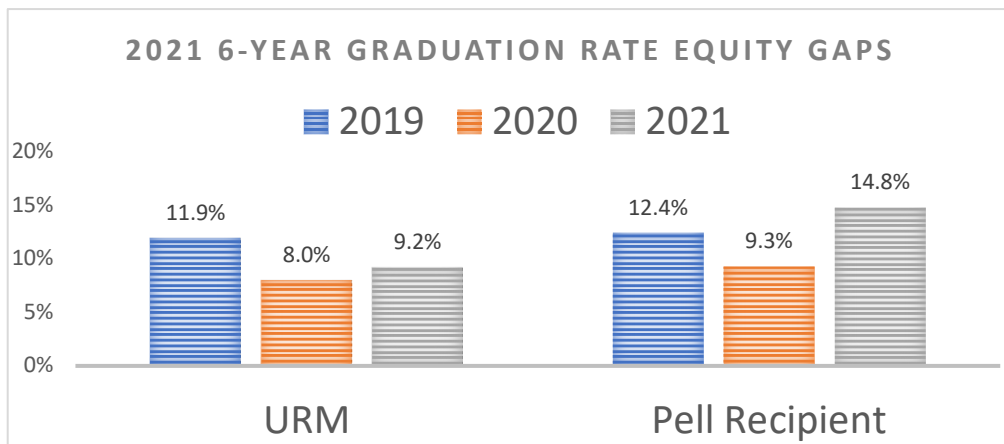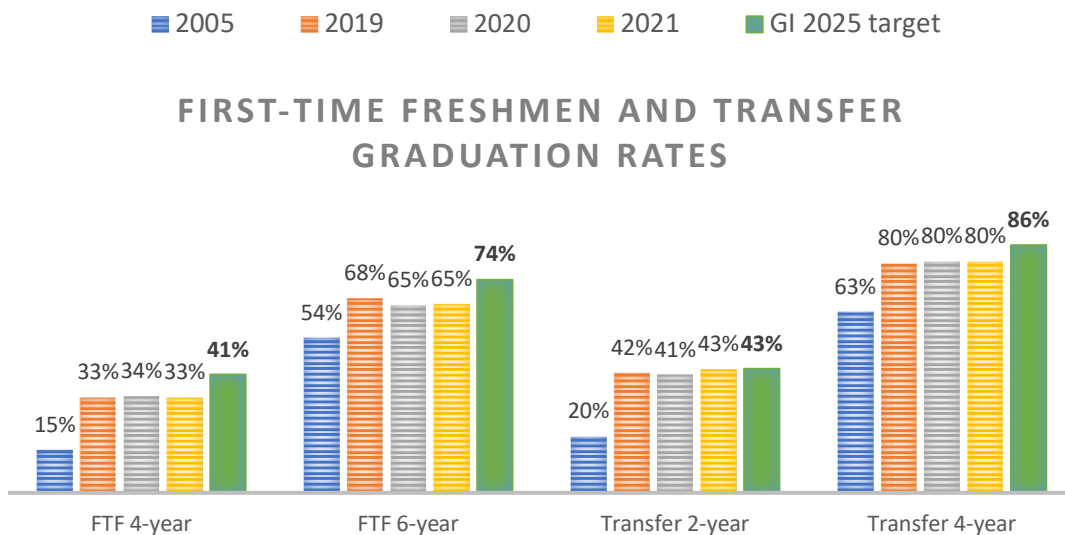# Graduation Initiative Advisory Team
Annual Report to Senate, May 2022

Charge: The Graduation Initiative Advisory Team coordinates and advances campus efforts to serve students in making timely progress to a high quality, meaningful undergraduate degree. We do this through intentional and data-driven efforts to improve learning environments and to identify and remove barriers to student success.

