

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017**

## **Early Outreach and Support Programs**

TRiO

Student Support Services

## TRIO/STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

**Note:** Student Support Services is a TRiO program funded by the United States Department of Education to provide academic support services to low-income, first generation college students. The mission statement and program goals (objectives in the U.S. Department of Education framework) are specified by federal regulations and policies and cannot be altered without approval from a program officer at the U.S. Department of Education.

### I. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Student Support Services (SSS) is to improve the academic standing, retention, graduation, and graduate and professional school enrollment rates of eligible students who are receiving project services.

**Department Goals** (Performance Objectives required by the U.S. Department of Education)

1. Persistence: 69% of all students served by the SSS Project will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or graduate.
2. Good Academic Standing: 91% of all enrolled participants served by the SSS Project will meet the performance of good academic standing (2.0 or above).
3. Graduation: 59% of new participants served each year will graduate within six years.
  - These performance objectives are in alignment with division goals to increase the **retention and graduation** of students.
  - The services offered by SSS also contribute to **recruitment** efforts by reassuring students and their families that individualized support is available to students from disadvantaged backgrounds at CSU, Chico.
  - The **date of last review** was November 27, 2016 when the project submitted the TRIO Student Support Services Annual Performance Report (APR) to the U.S. Department of Education.

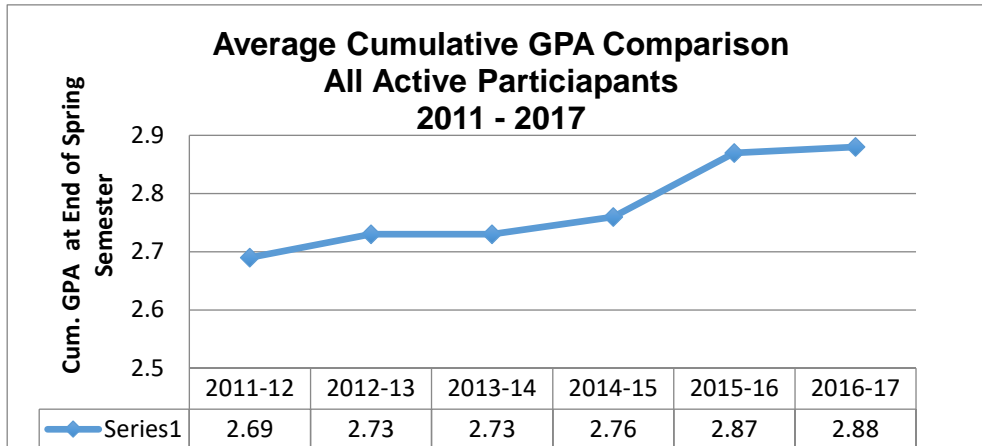
### II. DEPARTMENTAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Pilot 2016-17 – Expanded the SSS Mentor Program from one week in the summer to include the entire fall semester.
- Pilot 2016-17 – Mandatory weekly study sessions for all freshmen participants
- Pilot 2016-17 – Required all new freshmen to take a U-course
- Pilot 2016-17 – Required all new freshmen to take math in the fall
- Pilot 2016-17 – Required all new freshmen to take Math 290 or X tutoring class
- Pilot 2016-17 – Optional spring “Leadership Through Scholarship” course
- Pilot 2016-17 – Created and implemented budgeting tool for all participants
- Offered two eight week SSS Student Transfer Enrichment Programs (STEP)
- Offered the annual SSS Freshman Orientation Centered on University Success (FOCUS), running it alongside Wildcat Welcome Week.
- Offered two field school experiences; one for new freshmen participants, and the other for students enrolled in the leadership course
- Offered two “Choose Your Major” brown bag workshop series in collaboration with the Career Center - one each semester.
- Offered a spring graduate school tour
- Offered a one-day “Life After College” workshop for graduating seniors

#### Highlights:

Coaching program continues to enhance academic performance – Beginning in the summer of 2015, the project moved from a traditional advising model to a coaching model, using research-driven approaches designed to “nudge” students toward academic self-confidence and success (see Annual Report 2015-16). Due to a significant increase in participants’ cumulative GPAs at the end of spring 2016, this model was replicated in 2016-17 with similar positive results (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Average Annual Cumulative GPAs Achieved by Cohorts 2011 – 2016



Implementation of lessons learned through the REACH/SSS Pilot – SSS participated in a 2015-16 pilot project in collaboration with the Chico Student Success Center (CSSC), co-enrolling 11 freshmen in the CSSC’s REACH first year experience program. At the end of the academic year, the average cumulative GPA for co-enrolled students was higher than for other participants (see Annual Report 2015-16).

