

## Essay V: Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability

*Believing that we are accountable to the people of the State of California, we will continue to diversify our sources of revenue and strategically manage the resources entrusted to us.*

CSU, Chico builds its resource based on the four-pillar platform of state support, fair student fees, private support, and effective and wise stewardship of all our resources. It allocates resources in terms of its mission, vision, and strategic priorities and holds the leadership at all levels accountable for effective alignment of resources with strategic priorities.

### Ensure Strategic Alignment

After a period of consultation and feedback lasting about a year and a half, President Paul J. Zingg unveiled an update of the [Strategic Plan for the Future](#) for California State University. He noted that the Plan

challenges us to demonstrate a real and clear determination to allocate resources in terms of articulated priorities. For even in the best of circumstances, we cannot be all things to all people. Rather, in a world of flattened revenue streams, great pressures to hold down fees, rising infrastructure and benefits costs, increased competition for faculty staff and students, and fewer dollars for new investments, we must make choices.

To encourage intentionality and alignment at all levels of deliberation and decision making, President Zingg suggested a framework for visualizing the connections among all levels of efforts. He proposed that the campus [strategic paradigm](#) be compared to a hexagon. “The six elements, the six vertices, of this hexagon are the University Strategic Plan, the Master Plan, our enrollment plan, our academic plan, our advancement plan, and our budget. They [connect](#) to each other through the University’s Mission Statement, which provides a fundamental articulation of our identity and purpose.”



The Strategic Plan gives definition to Chico’s mission and values and proposes a set of actions that will ensure accomplishment of mission and vision within the stated values that now guide action at CSU, Chico. CSU, Chico’s [Master Plan](#), recently approved by the CSU Board of Trustees, defines physical aspects that create Chico’s sense of place—historic brick, archways, and bridges entwined with a natural creek-side environment. The plan provides for a built environment that harmonizes with our natural environment while providing access to our community of learning. The plan constitutes a comprehensive long-term strategy for addressing learning and working spaces to meet the vision and mission of the campus. Together with the [Enrollment Plan](#), it accommodates our enrollment growth while remaining a residential campus. The [Academic Plan](#) is not so much a single plan per se, as much as it is an academic action agenda to build on past achievements and to align new efforts with the values and priorities of the university Strategic Plan.

The [Advancement Plan](#) outlines plans for fostering of philanthropic culture. Advancement efforts are now connected to our vision, mission, values, and strategic priorities and are becoming a critical element of an integrated, multifaceted approach to resource acquisition and stewardship. The investment of resources to establish a high-performance advancement operation that serves the entire university community is already beginning to bear fruit. Finally, the [Budget Plan](#) is developed annually by the Financial Administration Committee (FAC) in collaboration with the University Budget Committee ([UBC](#)). The plan defines the sources and uses of, primarily, state or general fund support and fee revenues and is approved by Cabinet.

CFR  
[4.1](#)

CFR  
[4.2](#)

Each of the University's four divisions uses the campus Strategic Plan to guide their own planning for and reporting of achievements. Annual goals are developed and provided to the president for review, and achievements for the previous year are reviewed. Each division submits accomplishments and goals to the president every July. Though variations on the implementation of the division goals and status updates occur, each is consistent with the president's hexagon and the university Strategic Plan. [Academic Affairs](#), for example, holds semester retreats with executive and academic leadership during which time a division [Action Plan](#) is drafted for the year against which accomplishments are then assessed. [Business and Finance](#) historically used a Balance Scorecard approach and is currently transforming their [goals](#) and measures into a strategic plan format. [Student Affairs](#) has historically tracked [measures of quality and performance](#). Each major area within the division submits a mission statement and goals translated into outcomes and measures. [University Advancement](#) is strengthening its infrastructure and culture as we take the initial steps towards a major fund-raising campaign in conjunction with the University's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which we will celebrate in 2012.

### Strengthen Institutional Effectiveness and Accountability

CSU, Chico faces a more intense accountability environment that requires it to allocate resources in terms of well-articulated priorities, to show how these priorities are clearly tied to serving the public good, and demonstrate that its house is in order, both financially and administratively, so that it provides wise and effective stewardship of the resources entrusted to it.

#### *Wise Stewardship of Fiscal Resources*

CSU, Chico marshals fiscal resources from a number of sources: state support, self support, student fees, grants and contracts, philanthropy, and auxiliary activities. Total fiscal resources are over \$250 million. State appropriations are allocated on a per-student basis. For each additional student the California State University enrolls, the state provides funding at a marginal cost to support instruction and educational and instructional support services. This [marginal cost](#) funding for enrollment growth includes an amount of fee revenues to fund financial aid for students.

