

Introduction

The foundation of our Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan is Chico State's [Strategic Plan 2019-2023](#).

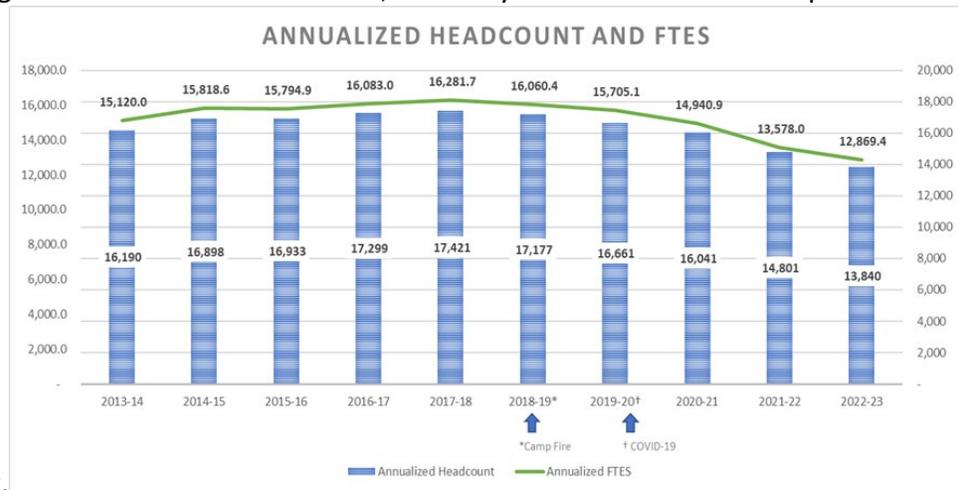


Throughout the SEM Plan are ambitious goals that will enable Chico State to work toward increased and sustainable enrollment and provide financial stability. The institution is committed to leveraging available resources to meet these goals. This SEM Plan is designed to be holistic in nature and focuses on the entire student life cycle. Over the next five years, the institution will continue efforts to engage new populations and instructional modalities, enhancing in-person, experiential, hybrid and online modes to attract first-time-in-college, transfer, returning, distance, remote, international, and mid-career learners through strategic planning within Academic Affairs and with the input and leadership of a new president. Much of the work with new programs will need to be developed over the next academic year.

Like many universities across the United States, Chico State has experienced a decline in student enrollment since its peak in the 2017–18 academic year. Societal shifts regarding higher education and declining enrollment in California community colleges have contributed to enrollment declines at Chico State. However, Chico State's challenges have been compounded by the effects of the 2018 Camp Fire and regional megafires, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

To contextualize the challenges and solutions proposed in this plan, the following chart shows the historical decline in overall enrollment as well as the decline in new students each year. Declining yield rates, which are the percentage of admitted students who ultimately enroll and

stay enrolled through Census their first semester, are a key reason behind the drop in new



student enrollment.

To address these challenges, Chico State began work on this SEM plan in academic year 2020-2021 with an evaluation of current enrollment management capabilities, strategies, and tactics, and has continued and expanded this work each year. On a parallel path, the University embarked on an identity and branding project, the first that we’ve conducted with a branding/identity development consultant, which provided a much-needed framework for many improvements. During 2021–2022, Chico State launched several projects which resulted in an increase of 4.5% for Fall 2022 first-time-in-college (FTIC) enrollment. At the same time, the Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI 2025) and Advancing Equity Project (AEP) provided structure to help close equity gaps in student success and retention, as well as improve success for all students. While these gains are helpful, the University needs more significant improvements in both new student enrollment and retention.

Beginning in academic year 2022–2023, the University launched the next phase of SEM planning, the [Enrollment Continuum](#). This work is focused on improving each stage of the student life cycle, developing a more robust admissions funnel while also restoring retention rates to historical norms. In particular, the University is focusing on growing enrollment by improving yield rates through a variety of tactics, including the removal of barriers in the application review process, greater intercampus collaboration communicating with admitted students, the use of data to better engage with students most likely to enroll, and accelerated admission, financial aid, and scholarship notifications.

The core goal of this plan is to leverage the resources of the institution to significantly grow enrollment over the next two years, and to sustain that growth over the duration of the plan. At the end of the plan, the University’s enrollment would be in line with the funded FTES target. The five-year SEM Plan is the blueprint with which to address enrollment challenges faced at Chico State. It will be continuously evaluated and modified. Each semester and academic year, milestones and overall goals will be evaluated to stay current with evolutions and trends in higher education.

Enrollment Projections

Chico State has ambitious goals to grow enrollment. Below you will find an enrollment model to reach the University's funded FTES target. In addition, the University has provided enrollment projections that still project growth, but more realistically.

