

Essay IV: Serving the Needs of the North State

Believing in the value of service to others, we will continue to serve the educational, cultural, and economic needs of Northern California.

CSU, Chico has articulated service as a fundamental tenet of identity and strategic plan. It emphasizes not only the obligation of service, but also the value of service to others in defining individual and institutional character. Embedding a regional orientation into its daily campus life and connecting its work to the needs and quality of a democratic society enacts a powerful affirmation: Chico is an American university, and it is *the University of the North State*.

The service area of CSU, Chico covers 32,200 square miles, or approximately 21 percent of the State of California, with a resident population of about 740,000, which is approximately 2 percent of the state's total population. Addressing the needs and interests of a population spread across such a large rural segment of the state is a significant challenge. CSU, Chico has sought out opportunities for partnerships and alliances to focus on those needs and continues to provide programs and services to the citizens throughout the region. In so doing, the University has become the North State center for intellectual, cultural, and athletic activities as well as a center for life-long learning.



Internships, Experiential, and Service Learning Programs and Student Organization Services Activities

Service Learning Programs

Student engagement within the region takes many forms but few are rated as highly by students themselves as their participation in various forms of service learning. Community Action Volunteers in Education ([CAVE](#)), a student-run nonprofit agency has been a program of the Associated Students since 1966. More than 2,000 Chico State students each year find both meaning and learning opportunities while providing over 60,000 hours in more than 20 programs serving children, the elderly, special populations, adult non-readers, English as a Second Language learners, low-income residents in the Chico area, or in programs serving state parks and institutions throughout Northern California. Each semester, at least three dozen classes have a component of service learning built into them, and many students simply volunteer to provide services without a class requirement.

Figure 4.1 shows the number of student placements through CAVE over the past five years. Student volunteering has a very positive economic impact on our region. Students have volunteered over 260,000 hours during the past five years with an economic impact estimated at \$4.5 million.

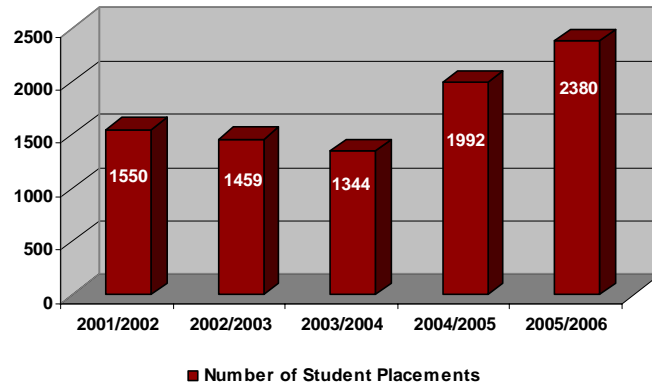
California State University, Chico was one of 10 colleges or universities in the United States named recently as finalists to the [President's Higher Education Community Service Award for Excellence in General Community Service](#). More than 500 schools submitted entries to receive the award.

Experiential Education and Internships

Students seeking more formal opportunities to engage in experiential learning related to their major often choose an internship. The Office of Experiential Education ([OEE](#)) has formed partnerships with business and government that enable students to gain academically related work experience prior to graduation. Thus students can blend theory with practice while they also make a contribution to the organizations within the region. Internships are a subset of the larger Cooperative Education Program (co-op) administered by the OEE. Co-op positions are paid and can be full or part time. At the bachelor's level the programs of Agricultural Business, Organizational Communication, Journalism, Nursing, Dietetics,

Figure 4.1

Community Action Volunteers in Education Placements



Political Science, and Recreation require internships for graduation. Most other programs encourage, but do not require, an internship. Each year 1,800-2,000 students are placed with nearly 450 companies or agencies, and many co-op students receive permanent job offers from the companies participating in the program.

As one example of the co-op program, senior-level nursing students, registered nurses, and re-entry professionals can participate in the Rural California Nursing Preceptorship ([RCNP](#)) program. This allows students to evaluate the benefits and career options in rural health, make a contribution to the people of the region, and gain clinical experience before graduating.

Student Organizations Providing Service

Some organizations are founded on the notion of service activities, such as [Scour and Devour](#), a student group whose mission is campus and community cleanup projects. The Campus Legal Information Center ([CLIC](#)) provides free advice and information to those who cannot afford to hire a lawyer, and the [Safe Ride](#) organization takes people home who should not drive. Many student organizations have service activities as an integral part of their mission. For example, fraternities and sororities provide a variety of services within the community. They regularly organize and donate countless gallons of blood to the local blood bank, collect and donate large amounts of food to local homeless shelters or food banks, donate formal dresses to high school students who cannot afford them for their prom dances, put on the annual major fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Club, and host booths in the Fun Without Alcohol Faire. The [Society of Ag Managers](#) donates many hours of time and energy to Farm City Week activities. In 2005–06 the Women’s Center presented or co-sponsored 28 educational events for over 15,000 women participants regarding personal safety, health, and socio-cultural concerns. These are but a few of the many ways that students contribute to the community and region through organized clubs.