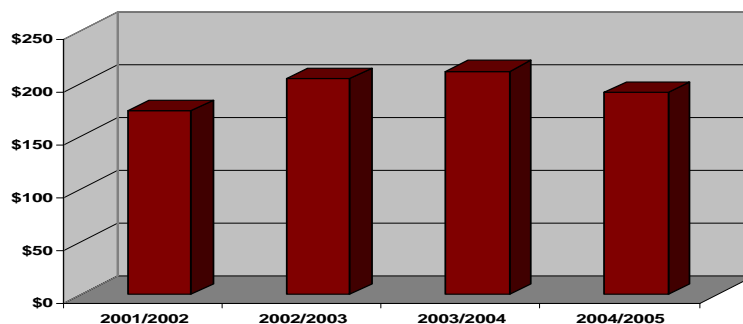
The University's [major sources of operating funds](#) include state appropriations, student fees, government grants and contracts, private grants and contracts, sales and service of auxiliary enterprises, sales and services of university educational activities, investment income, and other income (see *Figure 5.1*). State appropriations make up approximately 76 percent of the University's financial resources, and student fees provide another 22 percent (average).

CFR  
[3.5](#)

The University then [expends](#) the majority of its resources on instruction and academic support (56%), and the remaining funds on student grants and scholarships (13%), institutional support (11%), student services (10%), operation and maintenance of facilities (9%), and public service (.07%). Chico State spends approximately \$4,912 on [instruction](#) per student FTE (excluding academic support expenses).

[Financial performance measures](#) are used to review the use of operating funds. Specifically, [Key Financial Indicators](#) and [Composite Financial Index Analysis](#) are used to provide a broad picture of how the University has expended its funding and examining our alignment of priorities with current and future budget planning.

*Figure 5.1*  
**Total Operating Funds**  
(in millions of dollars)

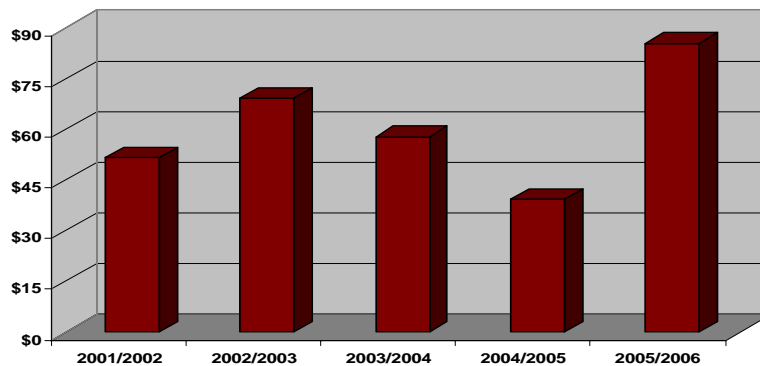


*Foster a Philanthropic Culture*

The creation of a separate division of University Advancement and the intentional strengthening of the advancement infrastructure with the hiring of a vice president for University Advancement and college advancement officers have been major steps in advancing the University. Advancement efforts are becoming a critical element of an integrated, multifaceted approach to Chico's resource acquisition. General Fund allocations and University Fee Revenues leave us with a funding gap, not only to support activities that add distinction and a margin of excellence, but even to provide some basic needs.

Chico State aspires to a values-based philanthropy in which development uncovers shared values and fundraising enables the campus to act upon its stated values. Accordingly, University Advancement strives for broad private support from individuals, corporations, and private foundations.

*Figure 5.2*  
**CSU, Chico Voluntary Support**  
(in millions of dollars)

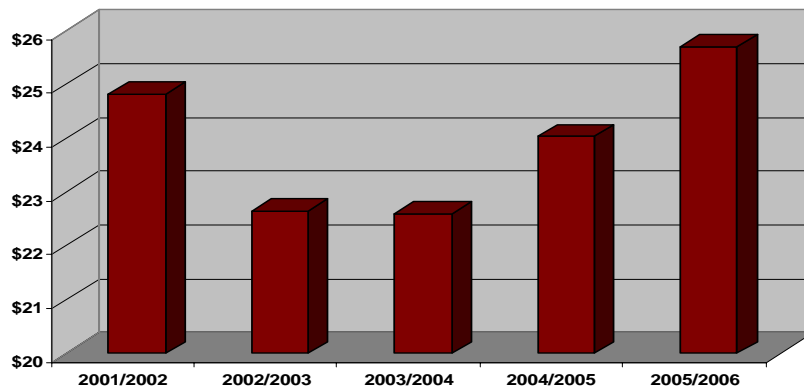


*Encourage Greater Grant and Contract Activity*

In addition to philanthropic support, CSU, Chico marshals funds in the form of operating grant and contract revenues to help make up funding gaps and support excellence and distinction. CSU, Chico's [number of submitted grants and contracts](#) has more than doubled over the last 10 years, nearing 722 annually, with an average [funding success rate of 80 percent](#) and awards totaling more than \$25 million in 2005–06 (see *Figure 5.3*).