Enrollment model to reach funded FTES target

	2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-2026		2026-2027		2027-2028	
	Fall	Spring										
New Students	3,667	845	5,501	1,268	5,639	1,300	5,780	1,333	5,925	1,367	6,074	1,402
Continuing Students	10,173	12,086	10,733	13,178	12,227	14,403	13,551	15,506	14,436	16,698	15,651	17,835
Headcount	13,840	12,931	16,234	14,446	17,866	15,703	19,331	16,839	20,361	18,065	21,725	19,237
FTE	12,869	11,686	14,935	13,146	16,436	14,289	17,784	15,324	18,732	16,439	19,987	17,505
Annualized	12,278		14,041		15,364		16,555		17,586		18,747	
Change	-0.095		0.144		0.094		0.078		0.062		0.066	

Projections based on current admissions and enrollment numbers

	2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-2026		2026-2027		2027-2028	
	Fall	Spring										
New Students	3,667	845	4,067	920	4,256	954	4,434	994	4,646	1,048	4,859	1,094
Continuing Students	10,173	12,086	10,733	12,008	10,943	12,168	11,325	12,555	11,615	13,257	12,393	14,083
Headcount	13,840	12,931	14,800	12,928	15,199	13,122	15,759	13,549	16,261	14,305	17,252	15,177
FTE	12,869	11,686	13,616	11,764	13,983	11,941	14,498	12,330	14,960	13,017	15,871	13,811
Annualized	12,278		12,691		12,963		13,415		13,989		14,842	
Change	-0.095		0.034		0.021		0.035		0.043		0.061	

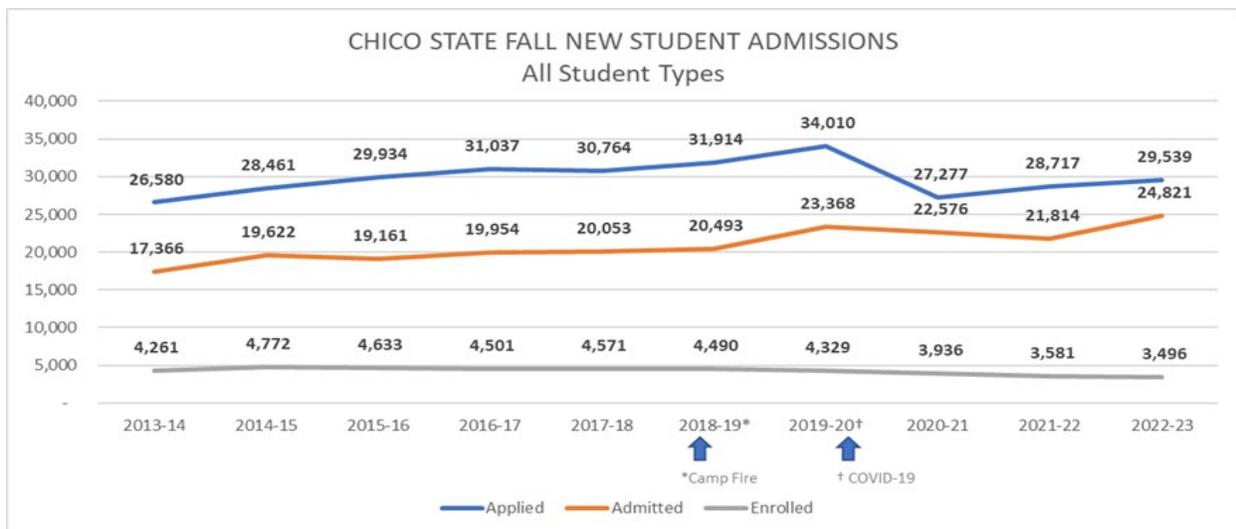
Goals tied to enrollment projections

- Domestic Undergraduate Admissions Goals:
 - Increase fall 2023 first-time-in-college (FTIC) enrollment by at least 250 students
 - Increase first-time-in-college yield by 2% for fall 2023 (to 12%) and then by 0.5% annually through 2026–2027
 - Increase fall 2023 transfer enrollment by at least 150 students
 - Increase transfer yield by 2% annually beginning fall 2023 (to 32%)
 - Increase spring 2024 transfer enrollment by 200 students
 - Increase prospect pool by 50% each year (5,400 before efforts to increase)
- Increase California graduate student population by 10% each year

- International Student Enrollment Goals:
 - Improve new international student enrollment by 5%-10% annually
- Retention through Graduation Goals:
 - Improve overall FTIC Year 1-2 retention rate by 5% over five years (84% by 2027)
 - Improve FTIC Underrepresented Minority (URM) Year 1-2 retention rate by 8% over five years (no gap by 2027)

Strategies to Increase Enrollment

Chico State has employed numerous data-informed strategies to address enrollment challenges. No one solution will achieve the needed results for the institution. We are looking to continue making significant improvements to each stage of the admissions funnel and the entire student life cycle. The University is paying particular attention to improving the top of admissions funnel, as well as improving overall yield rates as a pathway to grow enrollment. To contextualize the challenges and solutions proposed in this plan, the following charts show the historical decline in overall enrollment as well as the decline in new students each year. It is also important to know where Chico State’s students coming from.



