

Advancing Equity Project

Graduation Initiative 2025



2022-23 Year-End Summary and Recommendations for 2023-24

Kate McCarthy, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Academic Success
Kaitlyn Baumgartner Lee, Assistant Vice President for Student Success Initiatives & University Advising

Launched in May 2021 under presidential direction, The Advancing Equity Project (AEP) is now the sole focus of the campus' longstanding Graduation Initiative 2025 work. Supported by funding from the Chancellor's Office, AEP serves as the organizing and facilitating structure of Chico State's efforts to close equity gaps and ensure all timely academic progress for all students.

| FIVE-YEAR GOALS (established Fall 2022) |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Improve overall first-time-in-college Year One to Year Two retention rate by 5% over five years (84% by 2027).2. Improve underrepresented minority first-time-in-college Year One to Year Two retention rate by 8% over five years (no gap by 2027). |
| 2022-23 OBJECTIVES |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Design and Implement College-Based Equity Plans2. Pilot Critical Success Course Model3. Implement Comprehensive Student Success Team Model4. Align and Expand Peer Navigation and Mentoring5. Expand and Institutionalize HSI Grants and Efforts to Serve Latinx Students6. Remove Identified Barriers through Policy and Process Review |

2023-23 Highlights

OBJECTIVE 1: College-Based Equity Plans

In September 2022, for the first time, each college dean was asked to submit a detailed Equity and Retention Plan to improve the year-one-to-year-two retention of students who came in with majors in their colleges. A template provided specific metrics and targets for each college. The full set of completed plans, with first interim updates included, can be found [here](#). Colleges were given the opportunity to apply for modest one-time funding to implement their plans.

Sample college activities:

- "Connections" program linking first-year students with college faculty and staff mentors (HFA)
- Adding Supplemental Instruction to JOUR 130 (CME)
- Providing free textbooks to all students in one set of core courses (COB)
- Handouts provided to each department with graduation, retention, GPA and equity gap data and guest speakers from Faculty Development presenting EDI teaching strategies. (ECC)

- Letter sent to all families in Spanish and English detailing the support available to first-year students (CME)

OBJECTIVE 2: Critical Success Courses

This Objective recognizes that a small set of courses are disproportionately responsible for first-year students' academic dismissal. These high-enrollment, high DFW/high equity gap courses require additional faculty preparation, learning support, and course coordination.

Two courses, Chemistry 111 and Political Science 155, were selected as Critical Success Courses in the 2022-23 pilot. Departments were provided with funding for a course coordinator, modest additional compensation for faculty, and funds for appropriate course support (tutors, TAs, etc.). All faculty who teach the courses participated in reworking the design and delivery of the two courses, with a focus on student engagement, belonging, and equity. Their multi-section agreements were implemented this spring and will be assessed in fall 2023. Initial grade data show a modest decrease in DFW rates for both courses.

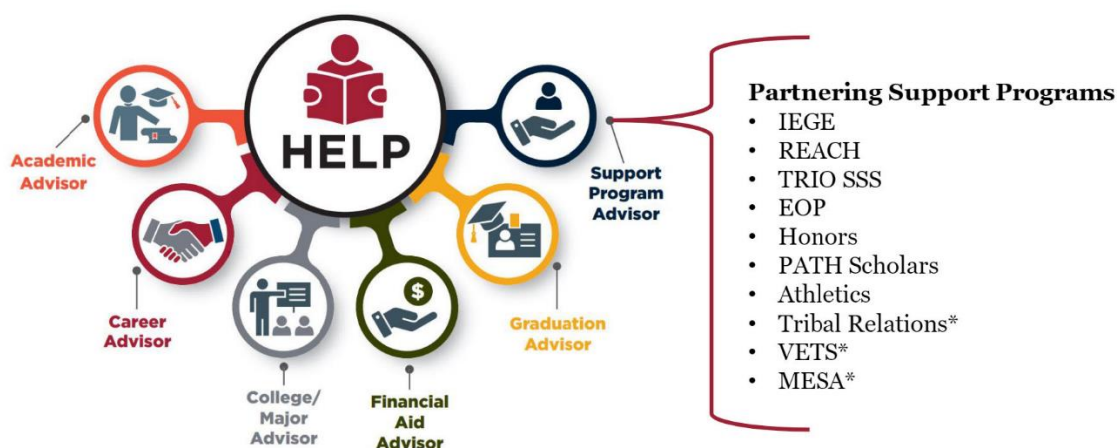
Additional funding from the Chancellor's Office under Equity Priority 5 will allow us to sustain support for these two courses and add a third course, History 130, in 2023-24. The Multi-Section Implementation Plans for CHEM 111 and POLS 155 can be found [here](#).

