



*Updating  
CSU, Chico's  
Strategic Plan  
for the Future*



May 2006

## **Dear Friends and Colleagues:**



*Since my arrival at California State University, Chico in February, 2004, I have found that which I sought and expected: an institution rich in the spirits of inquiry, community, service, and place; and an institution joined in purpose – to be a community of learning and excellence worthy of the trust that our students and the people of California have placed in us.*

*Chico State truly is a special place – a place of people and ideas, public purpose and service, creativity and values. What binds us together – teaching and learning – and what commands our attention – our students and the high expectations that our stakeholders have of us – define the Chico way. Above the doors of Kendall Hall is the inscription “Today Decides Tomorrow.” We take these words to heart as we focus with optimism and hope on the future while building on the best of the past. In this update of our **Strategic Plan for the Future**, I am pleased to join my vision of the kind of institution I hope Chico State can become with yours and to identify several steps to take in choosing and building that future.*

*This document is the consequence of the listening and the asking I have been doing in order to learn about Chico State and the aspirations of its members and constituencies. This document is an important part of a broad, ongoing conversation on the matters of our identity, values, goals, and priorities. But this is not the final word on*

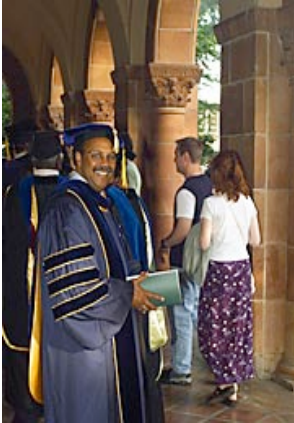
*our future, as a strategic plan is an open and living document that balances change and continuity, direction and flexibility.*

*This document preserves the format and basic structure of our current strategic plan, because they are sound, but it does reflect several new contexts, including our Master Plan, the Governor's compact with higher education, the State and CSU budget conditions and initiatives, our approaching 125th anniversary, and the fresh lens of a new president. The latter includes observations and interests that I have already shared with the University through my writings, addresses, conversations, and other communications. This document constitutes a formal way to share what I have learned and envisioned with all members of our University community. It aims to chart a course for the future and to articulate a set of priorities among a great number of desirable initiatives and activities.*

*There are two new elements entirely, though, to this update. First, it includes a "Values" section that gives greater focus to our shared purposes and beliefs. Second, it adds a sixth strategic priority on sustainability and environmental awareness. Both additions reflect a strong sense within our University community that we should be clearer and more intentional in our values and more fully engaged as stewards of our inherited and created assets for the campus, the North State, and beyond.*

*More and more every day, I am aware of the honor and the thrill to be part of the story of Chico State. I can't wait to see how, together, we will develop our story further and tell it more purposefully and confidently.*

## Our Vision



*California State University, Chico sees its distinctive residential context as an opportunity to create an active, diverse, healthy, caring, innovative, and green learning and working environment. We aim to create a vital and collaborative living and learning experience for students, who will appreciate and embrace the local, regional, and global communities of which we are all a part. We have a well-respected and dedicated faculty, a superior staff, and committed leadership together with cutting-edge learning and information resources. All of these assets are placed within a beautiful and engaging physical environment. We are a place devoted to the academy's most fundamental tenets: reason, respect, civility, and community. We are a place where the passion of our commitments and clarity of our values find expression every day in the community of learning and serving we have fashioned.*

*As surely as we are a special place of people and ideas, as boldly as we are the "university of the North State," we aspire to be the "university of choice" for all those who wish to share our vision and values.*

## Our Mission



*California State University, Chico is a comprehensive university principally serving Northern California, our state and nation through excellence in instruction, research, creative activity, and public service. The University is committed to assist students in their search for knowledge and understanding and to prepare them with the attitudes, skills, and habits of lifelong learning in order to assume responsibility in a democratic community and to be useful members of a global society.*

## Our Values

- *We stand for academic freedom, the exploration of the frontiers of knowledge, and a strong sense of intellectual community characterized by reason, respect, civility, and openness of expression.*
- *We share a commitment to academic excellence and will communicate high expectations to our students.*
- *We seek the purposeful integration of liberal and applied learning and the provision of full access and equal opportunity for all our students to the knowledge, skills, and habits that form the basis for life-long learning, civic engagement, and enlightened service in a diverse society and global community.*
- *We promote active learning, curiosity, and the recognition that learning occurs in our classrooms, studios, and laboratories, and beyond, through the co-curricular experience, service engagements, social interactions, and other expressions of a full and healthy student environment.*
- *We teach not only with the command of our disciplines, but with the force of personal example, enabling us to transmit knowledge effectively through integrity, intellectual honesty, kindness, and enthusiasm.*
- *We emphasize both the quality and the spirit of services to our students, employing “student-friendly” policies and practices that foster student achievement and progress to degree.*
- *We acknowledge not only the obligation of service, but also the value of service to others in defining institutional character and measuring institutional performance.*
- *We hold dear the values of multicultural respect, awareness, and understanding and we pursue diversity not just as an idea to embrace, but as a community to form.*
- *We aim to be a community connected in our conversations, confident in our strengths, and intentional in our aspirations.*
- *We celebrate a distinctive institutional culture through a keen sense of place, a deep respect for our natural environment, an orientation to the principles and practices of sustainability, and the use of the campus’s entire physical environment to promote the University’s goals.*