Residence Area

	2018-19 Fall		2019-20 Fall		2020-21 Fall		2021-22 Fall		2022-23 Fall	
	Count	Pct								
Service Area	4,448.7	27.1%	4,312.9	26.7%	4,116.9	26.4%	3,723.2	26.2%	3,314.3	25.8%
Sacramento Area	1,683.2	10.2%	1,757.2	10.9%	1,758.0	11.3%	1,508.9	10.6%	1,361.3	10.6%
SF Bay Area	3,449.5	21.0%	3,372.3	20.8%	3,385.8	21.7%	3,202.9	22.5%	2,934.8	22.8%
Los Angeles Area	3,802.0	23.1%	3,634.3	22.5%	3,386.6	21.7%	3,028.5	21.3%	2,675.0	20.8%
Rest of CA	2,583.4	15.7%	2,703.7	16.7%	2,627.4	16.8%	2,431.2	17.1%	2,213.9	17.2%
Out of State	154.1	0.9%	126.9	0.8%	116.5	0.7%	110.1	0.8%	131.8	1.0%
Out of Country	316.3	1.9%	274.0	1.7%	216.9	1.4%	226.5	1.6%	238.3	1.9%
Grand Total	16,437.3	100.0%	16,181.2	100.0%	15,607.9	100.0%	14,231.3	100.0%	12,869.4	100.0%

With this information in mind, the University has developed the following strategies to address the enrollment situation.

Domestic Undergraduate Strategies

- First-Time-In-College Admissions Enhancements to Build Pipeline and Improve Yield
 - **Senior Awareness-Building Communications:** Purchase College Board names of high school seniors from counties with highest enrollment numbers and engage them in a multi-modal application generation communication campaign. We must more aggressively seek out students who may not be aware of what Chico State has to offer.
 - **Data-Informed Territory Assignments:** Use institutional and statewide data to identify areas most likely to yield California students and assign admissions recruiters to support application generation, conversion, and yield in those areas. We must be more responsive to shifting student demographics.
 - **University-Wide Yield Planning and Collaboration:** Develop communication plans with all campus community stakeholders and manage through the Office of Admissions to avoid confusion for our students, prioritize onboarding after yield, and provide consistency, structure, and synergy. Enrollment is Job One for everyone at Chico State; everyone can play a part.
 - **Commitment Events on Campus and Across California:** Offer a variety of yield events with a variety of deliveries to enable a wider range of students to make informed decisions. We can bring Chico State to students or students can come to us; either way, we will provide information that will affirm a student’s decision to apply and, ultimately, enroll.
 - **Engaging and Informative Parent/Caregiver Communications:** Provide resources to parents and caregivers that supplement and enhance FTIC student yield communications. The college selection process is a family decision and one we intend to honor.
- Transfer Processing and Recruitment Improvements

- **Transfer Advising and Application Generation Synergy:** Market the simplicity and accessibility of application submission and admission criteria. We will make sure transfer students understand how easy it is to become a Wildcat.
 - **Expand California Community College (CCC) Partnerships:** Develop new partnerships that promote application generation, provide space for transfer advising, and celebrate the transition from a CCC to Chico State. We must cultivate and expand existing relationships to achieve success in the challenging transfer market.
- Universal Undergraduate Application Barrier Removals
 - **Barrier Reduction to Improve Conversion and Yield:** Better use of technological and human resources to accelerate application review and yield behaviors; for example, more aggressive use of the auto admit functionality to render decisions on applications.
 - **Redesign Admissions Website:** Modernize the Admissions website to make it easier to navigate and more responsive.
 - **Improve Financial Aid and Scholarship Leveraging:** In addition to earlier financial aid notifications with associated communications, automatically award Admissions & Performance Scholarships to admitted students in rather than in March or April across multiple colleges and offices.
 - **Exciting and Informative Engagement with High School Counselors:** In addition to getting high school and community college counselors back on campus to see what Chico State has to offer, we will also introduce regular written updates from the Office of Admissions.
- Non-Traditional Recruitment Initiatives
 - **Re-engage Local Former Students:** Create intentional messaging and support to encourage stop-outs to reapply. The University will proactively communicate the possibilities, ease, and value of finishing what they started.
 - **Flexible Virtual Experiences:** Promote special marketing to highlight the availability and convenience of virtual educational experiences.
- Prospect Development to Build Application Generation Foundation
 - **Prospect Affinity Development Communications and Visits Campaign:** Craft three distinct communication campaigns for grades 9, 10, and 11 high school students to introduce them to college planning and invite them to visit campus to develop an early rapport with our community.
 - **Service Area Partnering and Prospect Development:** Launch Way to Wildcat, a new strategic partnership program with eight service area high schools selected for their high underrepresented minority populations.

International Student Enrollment Strategies

- Shorten time to international enrollment admissions decisions and I-20 processing.
- Enhance new student visa application and visa interview preparation services to counterbalance growing visa denial rates at US Consulates abroad.