The lessons learned from this pilot were incorporated into the 2016-17 SSS freshman year program (see VII. Analysis). The following two elements of REACH were incorporated into the 2016-17 SSS freshmen experience: (1) enrollment in U-courses and (2) weekly structured group study sessions with student mentors.

Results - At the end of fall 2016, 96% of participants indicated that the U-courses had a positive impact on their sense of belonging and connection to Chico State, and 91% indicated that the study sessions had an impact on their academic success and self-confidence. Cumulative GPAs held steady with a fall 2016 average of 3.16 and spring 2017 average of 2.86 (see Figure 2). Students who participated in the optional spring “Leadership Through Scholarship” course fared better, with a 2.93 GPA at the end of spring 2017 (see VII. Analysis).

Figure 2: Academic Performance - Freshmen Participating in FOCUS 2011 – 2017

FOCUS Cohort	Average Cumulative GPA All FOCUS Participants	Average Cumulative GPA Early Start Required	AP Spring
Cohort 11	2.62	2.66	19%
Cohort 12	2.81	2.84	5%
Cohort 13	2.76	2.59	0%
Cohort 14	2.65	2.40	18%
Cohort 15 *	2.89	2.81	15%
Cohort 16	2.86	2.73	12%

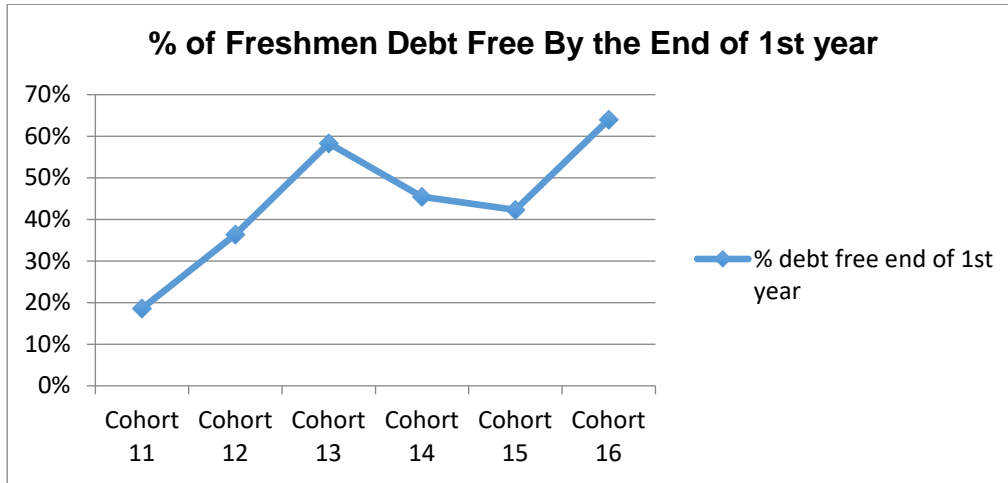
\* In order to determine the true impact of new interventions in 2016-17 as compared with previous years, Cohort 2015 data is for non-REACH participants only. The average cumulative GPA for REACH participants at the end of spring 2016 was 3.16.

Financial literacy program – All freshmen and sophomores, as well as upperclassmen on “Career Track” were required to work one-on-one with a financial literacy coach in 2016-17. Freshmen participants with a summer start (FOCUS) received more comprehensive and intrusive programming than other participants—they had two required phone coaching sessions over the summer, attended four financial literacy workshops during the fall semester, and engaged in self-study using the Dave Ramsey financial literacy program during the spring semester. Sophomores completed four self-study financial literacy units each semester, and all upperclassmen participants in Career Track met one-on-one with the financial literacy coach.