OBJECTIVE 3: Comprehensive Student Success Team Model

Six teams addressed this objective to create a seamless student-centered support network in which faculty and staff work efficiently and collaboratively to address the full range of student needs.

- **Team 3A** developed the framework for an **integrated HELP team**, a student-centric, cross-divisional team of student services personnel who coordinate holistic and proactive student support.

Helping Everyone Leverage their Potential (HELP)



- **Team 3B** is enabling faculty to use **Canvas New Analytics** to support student success through data analysis and Early Alerts when students are falling behind in grades, participation, or other indicators. TLP now offers regular workshops on these functions.
- **Team 3C** Collaborated with team 3A to identify critical student success tools in TargetX (Chico State 360) to utilize in the collaborative advising environment; established technology-based methods for

the campus community to engage with the HELP team with referrals and alerts; and built out custom dashboards for each HELP team to manage referral and alert activity

- **Team 3D** improved support for students to meet their first-year quantitative reasoning GE requirement by collapsing placement categories 3 and 4 to simplify the quantitative reasoning experience for students; overhauling the first-year math website; implementing a coordinated communication plan; improving the hiring, training and deployment of math tutors; and piloting pre-enrollment into appropriate QR courses with a pilot block enrollment for supported Math 107 and BADM 101.
- **Team 3E** built all undergraduate major and minor digital degree plans, testing underway to confirm validity; developed a project plan for the selection and implementation of future tools; and launched a tiered training plan to introduce campus advisors with the tool
- **Team 3F** leveraged the CSU Student Success Analytics program to identify success correlations for continuous improvement of early alert systems and identified partnership opportunities with IRSA for future analytic program cycles.

OBJECTIVE 4: Align and Expand Peer Mentoring

- **Alignment:** This team convened a campus wide Peer Support Council and worked with the Council throughout the year to establish a cohesive definition and set of core functions for first-year peer mentors. They formed the [First-Year Peer Mentor Network](#) that will provide coordinated mentoring to students in four existing support programs—EOP, TRiO, REACH, and the pilot Black Leadership Mentoring program. **Shared peer mentor training via a 2-unit course in spring 2024 will further align these activities.**
- **Expansion:** Peer mentoring support is expanding to include all students who come to Chico State without a declared major (these students have lower year-1-2 retention rates compared to their declared peers). The team also created a 1-unit course for mentees in these programs that they will be pre-enrolled for in fall 2023. **With this expansion, we will have moved from serving approximately 500 first-year students in a formal peer mentor program in fall 2021 to serving approximately 700 in fall 2023.**
- Team 4 also modeled a budget for the expansion of first-year peer mentoring to encompass all FTIC. Including full time staff coordinator, paid peer mentors, graduate student program assistant, and event and program support, per student cost would be \$305/annually, approximately \$600,000 total. **Undergraduate Education is working with Advancement to identify one-time and endowed funding for scaled implementation of this initiative (pending assessment outcomes).**

OBJECTIVE 5: Improved Service to Latinx Students and Institutionalization of HSI Grants

This objective was addressed through the agency of multiple campus partners, led by AVP for Student Engagement and Retention Programs Cirilo Cortez and Latinx Equity and Success Director Teresita Curiel. The team report is available [here](#).

OBJECTIVE 6: Policy and Process Improvements to Remove Barriers

- Academic Senate approved a recommendation to discontinue requiring written verification of serious and compelling reasons for **withdrawing from a course**. In addition to signaling a greater level of trust in our students, this change removes an administrative barrier to retention by providing students a streamlined exit from a course in which it is clear they will not be successful and allowing them to redirect attention to other courses.
- The campus secured Chancellor's Office funding for staffing to help mitigate backlog in **articulation**.