- Evaluate global partnerships to further diversify recruitment outreach. Evaluate and renew successful partnerships.
- Explore opportunities for collaborative undergraduate and graduate degree programs with international partners in various regions of the world.
- Invest in digital marketing campaigns and outreach to expand Chico State brand recognition abroad.
- Attend virtual and in-person recruitment events organized through recruitment partners to maximize and expand existing networks.
- Visit sponsoring government offices/embassies (KCO LA office, UAE embassy, and Saudi Cultural Mission in DC) annually to maintain positive relations.
- Review and revise campus English proficiency admission requirements to reflect current exam offerings and achieve greater equity among English speaking countries and unfair admission barriers.
- Collaborate with academic departments on admitted student communication plans and yield campaigns.
- Review and expand transfer admission guarantee with community college partners.

Graduate Education Strategies

- Expand (internal) campus outreach efforts: Partner with undergraduate recruitment and outreach campaigns/strategies to ensure new, first year, and transfer students are aware of the graduate education and its opportunities very early in their careers
- Expand external (statewide and beyond) outreach and recruitment: Integrate campus marketing efforts to embed graduate education opportunities/benefits as an attractive part of the Chico State story
- Concentrate outreach and recruitment efforts on those graduate programs with the current capacity or immediate growth capacity, including room for international student growth
- Increase capacity of existing graduate programs
- Increase enrollment capacity by developing new graduate programs, including in-person, online, self-support, and blended programs

Retention Through Graduation Strategies

All retention strategies are aligned with the CSU Equity Goals and Priorities and coordinated by the Advancing Equity Team.

- Implement college-specific Retention and Equity Plans.
- Design and Implement Critical Success Course model for high-stakes first-year courses.
- Implement Summer Boost program for no-cost repeat of critical first-year courses for eligible students.
- Establish a seamless, comprehensive, and easily navigable support system for all Chico State students.
- Align and expand first-year peer mentoring.
- Expand and institutionalize HSI grants and intentional service to Latinx students.

- Enhance the support process for incoming students and their supporters during high school transition, onboarding, and integration.
- Enact policy and procedure changes to remove identified barriers to retention.
- Implement a campaign to re-engage and re-enroll URM students who have left the University.
- Improve workforce development for equity-minded instruction and support.

Planned Activities

Domestic Undergraduate Planned Activities

- First-Time-In-College Processing and Recruitment Improvements
 - Fall 2022: Purchased 19,300 senior names in select markets from The College Board
 - Fall 2022: Began releasing Admit decisions November 1 and continued campaign announcement to encourage submissions.
 - Spring 2023: Expand application window to May 1 to reduce reliance on late applications and redirects.
 - Relaunch and hold monthly Recruitment Coordination Committee (RCC) with membership from each academic college and select Student Affairs offices to focus on yield
 - Coordinate with Orientation and other onboarding partners to reduce melt
 - Bi-annual meetings with college deans to review marketing and communication plans
 - Area receptions in seven select California markets, namely those from which we have the greatest likelihood to yield the most students
 - North State check-ins: Social media opportunities at local high schools where we deliver confections and celebrate intents to enroll (IE) with students and counselors
 - Affinity group sessions during Choose Chico, our Admitted Student Open House
 - Parent-to-parent letter featuring parent of a current student
 - Parent newsletter featuring next steps
 - Parent email featuring Choose Chico
 - Parent email featuring IE promotion
 - Parent email featuring onboarding support
 - New high school counselor newsletters biannually (fall and spring)
 - New on-campus Counselor Showcase
- Transfer Processing and Recruitment Improvements
 - Use of auto-admit in application review process
 - Use of student self-reported academic information in application review process
 - Accelerate fall file review process to begin the fall prior
 - *B to C Guarantee Partnership* between Butte College and Chico State that simplifies the admissions process and promotes on-the-spot admissions and transfer advising sessions
- Universal Undergraduate Application Barrier Removals

- Accelerate Financial Aid estimate notifications to January (compared to late March/early April) to give students more information upon which to make decisions about enrolling at Chico State.
- Consolidated Admissions and Performance Scholarships: By consolidating Admissions and Performance Scholarships and removing the barrier of an additional application for admitted students, we can automatically award students in a coordinated fashion much earlier in the process (compared to awards being spread out from March to mid-summer in previous cycles).
- Non-Traditional Recruitment Initiatives
 - Implement communication outreach campaign to encourage stop-outs to reapply
 - Partner with service area businesses to present to their employees the ease and value of the application process for Chico State
 - Leverage Project Rebound
- Prospect Development to Build Application Generation Foundation
 - Purchase 80,000 College Board names of likely eligible California grade 9, 10, and 11 students (6,000, 35,000, and 39,000 by grade respectively) from our top-enrolling counties for early rapport-building and engagement.
 - *Way to Wildcat Pre-College Program*: Through this new program, we will develop and deploy workshops to local URM-serving high schools' grade 9, 10, and 11 students. This is a long-term program in which we will keep 9th graders engaged until they begin 12th grade.
 - *Way to Wildcat Event*: Spring event for high school grade 9, 10, and 11 students and their families to learn how to successfully prepare for college. This is related to but expands from the Way to Wildcat Program as all available prospects will be invited.