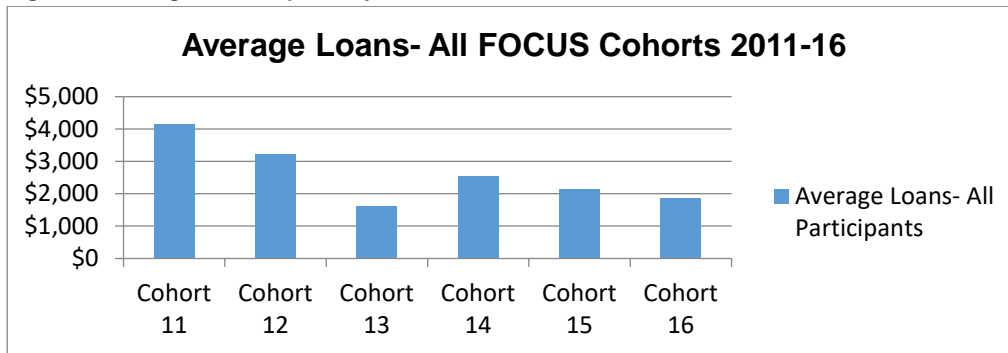
Results – This intervention was first piloted in Spring 2015 with freshmen and sophomores. The number of debt free freshmen has increased (see Figure 3), and freshmen and sophomores are borrowing less (see Figures 3 and 4). Student evaluations also indicate an increase in financial self-confidence and budgeting skills (see Figure 10). All freshmen successfully completed and paid for their first year of college. No participants in 2016-17 stopped out for financial reasons. Note: As you will see in the figures below, Cohort

2013 is an anomaly, perhaps due to a small sample size – there were only 12 students in that cohort, half as many as the other cohorts.

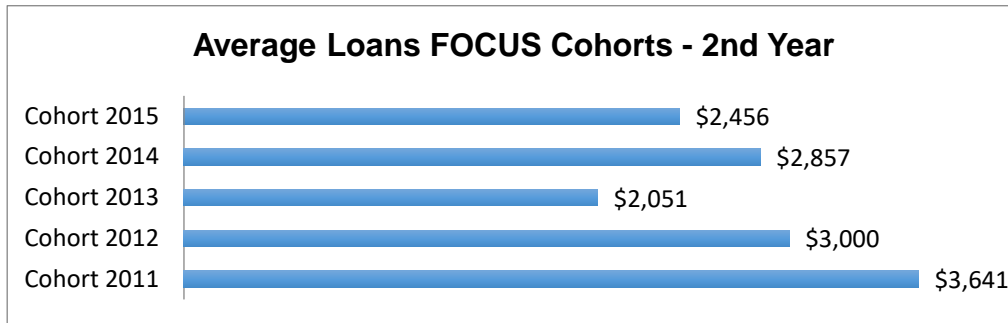
**Figure 3: Debt-Free Freshmen at End of 1<sup>st</sup> Year, FOCUS Cohorts 2011-2016**



**Figure 4: Average Debt Acquired by Freshmen in FOCUS Cohorts 2011 – 2016**



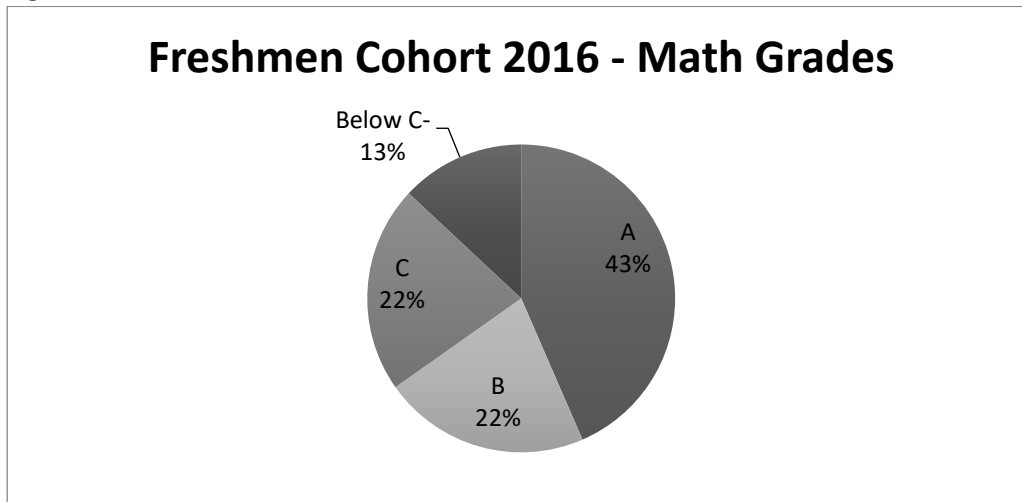
**Figure 5: Average Debt Acquired in 2<sup>nd</sup> Year By FOCUS Cohorts 2011 – 2016**



Pilot – Requirement of math course and Math 290 tutoring for all participants - All new freshmen in Cohort 2016 were required to take math (not only those requiring developmental courses). This pilot was undertaken for five reasons: (1) to create a shared academic experience among all scholars, (2) to diminish the stigma associated with developmental math, (3) to require that all freshmen experience tutoring as a part of their freshman experience, (4) to require that students take math while it's still fresh in their minds from high school, and (5) to encourage students to stay on track for graduation, particularly those in STEM majors with a heavy math-component.

