

Advancing Equity 2021-2022: Action and Inquiry Plans

Project leads: Kate McCarthy and Kaitlyn Baumgartner Lee,
Graduation Initiative Advisory Team Co-Chairs

Background

In May 2021, President Hutchinson charged the 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 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. Seven 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 AREA I: Close equity gaps and improve pass rates in high enrollment, high DFW 100- and 200-level classes.

ACTION TEAM I.A: CLASS SIZE

CHARGE: Analyze the impact of class size in high DFW courses and make recommendations for sustained funding of smaller classes in critical courses.

Team Lead(s): Ellie Ertle and Zahrasadat Alavi

Team members: Erin Kelly, Kathleen Meehan, Chris Fosen

ACTION TEAM I.B: SENSE OF BELONGING

CHARGE: Assess high DFW courses for URM, Pell and first-gen students' sense of belonging and develop relevant interventions.

Team Lead(s): William Cuthbertson and Molly Heck

Team members: Marianne Paiva, Lupe Jimenez, Nate Millard, Megan Kurtz

ACTION TEAM I.C: GRADING PRACTICES

CHARGE: Engage a multidisciplinary faculty to develop strategies to, including policy considerations, for improving equitable grading practices

Team Lead(s): Jeff Bell

Team members: Chiara Ferrari, Kathy Fernandes, Michael Dills-Allen, Michelle Morris, Pablo Cornejo, Kim Jaxon, Jack Hames

ACTION AREA II: Create a seamless experience of engagement and navigation for FTF from decision to enroll through the first year.

ACTION TEAM II.A: EARLY ENGAGEMENT

CHARGE: Develop and assess a plan to meaningfully engage students and families from decision to enroll through Census.

Team Lead(s): Tasha Alexander, Denise Crosswhite

Team members: Holly Nevarez, Bertha Alicia Curiel, Jeff Logsdon, Corinne Knapp, Shawn Ryan

ACTION TEAM II.B: ORIENTATION

CHARGE: Institute inclusive, mandatory, and accessible FTF Orientation.

Team Lead(s): Shawn Ryan

Team members: Kentiner David, Blake Wentz, Celina Phillips, Jennifer Duggan, Joel Ramirez, Yuki Rojas, Stacie Corona

ACTION TEAM II.C: FIRST-YEAR ADVISING

CHARGE: Revise first-year advising practices, beginning with Orientation, to eliminate inconsistent advice and achieve defined learning outcomes.

Team Lead(s): Pablo Soto & Kylee Sharp

Team members: Megan Odom, Peter Kittle

ACTION TEAM II.D: PEER MENTORING

CHARGE: 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.

Team Lead(s): Sue Peterson, Brianna Ellis

Team members: Shawn Bates, Felipe Restrepo, Jen Harris, Ashley Person

In parallel with these Action Areas, **Inquiry Teams** will conduct additional research, consult broadly, and make recommendations for action on four additional areas of potential impact.

Inquiry Area I: Learning Support

- *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?*

Team: Dawn Frank (lead), Sue Peterson, Kathy Fernandes, Erik Wasinger, Billy Harkness, Yer Thao, Robin Donatello.

Inquiry Area II: Administrative Policy Review

- *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.*

Team: Holly Nevarez (lead), Pablo Soto, Jenn Duggan, Elli Alaniz, Josh James, Malcolm McLemore, Anna Magaña.

Inquiry Area III: Block Enrollment

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

Team: Kelly McGregor (co-lead), Vicki Bass (co-lead), Michael Dills-Allen, Jessica Dietrich, Jennifer McKee, Cindy McKay, Jason Stapleton.