International Student Recruitment and Outreach Activities

- International Processing and Recruitment Improvements
 - Transfer academic advising and I-20 processing for new undergraduate and graduate students to International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), allowing admissions evaluators to focus on application processing.
 - Training: updates for current evaluators and targeted training for admissions assistant to help speed up processing times.
 - Revised English proficiency policy now in place, international admissions website was updated in January 2023 to reflect policy change for Fall 2023 intake.
- Prospect Development
 - Attend virtual and in-person recruitment events organized through recruitment partners and EducationUSA in order to maximize and expand existing networks.
 - Build and update international student counselor database in Salesforce.
 - Email campaigns to high school counselors worldwide highlighting new programs, student services, faculty research and initiatives, scholarships, and application open and close dates.

- Evaluation and expansion of global partnerships, agent recruiter productivity analysis, exploration of pathway (articulation) programs and development of partner communications campaigns.
- Marketing Activities Supporting Enrollment Efforts
 - Chico State website improvements
 - Complete restructure of the international admissions website, separating out international student services. Updated regularly with new information and to improve user experience.
 - Paid Digital Advertising (Educational Search Engine Marketing)
 - Partnership investment with Yocket (India, South Asia, Middle East & Sub-Saharan Africa) and Study in the USA (worldwide). Annual marketing plans include targeted social media marketing, virtual recruitment events, and a dedicated webpage on the organizations' website.
 - Google Advertisements
 - Display ads –Brand awareness campaigns as a top of funnel tactic. Targeted ads appear on user websites based on internet behavior. Initial efforts have shown promising results with an international audience: higher Ed industry average KPIs vs. Chico State KPIs:
 - Click Through Rate (CTR): 0.53% vs. 2.36% for International Admissions
 - Click to Conversion Rate: 0.50% vs. 17.40% for International Admissions
 - Cost Per Click (CPC): \$0.47 vs. \$0.02 for International Admissions
 - In addition to brand awareness, ads are utilized ahead of recruitment travel to maximize recruitment travel expenses, to announce program deadlines, and market specific degrees in targeted areas where industry indicates there might be an interest.
 - Social Media campaigns
 - Engage international student ambassadors to expand Instagram presence and developed content for Chico State International YouTube channel marketed toward prospective and current international students.
- Participate in Recruitment Coordination Committee (RCC) meetings and partner in yield activities across campus.
 - Participate in area yield receptions in select CA markets.
 - Provide handouts to ADMS to share with international students at events we are unable to attend.
- Expand admitted student outreach activities.
 - Ensure international students are included in department communications to admitted students.

- Implement a comprehensive “Chico Friend” call campaign using current students and staff to reach out to students as they are admitted and remain a point of contact through Spring semester.

Retention Through Graduation Activities

- Implement college-specific Retention and Equity Plans
 - Each of the seven academic colleges has submitted a Retention and Equity Plan to meet individual targets for improving the Year 1-2 retention rate of its majors and closing retention equity gaps by 2025.
 - Activities range from curricular restructuring and increased learning support to social connection events, to providing each first-year student with a college-based faculty, staff, or administrative mentor.
- Design and Implement Critical Success Course model for high-stakes first-year courses.
 - The Critical Success Course model invests in high-stakes courses with (1) mandatory professional development and additional compensation for faculty, (2) a course coordinator, and (3) department funds for learning support and building sense of belonging.
 - Chancellor’s Office support through the Equity Priority 5 initiative allows expansion of this model through 2024, with an emphasis on GE A2 and B4 courses.
- Implement Summer Boost program for no-cost repeat of critical first-year courses for eligible students.
 - Fund eligible students (Pell, URM) to retake critical first-year courses in which they had been unsuccessful in the previous year.
 - Courses offered based on DFW/equity gap data and proven summer success rates.
 - More than 130 students successfully completed these courses in summer 2022.
- Establish a seamless, comprehensive, and easily navigable support system for all Chico State students.
 - Develop a framework with defined personnel roles and responsibilities; design and implement campus-wide early alert systems using the LMS and CRM platforms
 - Pilot block enrollment for improved first-year quantitative reasoning outcomes
 - Implement digital degree planner
- Align and expand first-year peer mentoring.
 - Form campus-wide Mentoring Council
 - Establish framework for first-year mentoring to serve all students (role definitions and program relationships, trainings and curriculum, outreach and recruitment practices, student employment practices, dedicated personnel and space, etc.)
 - Pilot Black Leadership Mentor Program as model for affinity-based mentoring
- Expand and institutionalize HSI grants and intentional service to Latinx students.

