

Access to Excellence: Domain #1: Assuring Access.

CAFES Open Forum: Wed., Feb. 14, 2007; 1-2 p.m., 11-210.

Domain Leaders: Bob Flores, Tom Rice

Participants: John Harris, Sue Tonik

Agenda and Comments

1. Opening remarks

Domain 1. Assuring Access (CSU web site excerpt)

1. Encouraging improvement in P-12 students' academic preparation and eliminating the achievement gaps among different groups of students

a. Encouraging students to consider the option of going to college early in their academic careers.

i. Delivering comprehensive advising about getting to college, beginning in middle school.

ii. Seeking the help of networks of campus supporters - parents and family, alumni, community leaders, internship providers - in doing this.

2. Addressing the needs of special learners, as through adaptive technology.

3. Making the pathway to CSU from community college apparent, and removing barriers to transfer and success.

4. Ensuring that campus and system policies work in support of access.

2. Comments from Feb. 14, 2007 participants:

a. Continue use of Ag. Ambassadors as “outreach” to high schools and community colleges. Expand Ag. Ambassador outreach to include middle schools.

b. Consider adding agricultural science and environmental science teaching modules for use by K-12 teachers as links to the CAFES web site. One other example is the MESA program competitions in soil science.

c. Continue to make the CAFES department and college admission requirements available to high school and community college faculty advisors.

d. Increase access to the campus farm for visits by K-12 students to give these young students an idea of the nature of local agriculture operations and the CAFES involvement in agriculture.

e. Continue to foster the relationship between CAFES and Cuesta College in the Ag. Tech. program.

f. Help to develop an interest in agriculture by student leaders in Vo. Ag., FFA, 4H and science courses. Use peer mentoring, as appropriate.

g. Continue to encourage under-represented groups in agriculture and environmental science curricula. MAP Center is one example on campus and MESA is an example program located off campus.

Forum Follow-up: Each Domain committee will develop one or more Proposition/Action/Implementation Ideas statement for their Domain.

Comments from students working with Robert Flores (16 Feb. 2007)

1.) The comment about the Ag Ambassadors says something about the power of having CAFES students serve in a welcoming and encouraging capacity. Extending ag ambassadors to make on-site visitations is a good step, however, it will be difficult to achieve without resources. Developing a school visitation kit that includes a DVD presentation by our students could add to a presentation by faculty when students are not able to miss classes to go to schools.

2.) Develop a schedule that identifies specific dates for Cal Poly visits by schools. We might be able to host them without taxing existing resources if we formalize a plan that each department accepts. Too many students believe that college is not for them, especially first-generation college students. Getting them on campus is critical in breaking a perceived barrier.

3.) Strengthen CAFES relationship with students studying agriculture in high schools. There are 65,000 students enrolled in agriculture classes in California, and the number has grown steadily over the past several years. Our college should take advantage of this captive audience who have already expressed an interest in agriculture. Attendance by faculty at local and regional functions/activities is a start. CAFES hosts a reception each summer for ag teachers when they come to campus. It has been well-received. We need faculty to be present in greater numbers.

4.) Enhance the website resources to streamline information available to potential students and their parents. This may involve coordination of content to eliminate a mixed message. In other words, admission info relevant to the college, along with any other advice should be found in the same location/format at the college and departmental websites. It should mirror information posted by the admissions office and should be updated regularly.

5.) Get newsletters and other college materials in the hands of teachers, counselors, and administrators. Too much misinformation is being delivered to potential students by the school personnel. For instance, several current CAFES students have commented that they were encouraged by counselors to apply to other majors because there is not a future in agriculture. More success stories about our students need to be written and shared. Careful targeting to share with high school alum successes while at Cal Poly would certainly open some minds.

6.) Get our CAFES alumni engaged in college visits. They need to be prepared to serve as our ambassadors. They are the real success stories that need to be shared. They need to commit to visiting high school and/or middle school classes to tell students about wonderful employment possibilities for college graduates.