California State University, Chico

Division of Student Affairs
Department Name
Annual Report 2025-26

- **Mission Statement**

  As a student transition program, we evaluate our success by whom we include in the onboarding process. We design and implement comprehensive student and parent/family programs that introduce educational, social, and personal resources to facilitate the transition and success of new students. We innovate and collaborate with departments across campus and build skilled and confident student Orientation leaders in order to meet the changing needs of our diverse community.

  Our goal is to serve students at the point of formal intent to attend Chico State through campus integration. We strive to be a model to the California State University system and nationally through proactive outreach, evidence-based data initiatives, intentional communication, and scaffolding educational and developmental processes that progresses social mobility, cultivate academic capital, and **measure the influence of our success by whom we include and help succeed**.

- **Accomplishments - A highlight**
  - **Leveraging Our Strengths in What We Do**

Hosted our largest Spanish Family Program in Chico State Orientation History. As part of our commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive orientation experience, this year we hosted our largest Spanish-language family orientation session to date, with 128 parents and family members in attendance. The full-day program was delivered entirely in Spanish, providing families with direct access to important information, resources, and guidance to help them better understand and support their student's transition to Chico State. Recognizing that student success is strengthened by informed and engaged support networks, this initiative reflects our commitment to educating and empowering not only our students, but also the families and supporters who play an important role in their college journey.

Future Outcome

Assess the effectiveness and reach of Spanish-language family orientation programming and identify opportunities to increase participation and engagement. Future efforts will include collecting participant feedback to better understand families' needs, measuring satisfaction and perceived preparedness to support their students, and using these findings to strengthen programming and increase participation in future Spanish-language orientation sessions.

  - **Advancing Our Influence by How We Do Our Work**

Increased yield for our fastest growing population; Distance Education Learners. Distance Education/Chico State Online continues to be one of our fastest-growing student populations, with diverse needs that require flexible and responsive orientation services. From 2025 to 2026, orientation reservations increased by 15%, from 513 to 589, and we were able to increase yield

through intentional outreach and support 19%, from 463 to 549 students. As a result, the attendance rate improved from 90.3% to 93.2%.

Most notably, the reservation-to-attendance melt rate decreased from 9.7% to 6.8%, representing an approximately 30% reduction in orientation melt. This improvement demonstrates our increased effectiveness in converting Distance Education students from orientation reservations to actual participation.

Future Outcome
Continue reducing orientation melt among Distance Education/Chico State Online students while sustaining a reservation-to-attendance conversion rate of at least 93% as the population continues to grow. Future efforts will focus on deploying a survey and identifying and addressing at least 3 barriers to participation and providing flexible, targeted communication and support that meet the unique needs of online learners.

- **Proudly Owning Who We Are**

Developing Student Leaders. The Orientation Leader experience is intentionally designed as a developmental opportunity, allowing students to strengthen competencies that extend well beyond their immediate responsibilities and contribute to their continued growth as leaders, professionals, and members of the campus community.

To assess this impact, Orientation Leaders completed pre- and post-experience assessments measuring their perceived abilities across a range of leadership and professional competencies. Results are reported in the aggregate and demonstrate growth across every assessed area following their Orientation Leader experience. Particularly notable gains occurred in public speaking (+1.2), knowledge of campus resources (+1.1), group facilitation (+0.9), conflict management (+0.9), and sense of connection and responsibility to the campus community (+0.8 each). Collectively, these findings demonstrate that the Orientation Leader role is more than a student employment experience; it is a meaningful learning environment in which students build confidence, strengthen interpersonal and leadership skills, deepen their connection to the institution, and develop competencies that can serve them well beyond their time in the role. These results provide an important measure of the developmental value of the experience while establishing a benchmark for evaluating and strengthening the program in future cycles.

California State University, Chico

	Question	Pre	Post	Differerence
1	Effectively speaking in front of a group	2.4	3.6	1.2
2	Knowledge about campus resources	2.5	3.6	1.1
3	Effectively facilitating group discussions	2.6	3.5	0.9
4	Effectively managing conflicts between others	2.6	3.5	0.9
5	Feeling a part of the campus community	2.9	3.7	0.8
6	Feeling responsible for helping to improve the campus community	2.9	3.7	0.8
7	Effectively organizing my time	2.6	3.3	0.7
8	Sharing ideas and information effectively with others	3	3.6	0.6
9	Comfortable with presenting programs to students different than me	3	3.6	0.6
10	Developing an effective solution to a problem	3.1	3.6	0.5
11	Critically analyzing situations	3	3.5	0.5
12	Applying previous experiences to inform new situations	3.2	3.7	0.5
13	Recognizing and accepting my strengths and deficiencies	3	3.5	0.5
14	Knowing my own limitations and when to refer to other resources	2.8	3.3	0.5
15	Effectively communicating with people	3	3.5	0.5
16	Effectively managing my non-academic commitments	2.9	3.3	0.4
17	Ability to motivate others to accomplish goals	3	3.3	0.3
18	Reevaluating previous assumptions	3.1	3.4	0.3
19	Developing long range goals	3	3.3	0.3
20	Having a positive self-concept (self-confidence, self-esteem)	3.4	3.7	0.3
21	Having a career direction	3.1	3.3	0.2
22	Holding yourself accountable for obligations and commitments	3.5	3.7	0.2
23	Understanding people's values that are different from my own	3.6	3.8	0.2
24	Having a better understanding of my own values	3.6	3.7	0.2
25	Having a sense of purpose	3.4	3.5	0.1
26	Being a role model for healthy choices	3.5	3.6	0.1
27	Having conversations with students who are different than me	3.6	3.6	0