- Form collaborative group of Hispanic-Serving Institution grant program leaders to advance cooperation among and institutionalization of our multiple grant activities.
 - Develop timely, meaningful, and culturally inclusive communications and diversified delivery modalities.
- Enhance the support process for incoming students and their supporters during high school transition, onboarding, and integration.
 - Improve access to and cultural inclusiveness of new student orientation
- Enact policy and procedure changes to remove identified barriers to retention.
 - Change “Academic Probation” to “Academic Notice” in all University publications and communications
 - Consider adjustment of Student Fee Processes (decoupling, bundling, holds policy, timing, etc.)
 - Consider Adjustment of Policy for Dropping Courses after Week 4 (required documentation, signatures, etc.)
 - Consider Revising Grade Definitions (EM 10-018)
 - Determine Process to Enact Mandatory Orientation (EM 93-008)
 - To address emergent policy barriers, form a small team to explore and resolve newly identified barriers and improve efficiency in student-facing campus processes. For instance, deeper analysis of the impact of our academic contract practices for students that would avoid dismissal might prompt expansion of eligibility for that option.
- Implement a campaign to re-engage and re-enroll URM students who have left the University.
 - In alignment with the [CSU Chancellor’s Office Equity Priority 1](#), campaign includes outreach to previously enrolled students, re-establishing relations with feeder community colleges, and differentiated messaging for sub-populations
- Improve workforce development for equity-minded instruction and support.
 - Continue efforts to diversify faculty and staff
 - Launch and expansion of Faculty Development of Faculty Development’s Research in Equity, Antiracism, Diversity and Inclusion (READI) hub for the production of new and innovative scholarship on EDI and for pairing faculty needs with resources on EDI and antiracism.
 - Deliver HSI professional development initiative for faculty and staff

Marketing Efforts Supporting All Activities

- Partnership investment with Simpson Scarborough, a national marketing firm that specializes in higher education. An initial two-year investment beginning in fall 2022 aims to build strong foundations for existing and new marketing strategies to help grow enrollment
- Chico State website improvements

- Admissions page redesign. Improved overall user experience, added clear Calls to Action (CTA) to page header leading to Apply, Visit, Requests Info, streamlined content and layout
 - Creating custom landing pages with specific CTAs for all marketing campaigns
 - Chico State homepage redesign: added clear CTAs to page header, streamlined content to provide the resources most often requested by prospective students and families; Tour, Cost & Aid, How to Apply
 - University Communications is doing an audit of all University pages so that the user experience and desired outcomes are consistent in all areas
 - “Search By Area of Interest” functionality: Related to the course catalog, this platform allows students to search by areas of interest using generic terms to find programs that they might not know exist, such as “work outdoors”, “medicine”, “work with animals”, etc. The generic search term results show a list of all applicable majors/programs related to their search, providing new opportunity.
- Paid Digital Advertising campaigns (Search Engine Marketing)
 - Student acquisition: Data-informed approach, geofencing top feeder high schools and community colleges throughout California, utilizing custom audience lists, Google algorithm-generated lookalike audiences, and retargeting. Started in August 2021 and continuously deployed across all enrollment cycles, we focus on schools that have traditionally enrolled students at Chico State with an added emphasis on identifying schools with opportunities to grow future enrollment (low apps but with high yield rates, etc.)
 - Student retention: Campaigns geofencing the Chico State campus promoting student support services such as Academic Advising, Office of the Registrar, Financial Aid, Student Learning Center, Career Center, and Job Fairs. Campaigns supporting TRIO programs are launching in spring 2023
 - International Admissions and Outreach: Campaigns geofencing specific markets in South Asia and Latin America were launched in 2022 and will continue
 - Graduate Studies: Strategic planning discussions are in progress. Initial campaigns are launching in spring 2023
 - Ads are run on various platforms, including Google Ads, YouTube, native display platforms, and streaming services. Overall search engine marketing efforts see KPI trends of:
 - 33% of visitors to Chico State’s website are new users
 - Overall Click Through Rate (CTR) is 34.08% compared to higher ed industry average of 3.27%
 - Overall display ad CTR of 0.22% vs. industry average of 0.05-0.10%
 - Video Cost Per Completed View (CPCV) of \$0.02
 - Google Ads
 - Display ads: Awareness-based campaigns, top-of-funnel tactic. Targeted ads appear on user websites based on internet behavior, intended to increase brand awareness of Chico State.
 - Higher ed industry average KPIs vs. Chico State KPIs:

- Click Through Rate: 0.53% vs. 0.63% for Chico State
 - Cost Per Click (CPC): \$0.47 vs. \$0.27 for Chico State
- Search ads: Intent-based, mid- to lower-funnel tactic. Students and families are searching for terms such as “best colleges,” “best <program name>,” “affordable colleges,” as they prepare to apply to colleges.
 - Higher ed industry average KPIs vs. Chico State KPIs:
 - Click Through Rate: 3.8% vs. 36.3% for Chico State
 - Cost Per Click: \$2.40 vs. \$0.54 for Chico State
- Streaming TV and video ads
 - YouTube video campaigns
 - Streaming services including Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, YouTube TV, and Peacock
- Organic Social Media campaigns
 - Campus-wide and department-specific platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, promoting Chico State throughout the entire student lifecycle (from prospect to current student to alumni)
- Billboards
 - Launched in November 2023 in primary target markets, including our service area (North State), Sacramento, Bay Area, and Los Angeles
- Traditional radio
 - Launching in spring 2023, radio campaigns will focus on Spanish-speaking communities in the North State and Central Valley areas of California
- CRM programs
 - TargetX and Marketing Cloud: We currently use available technology through TargetX to monitor, report on, and improve the performance of all communications. Marketing Cloud, to be implemented in summer 2023, is a major technological advancement that will enable us to automate all communication flows as well as develop more robust reporting and data analysis that ultimately led to application growth and overall improvement in yield
 - Email: TargetX is our current email service provider. Salesforce Marketing Cloud will be implemented by summer 2023 to help automate all communication flows
 - Email campaigns. Email communication flows begin as soon as a prospective student applies or fills out a request for information (RFI) on the Chico State website.
 - Communications are focused on relationship building, providing useful resources, answering questions, and removing barriers throughout the admissions funnel (application through enrollment)
 - Text: SMS Magic is our current text service provider. Salesforce Marketing Cloud will be implemented by summer 2023
 - Text campaigns
 - Texts are sent to support email campaigns and to alert students and families to key deadlines and required action items