Grant and contract activities allow students to gain exciting, first-hand experience in the search for knowledge and allow faculty and staff to be at the cutting edge of their disciplines and maintain partnerships with scholars around the world.

*Figure 5.3*  
**CSU, Chico Grant and Contract Awards**  
(in millions of dollars)



## *Foster a Culture of Evidence and Accountability*

National conversations about higher education continue to emphasize the importance of providing evidence of student learning and student success. Recently the [Spellings Commission](#) suggested that “colleges and universities must become more transparent about cost, price, and student success outcomes, and willingly share this information with students and families.” “Student achievement,” they suggest, “must be measured by institutions on a ‘value-added’ basis that takes into the account students’ academic baseline when assessing their results.”

The CSU has been committed to accounting for its performance by providing periodic reports to the public through the CSU Accountability Process. The CSU Cornerstones Report (1998) first called for such a system: “The California State University will account for its performance in facilitating the development of its students, in serving the communities in which we reside, and in the continued contribution to the California economy and society, through regular assessment of student achievement and through periodic reports to the public regarding our broader performance.” In 1999, the CSU implemented an [Accountability Process](#) to analyze educational effectiveness and to provide regular [reports](#) on systemwide and campus performances. Such reports have been submitted to the Legislature and the citizens of California.

In 1993 the CSU started a systemwide [Quality Improvement](#) effort based on best practices, benchmarking, and communities of practitioners. Much of this work has focused on administrative operations (e.g., Facilities and Parking), but much of it is germane to academic outcomes as well (e.g., Library and Financial Aid Services). In 2006 alone, more than half the CSUs participated in as many as 16 surveys. This work follows national standards of best practice developed by the Academic Quality Improvement Program. Units within Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, and Student Affairs have all participated in QI surveys and analyses.

CSU, Chico has been a participant in both the Quality Improvement Symposium and the CSU Accountability Process as part of its efforts to establish a culture of evidence and accountability. Indeed, as stated in its [Institutional Proposal](#), Chico views the WASC re-accreditation process as an aid “. . . in further institutionalizing a ‘culture of evidence’ in which performance indicators inform and drive institutional improvement and decision making.” As noted earlier, each of the University’s divisions aligns its plans and actions with the University’s Strategic Plan and is responsible for the development of processes for collecting and disseminating data and information to highlight respective progress and achievement.

### Information Acquisition and Dissemination

Examples of information acquisition and dissemination efforts by division include:

**Academic Affairs:** The provost conducts an annual operationalization of the Strategic Plan via an Academic Affairs Strategic [Action Plan](#). Assessment of the prior plan’s achievement and setting new goals are conducted in annual retreats. Institutional Research ([IR](#)) provides reports via the Web on admissions, enrollments, degrees, and persistence/graduation rates. IR maintains a large historical database. IR also handles external reporting (e.g., IPEDS, CPEC, CSU, Common Dataset) and provides expert consulting on assessments – particularly surveys – for all units. [Enrollment Management’s](#) Technical Group maintains a large operational datastore to handle real-time reporting and current analysis issues. The Academic Publications, Facilities, and Database Services Office provides a [datastore](#) providing enrollment, course and facilities information used every day by academic departments in their course/faculty management. There are many more data operations – some large such as the Library and Personnel, some small such as Credentials and the Farm’s [Beef Unit](#) animal tracking system – but all are consequential. Our [Technology and Learning Program](#) office provides assistance in course design and assessment. They conduct [Learning Productivity Projects](#), and their [Rubric for Online Instruction](#) has become widely used. We have introduced a new Learning Management System (LMS)—Vista (after 8 years with WebCT); the LMS both uses and produces data on learning, which we have yet to fully employ. Regional and Continuing Education uses Google analytics to assess what populations access University websites and the nature of their connections.

CFR  
[4.6](#)

**Student Affairs:** [Testing and Research](#) acquires/maintains standardized test data on CSU, Chico students, supervises the acquisition and reporting of Student Evaluations of Teaching, provides expert psychometric and test scoring services to faculty and is the lead office in conducting assessments within this division. [Financial Aid](#) has extensive data systems, as do [Housing](#) and the [Student Health Service](#) offices. Smaller, but no less mission critical, datasets include the [Educational Opportunity Program](#), [Campus Alcohol and Drug Education Center](#), and [Disability Support Services](#).