ADDITIONAL AEP ACTIVITIES

- The AEP and GI 2025 teams delivered the 5th annual **Tipping Point Student Success Summit** in January 2023, with the theme “Honoring Student Stories.” The event drew 215 participants across 8 sessions. The two largest sessions were “College-Based Innovation for Student Retention and Equity, a showcase of the college Equity Plans (Objective 1) and “Getting to Holistic Student Support” (Objective 3). This summit had more student participation than any prior event, including a powerful student panel discussion with President Hutchinson. In a post-event survey, 96% rated the overall event excellent or good.
- In alignment with the [CSU Chancellor’s Office Equity Priority 1](#), the campus launched **Re-engagement and Re-enrollment campaigns** to reach disenrolled URM student population and smooth their way to resuming their path to a Chico State degree.
- GI 2025 funds were deployed in 2022 to offer **Summer Boost**, an opportunity for eligible students to retake critical first-year courses in which they had been unsuccessful in the previous year. Over 130 low-income students successfully completed these courses, helping them reset their academic trajectories. This program was offered again in 2023, with 13 sections of high-impact first-year General Education courses.

AEP FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

One-time GI 2025 funding received in 2021-22 was budgeted to cover two years of AEP work. We have now completed the second year of that plan. Midyear, the Chancellor’s Office implemented a new funding model based on Requests for Funding to support its specific [Equity Goals and Priorities](#). Chico State was very successful in securing these awards, which we aligned with our own AEP activities (see table). These proposals will be enacted in 2023-24, with limited preliminary spending in 2022-23 for program preparation.

| Chancellor’s Office RFP | Amount Awarded Spring 2023 | Aligned AEP Activities |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| Supportive Pathways for First-Year Students (Replacing Early Start) | \$130,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidized travel and lodging for Summer Orientation • Enhanced EOP Summer Bridge programming • Support for Student Success in A2 courses • Support for Student Success in B4 courses • Strengths-Based Advising Campaign |
| Re-engage and Re-Enroll Underserved Students (Priority 1) | \$63,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative and ongoing effort to engage and enroll URM students previously enrolled at Chico State • Designed to begin with Fall 2019 enrollees, but will be embedded as practice moving forward for students who stop out • Cross-divisional implementation team will be developed |

| | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| Expand Summer/Interession Enrollment (Priority 2) | \$150,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer Boost 2023: 13 fully funded sections of A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, and B4 GE courses |
| Promote Equitable Learning and Reduce DFW Rates (Priority 5) | \$170,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical Success Courses: POLS 155, CHEM 111, HIST 130 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course coordinators Faculty Learning Community for course redesign Learning Support Additional faculty compensation |
| Family Engagement for Student Success | \$50,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-divisional, wrap-around parent/guardian engagement for middle school planning, high school preparation, and first-year college prospering |

This infusion of additional support has afforded us the opportunity to extend and repurpose funds from the original 2021-22 one-time GI 2025 allocation. **With Cabinet approval of the recommendations in this report, we will extend support for successful implementation of AEP efforts into a third year.** The GI 2025 funds will be used to supplement and back-fill programming needs associated with the additional CO awards.

2022-2023 Advancing Equity Project Financial Summary

| <i>Sources</i> | <i>Budget</i> | <i>Expenses</i> | <i>Balance Forward</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| One-Time 2021-2023 GI 2025 Yr2 Funds | \$ 445,036 | \$ 189,275 | \$ 255,761 |
| 2022 CO RFP Summer Boost | \$ 175,000 | \$ 175,000 | \$ 0 |
| 2022-2023 CO RFP Awards (various) | \$ 563,000 | \$ 10,600 | \$ 552,400 |
| <i>Totals:</i> | \$ 1,183,036 | \$ 374,875 | \$ 808,161 |

2022-2023 Advancing Equity Project Expenses (by priority)

| <i>Project Component</i> | <i>Expenses</i> |
|---|-----------------|
| Objective 1: College-Based Equity Plans | \$ 83,500 |
| Objective 2: Critical Success Courses | \$ 58,239 |
| Objective 3: Comprehensive Student Support Team | \$ 10,620 |
| Objective 4: Expanded and Aligned First-Year Peer Mentoring | \$ 6,300 |
| Tipping Point Student Success Summit 2023 | \$ 18,971 |
| Summer 2022 Summer Boost (initiating 2023 costs) | \$ 187,100 |
| Administrative Expenses (student staff/Team Leads/travel/GSI-SSI) | \$ 10,145 |
| <i>Totals:</i> | \$ 374,875 |

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2023-24

AEP's capacity in 2023-24 will be affected by campus resource and staffing limitations. We have learned that great initiatives need sustained coordination beyond what the action teams design and build. We therefore hope to focus on further implementing what has been planned and initiated, assessing what we've tried, and scaling what we know works.