Serving as the North State Center for Intellectual, Cultural, Athletic, and Life-long Learning Activities

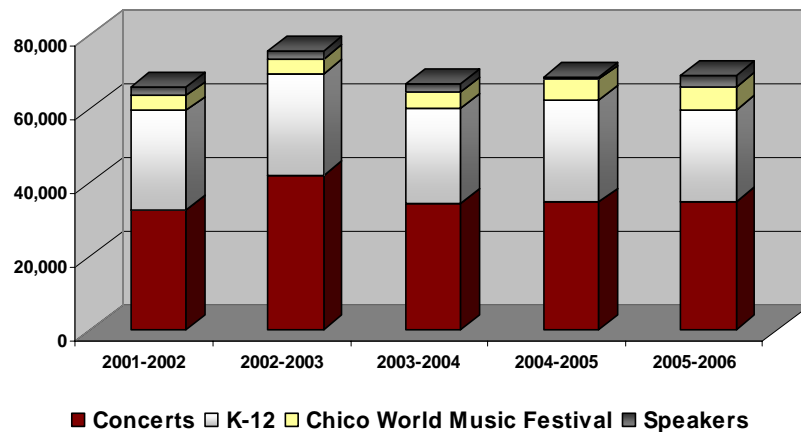
North State Center for Intellectual Activities

The University supports a program of visiting professors from various parts of the nation and world who come to teach at Chico. A large and varied set of lecture series bring knowledge and experience to the region on a wide range of topics. The [Anthropology Forum](#) addresses issues in both cultural and physical aspects of the study of man. The Center for Applied and Professional Ethics ([CAPE](#)) sponsors public lectures and panel discussions on topics of ethical importance and serves as a link between the University and the professional community in Northern California. The [On the Creek Lecture Series](#) educates and facilitates discussion on vital ecological and stewardship issues for the North State and beyond. The [Museum Without Walls](#) is a series sponsored by the Northern California Natural History Museum at CSU, Chico, and the [President’s Lecture Series](#) has featured a number of Nobel Peace Prize winners in recent years. [The Humanities Center](#) sponsors several ongoing series, including the [University Film Series](#), [Symposia/Tertulias](#), and [Gallery Exhibitions](#).

North State Center for Cultural Activities

The University is a focal point in the North State for artistic and cultural activities. [Kaleidoscope](#), CSU, Chico's Arts Magazine annually illustrates the rich calendar of events that bring people to campus. [Chico Performances](#) sponsors professional performers ranging from local to international in origin and features prominent speakers, singers, musicians, dancers, actors, and other artistic performances. In 2005–2006 fifty two evening performances drew a combined audience of over 40,000. Twenty-six separate performances featuring many of the same artists enriched the lives of over 25,000 children from Chico and surrounding communities. The Chico World Music Festival was attended by another 6,000 people and provided two dozen master classes, lecture demonstrations, and workshops experienced by 500 people.

Figure 4.2
CSU, Chico Event Attendance



The [School of the Arts](#), within the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, sponsors performances by students and faculty which reflect the richness of the arts curriculum, including Choral Union, Jazz X-Press, the Off Broadways, Opera Workshop, Performance Ensembles, Chico State Bands, and Theatre Productions. The Schools also sponsors the [North State Symphony](#) and is home to the Court Theater and the [Janet Turner Print Museum](#).

Another major contribution to North State culture is made by [North State Public Radio](#) which is housed and supported by the University. The radio station's transmitters reach residents of Northern California across an area roughly the size of the state of Ohio with news, music, and a wonderful variety of programming meant to entertain and inform our community.

North State Center for Athletic Activities

[Intercollegiate Athletics](#) is a continuing source of entertainment, excitement, and pride for sports fans in the North State. Chico State fields 13 teams, including seven women's teams (cross country, basketball, golf, soccer, softball, track and field, and volleyball) and six men's teams (cross country, basketball, baseball, track and field, golf, and soccer). The University has been ranked in the top five of [Division II](#) schools in the nation for the past three years. The California Collegiate Athletic Association ([CCAA](#)) in which Chico State competes is a scholarship conference whose teams have won more NCAA National Championships than any other Division II conference. Recent accomplishments by CSU, Chico can be seen at [Wildcat Athletics](#).