Current GI 2025 Metrics: Rising Graduation Rates and Persistent Equity Gaps

Chico state's graduation rates remain strong. In fact, our 2019 transfer cohort achieved our GI 2025 two-year graduation rate goal of 43%, the first of our targets reached. Unfortunately, we did not make progress in closing graduation rate equity gaps; both URM and Pell six-year graduation rate equity gaps grew in 2021, as shown below. The pandemic disruptions no doubt contributed to this growth, but we know that longstanding systemic problems bear most of the responsibility for our failure to serve these students equitably.

Advancing Equity Project 2021-22: Focus on the First Year

In May 2021, President Hutchinson charged the Graduation Initiative Advisory Team Co-Chairs with leading an intensive campus-wide effort to close the equity gaps in Chico State's graduation rates for underrepresented minority, low income, and first-generation students. In summer 2021, the Co-Chairs, a planning team of faculty and staff, and Institutional Research staff conducted 10 weeks of data analysis, consultation with campus equity experts, and review of relevant research to identify areas for action and further inquiry to make immediate progress on this charge.

Campus data analysis showed that first-term academic success is the most powerful predictor of our students' likelihood of graduating within six years. For that reason, the team narrowed its focus to first-year success for first-time freshmen. The resulting Advancing Equity Plan 2021-22 was the sole focus of the Graduation Initiative Advisory Team's work in 2021-22. Regular meetings were devoted to updates from the teams, coordination across the two main action areas, and data and research sharing.

The Advancing Equity Plan focuses on two major Action Areas, enacted by seven cross-divisional Action Teams. An additional four Inquiry Teams conducted further research and consultation to make recommendations on additional areas of potential impact. Every member of the Graduation Initiative Advisory Team served on one or more Advancing Equity teams (or on the Tipping Point planning team). Additional campus personnel were recruited to serve on Advancing Equity Teams relevant to their areas of campus activity and expertise. In all, the teams included 68 faculty and staff representing four divisions. A full list of team rosters can be found on the GI Advisory Team website.

Action and Inquiry Teams

Action Area 1: Close equity gaps and improve pass rates in high enrollment, high DFW 100- and 200-level courses.

> **Team I.A:** Analyze impact of small classes in high DFW courses and make recommendations for sustained funding of smaller classes in critical courses.
>
> **Team I.B:** Assess high DFW courses for URM, Pell and first-gen students' sense of belonging and develop relevant interventions
>
> **Team I.C**: Engage a multidisciplinary group of faculty to develop strategies, including policy considerations, for improving equitable grading practices.

Action Area II: Create a seamless experience of engagement and navigation for first-time freshmen from Intent to Enroll through the first year.

> **Team II.A:** Develop and assess a plan to meaningfully engage students and families from decision to enroll through Census.
>
> **Team II.B:** Institute inclusive, mandatory, and accessible Orientation.
>
> **Team II.C:** Revise first-year advising practices, beginning with Orientation, to eliminate inconsistent advice and achieve defined learning outcomes.

Team II.D: Leverage campus mentoring programs to assign a peer mentor/coach to each incoming student not in a formal support program for sustained help with campus navigation.

Inquiry Area I: Learning Support
- What are the most effective learning support programs for high DFW courses (SI, embedded tutors, etc.)?
- How do we ensure that students access these supports equitably?

Inquiry Area II: Policy Reviews
- Are there academic and financial policy changes that can improve retention and success of URM, Pell, and first-gen students?
- Consider fee timing, academic scheduling and deadlines, academic probation, etc.

Inquiry Area III: Block Enrollment
- Could block enrollment improve first-year success, especially for students needing developmental QR support?
- If so, how should it be implemented?

Inquiry Area IV: Early Alert
- How can we understand our students' academic challenges early enough to be able to address them in time for a successful semester?
- What technologies might assist in this effort?

The Action Teams were encouraged to have an action orientation; that is, to *enact* equity-oriented improvements to campus activities wherever possible, even while pursuing additional understanding of challenges and potential innovations.

