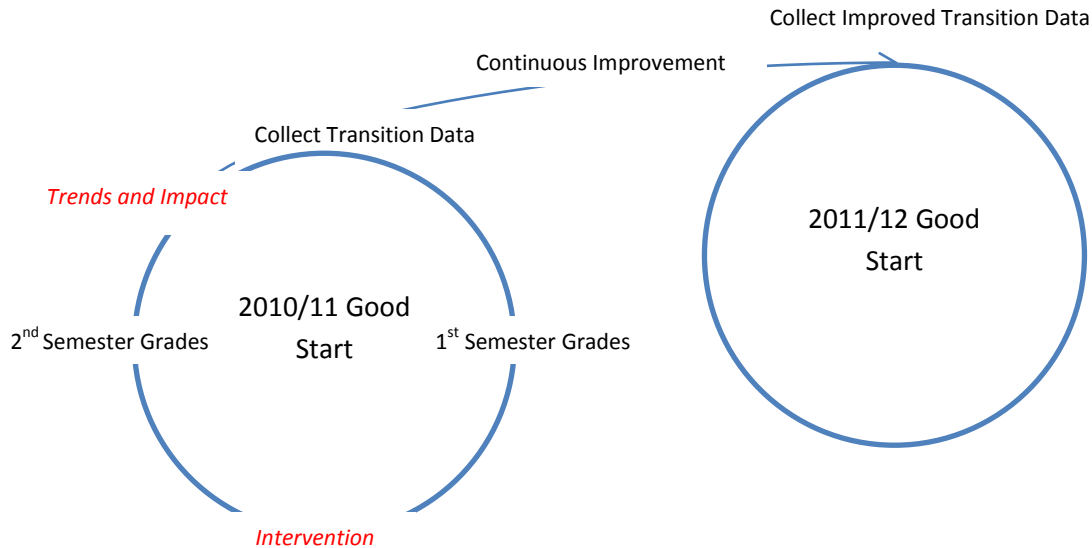


# Chico Student Success Center Graduation Initiative Pilot Project 2010/2011 Academic Year



## Project Introduction

The Chico Student Success Center (CCSC) model focuses on the entire spectrum of college student development. The model includes activities with outreach, recruitment, transition, academic success, intervention, social integration, career preparation, and alumni relations. This provides the CCSC with a unique opportunity to work with a cohort of students before they arrive on campus. Ninety percent of the CCSC first time freshmen are African American, Hispanic, or Native American students. The 2010/11 cohort consisted of 107 students from 27 partnership high schools. These schools serve a majority of low income students.

The goals of the “Good Start” pilot project were the following:

1. Identify Transition Issues for Partnership Students
2. Review Course Schedules for Partnership Students
3. Track Specific Support Services
4. Improve Early Intervention Services
5. Identify and Share High Impact Practices

During the summer of 2010, transition data was collected for the fall 2010 freshmen cohort. Below are the data columns.

Name	High School	High School Contact	CSU Admission Index	HS GPA	Chico Support Program	Fall Financial Award	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Housing	Summer Orientation	Advisor's Opinion of Class Schedule	Notes	Fall 2010 GPA	Intervention	Spring 2011 GPA
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### 1<sup>st</sup> Semester Data

- The average fall semester gpa for the cohort was 2.28.
- 35 students had a fall semester gpa below 2.0
- 9 of the 35 students with a gpa below 2.0 came from 2 schools
- There was no significant difference in gpa between students living in university housing (2.16) and students living in privately-managed, residential style housing (2.13).
- The 8 students either commuting or living in off-campus apartments had a 2.73 fall semester gpa.
- The bottom 10% averaged a gpa of .59. The top 10% averaged 3.54.
- The bottom 10% average CSU admission score was 3366. The top 10% average CSU admission score was 3662.
- 25% of the students below a 2.0 gpa were registered with another student support program such as MESA, EOP, or Student Support Services (SSS). Of the students above a 2.0 gpa, 33% were registered with MESA, EOP, or SSS.
- 71% of the CSSC fall 2010 cohort were not registered with MESA, EOP, or SSS.

### CSSC Mid-Year Intervention

- The CSSC reached out to all 35 students with a fall gpa below 2.0 through email or phone calls. In addition, we spoke with some of the students' former high school teachers and counselors in an effort to better understand the student's background.
- Meetings were conducted with 21 of the 35 students during the first 2 weeks of the spring semester. Discussions included academic policies, financial aid and housing issues, and the possible reasons for the student's poor academic performance. In addition, the CSSC spent a considerable amount of time helping the students navigate through the university's student support system, including arranging tutoring services.
- Nine students were enrolled in the CSSC's academic leadership course. This course is designed for juniors and seniors, but the university did not have an academic intervention course available.
  - The 9 students in the course were required to reflect upon their academic goals, and personal values while also engaging in community service and career preparation activities

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester Findings

- The average spring semester gpa for the cohort was 2.389. (Fall = 2.28)
- 29 students had a fall semester gpa below 2.0 (Fall = 35)
- 11 of the 29 students with a gpa below 2.0 came from the same two schools cited in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester findings. (For fall 2011, only 5 students are enrolled in Chico from these same 2 schools compared to 22 freshmen in the 2010/11 cohort.)
- There was a slight difference in grade point averages between students living in university housing (2.21) and the students living in privately-managed, residential style housing (2.48). (In the fall, there was no difference.)
- The 8 students either commuting or living off-campus in apartments had a 2.86 spring semester gpa. (Fall = 2.73)
- The bottom 10% averaged a spring gpa of .68. The top 10% averaged 3.64. (Fall low 10% = .59, top 10% = 3.54)
- The bottom 10% gpa in the cohort group had an average CSU admission score of 3366. The top 10% gpa in the cohort average CSU admission score was 3720. (Fall low 10% = 3366, top 10% = 3662)