Also contributing to physical health and a spirit of fun are the recreational opportunities available through the University's [Recreational Sports](#) program. Through the intramural program roughly 3,700 students take part on about 360 teams in various sports each year. In addition, there are twenty-eight sports clubs, from badminton to waterskiing, in which one can participate in competitive venues or recreational sports. Chico State athletic facilities are also made available for the two local high schools to use for some of their sporting events.

North State Center for Life-long Learning Activities

The Center for Regional and Continuing Education ([RCE](#)) has long been a vital resource for life-long learning in the North State. As the anchor institution in Northern California, Chico State serves a 12-county service area, largest in the CSU system. RCE is dedicated to providing higher education access to this widely distributed population. Through regional programs, Open University, and the delivery of accredited degrees via distance education, RCE makes a significant difference in the availability of educational opportunities across the North State. Regional programs support the University's mission by extending educational programming and services throughout Northern California. Through the extension program a wide variety of non-credit courses are offered encompassing personal enrichment and professional development topics, classroom-based and online computer training, financial planning, and test preparation. This program also develops contract education and training solutions for small businesses, corporations, and government agencies. Total new revenue provided to the University by Regional Continuing Education operations from both credit and non-credit activities exceeded \$1 million in 2005–06.

In addition to the distance education programs the University has offered since the mid-1970s, RCE programs have also served the needs of federal, state, county, and nonprofit community agencies. For nearly 30 years CSU, Chico's Leadership Institute has provided professional education for public service managers in areas such as leadership, strategic planning, and ethics. In 1999 the University established programming to provide professional development opportunities for those who work with [Family Court Services](#) to address the needs of psychologists, attorneys, and law enforcement professionals.

[The Open University](#) provides an opportunity for residents of CSU, Chico's service area to have access to regularly scheduled university classes where there is excess capacity on a limited basis, without formal admission to the University.

In 1988, Prime Timers (an organization dedicated to learning in retirement) was formed. Since that time Prime Timers' classes have afforded participants an opportunity for academic reflection in a peer environment with no pressure to perform. Currently participants range in age from 60 to 90. In 2004, CSU, Chico applied for and received a \$100,000 Osher grant to form an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute ([OLLI](#)). The Prime Timers organization was the beneficiary of funds, and, as a lifelong learning program, the emphasis remains on academics, affordable membership fees, and the volunteer nature of the instructors (often retired faculty). OLLI membership now exceeds 500 Northstate residents.

Establishing Partnerships and Alliances to Address Critical Regional Needs

The University continues to actively seek opportunities to make a positive impact on the needs of the North State in such areas as diversity, economic development, and education. For example, after getting calls from nurses and teachers in communities all around the North State a few years ago, a professor in the Nutrition and Food Sciences Program, tapped into California Nutrition Network dollars to create a children's nutrition and activity program, Sierra Cascade Nutrition and Activity Consortium ([SCNAC](#)), which now serves six counties and eventually may cover the University's entire 12-county service area. Similarly, CSU, Chico's Tourism and Communication Design Partnership has also helped graduates receive the training they need to begin their careers in the North State, such as environmental scientist Adam Henderson, who works for the California Department of Water Resources in Red Bluff. This unique partnership has also helped government agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and local entities such as the city of Oroville promote the beauty and culture of some of the lesser-known parts of Northern California. The College of Agriculture has made good use of [Ag Partnerships](#) to enhance the instructional program while at the same time improving its ability to serve the North State.

Faculty / Staff Engagement in the Region

[Chico Distance and Online Education](#). Beginning with the first external degree programs in the State of California in 1972, CSU, Chico has evolved into a state, national, and international leader in the offering of degree programs in a wide variety of distance education formats using live and interactive technologies. Programs available include bachelor's degrees in liberal studies, social science, nursing (for registered nurses); minors in family relations, political science, psychology, sociology; the concentration in career planning and development; alternative dispute resolution; Cross-cultural, Language, and Academic Development ([CLAD](#)) certification; paralegal certificates; and coursework leading to a teaching credential.

Many faculty and staff have taken part in grants and contracts that benefit the North State, and the University maintains a [Faculty Expert Database](#), a list of CSU, Chico faculty who have volunteered to give lectures and be available to answer questions about their fields of expertise. Faculty and staff serve on many community and North State school boards, planning

boards, other public agency committees and organizations, as well as the boards of private charitable organizations. They have served on City Councils and served as mayor thereby profoundly influencing our community.

The connections of our faculty and staff to the local educational community are so substantial that they almost defy summary. CSU, Chico has nine subject-matter projects, for example, which provide in-service training to K–12 teachers. Overall, the campus currently has more than 100 funded K–12 projects. University Public Events brings more than 25,000 grade school children to campus each year for performances. Thousands more come to visit campus museums, the planetarium, and events such as Ag Day and Fun Without Alcohol.

