Advancing Equity 2021-2022: Action and Inquiry Plans
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Graduation Initiative Advisory Team Co-Chairs

Background

In May 2021, President Hutchinson charged us as GI Advisory Team Co-Chairs with leading an intensive campus-wide effort to close the equity gaps in Chico State’s graduation rates for underrepresented minority, low income, and first-generation students. With the help of a summer planning team and Institutional Research staff, we conducted 10 weeks of data analysis, consultation with campus equity experts, and review of relevant research to identify areas for action and further inquiry to make immediate progress on this ambitious goal. With the understanding that this is a multi-year initiative, the Graduation Initiative Advisory Team will focus its 2021-2022 work in the Action and Inquiry Areas indicated below.

Principles

Four shared principles will guide this work. Action and Inquiry Teams will:

- Be guided by both data and consultation with advocates for and representatives of Latinx, African American, Native American, low-income, and first-generation student populations.
- Use a cultural asset framework.
- Build sense of belonging into all strategies.
- Cultivate mentoring mindset for all employees.

Focus for 2021-22: Equitable Success in the First Term

Critical data findings about the impact of first-time freshmen (FTF) first-term GPA on the likelihood of graduating in six years or less demand an intensive focus on students’ earliest Chico State experiences, both in classroom learning and in navigating complex campus processes and services. Two Action Teams will enact specific short- and medium-term goals, and four Inquiry Teams will do further analysis on other areas for potential future action to improve first term success.¹ This focus on the first term for FTF is not intended to diminish the importance of efforts to improve transfer student success. Institutional Research is currently developing predictive models for that population as well and we anticipate that activity around our WASC interim report will also address transfer success. Based on research completed thus far, we anticipate that future action areas related to transfer equity will be focused on the colleges with specific milestones for each.²

¹ See findings 1 and 2 in the Institutional Research report “Initial Findings on Student Equity and Success.”
² See findings 8 and 9 in “Initial Findings on Student Equity and Success.”
Action Areas

Action Area I:
Close equity gaps and improve pass rates in high enrollment, high DFW 100 and 200 level classes.

Target objectives
I.A Analyze impact of small classes in high DFW courses and make recommendations for sustained funding of smaller classes in critical courses.
I.B Assess high DFW courses for URM, Pell and first gen students’ sense of belonging and develop relevant interventions
I.C Engage a multidisciplinary group of faculty to develop strategies, including policy considerations, for improving equitable grading practices.

Action Area II:
Create a seamless experience of engagement and navigation for FTF from Intent to Enroll though the first year.

Target Objectives
II.A Develop and assess a plan to meaningfully engage students and families from decision to enroll through matriculation.
II.B Institute inclusive, mandatory, and accessible Orientation. (See finding 7 in Institutional Research report.)
II.C Revise first year advising practices, beginning with Orientation, to eliminate inconsistent advice and achieve defined learning outcomes.
II.D Leverage campus mentoring programs to assign a peer mentor/coach to each incoming student not in a formal support program for sustained help with campus navigation.

Each Action Team will be provided with relevant data findings, a research brief, a list of recommended campus consultants, a set of target objectives (listed above), and a template for the team’s actions and interim deliverables.

➤ Action Team deliverable: Measurable improvement in target area by end of fall 2022.
Inquiry Areas

Inquiry Area I:
- What are the most effective learning support programs for high DFW courses (SI, embedded tutors, etc.)? How do we ensure that students access these supports equitably?

Inquiry Area II:
- Are there academic and financial policy changes that can improve retention and success of URM, Pell, and first gen students? Consider fee timing, academic scheduling and deadlines, academic probation, etc.

Inquiry Area III:
- Could block enrollment improve first year success, especially for students needing developmental QR support? If so, how should it be implemented?

Inquiry Area IV:
- How can we understand our students’ academic challenges early enough to be able to address them in time for a successful semester? What technologies might assist in this effort?

- Each Inquiry Team will be provided with guiding questions, background research and resources, and a template for the team’s information gathering process and interim deliverables.
  - **Inquiry Team deliverable**: A set of recommended action areas for 2022-23 by end of Spring 2022.
The following model demonstrates the work flow for this year’s actions to close equity gaps.

**Process**

Explore Potential Action Areas
- Summer Planning Team
  - Campus Consultations

Data/Analysis
- Summer Planning Team, IR

Define Action Areas & Target Objectives

Implement Action Plans

Identify Progress & Resistance

Assess and Adjust

Establish Strategies, Metrics, Accountability

Getting to Equity with a Laser Focus 2021-22

Convocation August 2021

Project Leads ➔ Cabinet

Action Teams, Project Leads

Tipping Point January 2022

Project Leads

Action Teams

**Action and Inquiry Teams:**

- Teams should include 4-6 members representing areas relevant to the action or inquiry subject.
- Project Leads will meet monthly with team leads to provide support, track progress, and troubleshoot problems.
- Project Leads will engage regularly with divisional leadership teams for updates and input.
- Project Leads will consult with partners at Cal State LA, San Marcos, and Fullerton on successful reduction in DFW rates and share information with relevant teams.
- Progress and initial outcomes will be shared at Tipping Point 2022.
- Teams will be compensated with additional employment, buyouts, or professional development as appropriate to their positions and roles on the teams.
• Full team meets monthly instead of every 2 weeks.
• Action and Inquiry Teams supplant regular work groups (with additional non-GI members informed by VP consultations).
• Assume Action and Inquiry Teams will meet at designated time between full GI Team monthly meetings.