Resources Needed

While the goals detailed are lofty, they can be achieved through the strategic approaches described earlier. Many of these strategies, and the actions that spring from them, require more personalized, face-to-face contact with students and with educational partners in high schools and the California Community Colleges. They also require more frequent and sophisticated uses of our CRM, social media, and creative content. Consequently, the strategic investments below will contribute greatly to the successful achievement of our goals.

Domestic Undergraduate Admissions Resources

- Five SSP II positions to enhance yield communications and interactions: These positions will allow us to fully realize our Data-Informed Territory Assignments by allowing us to have more professional staff in key areas across the state. Additionally, we will be better poised to conduct more meaningful yield activities for both spring and fall. \$500,000 salary and benefits.
- One Communication Specialist II position to develop online resources and marketing content for non-traditional students and adult learners: Our University-Wide Yield Planning and Collaboration heavily relies on frequent copywriting and communication campaign management. This position would provide more dexterity to keep up with growing demand for personalized and frequent communications to potential students. \$96,000 salary and benefits.

International Student Enrollment

- Dedicated Director of Global Partnerships (Admin II) position to maintain, develop, and expand global partnerships and articulation agreements, to support educational agent relations and grow international applicant pool.
- Communication Specialist II position to develop online resources and marketing content for prospective international students, follow up on leads and applicants to improve yield. \$96,000 salary and benefits.
- \$40,000 annual funding for regional in-country representation (South Asia) to grow an international applicant pool.
- \$100,000 annual funds for expansion of global digital marketing and advertising campaigns in key international markets, and continuation of in-person and virtual recruitment opportunities.
- Develop a robust scholarship pool for high-achieving and/or high-need international applicants to expand educational access and opportunity.
- \$30,000 in annual funding for continuation of International Student Ambassadors to support digital marketing, social media campaigns, and peer mentoring for international student retention.

Retention Through Graduation

- The most critical need is to protect the workforce of Academic Advising and Undergraduate Education, the units leading these retention efforts.

- Dedicated analytical support for cohort tracking and trend analysis
- New 1.0 Mentor Coordinator position and sustained funding to support program expansion
- Sustained funding for CSU Equity Priority RFPs

Graduate Education

- Staff and faculty time to create growth plan and cost/benefit analysis
- New faculty hires or reallocation of faculty lines
- New field placement staff
- Recruitment staff and funding (international particularly) to be located in either graduate studies or international education depending on scope

Additional resources

- \$1.5 million to develop a comprehensive scholarship pool: In our effort to Improve Financial Aid and Scholarship Leveraging, an investment in scholarship funds that can be automatically awarded to all eligible admitted students early in the cycle will have a significant, positive impact on yield.
- Marketing commitment of extra \$500,000 for fall 2023 admissions cycle
- Marketing commitment of total \$1,500,000 for spring/fall 2024 admissions cycle
- Additional SSP II to assist with re-enrollment of stop-outs: A professional focused on intentional outreach to previous students who did not complete a Chico State degree would fulfill our commitment to not only access but to student success. \$100,000 salary and benefits.

Retention Goals by Term

As a result of the retention through graduation strategies outlined above, the following term-by-term retention goals are identified. Below you will find the goals by semester of the percentage of students retained from each cohort. As the cohort progresses toward graduation, the percentage retained decreases.

FTIC

Cohort	S23	F23	S24	F24	S25	F25	S26	F26	S27	F28
2022	0.95	0.81	0.80	0.72	0.70	0.67	0.25	0.10	0.04	0.01
2023			0.96	0.82	0.80	0.72	0.70	0.66	0.10	0.04
2024					0.96	0.83	0.80	0.72	0.70	0.67
2025							0.97	0.84	0.81	0.80
2026									0.97	0.85

Transfers

Cohort	S23	F23	S24	F24	S25	F25	S26	F26	S27	F28
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2022	0.94	0.87	0.82	0.50	0.28	0.13	0.08	0.04	0.01	
2023			0.94	0.88	0.82	0.48	0.27	0.13	0.08	0.04
2024					0.95	0.89	0.83	0.47	0.26	0.12
2025							0.95	0.90	0.83	0.46
2026									0.96	0.91

