



Opportunity and Challenge Profile

Search for the Chief Diversity Officer California State University, Chico Chico, California

California State University, Chico (Chico State) seeks a visionary and collaborative leader for the position of Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). As a member of the Cabinet, the CDO will provide counsel to the President and Cabinet, and have the opportunity to advance and center equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts across the University. The new CDO will provide an overarching vision and strategy to build on the good work already being done to fulfill the strategic plan and earn the Seal of Excelencia to become a more equitable and inclusive institution. The CDO will serve as a thought partner on campus, in the surrounding community, at the California State University System, and beyond.

Operating as part of the 23-campus California State University System, which educates the most ethnically, economically, and academically diverse student body in the nation, Chico State is a comprehensive and residential public university with the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation. The University enrolls over 15,000 students with more than 50 percent identifying as first-generation college students. Founded in 1887, Chico State is the second-oldest campus in the CSU system and is the anchor institution for Northern California. Situated on a beautiful 119-acre campus—designated as an arboretum—Chico State is located near the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains, approximately 90 minutes north of the state capitol, Sacramento, and a three-hour drive from the San Francisco Bay Area. Chico State provides students a small-college-town, residential campus experience and boasts a diverse student body, high-quality research experiences, exceptional faculty mentoring, and civic and global engagement opportunities for undergraduates and graduate students alike.

Working in close collaboration with University leadership and the community, the CDO will lead the University in leveraging its many strengths, including its strong sense of community and a highly dedicated staff and faculty, and leading the campus in open dialogue around how best to fulfill Chico State's mission to become “a preeminent university solving the unprecedented challenges of the 21st century.” The new CDO will provide leadership in the development, coordination, and implementation of initiatives, programming, policies, and services that promote equity, diversity, and inclusion and address the following opportunities and challenges:

- Create and implement a vision and measurable strategy for equity, diversity, and inclusion in alignment with the university strategic plan
- Serve as a trusted and collaborative campus partner who fosters a culture of open dialogue, education, and community building across the University
- Partner closely with the University community to support the recruitment and retention of diverse populations
- Effectively manage and expand resources to advance efforts

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- Expand community and external engagement to establish Chico State as a valued leader and partner for inclusive excellence locally, regionally, within the CSU system, and beyond.

A list of desired qualifications and characteristics of the Chief Diversity Officer can be found at the conclusion of this document. This list was prepared by the search committee with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to provide background information and detail the key opportunities and challenges related to the position. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

About the California State University System

With 23 campuses, 485,000 students, and 56,000 faculty and staff, the CSU is a leader in high-quality, accessible, student-focused higher education, and trains the majority of California's leaders and policymakers: approximately 1 in 10 employees in California is a CSU graduate and there are over 3.9 million alumni. The CSU has several student success initiatives that have been lauded nationally. Currently, the Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI 2025) is focused on efforts to help students succeed and progress toward graduation in a timely manner and to eliminate gaps in achievement for underrepresented minorities (URM) and Pell-eligible students. For more information on GI 2025 please see: <https://www.csuchico.edu/gradinitiative/index.shtml>.

To learn more about the California State University system, see www.calstate.edu.

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Chico State sits on land originally inhabited by the Mechoopda Maidu Indians. Chico State is a Hispanic-Serving Institution, and more than half of enrolled students are first generation in their families to attend college. About 77% of students receive financial aid, and Chico State is ranked in the top 8 percent nationally for return on investment by PayScale.com.

Today, Chico State is a comprehensive university serving not only the Northern California region, but also the state, the nation, and the world through instruction, research, and public service. The University helps today's students develop into tomorrow's successful citizens. Its unique combination of scholarly pursuits, civic engagement, and a strong connection to the local community has earned it national and international accolades. Chico State has been rated a top-10 regional public university in the West by *U.S. News & World Report* since 1998, when the rankings began, and earned the highest possible score on the U.S. Department of Education's College Scoreboard. In its 2022 [Best Colleges Rankings](#), US News & World Report recognized Chico State on a half-dozen lists—including a trio of regional top 25 placements: Social Mobility, Best Colleges for Veterans, and Top Public Schools. Chico State's national and regional recognitions for providing a high-quality, high-value education are prolific—and in a diverse array of categories. Within the last year, College Consensus [ranked the University](#) No. 2 in its "[Best Online Colleges and Universities](#)" and No. 8 in the "[Best Public Colleges and Universities](#)" lists—both national honors. The [Institute for International Education](#) ranked Chico State's [Study Abroad and Exchange](#) program at No. 7 nationally for master's institutions with students participating in programs a year or longer. And the University placed in the top 15 in a pair of [Washington Monthly's 2021 College Guide and Rankings](#) lists—"Best Bang for the Buck Rankings: West" and "[Master's University Rankings](#)".