- *We appreciate the loyalty and achievements of our alumni and retired faculty and staff and the importance of a strong alumni organization to keep alumni informed and engaged with their alma mater.*
- *We affirm that we are “One University” where collaboration, mutual support and trust, and common goals define our work together and the spirit of its engagement.*

## Our Strategic Priorities

### **1. *Believing in the primacy of learning, we will continue to develop high-quality learning environments both inside and outside the classroom.***

California State University, Chico, above all else, is a center for active and lifelong learning. Its heart and essence is the learning process: active collaboration among a community of diverse students, staff, and faculty that enables learning opportunities connecting classroom instruction, out-of-class experiences, and service. This collaboration results in discovering and rediscovering the joys of learning and enabling participants to become effective lifelong learners and engaged citizens.

We will

- Recruit, enroll, support, and graduate a diverse and high-quality student population.
- Rededicate ourselves to student success by re-examining the total education experience of our students, including:
  - Purposefully structuring and nurturing first-year students' academic, intellectual, cultural, social, and civic engagements and personal development
  - Continuing to develop a distinctive and integrative General Education program
  - Designing and delivering distinctive undergraduate and graduate programs
  - Engaging our students in the richness and diversity of American and world cultures both inside and outside the classroom, including encouraging study abroad, enrolling international students, and supporting area and international studies
  - Providing common experiences for all students, faculty, and staff that emphasize our identity as an intellectual community
  - Deepening a sense of a distinctive "Chico experience" for all our students, through co-curricular programs and a vast array of other learning opportunities both on and beyond the campus
  - Periodically assessing the personal, social, and demographic characteristics of our students and their educational and career needs
  - Emphasizing campus safety as a concern for all and a condition for student success
  - Offering student leadership programs



- Achieve clarity about learning outcomes, coordinate teaching and assessment, and align structures and resources to serve student learning and other institutional intentions.
- Use the program review process to reflect critically upon and ensure the quality and distinctiveness of all of our programs.
- Maintain superior learning support systems that promote student success.
- Provide on-going faculty/staff training and student learning experiences in the areas of multicultural respect, awareness, and competency.
- Ensure the maintenance of a vibrant library collection, emphasize the library as a University center for learning and research, and provide superior library services.
- Maintain attractive, safe, friendly, and functional physical facilities that serve our campus community and support learning and the co-curricular program.
- Protect and enhance the physical beauty of the campus and provide new facilities to support our mission of teaching and learning.
- Develop sufficient student housing capacity that accommodates all freshmen and other targeted groups who desire university-operated housing.
- Create learning communities within student housing.
- Provide indoor and outdoor athletics and recreation facilities to support learning, personal development, and both intercollegiate and co-curricular programs.
- Through our Master Plan, foster and highlight the special and unique sense of place for the University in the design and appearance of the campus.

**2. *Believing in the importance of faculty and staff, and their role in student success, we will continue to invest in faculty and staff development.***

California State University, Chico recognizes that scholarship, research, and creative activity are essential components of its mission. The University will invest in the currency and the continuing professional development of its faculty and staff as a vital means of strengthening the capacity and quality of its programs and the services that flow from them.

We will

- Recruit and retain a diverse and highly qualified faculty and staff.
- Emphasize student learning in our processes for recruiting, hiring, orienting, deploying, evaluating, and rewarding faculty and staff.
- Continue to promote the teacher-scholar model to integrate teaching, scholarly and creative activities, and the exchange of ideas.
- Support different forms of scholarship, creativity, and research, including traditional scholarship and externally funded research.
- Encourage community-based learning and research as means to reinvigorate the public purposes and civic mission of higher education.
- Encourage student involvement in the scholarly and creative activities of faculty and staff.
- Create an e-professional development “center” to support faculty and staff development and renewal activities.
- Annually report on faculty and staff development activities within each of the University’s divisions.
- Ensure that our rewards systems are aligned with our vision, mission, and strategic priorities.
- Regularly celebrate the scholarly, professional, and creative achievements of our faculty and staff.

**3. *Believing in the wise use of new technologies in learning and teaching, we will continue to provide the technology, the related training, and the support needed to create high quality learning environments both inside and outside of the classroom.***

Information technology provides opportunities to revolutionize and improve the way we teach, learn, and conduct university business. We will continue our history of leadership in the effective use of academic technology by seizing those opportunities that enhance our core educational mission, including on-line learning. We will continue to distinguish ourselves by building an electronic learning community that links knowledge, curricula, students, faculty, and staff. We will be guided by the “Seven Principles for Effective Teaching,” as stated in our criteria for faculty retention, promotion, and tenure, and we will utilize instructional technologies that support these principles, where appropriate.