**Business & Finance:** The division collects assorted data and conducts analyses regarding the [financial management](#) of the University as well as business processes and customer satisfaction. [Budget Analysis and Research](#) provides assistance in the preparation, analysis, and management of the financial resources of the University in support of the University's strategic priorities. [Financial Accounting and Reporting](#) prepares campus [financial statements](#). [B&F Technologies](#) provides analytic and user support to Financial Services and the general campus users of Business Financial data systems (using both real-time and warehoused data.) Full accounting and purchasing operations are maintained. There are also, for example, [facilities management](#) data systems, inventory systems, and an [environmental health](#) database. The division is developing a [strategic planning](#) function that will specialize in tracking and publishing division results from quality improvement initiatives, performance measurement, customer satisfaction and other strategic initiatives.

**University Advancement & Development:** Large alumni and donor data systems are maintained, and data-mining analytic techniques are used to better understand our donors.

### Assessment

CSU, Chico has a long and distinguished documented history in assessment going back to 1974 when it used a “new view” – a self study and MIS approach – to receive WASC accreditation. Recent assessment efforts related to educational attainment are monitored, guided, and supported by our All University Responsibility for Assessment Committee ([AURA](#)). AURA provides campus leadership for ongoing campuswide conversations on the nature of student learning assessment and its relationship to effective teaching, learning, and advising. All major programs have or are in the process of developing or further refining program missions, program goals, student learning outcomes, course alignment matrices, and assessment [plans](#). Members of AURA serve as individual coaches to the individuals within their respective colleges.

CFR  
[4.7](#)

Continuous improvement is also being recorded in the assessment of general education (GE). Good progress is being made in terms of defining student learning outcomes in core areas of [GE](#) as well as in creating the rubrics that are helpful in assessing and evaluating student work products. The collection of cross-sectional data on student performance in writing, oral communication, and quantitative reasoning in GE classes allowed comparisons of first-year students versus seniors, across colleges, and between native and transfer students. Assessment data are being shared widely on campus and are guiding efforts at curricular and pedagogical changes to enhance student learning.

The institutionalization of these assessment and evaluation efforts is further stimulated by an [academic program review project](#) designed to refocus programs toward becoming more systematic and intentional about gathering data about the right things – performance and effectiveness – and on using the resulting information to continuously improve what the program does. While program reviews have been conducted since the early 1970s, elements of this new framework will align under the strategic priorities of the University, the 10 principles of Cornerstones, the principles of the CSU Accountability Process, and the core commitments to institutional capacity and educational effectiveness that are embodied in the new WASC accreditation standards.

CFR  
[2.7](#)

### Use of Data

While CSU, Chico demonstrates substantial capacity to collect and disseminate evidence, it demonstrates far less well the use of the results of assessments and evaluations to revise and improve structures, processes, curricula, and pedagogy. Evidence teams report strong communities of practice in some areas as well as the capacity to further develop such communities. At the same time, the teams reported a great deal of variability in the quality of Chico learning information and learning outcomes assessment; poor organization and accessibility of available data and evidence; and the need for better knowledge accumulation, retention, and dissemination. (Chico has been a victim of its own data decentralization, at a modest level, making integration of its data and evidentiary information more difficult.) CSU, Chico, it was further concluded, needs both better assessment of learning outcomes and better faculty training on the development and assessment of learning outcomes. Continued administrative focus upon, and support for, assessment is necessary.

CFR  
[4.4](#)

### **Summary**

CSU, Chico's *Strategic Plan for the Future*, operationalized in the hexagon diagram, gives definition to its mission and values and provides the framework for effective alignment of resources with strategic priorities. Each of the University's divisions has developed divisional plans that are anchored in the *Strategic Plan*, which in turn inform their decision making and performance measurement.

The University draws its fiscal resources from four major sources: state support, student fees, private support, and wise stewardship. As a state-supported institution, CSU, Chico receives a substantial amount of public funding. That level of funding has decreased over the years, and alternative sources must be increased to maintain distinctiveness and margins of excellence. The two major alternative sources are grants and contracts and university advancement, i.e., fund-raising. Chico is actively pursuing these, and there are signs of success that instill confidence for the future.

CSU, Chico has shown its commitment to strengthening its institutional effectiveness by installing a decentralized performance-based budget system that links resource allocation to the accomplishment of university priorities and by fostering a culture of evidence and accountability. While major strides have been made, Chico has not developed a true culture of evidence through a university-wide strategic management system. It does report a commitment to achieving the goal of enterprise knowledge and information management systems and has included related efforts in the bullet items of its *Strategic Plan*.