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The University comprises seven colleges and five schools including the College of Agriculture; the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (which includes the School of Social Work); the College of Business; the College of Communication and Education (including the Schools of Education and Communication); the College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management; the College of Humanities and Fine Arts (including the School of the Arts); and the College of Natural Sciences (including the School of Nursing). The University also has 22 specialized centers, including the Center for Regenerative Agriculture and Resilient Systems, Agribusiness Institute, and the California Pavement Preservation Center. Chico State's faculty are dedicated scholars and teachers. From preparing teachers to protecting watersheds, promoting economic development to supporting archaeological research, faculty have enabled the University to be a positive force in the communities it serves. The student-to-faculty ratio is approximately 23 to 1, and the average undergraduate class size is 30.

In 2019, the University finalized its 2019–24 Strategic Plan: “[The Time is Now.](#)” This plan is Chico State’s first step in their journey toward distinction, where students earn a premier education through leading-edge instruction, service, and scholarship. This plan underscores three priorities: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Civic and Global Engagement; and Resilient and Sustainable Systems. More information about the strategic plan can be found at the following link: <https://www.csuchico.edu/pres/assets/documents/stategic-plan-2019-2024.pdf>

As an HSI but also as a Predominately White Institution (PWI), Chico State is committed to continuously working with Latino populations and increasing the number of students who not only attend the University but also graduate from Chico State. To do so, [The Office of Latinx Equity and Success](#), whose director reports to the CDO, is working toward achieving the [Seal of Excelencia](#), which is a national certification that aims to accelerate Latino student success in higher education. Chico State also aspires to diversify its faculty and staff to ensure historically underserved students identify with their support systems and understand their differing needs, but also to reflect the changing demographics of the workforce, especially in California.

Students are drawn to Chico State for its close-knit community and its intimate, student focused environment. In 2021, Chico State students were from 43 nations, 30 states, and 1 U.S. territory. The majority (97.8%) came from California: 27% from Chico State’s service area; 10% from the Sacramento area; 22% from the San Francisco Bay Area; 21% from the Los Angeles area; and 17% from the rest of California. The remaining 2% are out-of-state or international students. Approximately 52% of first-year students are the first in their families to attend college. Chico State became a Hispanic-Serving Institution in 2015 and now reports over 36% of students are Latinx. View additional [student diversity demographics](#). Chico State prides itself as being a social mobility vehicle for first-generation students and lessening the student debt burden for all graduates. Chico state has ranked 5th in the nation and 1st in California for the lowest student loan debt.¹

Six years into the Graduation Initiative 2025, Chico State is making progress toward its 2025 goal. For first-year freshman, the University graduation rate is 33.1% for those graduating in 4 years, edging closer to a 2025 goal of 41%. The 6-year graduation rate for first-year freshmen is at 65.4% with a 2025 goal of 74%. For transfer students, Chico State’s 4-year graduation goal is 86% by 2025 and currently at 80.6% and the 2-year transfer student rate is 43.7%, surpassing the goal of 43% for 2025. The equity gap between the URM and non-URM students remains a challenge that the University is committed to effectively address with additional resources and strategies.

¹ <https://lendedu.com/blog/student-loan-debt-by-school-by-state/>

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To learn more about the University's overall EDI efforts, visit www.csuchico.edu/diversity.

About the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The [Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) is committed to cultivating an inclusive environment where diverse identities and expressions are valued, respected, appreciated and celebrated. It serves as a resource to our campus community by providing information, referrals, advocacy, coordination, and support for diversity-related events, activities, initiatives, and discussions. The Office partners with a wide variety of constituencies throughout Chico State, including the [University Diversity Council](#), the [Office of Tribal Relations](#), [Office of Latinx Equity and Success](#), the [Cross Cultural Leadership Center](#) (CCLC), [Student Transition and Retention Center](#) (STAR), [International Education and Global Engagement](#), [Multicultural & Gender Studies](#), [Office of Veteran Affairs](#), [Path Scholars](#), [Dreamer Center](#), [1st Generation Faculty & Staff Association](#), and the [Accessibility Resource Center](#). The CDO also works closely with Human Resources and the Office of Academic Personnel on improving recruitment and retention practices.