Responding to Diverse Communities

CSU, Chico's 12-county service region is an incredibly diverse region, rich in history, natural resources and beauty, vibrant and varied communities—and promise. Chico wants to strengthen the region's social fabric through establishing partnerships with the diverse communities of the North State to address their needs and stimulate college attendance among their members. One such partnership agreement was concluded on October 28, 2005 with the [Mechoopda Indian Tribe](#) of Chico Rancheria. The agreement is a Memorandum of Understanding regarding Guiding Principles for CSU, Chico Consultation with the Tribe on actions taken to protect, preserve, and manage cultural resources that may be identified on campus lands. CSU, Chico is unique among the CSU campuses in possessing many cultural resources that relate to Mechoopda tribal prehistory and history. In fact, campus grounds include property that was held in Mechoopda tribal trust as recently as the early 1950s.



Mechoopda Tribal Chairman Steve Santos and President Paul J. Zingg

Support of K-12 Education

CSU, Chico, as the primary university serving the North State, strives to provide an excellent collection of resources for K-12 education. The School of Education's extensive [Teacher Preparation](#) programs have a far reaching impact on regional schools. The hundreds of candidates in the Teacher Credential program – and aligned programs such as Pupil Personnel Service, Counseling, and Audiology – provide the region tens of thousands of hours of participation, practicing and aiding in local K-12 classrooms.

Meriam Library maintains a [Web site](#) containing links to vast amounts of information into which educators from around the region can tap for knowledge and support. Some of the areas available include California and National Standards for areas such as physical education, social studies, science, mathematics, and more. A large section on special education is also available as well as information on benchmarks for literacy in various subjects, school directories, newsletters, and additional topics.

[The North State History-Social Science Project](#) serves K-12 students, teachers, schools, and school districts throughout the northern Sacramento Valley and the inter-mountain region of northeastern California by enhancing the development of curriculum, creating partnerships with schools and school districts, offering workshops, conducting summer institutes, and providing relevant materials. In the process, the project builds a sense of community among teachers and university faculty.

The Center for Mathematics and Science Education ([CMSE](#)) is part of the College of Natural Sciences at California State University, Chico. The center's focus is to create and coordinate programs dedicated to mathematics and science education. In particular, it works with all units within the University to provide the most current and effective programs to prepare future teachers to teach mathematics and science.

The Northeastern California Teacher Education Collaborative – Improving Teacher Quality's ([NECTEC ITQ](#)) goal is to have Institutes of Higher Education faculty, school district personnel, and mentor teachers work together to establish a seamless process by which pre-service teacher candidates move from teacher training to induction into the teaching profession in northeastern California K-12 schools. In 2006, NECTEC ITQ project participants include 844 teachers from

across the 12-county region, and the number of students impacted by this program through Regional Continuing Education is estimated at 28,250.

Fostering Community Leadership Development and Entrepreneurship

Economic Development

The Center for Economic Development ([CED](#)) at CSU, Chico Research Foundation was founded in 1986 through a technical assistance grant administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce. There was clearly a need for targeted technical assistance, particularly in Northern California. In 2003, the CED became the lead Small Business Development Center, overseeing six of the centers at local community colleges, through a grant from the Small Business Administration. The organization has since become known as the Northeastern California Small Business Development Center ([NECSBDC](#)). Service is provided in such areas as technical assistance and training, small business and entrepreneurial development and support, applied research and economic analysis, information dissemination, economic gardening, and more. The NECSBDC [mission](#) is to enhance the well being of the region's citizens by facilitating sustained, long-term, and coordinated economic development strategies.

The College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management works with cities and counties to pursue new businesses, linking them with the research strengths of the University. Congressional funds, totaling \$1 million, were obtained to develop a plastics program and laboratory, which also has industrial support. A new partnership between the concrete industry and the College will offer students a unique blend of technical and management preparation in a new discipline – Concrete Industry Management – and help meet industry employment demands.

The state-funded Agricultural Research Initiative matches funds from industry partners. College of Agriculture projects have benefited the entire community, offering solutions to rice straw burning, agricultural waste management, and the improvement of water quality. In addition, the college has many creative partnerships, such as one with Sierra Nevada Brewery, which is testing the use of brewing by-products in cattle feed.

Summary

CSU, Chico has boldly declared its inclination to serve and has demonstrated the capacity to do so for more than 100 years. The programs and efforts cited above provide glimpses of the ways in which Chico works to serve the educational, cultural, and economic needs of the Northern California and make a difference in the lives of many in the North State. Through the range and spirit of these services, CSU, Chico affirms that regional stewardship is not just a task or a stand-alone project. It is an orientation. As a result, Chico has a powerful impact on its service region and a long and proud history of serving the community. Its message continues to be *“We are the university of the North State; we are here to help; let us know how we can do so.”*