Results – 100% of the students who attended all 10 tutoring sessions required by Math 290 earned a letter grade of C- or better in their math course. More students received A's than any other grade earned in math (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Math Grades in Fall 2016 – FOCUS Cohort 2016



#### Diversity Efforts:

- 
- Diversity trainings required of SSS interns – Interns were required to attend a diversity training offered by the CCLC prior to beginning their fall 2016 internship.
- Inclusion efforts - male participants – The project director modified internship requirements to ensure gender diversity among project staff so that male participants will see themselves reflected in project leadership in 2017-18. Also, in 2016-17, student interest was gauged before scheduling project activities to ensure male voices were included in programming. *Result – Applications from male students to serve on the project's leadership team increased from one male in 2016 to six males and one transgender male in 2017.*
- Inclusion efforts - Latinx students – Culturally inclusive approaches were incorporated into FOCUS, including Spanish speaking staff and welcome baskets delivered to students by SSS mentors. Latinx students are contacted in advance and encouraged to bring their parents to meet project staff. The project director participated in two subcommittees of the Chicano/Latino Council: (1) Hispanic Heritage Month planning committee and (2) Spanish Summer Orientation planning and implementation team. The Student Development Coordinator participated in the HSI Faculty Learning Community.
- Inclusion efforts - LGBTQ students – The project director participated in GSEC's Queer Week planning committee and Lavender Living Steering Committee.
- Campus Collaboration and Outreach
  - **Diversity Certificate** – The project director co-presented on first generation students' needs and challenges to faculty and staff at the Diversity Certificate program, along with the interim associate director of HSI initiatives and the associate director of the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office.
  - **CELT** – The project director co-presented on best practices for advising and supporting first generation students at the annual CELT conference, along with an advisor from the office of Academic Advising and Orientation and a faculty member.
  - **Student Learning Center** – The project director conducted a training in support of meeting first generation students' needs for tutors at the Student Learning Center.
  - **First Gen & Proud!** – The project director served as secretary for the First Generation Faculty and Staff Association and on the subcommittee that planned and implemented CSU, Chico's first ever Trailblazer Symposium.
  - **Visiting 1<sup>st</sup> Gen Author** – The project director collaborated with the director of the Chico Student Success Center on hosting the visit of author Kevin Jennings to CSU, Chico. Mr. Jennings interviewed 15 project participants for his new book.

### III. CHANGES IN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

N/A

#### IV. RESOURCES SUMMARY

##### Resource Allocation:

SSS allocation for 2016-2017	\$255,010
Rollover from 2015-2016	\$18,503
Total allocation for 2016-2017	\$273,513
Projected expenses*	(\$247,216)
Projected carryover balance	\$26,298

\*Note: Fiscal year is based on a September 1, 2016-August 31, 2017 timeline.

##### Human Resources:

N/A

##### Facilities/Equipment:

N/A

#### V. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT OF PAST YEAR

##### Program Objectives (Performance Objectives required by the U.S. Department of Education):

1. Persistence: 69% of all students served by the SSS Project will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or graduate.  
Met - Of the 139\* participants enrolled in 2016-17, 137 students or 99% either graduated or have registered for the fall 2017 semester
2. Good Academic Standing: 91% of all enrolled participants served by the SSS Project will meet the performance of good academic standing (2.0 or above).  
Met - Of the 139\* participants enrolled in 2016-17, 127 or 91% of them were in good academic standing (GPA above 2.0) by the end of the academic year.
3. Graduation: 59% of new participants served each year will graduate within six years.  
Unmet - Of the participants admitted into cohort 2011, 25 or 56% graduated within six years of their point of entry into the program.

\*This does not include new freshmen or transfer participants admitted summer 2017.