About the University Diversity Council

The [University Diversity Council](#) (UDC), led by the Chief Diversity Officer and made up of staff, faculty, and students, was established in fall 2014 and [codified by the Academic Senate in 2021](#). In aligning its mission and goals with Chico State's strategic priorities, the University and UDC are committed to fostering dynamic, high-quality and inclusive learning environments both within and outside of the classroom. Current priorities for the UDC include increasing workforce diversity; improving campus climate; data and metrics for faculty, staff, and student demographics reporting; communicating EDI initiatives and progress; and promoting social justice, diversity & inclusion across the curriculum.

Role of the Chief Diversity Officer

The CDO is the chief administrator for the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, responsible for collaborating across the institution and externally to provide a vision, leadership, and strategic direction for University-wide EDI initiatives and advance the priorities and goals of the institution. The CDO is an ex-officio (nonvoting) member of the President's Cabinet and will provide counsel to the President and Cabinet on equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. The CDO is charged with overall management, planning, administration, and evaluation of the unit's programs, services, personnel, policies, procedures development, and an operating budget of \$100,000. The CDO supervises the Office of Latinx Equity and Success and its director is a direct report. The Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion also includes an associate director, an administrative support assistant, and student assistants.

The CDO interfaces regularly with all units and divisions to ensure impactful initiatives are being developed and implemented with continuous assessment and improvements. The CDO will provide leadership to the University Diversity Council (UDC) and coordinate and assess the efforts of various campus units to increase pathways of success for all students, faculty and staff, especially those from traditionally underserved populations.

Key Opportunities and Challenges for the Chief Diversity Officer

The CDO will serve as a leader, advocate, and spokesperson for EDI matters across the University in order to achieve greater impact within Chico State and the broader community. In doing so, the CDO will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Create and implement a vision and measurable strategy for equity, diversity, and inclusion in alignment with the university strategic plan

With a strategic plan that highlights EDI as a top priority, the CDO will have the opportunity to motivate the University community around this important work and set a vision and strategy for the future. By developing student success initiatives catered for historically underserved students, enhancing the policies that support a more equitable and inclusive environment, and facilitating conversations that honor various identities, the CDO will work collectively with the wider University community to create lasting institutional change. Additionally, the CDO will partner with the incoming Vice President of Student Affairs and the Director for Latinx Equity & Success in achieving the Seal of Excelencia and further solidifying the University's commitment as an HSI. The CDO is expected to establish clear and measurable benchmarks informed by the strategic plan and the priorities of the University community to measure progress toward EDI goals, including understanding demographic data on local, state, and federal levels while also working with other units, such as the Office of Tribal Relations, to further disaggregate data and enhance programming specific to the needs of the Chico State community. To be successful, the CDO will need to develop thoughtful partnerships with offices across the University to align strategy, bridge current efforts, and support a common understanding and goals for EDI.

Serve as a trusted and collaborative campus partner who fosters a culture of open dialogue, education, and community building across the university

Collaboration is a central tenet at Chico State, and the University community is eager to develop their skill set for how best to support EDI objectives. As a member of the President's Cabinet, the CDO is uniquely positioned to listen to and support all areas of the institution by encouraging difficult yet necessary conversations at both communal and institutional levels. The CDO will be an effective communicator who will illuminate a variety of voices on and off campus and serve as an advocate and spokesperson for those voices to positively impact campus climate through trust and community-building initiatives. The CDO will propose new opportunities to educate the community regarding the language and literature on EDI and its potential, positive impact on the core academic and student experience. The CDO will help instill a culture that encourages and values such discussions, emphasizing both the individual and collective responsibilities needed for improving climate.

Partner closely with the University community to support the recruitment and retention of diverse populations

The CDO will help recruit, support, and retain faculty, staff, and students from a range of backgrounds. This will involve helping to identify systemic barriers to their success and fostering a more welcoming environment for all by working closely with campus partners, such as Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, Human Resources, and Student Affairs, to ensure policies, procedures, practices, and resources facilitate an equitable and inclusive environment for all members of the University community to feel supported and valued. The CDO will be a thoughtful and reflective collaborator who knows how to work closely with a wide range of individuals to coordinate institutional and community efforts, especially when there is a need to reach out to others for guidance for how best to support the many populations that make up Chico State.

Effectively manage and expand resources to advance efforts

To grow programming and impact, the CDO will need to be creative with existing resources and actively seek new sources of funding. The CDO will have the opportunity to leverage Chico State's designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution to collaborate with other members of the Chico State community around grant-funding opportunities and encourage the sharing of resources to accomplish shared EDI goals and objectives. The CDO will be expected partner across the University to help tell Chico State's evolving EDI story well externally to various audiences for resource generation through fundraising, foundations, and other community partnerships.