Accomplishments in the 2021-22 year include:
- The 4th Annual Tipping Point Student Success Summit in January 2022 provided an opportunity for the greater campus to engage with and contribute to Advancing Equity priorities.
- Funding for reduced class sizes and embedded learning support was provided to high DFW/high equity gap courses in spring 2022.
- Faculty in two departments with critical courses held semester-long course-specific FLCs on equitable teaching practices.
- On March 24, the Academic Senate approved changes to the FPPP to include equity-related teaching practices and efforts to close equity gaps as evidence of teaching effectiveness in the RTP process.
- A campus-wide convening in April brought together campus leaders and practitioners who engage with students and their families from the decision to enroll through first-term census. Facilitated by CSU Assistant Director of Student Success Dr. Cynthia Alvarez, this event reviewed student survey data and identified high-impact practices for better engaging the students and families we serve now.
- On May 5, the Academic Senate approved at Introduction the immediate language change from "Academic Probation" to "Academic Notice" in all University communications. If approved on

May 12, this change will remove problematic associations that can further inhibit sense of belonging for underrepresented students.

- Regional and Continuing Education is offering 13 "Summer Boost" sections of high DFW/High Equity gap courses in summer 2022 for quick unit recovery at no cost to eligible students (URM, Pell eligible, unsuccessful in the course in the past three semesters). Data show these courses have a very high pass rate for students repeating them in the summer; this program removes the cost barrier to enrolling in them.
- Summer Orientation 2022 will employ a more equitable fee structure, embed a student needs intake survey, and include an EDI-oriented presentation as the first experience in each Orientation session.
- A set of common learning outcomes for more coherent and comprehensive first-year academic advising has been drafted and will be embedded in Summer Orientation 2022.

CSU Equity Goals and Priorities

In November 2021, The CSU Office of the Chancellor released a new charge to the CSU campuses in its Graduation Initiative 2025 Equity Goals and Priorities. These priorities align quite well with the Advancing Equity Plan but have added complexity and volume to the teams' work. Relevant team members join in regular meetings with Chancellor's Office leads for each priority. The prior formation of the Advancing Equity Plan and teams has afforded us a running start on these priorities.

Campus GI 2025 Allocations and Investments

2021-22 GI 2025 Base Funding: $3,593,000

Academic Affairs: $1,809,309
- 7 College-based Academic Advisors
- 7 Tenure-track hires
- ESAT Awards
- Advancing Equity Project staff support
- Study Abroad Scholarships
- Library staff and student employees
- IEGI COIL ongoing funding

Business and Finance: $278,200
- Human Resources and Financial Services staff

Student Affairs: $598,594 (+ Basic Needs & Wellcat Services: $1,026,000)
- Academic Advising Programs: 2 SSP Advisors, reclassification of SSPIV to Admin II, AVP salary analysis
- Admissions: Evaluator I, Diversity Recruiter *(new position)*
- Registrar: ASC I vacancy previously funded by GI2025
- Accessibility Resource Center: SSP III
- EOSP: SSP III

- Student Life & Leadership: SSP IB Orientation

Information Technology: $876,997
- 2 IR Research Technicians
- 1 Analyst Programmer
- 1 ITC
- Salesforce, HighPoint costs and support

University Advancement: $29,900

2021-22 GI 2025 One-Time Funding (may be used 2021-22 and 2022-23):

Initial Allocation: $1,625,000
- Support for High DFW/high equity gap 100- and 200-level courses
- Equity-related academic department funding
- Faculty and staff advising professional development
- Cross-divisional advising paraprofessionals
- Senior fee support
- Summer Orientation cost offset
- Summer/winter session grants
- Expanded peer mentoring
- Tipping Point Student Success Summit
- Early Alert development
- Equity-related recruitment/outreach
- Technology innovation/support for substitutions and fee waivers
- Action and Inquiry team support

