Draft Academic Plan

Preamble
Our Academic Plan is rooted in California State University, Chico’s long-standing commitments to student success, life-long learning, and teaching excellence. The Plan reflects our deep connections to our historical, geographical, and beautiful physical place. At the same time, the Academic Plan charts a path toward a verdant and sustainable future for our University, our students, and our community.

In its very construction, this draft manifests the values of the “Chico Experience.” It was seeded by civil, consultative, and collaborative interactions among faculty, administrators, students, and staff, all of whom are dedicated to preparing students to succeed in a rapidly changing world in the context of a healthy, vibrant, and engaged academic community.

The draft Academic Plan has, at its center, six key themes each of which is supported by several action items. We will:

1. Prepare Students for Lifelong Success
2. Cultivate a Culture of Excellence in Teaching and Learning
3. Build and Sustain Community
4. Foster Faculty Renewal and Sustainability
5. Foster Staff Renewal and Sustainability
6. Implement Highly Effective Administrative Processes

Theme 1: Prepare Students for Lifelong Success
We are committed to the goal of inclusive excellence for all students at California State University, Chico as we prepare them for fulfilling professional, civic and personal lives. We will strive to attract and retain a diverse student body, both domestic and international, and graduate students well-prepared for lifelong success. A Chico State education will make available to all students high-impact and immersive experiences that provide them with the preparation necessary for success in a diverse and globalized world.

1. Academic Excellence: we will support excellence in student academic achievement through highly intentional, appropriately scaffolded and up-to-date curriculum and learning environments.
   ● Ensure proficiency in core competencies: (i) Written communication, (ii) Oral communication, (iii) Critical thinking, (iv) Quantitative reasoning and (v) Information literacy.
• Ensure disciplinary competencies in the major field of study.
• Provide high-impact and immersive learning experiences in support of academic excellence such as research experiences for graduate and undergraduate students and service learning opportunities.

2. Professional preparation: our students will be well-prepared to be effective contributors to the economic health and vitality of the State of California and beyond.
• Implement effective career path advising at all stages of students’ education.
• Provide opportunities for high-impact and immersive experiences that prepare students for professional success, such as internships, practica and similar experiences.
• Foster professional competencies such as: (i) Presentation skills, (ii) Technological fluency, (iii) sophisticated use of E-portfolios to demonstrate capacities and (iv) opportunities to develop financial literacy.

3. Personal and Social Responsibility: our learning environments will foster an appreciation of diversity, locally and globally, and a commitment to civic engagement and sustainability.
• Support for high-impact and immersive experiences including increased participation in Study Abroad and creation of opportunities to Study Local through community-based study and engagement.
• Ensure quality of life through a commitment to the health and wellness of our students.

Theme 2: Cultivate a Culture of Excellence in Teaching and Learning
Learning is at the heart of all we do. Thus, we strive to cultivate a culture of excellence in teaching and learning for students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Doing so honors our Normal School heritage and ensures our ability to serve our undergraduate and graduate students in the 21st century and beyond.

1. Provide Institutional Resources and Support for Pedagogical Excellence: We provide educators with opportunities for continued professional pedagogical development.
• Provide appropriate technologies (computers, discipline-specific equipment and technologies) and training in their use.
• Reward pedagogical innovations including high-impact practices, civic engagement, and immersive experiences.
• Showcase pedagogical innovation and success at the local, state, and national and international levels.

2. Innovate Curriculum: Create effective processes that will lead to thoughtful review, modification, diversification, and renewal of our curriculum.
• Develop efficient mechanisms for building interdisciplinary and general education curricula.
• Extend international teaching and learning opportunities.
• Demonstrate and encourage disciplinary excellence.
3. Commit to Continuous Improvement: In examining and reflecting on teaching and learning practices, we will be mindful of our current practices, goals for improvement, and strategies for achieving those goals.

- Encourage strategic and purposeful assessment at all levels (course, program, unit, college and University).
- Build and utilize rich and appropriate sources of data for analytical and decision making purposes.
- Ensure that our campus is characterized by physical environments and spaces that enable active learning.
- Anticipate and respond to changes in the academy and society.

Theme 3: Build and Sustain Community

Creating and sustaining communities are integral for our collective success, including the success of our students. Building community reflects the fundamental human need to belong and manifests our commitment to the greater good. Community fosters our unique sense of place and is an essential aspect of the Chico Experience. Community grounds us in the local and connects us to the global.

1. Mentoring to support the success of students, faculty and staff

- Expand the use of student peer mentors including:
  - enhanced peer mentor training, assessment of effectiveness, and parameters for the constructive and appropriate use of peer mentors inside and outside the classroom.
  - broaden the pool of peer mentors, particularly among under-represented minorities.
- Identify and train peer mentors focused on transfer students in each College.
  - Collaborate with Staff Council and Faculty Affairs to determine the scope of mentoring needed for staff and faculty and develop programs to address those needs.

2. Collaborative communication to strengthen our academic community on campus (inreach) and our ties to the broader communities we serve (outreach).