Data to Measure Progress and Inform Changes

Undergraduate Admissions Data to Measure Progress and Inform Changes

- First-Time-In-College Processing and Recruitment Improvements
 - Fall 2023
 - KPI: FTIC conversion at 87% or approximately 450 additional admits
 - This will increase our fall admit total from 20,350 in fall 2022 to approximately 20,800 fall 2023 (based on current numbers)
 - KPI: FTIC yield at 14.5% or approximately 1,000 additional enrolled
 - This will increase our fall enrolled total from 2,020 in fall 2022 to approximately 3,020 in fall 2023 (based on current numbers)
 - Fall 2024
 - KPI: Generate 1000 applications from summer 2023 senior search campaign
 - KPI: Convert 90% or 900 Admits
 - KPI: Achieve 13.5% yield (or enroll additional 122 students)
- Transfer Processing and Recruitment Improvements
 - KPI: Improve spring conversion to 80% from spring 2023 forward
 - KPI: Improve fall conversion to 85% from fall 2023 forward
 - Fall 2023 conversion increase by 26 percentage point increase
 - Fall 2023 admit total to 6,010
 - KPI: Improve yield by 2% for spring 2023 and fall 2023
 - Spring 2023 achieved
 - Fall 2023 yield
 - increase to 32%
 - Fall 2023 enrolled total 1, 920 or increase of 654 transfer students with improved conversion
 - KPI: Begin fall 2023 admit decisions in fall 2022
- Prospect Development to Build Application Generation Foundation
 - KPI: Launch meetings with high school students spring 2023
 - KPI: Create 240 total unique prospects by summer 2023
- Digital Marketing KPI Data
 - Overall Search Engine Marketing
 - 33% of current visitors to Chico State’s website are new users
 - Overall Click Through Rate is 34.08% compared to higher ed industry average of 3.27% (outperforming by 10x)

- Overall display ad CTR of 0.22% vs. industry average of 0.05-0.10%
- Video Cost Per Completed View of \$0.02
- Google Ads
 - Display ads
 - Higher ed industry average KPIs vs. Chico State KPIs:
 - Click Through Rate: 0.53% vs. 0.63% for Chico State
 - Cost Per Click: \$0.47 vs. \$0.27 for Chico State
 - Search ads
 - Higher Ed industry average KPIs vs. Chico State KPIs:
 - Click Through Rate: 3.8% vs. 36.3% for Chico State
 - Cost Per Click: \$2.40 vs. \$0.54 for Chico State

Key Milestones to Evaluate and Adjust this Plan

For each admissions cycle, we will be reevaluating data along the way to measure effectiveness of marketing and recruiting efforts. We will adjust tactics to ensure maximum effectiveness. The milestones below are the points-in-time when the university will evaluate progress towards relevant elements of the plan.

Fall 2023 Milestones

1st of each month: Three-year funnel analysis

May 1, 2023 - New application deadline for domestic undergraduate admissions

June 1, 2023 - New Intent to Enroll deadline (except for late applications)

September 18, 2023 - Fall 2023 Census Date

Spring 2024 Milestones

1st of each month: Three-year funnel analysis

July 1, 2023 - Opening of application period

August 1, 2023 - Application decision announcements begin

September 30, 2023 - Application deadline

November 15, 2023 - Intent to Enroll deadline

February 16, 2024 - Spring 2024 Census Date

Fall 2024 Milestones

1st of each month: Three-year funnel analysis

October 1, 2023 - Opening of application period

November 1, 2023 - Application decision announcements begin

May 1, 2024 - Application deadline

June 1, 2024 - Intent to Enroll deadline

Conclusion

The challenges facing Chico State are significant, but the solutions outlined in this document are steps toward meeting them. At the core of our strategic planning process is collaboration.

These challenges were not created in one moment or through one action or inaction, but by years of maladaptation to the evolving higher education landscape. Collaboration will help the

University continue to improve its recruitment, retention, and graduation of students across all student types. Through a highly data informed process, the University has identified a direction to go as well as measurable and achievable ways to get there. Through a coordinated effort, the University has set these overarching goals to address the enrollment challenges:

- Meet the educational needs of the North State and beyond;
- Expand top of admissions funnel through strategic marketing and communications for undergraduate, graduate, international, and non-traditional enrollment;
- Improve yield rates across all undergraduate populations;
- Return retention rates to pre-COVID levels; and
- Close equity gaps across the student life cycle.

The SEM Plan outlined above is a living touchstone for the institution to continue improving to meet the needs of the North State and beyond. The core of that is the recognition of what Chico State represents through its enduring commitments and strategic priorities. The goals, processes, and tactics outlined above are achievable and will help to provide the stability the University needs for coming years.

Through the implementation of this plan, the University will position itself for a stronger future by improving each stage of the student life cycle, addressing the demographic realities facing higher education, developing market ready academic offerings, and embracing technology as a tool to deliver education while enhancing our ability to reach prospective students. In achieving these goals, the University will significantly increase enrollment and return to the levels seen before the decline after 2017-2018. By the innovative strategies and tactics found in this plan, the University will achieve its goal of returning to the FTES target by fall 2025.