



# Chico State Enterprises

RESEARCH | SERVICE | PARTNERSHIP

CEO Update

June 17, 2024

## New Services, New Positions, and Additional Resources!

I am delighted to share important improvements underway within Chico State Enterprises (CSE). As a result of explosive growth in externally funded grants and contract activity—up an amazing 32% year-to-date compared to last year—CSE is offering new services as well as adding new staff to better support project directors, project staff, and other CSE and University Foundation (UF) stakeholders.

### New Services

#### **Procurement Buyer Service**

We are excited to announce new services to be provided by a professional Procurement Buyer to assist project directors and staff with the procurement of goods and services. The Procurement Buyer service will remove from the project team member or account holder the responsibility for obtaining or preparing documentation such as vendor quotes and sole source justifications. Instead, the Buyer will perform these tasks in consultation with the requester. The addition of a professional Buyer is expected to significantly reduce processing time for the procurement process. Recruitment for this position is underway.

#### **Program Analyst Support for Recipients of University Awards, Prizes, Endowments and Annual Funds**

A new service and additional staff have been added to our Program Analyst team to provide dedicated account support to UF and CSE account holders who receive funding for various purposes including university awards, prizes and endowment annual fund distributions. Recipients of these funds may not necessarily have active grants or contracts where Program Analysts are traditionally assigned. Recipients of these special funds, similar to grant-funded project directors, will have a primary point of contact to assist them with the various aspects of managing their university awards and philanthropic funds. Note that if a grant-funded project director also receives a university award, prize, etc., their current Program Analyst will be trained to assist with the university-awarded funds.

#### **Corporate Compliance Officer**

Jeanne Dittman has joined CSE administration to serve as Corporate Compliance Officer, a position created in response to the growing volume of sponsor audits, Chancellor's Office Audits, and other compliance reviews. In this new position, Jeanne's responsibilities will involve assisting central administration and project staff with resolution of audit findings, coordination and responses, and reporting, and audit tracking. Jeanne joins CSE with over 22 years of CSU sponsored program and research compliance experience—17 years with the San Jose State University Research Foundation, 5 years with Cal State East Bay, and currently serves on special committee assignments with the CSU Chancellor's Office.

## **New Positions**

### **Director of Sponsored Contracts**

Susan Podesta (Chico State '95) serves as CSE's Director of Sponsored Contracts following the restructuring of the Sponsored Programs Administration department. With Sponsored Contracts established as a separate unit, the contracts team is better positioned to support the growing volume, size and complexity of contractual agreements required by programs. Susan brings 17 years in nonprofit management and 14 years with California Rural Legal Assistance where she led all aspects of their grants and contracts unit.

### **Human Resources Business Partner**

In 2023, CSE recruited Catherine Madsack to serve as the organization's first Human Resources Business Partner, a piloted position created to support the specialized, high demands of the larger university centers. Based on strong, positive feedback from the center directors, and with continued growth in programs, CSE has recruited a second Human Resources Business Partner, Kevin Soukup, whose efforts will focus on those projects beyond the university centers. Kevin brings over 25 years of Human Resources management experience most recently including 8 years as HR Manager for the Smucker's campus located in south Chico where he provided full-spectrum HR services to over 110 employees working in two manufacturing plants and Smucker's west coast distribution center.

## **Additional Resources and Support**

CSE welcomes the following new staff who have recently joined the central administration team:

Mariana Brimm – Program Analyst, Sponsored Programs Administration  
Shanna Felix – Administrative Assistant, Executive Administration  
Isabella Gomez – Accounting Technician, Accounts Payable  
Melissa Gorton – Benefits Specialist, Human Resources  
Heather Gressmann – Contracts Officer, Contracts  
Sue Mylin – Program Analyst, Sponsored Programs Administration  
Peter Ramirez – Accounting Technician (Temporary), Accounts Payable

With these changes and additions, CSE staffing and services continue to expand to meet the challenges of unprecedented growth and historic grant successes while ensuring improved, high quality customer service. Please join me in welcoming our newest CSE staff to the Wildcat community!



Mary Sidney  
CEO, Chico State Enterprises