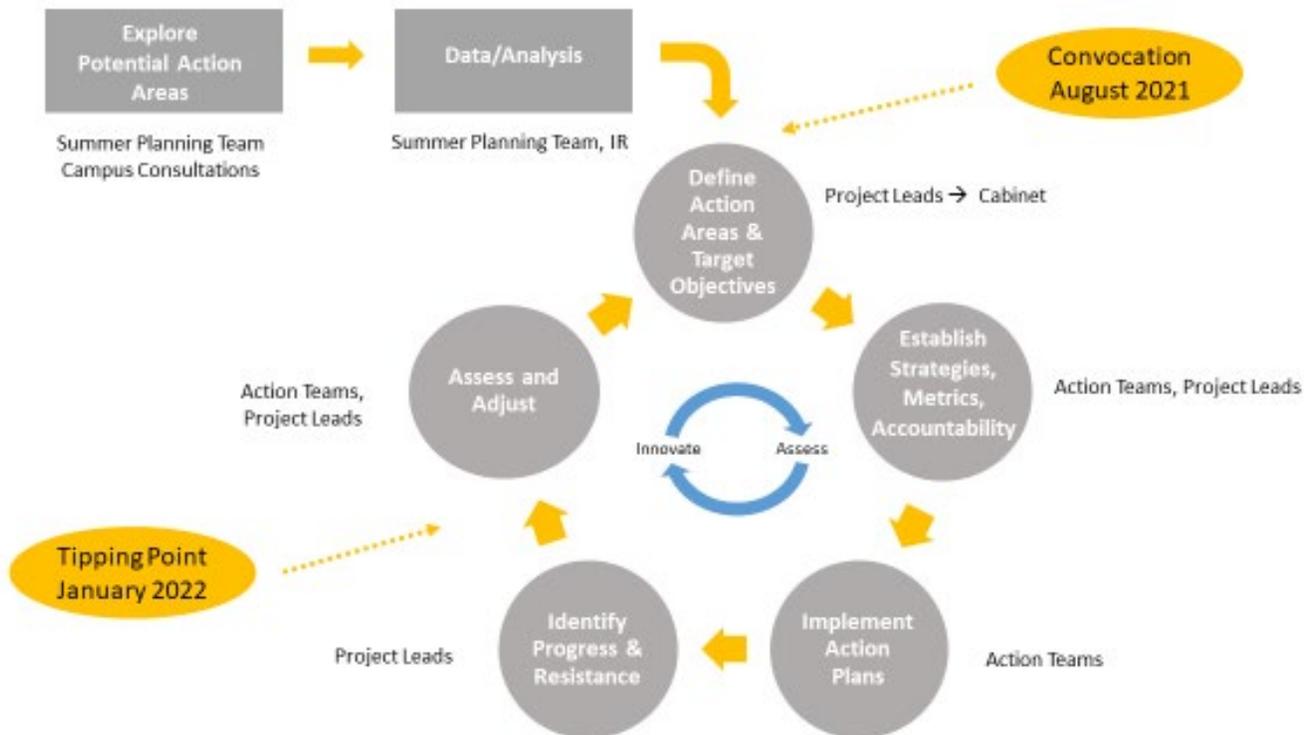
Inquiry Area IV: Early Alert

- *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?*

Team: Dave Rowe (lead), Jeremy Olguin, Kathy Fernandes, Darnell Lee, Jasmany Garcia, Gina O'Neal, Mitch Casselman.

Process

The following model demonstrates the work flow for this year's actions to close equity gaps.



Action and Inquiry Team Guidelines:

- Teams will include 4-8 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 for updates and input.
- Project Leads will consult with CSU partners on successful reduction in DFW rates and share information with relevant teams.
- Progress and initial outcomes will be shared at Tipping Point 2022.
- Team leads will be compensated with additional employment, buyouts, or professional development as appropriate to their positions and roles on the teams. Limited additional resources will be available to support the work of the teams.
- Action Teams will adopt an action framework that enacts change even as additional research and data analysis unfolds.
- Action Teams will include or engage with those with practitioner knowledge and positional authority to enact innovations.

For more information:

Advancing Equity Project Co-Leads:

- Kaitlyn Baumgartner Lee, Associate Vice President for University Advisement (kbaumgartner@csuchico.edu)
- Kate McCarthy, Dean of Undergraduate Education (kmmcarthy@csuchico.edu)