California State University, Chico

Division of Student Affairs
Financial Aid & Scholarship Office (FASO)
Annual Report 2025-26

I. Mission Statement

Through a sincere commitment to all students and their families, we strive to eliminate financial and other barriers to higher education. We make a conscious effort to reach out to those with exceptional economic and educational needs. We are dedicated to providing high quality service in a fair, sensitive, and confidential environment to all individuals, regardless of background, culture, or lifestyle.

II. Accomplishments - A highlight

In approaching and successfully accomplishing its goals during the 2025-26 year, FASO has followed the Student Affairs Value Propositions of:

- Proudly Owning Who We are
- Leveraging our strengths in what we do
- Advancing our influence in how we do our work
- Let's Dance

Here are the FASO highlights:

- Proudly Owning Who We Are – **FASO Coordinated and led efforts related to student financial support data and narrative to help Chico successfully submit the Seal of Excelencia application.** FASO coordinated with multiple departments to document and tell Chico's story in financially supporting Latinx students and provided supporting data. The application was submitted successfully, and we are now waiting to hear about the outcome.

- Leveraging Our Strengths in What We Do – **FASO Successfully implemented a new scholarship platform (NG Web) to manage Wildcat Scholarship applications.** A great amount of work and effort were dedicated to implementing this new scholarship administration platform. Folks from the divisions of IT, Advancement, and FASO in Student Affairs were involved in successfully completing this undertaking. The new system was used for the first time to award all 2026-27 Wildcat Scholarships.

- Leveraging Our Strengths in What We Do – **FASO implemented a new process to support students with children and ensure they do not miss out on the $6000 per year SWD Cal Grant Access Grants.** These

students were not always aware they had to complete a certification process with the California Student Aid Commission in order to receive these funds. FASO implemented a process to identify these students and provided actionable communication to ensure this last process was completed. This process significantly increased the number of students with children receiving these funds.

- Advancing Our Influence by How We Do Our Work – **In collaboration with the Office of the Registrar and Academic Advising, FASO successfully Implemented Course Auditor.** Tremendous effort and time were committed to engaging with university departments, governing bodies, student support programs, and students to socialize the Course Auditor functionality. Course Auditor went live for the spring 2026 enrollment cycle. FASO and the Office of the Registrar dedicated an inordinate amount of resources to work with departments, faculty, and students to mitigate negative impacts arising from the changes.

- Let's Dance! – **FASO advising and management team met with Seya Lumeya a number of times to make sure we effectively address the roots of conflict in our work environment.** Essential agreements were developed and are currently being utilized.

III. Program Statistics and Assessment for Past Year

- Key metrics that demonstrate program reach, engagement, outcomes, and areas of notable impact.

  In order to add to Chico's story, narrative, and supporting data for the Seal of Excelencia application, FASO assessed its Priority I Packaging Policy to evaluate its impact on our neediest students and Latinx students in comparison to the general financial aid recipient population. Average financial aid grant and scholarship awards were compared between Priority I students and the non-Priority I students for 4 financial aid years, starting with the 2020-21 aid year.

  Chico State's financial aid strategy is intentionally designed to increase affordability and promote equitable outcomes for our neediest students. A central practice is the Priority I Packaging Policy, which directs limited grant resources—SEOG, EOPG, and institutional funds—to students facing the greatest economic and educational barriers. Because Latinx students are disproportionately represented among low-income and first-generation populations, this policy serves as a direct investment in their success.

Priority I designation is based on indicators such as first-generation status, under-resourced K–12 backgrounds, limited college-going support, and low-income status. These criteria align with CSU's commitment to expanding access for historically underrepresented students.

By prioritizing these students, Chico State maximizes grant funding to reduce unmet financial need at enrollment. This support lowers reliance on loans, reduces work obligations, and enables full-time enrollment, strengthening persistence and success for Latinx students as well as other Priority I students.

- Summarize key findings and insights derived from the data, including successes, challenges, and/or opportunities for improvement.

  Institutional data demonstrate that the Priority I Packaging Policy effectively increases financial support for students with the greatest need, many of whom are Latinx. Across multiple academic years, Priority I students consistently receive higher average total grant funding compared to non–Priority I recipients, reflecting Chico State's intentional allocation of limited resources to reduce unmet financial need.

  Data further show that Latinx students represent a substantial and consistently higher proportion of Priority I recipients compared to other groups, indicating that the policy successfully targets historically underserved populations. This increased level of grant support improves affordability at entry and throughout enrollment. As a result, Priority I students are more likely to enroll full time, reduce reliance on loans or employment, and focus on academic progress.

  These trends demonstrate that the Priority I Packaging Policy strengthens affordability and contributes to improved success for Latinx students.

- **Other FASO Financial Aid Programs Outcome Data**

		Students	Dollars
Total Applications Processed		28,949	
Application Corrections Processed		36,096	
Total Award Revisions		73,526	
Total Appeals Processed		1,848	
Total Aid Disbursed		11,657	$164,930,271.00
	Consumer Loans	271	$3,428,234.00
	Dream Loans	6	$16,226.00
	Federal Grants	6,943	$41,169,551.00
	Federal Loans	5,109	$36,921,175.00
	Work-Study	629	$2,241,404.00
	Foundation Scholarships	1,744	$6,060,192.00
	Other Institutional Scholarships	77	$248,800.00
	Private Scholarships	709	$2,822,426.00
	State & Institutional Grants	9,640	$72,022,262.00

IV. Integrate Unit Objectives with Strategic Action Plan in 2026-27

The following is FASO action plan for the 2026-27 year:

- **Proudly Owning Who We Are – Coordinate with Web Services to complete all work to update the FASO website**
  - The outcome will be that the FASO website will be updated to meet all requirements delivered by the Web Services.

- **Leveraging Our Strengths in What We Do – Implement flexible calendar structure and process on the state side by collaborating with PCMO and other stakeholders**
  - The outcome will be that a more effective and flexible processing structure will be implemented to allow Chico to administer 8-week session pilot courses beginning in fall 2027.

- **Advancing Our Influence by How We Do Our Work – Fully implement the One Big Beautiful Bill loan proration requirements**
  - The outcome will be that FASO is able to address and resolve all proration scenarios at the student level to satisfy its compliance obligations.

- **Let's Dance!**
  - FASO will continue to expand the interactions and training with Seya Lumeya to other teams. This will ensure all FASO staff can effectively navigate conflict in our work environment.

Lastly, FASO will continue with its collaborative work with Division of IT to complete a process that will allow collection of data to be utilized in assessing our students' sense of belonging and engagement with FASO.

V. Identify at least one goal/objective that supports the Chico State Playbook in 2026-27

In support of the firth question from the Chico State Playbook, FASO will engage in a cross-training program for all FASO staff. Given the dual challenges of capacity reduction in the face of increased regulations and complexity of financial aid programs, FASO staff must become effective in leaning on each other to accomplish our goals more effectively. FASO must pool its resources by cross-training staff. In doing so, staff will learn additional functions, increasing collaboration, reducing silos, and improving career development.