Future Outcome: Orientation Leaders will demonstrate measurable growth in leadership and professional competencies as a result of their employment experience, with at least 80% showing improvement from pre- to post-assessment and an average increase of 0.5 points or greater across assessed competencies.

- **Let's Dance!**

Despite a significant staffing transition, our team embodied the Let's Dance spirit by remaining resilient, collaborative, and innovative. Following the departure of our program coordinators in December, the position remained vacant until May. During this period, the team collectively stepped up to maintain program continuity, sustain staff morale, and successfully support the largest Winter Orientation and Summer Orientation cohorts to date.

We continued to move the program forward while supporting enhancements to the S.E.M. Plan, exploring AI integration, and identifying opportunities to strengthen our programs and processes. This demonstrated our team's ability to adapt, celebrate shared successes, and remain focused on student belonging and engagement even during periods of change.

Future Outcome:
Building on this experience, we will intentionally carry the Let's Dance mindset forward by:

- Implementing at least two program or process enhancements, including opportunities related to AI integration and the S.E.M. Plan.

- Incorporate at least two intentional staff engagement or celebration opportunities during the Winter and Summer Orientation cycles to strengthen morale, connection, and team culture.

- **Program Statistics and Assessment for Past Year**
  a. We served 4,160 students, the largest Summer Orientation cohort in Chico State history
  b. Hosted our largest Spanish Family Program session (128 Spanish Speaking Families attended)
  c. Hosted our largest individual Summer Orientation session,498 participants
  d. The New Student Orientation and Transition Program persisted 5 months without a Program Coordinator
  e. More than 2,300 parents/supporters attended a Summer or Winter Orientation session
  f. Served incoming student and guest needs via 27 multiple session modalities (in-person, virtual, evening distance)
  g. S.E.M plan – contributed to enhancing the onboarding plan and aligned the execution
  h. In process, with partnership with The Division of IT and Academic Advising, to integrate multiple artificial agents to support timely and personalized onboarding support.

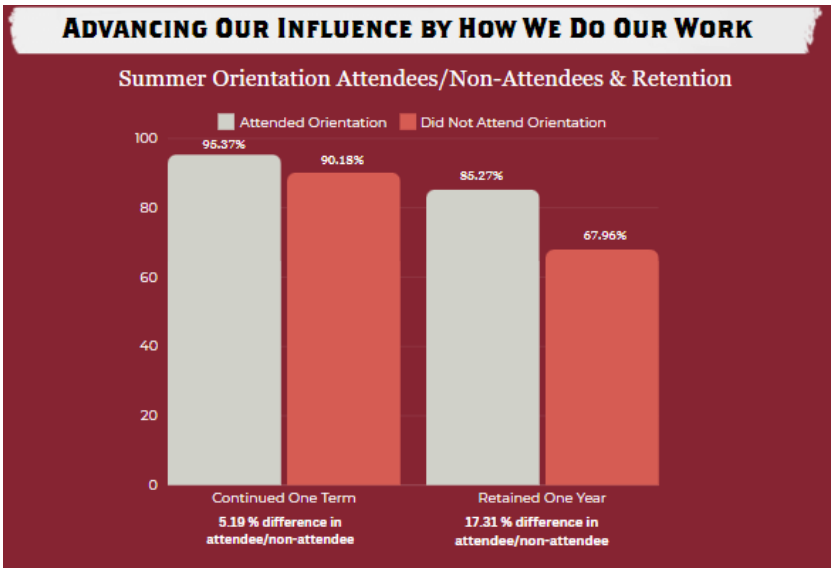
- **General Orientation attendance data**
  - 4,725 Student Orientation Attendees
    - 4,162 (Summer Orientation)
    - 563 (Winter Orientation)
  - 2,240 Parent/Supporter Attendees*largest amount of guests since pre-pandemic years.
    - 2,144 (Summer Orientation)
    - 96 (Winter Orientation)

- **Programmatic data**
  - 7 Spanish Family Program Orientation Sessions
  - 6 Overnight Program Sessions
  - Fee Reductions provided to 1,300 students
  - Timely response to over 3,350 emails from students, parents and guests
  - Captured over 2,600 new student list of prior experience/involvement. We shared that list with SLL/AS and the Affinity centers to provide proactive outreach. Instead of simply availing our services to students we are helping flip the script. We ask students their involvement and interest and help connect them to relevant services.
  - Monitored and responded to over 430 early alerts for students early in the transition to college
  - Generated our highest-ever summer orientation revenue from external sources, exceeding $410,000 for the first time in our history.