- Strengthen inreach efforts designed to build academic community.
  - Schedule a series of single topic Collaboration Lounges to promote common research projects, share best practices, and meet others with shared interests.
  - Create a searchable database of professional and personal interests to facilitate collaboration or community building events.
  - Coordinate and share information on University-wide events/activities (such as speaker series). This could include targeted marketing to those who have self-identified as interested in those events or activities.
- Strengthen outreach efforts designed to promote sustainable, mutually beneficial partnerships between the University and the communities we serve.
○ Create a “one stop” information contact point for the University to facilitate community access and participation.
○ Determine, using the North State Initiative report, what locales in our service area are underserved and encourage and support outreach to them.

3. Foster a stronger sense of academic community
   ● Create “Chico” Spaces for communication, collaboration, wellness, and social interaction
   ● Ensure that all Colleges or buildings have common spaces to meet, eat and collaborate.
   ● Establish wellness spaces on campus (communication hub for health and community group activities and news –child care, after school, baby care, elder care).
   ● Model “Chico Communication:” that informal, friendly approach that extends a helpful hand to students, staff and faculty seeking to resolve a problem.

Theme 4: Foster Faculty Renewal and Sustainability
The Academic Plan represents an opportunity to reflect collectively on the quality of faculty life in a context of rapid change and to renew our investment in individual faculty excellence and build an academic community that supports the success of our students and our collective success and well-being. A diverse and highly-qualified faculty is a fundamental value of our University and critical to the success of our students.

1. Assess faculty workload: Align workload with the faculty responsibilities (teaching, research, and service).
   ● Increase tenure density to better manage tenure-track/tenured faculty workload.
   ● Align WTU allocations with the responsibilities of the faculty appointment and its evaluations.

2. Faculty Development: Promote the philosophy of the Teacher-Scholar and design clear department standards and practices for retention, tenure, and promotion. Support all faculty with mentoring programs that serve to guide their professional lives.
   ● Promote a University-wide philosophy on faculty expectations (such as the Teacher-Scholar Model).
   ● Provide professional support throughout faculty career.
     ○ Maintain momentum regarding increases in professional development resources.
     ○ Continue to improve support for developing research.
     ○ Articulate and disseminate RTP “best practices” from across campus.
     ○ Establish and support tenure track and temporary faculty orientation and mentoring programs.
     ○ Provide incentives for temporary faculty, including awards and opportunities for leadership consistent with the CBA, perhaps in the form of “senior lecturer” status or teaching faculty.

3. Compensation: We are committed to improving faculty salaries and compensation at Chico State. Salary inversion, compression, and stagnation at all ranks, affect our ability to attract and retain highly qualified faculty. We are also committed to a clear and transparent process for requesting promotion salary increases or market increases.
● Enact campus-level compensation mechanisms as allowed by the CBA, to address inversion, compression, stagnation and salary competitiveness.

● Create a campus mechanism to ensure that compensation issues are addressed in an equitable and ethical manner, to include negotiation transparency, formal codification in college constitution/procedures, consistent and timely information sharing.

4. Sense of Belonging and Well Being: Commit to a climate of trust, shared decision-making and transparency to build the collective campus community, strengthen our culture of teaching and learning and promote productive, creative, satisfying work environments for all.

● Develop, administer, and respond to an annual Campus Climate Survey.

● Create an Ombuds Office for the campus.

● Provide ongoing training to facilitate community.

● Provide professional development opportunities to strengthen and sustain effective leadership.

Theme 5: Foster Staff Renewal and Sustainability

We recognize that staff, individually and collectively, are essential contributors to the educational experiences of our students and the mission of our University. We will strengthen our focus on staff excellence, professional development, wellness and diversity.

1. Recruit and retain a diverse and talented staff:
   ● Follow exemplary practices in attracting and nurturing diverse and highly qualified staff.
   ● Ensure that compensation issues are addressed in an effective, efficient, equitable and ethical manner.
   ● Recognize and celebrate the value and contributions of staff across all classifications.

2. Strengthen and increase opportunities and support for professional growth, development of job skills, and wellness activities.
   ● Create accurate position descriptions and identify career paths for every job.
   ● Improve annual performance review processes and include development plans for growth.
   ● Increase number of workshops, classes, and training sessions offered.
   ● Promote and support use of online courses and training tools.

3. Sustain and enhance flexibility in the workplace and workforce.
   ● Provide opportunities for cross training and collaboration.
   ● Allow for flexible schedules to enhance work/life balance and allow for professional development opportunities.
Theme 6: Implement Highly Effective Administrative Processes

We will strengthen the effectiveness of administrative processes to support data-driven decision making in support of our shared priorities. All administrative processes must support the University’s Mission including student success, academic community and the wise stewardship of resources.

1. Strengthen the organization and provision of data to enhance decision-making focused on the data-needs of various stakeholders in Academic Affairs and the goals of the Academic Plan: Student Success and Building Community.
2. Streamline administrative processes to ensure that all actions are appropriate to the task, focused on the University’s mission and supported by effective technologies, forms, platforms and related tools.
3. Support professional development opportunities for administrative staff and managers to enhance effective management, increase necessary capacities and skills and cultivate academic leadership at the University.