We will

- Assure that all students, faculty, and staff have access to appropriate information and instructional technology both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Provide appropriate assistive technology to ensure a successful learning environment for students who need this support.
- Assure that all students achieve basic and discipline-based information literacy skills and that students understand their responsibilities related to the ethical use of information.
- Provide support for the redesign of curricula to maximize our investment in technology and assure students access to the electronic resources that support redesigned curricula.
- Enhance the teaching and learning experience by supporting diverse and innovative use of a state-of-the-art learning management system.
- Assure that all learning and business processes and administrative services are supported by an effective and reliable information technology infrastructure.
- Assure that our student services and other university services are continuously improved through the wise use of technology.

- Assess and regularly report on the effects of technology in fostering student learning and use technology to support the assessment of institutional effectiveness.

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

California State University, Chico has articulated service as a fundamental tenet of its identity and strategic plan. We emphasize 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 our daily campus life and connecting our work to the needs and quality of a democratic society enacts a powerful affirmation: we are an American university and we are “the university of the North State.”

We will

- Support and expand internships, experiential and service learning programs, and student organization service activities.
- Serve as the North State center for intellectual, cultural, athletic, and life-long learning activities by
  - Developing further the activities and impact of the Bidwell Environmental Institute, the Preserves, and other programs that underscore environmental engagements and commitments
  - Enhancing the status of Chico State as a creative campus through exemplary programs in the studio and performing arts
  - Encouraging community and campus participation in University Public Events programs
  - Supporting the North State Symphony
  - Supporting North State Public Radio
  - Offering a full range of intercollegiate athletics and recreation opportunities
  - Establishing a natural history museum to foster science education, environmental awareness, and community pride.
- Strengthen the region’s social fabric through establishing partnerships with the diverse communities of the North State to help them address their needs and stimulate college attendance among their members.

- Establish partnerships and alliances to build upon the assets of the North State to meet critical regional and state workforce needs, especially supporting K-12 teacher education, agriculture, business, nursing, and math and science-based employment areas.
- Strengthen our capacity to foster community leadership development and entrepreneurship.

**5. *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.***

We will build our resource base on a four-pillar platform of state support, fair student fees, private support, and effective and wise stewardship of all our resources. We will demonstrate the determination to allocate resources in terms of clearly articulated priorities and how those priorities contribute to making the University even more outstanding than it now is.

We will

- Ensure that a focus on learning is reflected in all our documents and policies, assessment efforts, collegial interactions, and leadership behavior.
- Ensure that academic priorities guide our plans and actions, especially the interrelationships among strategic planning, enrollment planning, the Master Plan, advancement operations, budget design, and decision making.
- Ensure the efficient use of operating budgets and the wise stewardship of all resources.
- Foster a philanthropic culture and execute bold initiatives in the areas of fundraising and university advancement at both university and college levels.
- Encourage and support greater grant and contract activities among our faculty and staff.
- Strengthen our institutional effectiveness, shared governance, and sense of community by:
  - Ensuring that an operating philosophy of serving the educational mission of the University defines all University units
  - Installing a decentralized performance-based budgeting system that links resource allocation to accomplishment of university priorities
  - Fostering a culture of evidence and accountability through the development of formal assessment and performance measurement systems
  - Embracing a culture of decision making in which synthesis follows analysis, and judgments are formed following consultation with affected constituents within the campus community
  - Affirming a shared-governance structure that encourages participation of members of the University community in key decisions of the institution

**6. *Believing that each generation owes something to those which follow, we will create environmentally literate citizens, who embrace sustainability as a way of living. We will be wise stewards of scarce resources and, in seeking to develop the whole person, be aware that our individual and collective actions have economic, social, and environmental consequences locally, regionally, and globally.***

A hallmark of Chico State is the beautiful and inviting physical environment of our campus. We will become an environmentally engaged university, seeking to elevate our collective consciousness about the environment, recognizing our responsibilities to steward the inherited and created assets of our region, while articulating these values for the wider audiences we reach. We will make Chico State the distinctive “green” campus in California and become a national leader in environmental education, science, and public policy analysis; the building of environmentally responsible facilities; and practicing sustainability principles.

We will

- Strengthen our institutional reputation and record regarding environmental stewardship.
- Develop all campus planning within the context of sustainability and encourage resource conservation and recycling.
- Emphasize the need for all departments and programs to address issues of sustainability.
- Monitor our diverse sustainability efforts through outcomes-based assessment, noting successes as well as opportunities for improvement.
- Undertake and maintain an environmental focus in our advancement efforts, seeking to tell our story about an environmental orientation in our daily campus life and to enlist partners in our agenda for distinction in these matters.
- Develop a strong endowment devoted to expanding and managing our current system of preserves, while expanding our capacity to teach, learn, and serve.



- Expand our research efforts through the work of the Bidwell Environmental Institute.
- Introduce outside experts and mentors on sustainability to the campus, while seeking to deliver our own powerful story of environmental engagement.
- Connect with the local community and civic organizations and agencies to educate and assist in the preservation of natural resources, and help to protect the quality of life that has drawn people to our community.
- Seek partners throughout the North State who share our values and who are willing to share their expertise.
- Connect the campus and the ecological reserves to Native American practices and values.
- Host an annual or biannual conference on sustainability focusing on sustainability and conservation, business practices, civic engagement, social policy, and the curriculum.