##### Annual Objectives for 2016-2017

1. Go live with the new project website in fall 2016. Use participant evaluations and focus groups (freshmen, transfer students, student leadership team, and graduating seniors) to assess the effectiveness of the website in the following areas: (1) appeal to diverse populations, including those with historically low enrollment in the project, (2) accurate description of project services and requirements, (3) ease of use, and (4) perceived helpfulness and relevance of information included, particularly for juniors and above. Implement changes in early spring to coincide with the 2017 recruitment cycle.  
Completed – June 2017
2. Implement new freshman participant requirements to model high impact practices offered by the Chico State Success Center's REACH program, as per lessons learned during the 2015-16 pilot project. These include (1) mandatory U-course enrollment for all participants in the fall semester of 2016, and (2) three hours of structured and monitored group study each week.  
Modified and Completed – After careful analysis of the students' evaluations of REACH, it was decided to offer only 1.5 hours of study time each week.

- Develop and pilot a new Excel budgeting tool to complement financial literacy programming. Require that all freshmen, sophomores, and upperclassmen on “Career Track” contracts utilize the spreadsheet twice during the academic year. These participants will also be asked to provide feedback on the tools’ helpfulness. Project staff will rely on student feedback to evaluate and improve the budgeting tool in preparation for the 2017-18 academic year.

Completed – All freshmen, sophomores, and new transfer students were required to use these tools both semesters.

### Ongoing Assessment Efforts

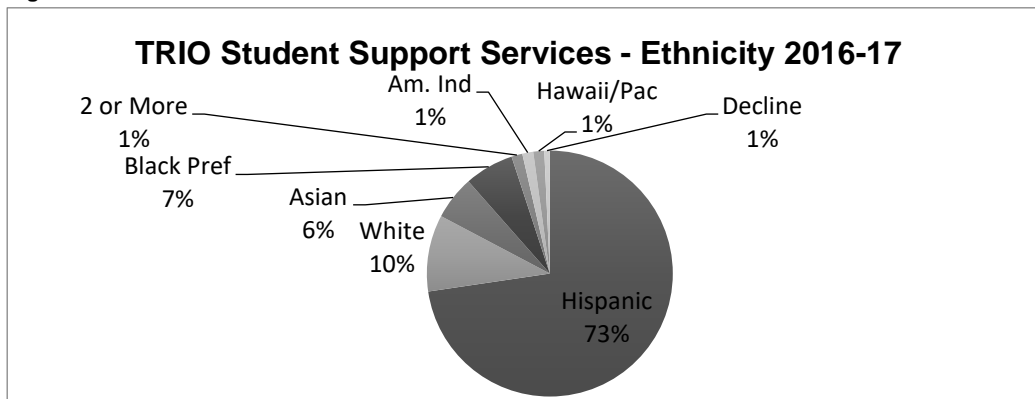
#### Demographic Reporting:

First Generation and Low Income – Federal legislation requires that SSS participants must be first generation college students (neither parent has a four year degree), come from a low-income background, and/or have a documented disability. Two-thirds of students must be both low-income and first generation. SSS met these demographic requirements in 2016-1.

Gender – Female: 71% Male: 29%

Ethnicity – See chart below for a breakdown.

Figure 7: Breakdown of Ethnicities 2016-17



#### Statistics on Program Usage

Figure 8: SSS Individual Advising/Coaching 2016-17 – Number of Participants Served

Total number of active participants during fall and spring semesters*	139
Received individualized non-cognitive skills coaching	139
Received advice and assistance in postsecondary course selection	69
Received education/counseling to improve financial aid literacy	83
Received information in applying for Federal Student Aid	35
Received assistance in completing and applying for Federal Student Aid	35
Received assistance in applying for admission to Graduate School	13
Received study abroad or National Student Exchange advising	6
Received career and professional development advising/coaching	23
Total number of individual advising/coaching sessions 2016-17	664

\*Does not include students admitted during the summer of 2017

Figure 9: SSS Group Advising/Coaching in 2016-17 – Number of Participants Served

STEP (new transfer students)—eight week seminar including these topics: course selections, financial literacy, non-cognitive skill development	13
FOCUS (new freshmen) – yearlong seminar including these topics: financial literacy, non-cognitive skill development, and course selection	27
Field School (RECR 399)	24
TRiO SSS leadership activities	27

Graduate school preparation activities	10
Professional development and career-oriented activities	26
Life After College workshop	7
Cultural events (e.g. theater, lectures, concerts, etc. )	39
Total number of participants in group advising/coaching sessions in 2016-17	173

### Student Assessment of Satisfaction, Quality, and Student Learning Outcomes

#### Student Learning Outcome #1: Increased participation in project services

As a result of participants creating their own contract each semester in combination with increased communication and monitoring of student progress by project staff (at least one contact per month), student participation in project services will increase over that of the previous year.