Expand community and external engagement to establish Chico State as a valued leader and partner for inclusive excellence locally, regionally, within the CSU system, and beyond.

With most Chico State students living either on campus or off campus within two miles of the University, and with most faculty and staff living nearby as well, the CDO will need to understand the importance of local and regional collaborations and the need for a community approach to cultivate a welcoming culture for all, especially for historically underserved populations. The CDO will also have the opportunity to work across the Cal State System in order to develop, coordinate, and establish efforts alongside the other CSU campuses to positively impact EDI efforts for the CSU system as a whole. Overall, the CDO will work to establish Chico State as a strategic and thoughtful partner around EDI efforts in the community and the state, and build Chico State's capacity and reputation around this important work.

Qualifications and Characteristics

Required Qualifications:

- A master's degree or equivalent in a related field.
- Demonstrated leadership, a minimum of 5 years, in planning, implementing, evaluating, and advocating for programs that support equitable educational and workforce access and outcomes.
- Knowledge of contemporary issues of access, social justice, equity, inclusion, diversity, and institutional racism, including the current scholarship and best practices that inform and address these issues.
- Demonstrated ability to manage crises related to systemic and structural racism and other EDI challenges
- Commitment to policies and practices in all areas of the university that engage diverse, intercultural, and intersectional viewpoints and identities
- Experience with budget management, supervision of staff, and staff development and empowerment.
- Experience with federal and state policy, regulation, and compliance issues.

Preferred attributes:

- Demonstrated cross-cultural competencies, including strong emotional intelligence and the ability to engage and build relationships with university constituencies and historically marginalized populations.
- Evidence of strong decision-making, leadership and management skills.
- Excellent communication and conflict-resolution skills needed to navigate politically-charged situations to resolve problems, build consensus, and reconcile competing interests.
- Experience in strategically implementing or supporting institutional change.

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- Experience creating, implementing, and evaluating long and short-term goals and plans.
- Ability to apply forward-thinking and creative thought with high ethical standards to develop strategic vision.
- Bilingual or multilingual preferred.

About the Chico Community

Chico is a vibrant community of approximately 102,000 people with easy access to Lassen Volcanic National Park, Napa Valley, San Francisco, Northern Oregon, and Lake Tahoe areas. Home to Bidwell Park, one of the largest municipal parks in the nation, Chico offers a high quality of life, affordable housing when compared to other California communities, strong commitments to sustainability, and access to numerous outdoor recreational opportunities and a thriving arts, music, and events scene. Enloe Medical Center ranks in the top 8 percent of hospitals in California by *U.S. News & Review* and top 15 percent in the nation for outstanding patient experience by Healthgrades. The Chico Unified School District and the Butte Glenn Community College District have excellent schools and innovative programs and a long history of collaboration with Chico State. Over the years, Chico has garnered recognition among the “Best Places in America” by *Forbes* magazine, the “Best Places to Retire” by *U.S. News & World Report*. Its dedication to the environment has landed it acknowledgement as the “Best Green Places to Live” by *Country Home Magazine*, and active lifestyle heralded by *TIME* magazine’s “Top 10 Cities in the Nation Where People Exercise the Most,” *Outdoor*’s “Best Towns,” and Bicycle’s “America’s Best Bike Town.”

Although primarily known as an agricultural area, Chico and the northern Sacramento Valley also have a robust, organized, and growing tech sector, including software and mobile application development, e-commerce, clean technologies, renewable energy, and advanced manufacturing. The city strives to maintain its strong sense of community, while simultaneously establishing itself as a dynamic regional center for business, education, recreation, and culture.

For more information, see <https://www.explorebuttecounty.com/>.

Furthermore, the campus acknowledges and is mindful that Chico State stands on lands that were originally occupied by the first people of the area, the Mechoopda, and we recognize their distinctive spiritual relationship with this land, the flora, the fauna, and the waters that run through campus. We are humbled that our campus resides upon sacred lands that since time immemorial have sustained the Mechoopda people and continue to do so today.

Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Chico State has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. For more details and to submit inquiries, nominations, and applications, visit <https://www.imsearch.com/8590>. Electronic submission of materials is required.



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California State University, Chico employs only individuals lawfully authorized to work in the United States. The University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate against persons on the basis of race, religion, color, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, medical condition, National origin, sex, sexual orientation, covered veteran status, or any other protected status.