	Cohort Avg. GPA	# Below a 2.0 GPA	Living on Campus	Living in Privately-Managed Residential Housing	Commuting/Living off Campus in Apartments	Bottom 10% GPA	Top 10% GPA	Bottom 10% GPA-Admission Index	Top 10% GPA-Admission Index
Spring	2.389	29	2.21	2.48	2.86	.68	3.64	3366	3720
Fall	2.28	35	2.16	2.13	2.73	.59	3.54	3366	3662

## Observations

Many of the CSSC students faced enormous personal challenges outside the classroom. Here are just a few comments heard during this past academic year from our cohort students:

- “My mother tried to commit suicide and she is in the hospital. I need to leave for home.” – Chico GPA 2.40
- “I lost my mother due to alcohol problems and now my dad is drinking too much again. I need to go home to support him.” – Chico GPA 3.14
- “My family is homeless. I sent my financial aid to them.” – Chico GPA 1.66

- “My sister tried to kill herself for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time this year. I can’t concentrate on school.” – Chico GPA .88
- “My mother is having surgery for a brain tumor. I need to go home to help her.” Chico GPA 2.48

All the students in the bottom 10% of our cohort’s gpa came from 3 high schools. Within this group two major problems were easily identifiable. Most of the students demonstrated very little motivation for attending class. They seemed to greatly enjoy the opportunity to live in a safe and highly social environment with a guarantee of three meals a day with all of this being paid for in grants and loans. There seemed to be little that could be done to change their mindset. Others were also deeply involved in an internal social issue, or as they would call it, “drama”. Although all the students in the lowest 10% gpa range received individual attention, advice, counseling, problem solving, “tough love” conversations, and advocacy support, nothing seemed to work. It would be much easier to intervene with the unmotivated, grant supported student, if their financial aid was directly linked to their class attendance.

The students’ health also seems to be a factor in their academic success. Many of our students did not appear to have health insurance. They were reluctant to seek medical care even at our own campus clinic. Several of them had serious dental issues. For students who are struggling academically, 7 to 10 days out of the classroom can be almost too much to overcome.

**The Mysterious and Wonderful Case of Ms. 2,762** (Her Admission Index Score - an exceptional admit)

Spring 2011	ENGL 130P - 40	Academic Writing				A-
Spring 2011	KINE 296 - 03	American Sports in Film				A
Spring 2011	MATH 051 - 09	Intermediate Algebra				C
Spring 2011	MCGS 155 - 42	Intro Multicultural/Gender Std				A
Spring 2011	SOCI 100 - 05	Introduction to Sociology				B-
Fall 2010	CMST 132 - 42	Small Group Communication				C+
Fall 2010	ECON 101 - 02	Introduction to Economics				F
Fall 2010	MATH 031 - 01	Beginning Algebra				A
Fall 2010	UNIV 101 - 42	Intro to University Life				D

This particular student demonstrated a remarkable turnaround. Her admission index score was below the 2900 CSU minimum. Her high school gpa was a relatively low 2.44. Her first semester college gpa was a 1.1. During our mid-year intervention interview, it was noted that “she should be ok.” However, this dramatic of a turnaround was not expected. As a member of an athletic team, she appeared tremendously motivated on being eligible to participate in her sport.

We had several others with remarkable turnarounds. They too had a fall gpa below 2.0 but above 1.0. This seemed to be the group that the CSSC interventions had the greatest success.

	1.00 – 1.99 GPA Students
Average Fall GPA for Sub-Group	1.51
Average Spring GPA for Students Identified in Fall Sub-Group	2.29

### **Continuous Improvement**

Two areas where the CSSC support needs to improve have been identified through the pilot project. First, at-risk CSSC students seem to avoid academic advising until it is too late to implement positive changes. The second area is the need to identify seriously at-risk students sooner rather than later.

To address the first concern, the CSSC's students will receive additional support from the Academic Advising Program. An advisor will attend the CSSC academic leadership course, spend additional hours in the CSSC, and carefully monitor the CSSC students during Summer Orientation. The goal is to get the CSSC students more comfortable with the university's entire student support network. This approach is similar to that used by the CSSC and the Financial Aid and Scholarship Office.

Because the CSSC has close relationships with high school partners, a survey of these partners has been created to identify "at risk students" before their first semester college grades have identified them. While still collecting the previous pilot project data, the CSSC is adding a College Readiness Survey. The survey asks 7 basic questions.

1. **MOTIVATION:** What is this student's level of academic curiosity?  
(1= not curious at all, 5 = very curious)
2. **FAMILY SUPPORT:** Do you think this student will send a portion of their financial aid back home to support their family?  
(1= probably will, 5 = very unlikely)
3. **ACADEMIC MATURITY:** What is this student's level of ability to stay on task?  
(1= Very low ability, 5 = Very high ability)
4. **SELF CONFIDENCE:** What is this student's level of self-confidence?

(1= very low self-confidence, 5 = very high self-confidence)

5. LEARNER ENGAGEMENT: What is this student's level of class participation?  
(1 = rarely contributes, 5 = always contributes)
6. PEER INFLUENCE: Would you describe this student as an independent thinker?  
(1 = greatly Influenced by others, 5= very independent thinker)
7. BOOMERRANG: How surprised would you be if this student returned home after only one year at Chico?  
(1 = I expect it, 5 = I would be greatly surprised)

An average “At-Risk” score will be developed from high school teacher’s answers. For students below a score of 4, the CSSC will attempt to provide early intervention services before the start of the fall 2011 semester.

#### **Final Note**

Last year we created the CSSC Logic Model. This model provided a strategic roadmap with purposeful activities and assessments. The “Good Start” pilot project fit nicely within the Model.