Fortunately, we have built budget agility through strategically applying for funds and collaborating with other CSU initiatives that support our goals and aligned priorities. Our structure and resource management have allowed for extended utilization of one-time funds and continued strategic support of successful program elements.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVANCING EQUITY TEAM ACTION:

Rather than a set of new objectives, we recommend sustained investment in and further implementation of 2022-23 AEP activities. It is our intention to deploy GI Team membership (and others) to accomplish these activities.

Recommended 2023-24 Action Teams

- 1. Action Team 1: Integrated Student Support: HELP Team Framework Implementation and Technology Integration***
 - Convene unit leads to assure continuity, quality, and continuous improvement; leverage NACADA external review and BCSSE data to ensure successful implementation and sustainability of the HELP model.
 - Establish plan for effective and student-user-centered technology integrations (CS 360, LMS, e-advising planning and registration tools).
- 2. Action Team 2: Academic Preparation and Early Success (Wildcat Way)***
 - In collaboration with the English and Mathematics departments, Orientation and New Student Programs, Admissions, Academic Advising, EAP, and PCE, implement **Wildcat Way: A Supported Path to Success in GE Math and Writing** (funded by CO to replace Early Start) to provide comprehensive support enabling first-time-in-college students to fulfill GE Area A2 and B4 in the first year.
- 3. Action Team 3: College-Based Equity and Retention**
 - Extend College Equity Plans and align with AEP priorities by appointing College Equity Leads (funding available)
 - Updating plans to include (1) data-informed targets for college adoption of digital degree planner and (2) efforts to address priority populations of need.
 - Sustain Critical Success Courses* by deploying unspent 2022-23 GI 2025 allocations to sustain 3 courses (CHEM 111, POLS 155, HIST 130 (as planned))

Other Recommended AEP Actions (no team required):

- **Sustain focus on the first-year student experience**, given its disproportionate impact on retention and graduation equity gaps. (This will not prohibit engagement with other CSU system priorities that pertain to other populations, including a likely focus on Black student success.)

*Aligned with CSU Equity Priorities

- o **Appoint an AEP Assessment Coordinator** to perform quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the AEP initiatives of the past two years. Beyond retention and equity gap metrics, assessment should consider measurables such as advising contacts and DFW rates in select courses, as well as qualitative feedback from students, faculty, and staff participating in AEP-related programs. This assessment will allow us to sharpen our focus as we approach the 2025 milestone. (AEP has funding to support this assessment.)
- o **Continue First-Year Peer Mentor implementation and expansion by doing the following:**
 - Continue to facilitate campus alignment and coordination of first-year peer mentoring programs to ensure clarity of services and monitor the development of start-up peer support programs to minimize redundancy and confusion.
 - Establish leadership for First-Year Peer Mentor Network
 - Coordinate with VPSA on implementation of affinity-based mentoring
 - Coordination with college success centers to facilitate effective hand-offs for second year support
- o **Sustain Summer Boost program*** by deploying unspent 2022-23 GI 2025 allocations to sustain the program for 2024 (as planned)
- o **Sustain Tipping Point Student Success Summit (6th Annual)** and consider aligning theme with CSU Report “Advancing Black Student Success and Elevating Black Excellence.”

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALIGNED ACTION BY CAMPUS LEADERSHIP

1. Enrollment Continuum*

- In 2022-23, AEP took on the “Retention to Graduation” focus area of the Enrollment Continuum. For 2023-24, we recommend that this area be redefined as “**Retention Barrier Removal**,” assigned to a small cross-divisional team with positional authority to confer and act to remove identified barriers. This recommendation has been adopted by Enrollment Continuum leadership.

2. Honoring Primary Sources on EDI

- To attend to the AEP guiding principle of consultation with “advocates for and representatives of traditionally underserved populations,” we recommend that campus leadership support the initiatives that are prioritized by the Offices of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, under the leadership of CDO Morales.

3. Campus Revitalization

- To enhance a critical sense of belonging, especially for minoritized students, and to revitalize the campus experience for all, we recommend that campus leadership initiate a coordinated (and inclusive) conversation about establishing places to facilitate informal social interactions (student-student, faculty-student, faculty-staff, etc.). In addition to cultural affinity spaces, this might include additional food and drink venues and indoor and outdoor conversation places.

*Aligned with CSU Equity Priorities