Faculty Professional Development and Equal Opportunity Practices: $400,000
- Equity-related FDEV faculty release time and FLCs
- FDEV equity- and anti-racism-related guest speakers and workshops
- Temporary TLP ITC

CSU Equity Priority 2 (Summer Session): $425,000
- Funding 13 Summer Boost sections of high DFW/High Equity gap courses for unit recovery at no cost to eligible students

Looking Ahead

The Action and Inquiry Teams have recently submitted their reports and recommendations to the Advancing Equity Plan Co-Chairs, who are currently reviewing them. From these reports the Co-Chairs will produce a comprehensive summary and set of recommendations to be presented to Cabinet by the end of the academic year. These will include recommended priorities for any potential 2022-23 GI 2025 funding as well as the extension or reconfiguration of existing Action Teams and potential new action areas. We anticipate a major focus on (1) disseminating and implementing identified best practices for

equity-minded first-year onboarding, advising, and teaching; (2) developing relevant metrics and assessment processes for recommended innovations; and (3) the establishment of a regular student consultation and feedback process. We also recognize the need for increased cross-divisional prioritization in the areas of technology, personnel, and project management.

We are grateful for the enormous contributions of our faculty, staff, and administrative partners who have made this a genuinely collaborative endeavor through the contributions of their time, passion, expertise, and good will. In a difficult and exhausting year, we asked our colleagues to do even more. It is a testament to their commitment to our students that so many said yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate McCarthy, Dean of Undergraduate Education
Kaitlyn Baumgartner Lee, AVP for University Advisement
Co-Chairs, Graduation Initiative Advisory Team and Advancing Equity Project

2021-2022 Graduation Initiative Advisory Team

Executive Leadership
Debra S. Larson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Tom Rios, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs

Co-Chairs (selected from committee membership)
- Kate McCarthy, Dean of Undergraduate Education (Provost designee)
- Kaitlyn Baumgartner Lee, AVP for University Advisement (Vice President for Student Affairs' Designee)

Members

Academic Leadership
- Kate McCarthy, Dean, Undergraduate Education (Co-Chair)
- Marianne Paiva, Chair of the Academic Senate

Enrollment Management and Business Processes
- Michael Dills-Allen, University Registrar
- Kentiner David, Director, Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Anna Magaña, Director, Student Financial Services

University Diversity Committee (selected by the University Diversity Committee, two members, may serve as both the UDC rep and in another role on the Team)
- Michelle Morris, Interim Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- Teresita Curiel, Director, Latinx Equity and Success, UDC Representative

Academic Advising
- Kaitlyn Baumgartner Lee, Assistant Vice President for University Advisement (Co-Chair)
- Kylee Sharp, College Advising and Retention Specialist

Faculty (appointed by college chairs)
- Celina Phillips, College of Agriculture
- Holly Nevarez, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
- Mitch Casselman, College of Business
- (vacant), College of Communication and Education
- Zahrasalat Alavi, College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management
- Erin Kelly, College of Humanities and Fine Arts
- Jeff Bell, College of Natural Sciences
- William Cuthbertson, Meriam Library

Academic Dean (appointed by the Provost)
- Blake Wentz, Dean, College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management

Student Life
- Mary Wallmark, Director, Student Life and Leadership

- Shawn Ryan, Program Coordinator, Orientation and New Student Programs, Student Life and Leadership

Academic Support and Innovation
- Sue Peterson, Director, First-Year Experience program
- Chiara Ferrari, Director, Faculty Development
- Dawn Frank, Director, Student Learning Center
- Cecilia Santillan-Robles, Director, Early Outreach and Support Programs
- Darnell Lee, Chico Student Success Center Representative

Technology and Data
- Kathy Fernandez, Academic Technology Officer
- Thomas Rosenow, Interim Director of Institutional Research
- David Rowe, Director of Enterprise Applications

Administrative Support
- Diane Ramalia, UED Administrative Support Coordinator
- Brandi Aranguren, Manager, UED Strategic Initiatives & External Resources