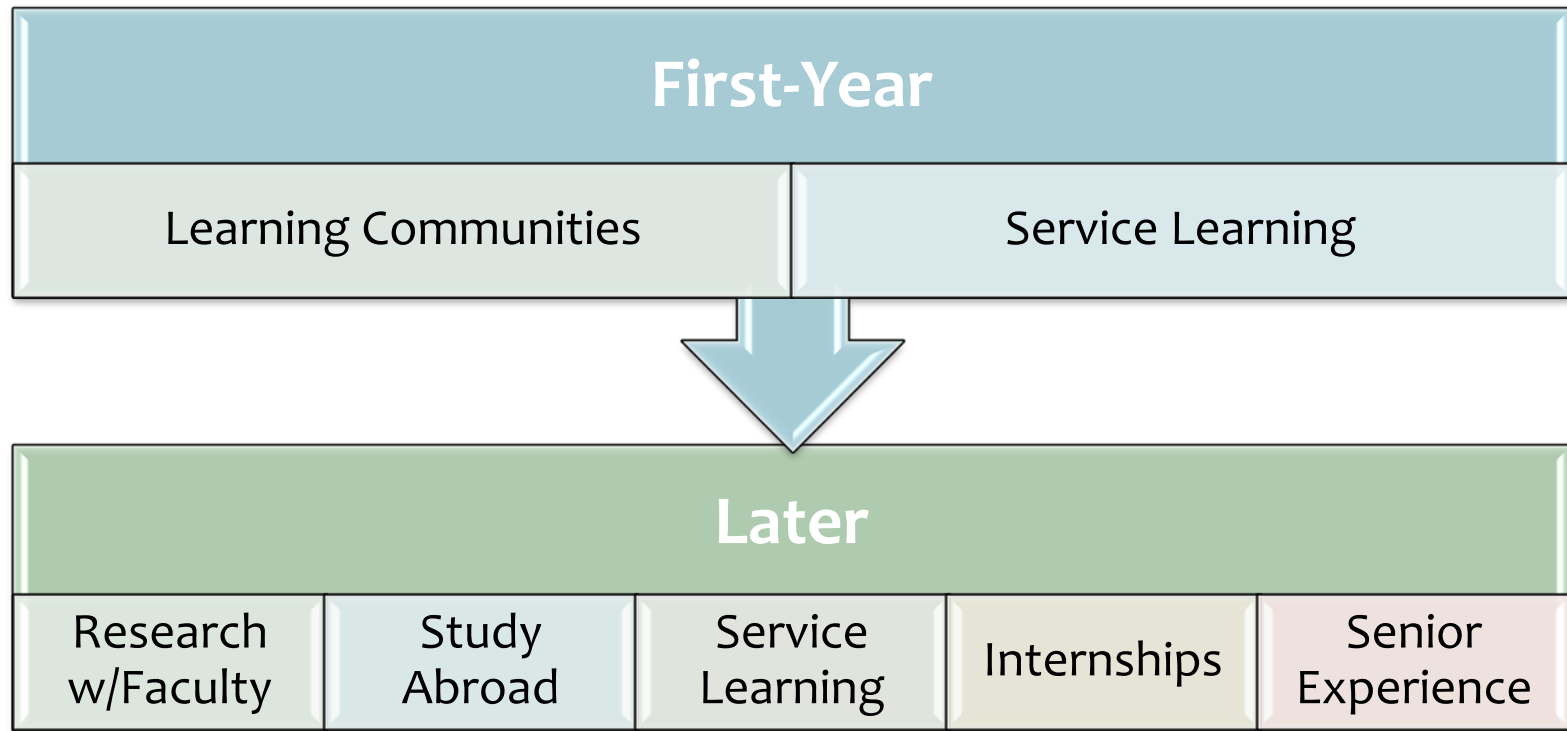
ACTION STRATEGIES FRAMEWORK

Advice for Students from Students	What Students Ask of Instructors	What Students Ask of UC San Diego	What Students Say Works
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find comfortable spaces • Join SPACES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show appreciation so that you stay here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater diversity representation in students, faculty, & staff • Increased outreach • Recruit more diverse population • Admit more students of color (specifically AA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community centers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get involved in organized activities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of faculty of same background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSU Overnight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join multi-cultural organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage validation from department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More activities that promote diversity • Cross-cultural experiences • More cultural awareness weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural organizations • MECHA • SAAC

Moving from research to actions & strategies

- * **Identifying challenges**
- * **Beginning a dialogue**
- * **Identifying partners empowered to make changes**
 - * Faculty
 - * Advisors
 - * Student Affairs Staff
- * **Testing out and evaluating new support efforts**
 - * Teaching changes
 - * Policy changes
 - * Service changes

We know that high-impact practices can improve retention & achievement (Kuh, 2008)



References

- * Bowen, W.G., Chingos, M.M., & McPherson, M.S. (2009). *Crossing the finish line: Completing college at America's public universities*. Princeton University Press. Princeton, NJ.
- * Gonzalez, K.P. (2009). *Using data to increase student success: A focus on diagnosis*. Achieving the Dream. Silver Spring, MD.
- * Kuh, G.D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: What they are and why they matter*. Association of American Colleges and Universities. Washington, D.C.
- * Tinto, V. (2010). From theory to action: Exploring the institutional conditions for student retention. In *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 51-89). Springer Netherlands.