- **Quantitative Summer 2026 Orientation student attendee Qualtrics survey response (21% response rate).** After attending Orientation:
  - 93% Agreed: "My orientation leader helped me believe I can be a successful student"

- 90% agreed that they feel more prepared to attend Chico State in the fall.
- 82% plan to become more engaged (join a campus club, organization, volunteer, work on campus).
- 92% know someone to turn to for help.
- 92% agreed that they are aware of the resources at Chico State that can help them be a more successful student.
- 93% agreed that their orientation leader helped answer my questions.
- 94% are more aware of resources at Chico State

- **Students that attend Orientation are more likely to be retained after one semester (5.19% more likely) and significantly more likely to be retained after one year (17.31% more likely).** Detailed graph below.



(Chico State Institutional Research and Strategic Analytics, 2024)

- **Identify at least one goal/objective that support the Chico State Playbook in 2026-27**

1. Strengthen Belonging and Connection

Goal: Strengthen the transition from intention to enroll to being an engaged Wildcat by helping new students build meaningful connections to peers, resources, and Chico State.
Objective: By the end of the 2026–27 Orientation cycle, at least 78% of participants will report an increased sense of belonging and confidence navigating Chico State**,** and 91% will identify at least one person they can turn to for support**.**

2. Enhance the Transfer Student Experience

Goal: Develop a differentiated transition experience that recognizes transfer students' prior college experience and accelerates their connection to Chico State.
Objective: During 2026–27, implement an enhanced transfer pathway, that better meets

transfer student needs, and achieve 83% satisfaction, 80% increased awareness of campus resources among participating transfer students.

3. Reduce Summer Melt by 3%, Aggregated

Goal: Strengthen the transition from intent to enroll through Orientation attendance and course registration by identifying and addressing barriers that contribute to summer attrition.
Objective: Reduce summer melt between intent to enroll and Orientation course enrollment by 3% compared with the 2025–26 baseline**.**

4. Expand Targeted PAWS Navigator Support

Goal: Use PAWS Navigators to provide earlier, targeted outreach to incoming student populations experiencing the highest rates of summer melt.
Objective: Using summer 2026 data, identify priority populations and deploy targeted PAWS Navigator interventions to increase Orientation attendance among identified populations by 3% compared with the 2025–26 baseline**.**

5. Strengthen Pre-Orientation Preparation

Goal: Enhance the pre-Orientation Canvas modules to better prepare students academically, socially, and logistically for their transition to Chico State.
Objective: By the end of the 2026–27 Orientation cycle, at least 78% of students completing the modules will report that the content increased their preparedness for Orientation and their transition to Chico State.

6. Expand Community Partnerships

Goal: Strengthen partnerships between New Student Orientation & Transition Programs and the Chico community to enhance the new student and family experience.
Objective: Secure at least 10 Orientation sponsorships or partnerships with local businesses and community organizations during the 2026–27 cycle.

7. Understand and Support Adult Online Learners

Goal: Better understand the onboarding and transition needs of Chico State's growing fully online and adult learner populations.
Objective: During 2026–27, collect and analyze feedback from fully online and adult learners and identify at least three actionable recommendations for improving their onboarding and transition experience in 2027–28.

8. Leverage Artificial Intelligence

Goal: Identify responsible and practical opportunities to use AI to improve Orientation operations, data analysis, student communication, and new-student education.
Objective: During 2026–27, evaluate at least two potential AI applications and pilot or **imp**lement

at least one AI-supported process, documenting its impact on efficiency, effectiveness, or the student experience.

9. Increase Student Preparedness and Next-Step Clarity

Goal: Ensure students leave Orientation understanding what comes next and feeling prepared to begin their Chico State journey.
Objective: By the end of the 2026–27 Orientation cycle, at least 88% of Orientation participants will report increased clarity about their next steps and greater preparedness to begin their first semester at Chico State.

10. Enhance Family and Supporter Education

Goal: Strengthen family and supporter education to better equip them to support their student's transition, independence, and success at Chico State.
Objective: By the end of the 2026–27 Orientation cycle, at least 83% of participating families and supporters will report increased understanding of key Chico State resources, student transition needs, and how to effectively support their student's success and independence**.** Assessment results will be used to identify and implement at least two enhancements to family and supporter programming for 2027–28**.**