- 2016-17 Outcome: The number of students participating in group advising sessions, went up from 62 in 2015-16 to 173 in 2016-17. The total number of individual advising sessions decreased from 896 in 2015-16 to 664 in 2016-17. This is likely a reporting error, however, as two staff members reported they were inconsistent with uploading session notes into Advisor during the academic year. See Figures 8 and 9 for a breakdown of individual and group sessions.

#### Student Learning Outcome #2: Increased academic self-confidence (first year students)

As a result of the yearlong First Year Enrichment Seminar, freshmen students will express increased academic self-confidence in the following areas: (1) ability to identify various resources on campus that support students from disadvantaged backgrounds; (2) willingness to utilize campus resources; (3) knowledge that research has proven that intelligence can increase over time; and (4) ability to identify various opportunities for connecting with the campus community during their academic career.

- 2016-17 Outcome: Student evaluations indicate that new freshmen participants increased their academic self-confidence greatly in all areas pre-identified as crucial (see Figure 10 below)

#### Student Learning Outcome #3: Increased financial literacy (freshmen)

As a result of four individualized coaching sessions and four group advising sessions over the course of an academic year with the financial literacy coach, first year students will be able to (1) find, read, and understand their financial aid award, (2) explain the value of reducing dependence upon student loans, (3) compare their financial aid award to their anticipated expenses in order to identify and plan for unmet need, (4) identify strategies and resources to bridge the gap between academic expenses and financial aid awarded, and (5) create a realistic annual budget that will stretch their financial aid dollars.

- 2016-17 Outcome: Student evaluations indicate that (1) new freshmen participating in FOCUS and (2) graduating seniors who participated in the “Life After College” workshop increased their financial literacy greatly in all areas pre-identified as crucial (see Figures 10 & 11 below). Quantitative data collected through financial aid records indicate that more freshmen completed their first year debt-free than in previous years and those with loans borrowed less (See Figures 3 and 4). Second year students also borrowed less (see Figure 5).

**Figure 10: 2016-17 FOCUS Participant Evaluations – Highlights**

FOCUS 2016-17 Programming - Intended Participant Outcomes	Perceived Level of Impact
Adjusting to and feeling successful in college	96%
Overcoming challenges in college	79%
Increased academic self-confidence	92%
Ability to identify, locate, and use campus resources	92%
Improved study skills	88%
Improved time management	88%
Improved budgeting skills	88%
Better understanding of financial aid package	96%
Increased desire to decrease, avoid, or eliminate debt	96%
Able to make a budget-driven decision on how much to work	83%
Overall satisfaction with FOCUS yearlong programming	100%



**Figure 11: 2016-17 Life After College Seminar Participant Evaluations – Highlights**

Life After College Seminar - Intended Participant Outcomes	Perceived Level of Impact
Lessened anxiety about life after college	100%
Increased confidence - managing loans and debt	100%
Increased confidence - budgeting	96%
Increased confidence - saving for retirement	96%
Increased confidence - dressing professionally	88%
Increased confidence – interviewing skills	88%
Overall satisfaction with Life After College seminar	100%

## VI. ANALYSIS

- **Increase recruitment efforts toward underrepresented groups** – The number of SSS applications received from males and black students (both genders) continues to be low compared with other populations. New and innovative approaches need to be sought that will encourage these students to apply.
- **Seek and obtain supplemental funds** – The U.S Department of Education imposes strict guidelines governing the use of project funds to pay for food and hospitality. This presents a challenge when scheduling overnight field trips, as well as daylong workshops and trainings for project participants from low-income backgrounds who cannot afford to supply their own meals/accommodations. The project should seek additional funds for purchase of items not allowable by the U.S. Department of Education.
- **Continue to offer comprehensive and intrusive financial literacy programming** – Analysis of data collected in 2015-16 and 2016-17, including both qualitative (participant surveys) and quantitative (financial aid records), indicates that the project’s financial literacy programming is making a positive impact on new freshmen participants’ ability to (1) “right size” their student loan package and (2) create a realistic budget to make their financial aid dollars stretch throughout the academic year. Accordingly, financial literacy programming for students at all stages of their academic career will continue, and the project director will begin to track the student loan debt of sophomores receiving grant aid, juniors and seniors on “Career Track” contracts, and graduating seniors (Life After College). This will allow for more comprehensive analysis and assessment of these services project-wide.
- **Continue to offer First Year Experience seminar to freshmen** – Analysis of data collected in 2015-16 and 2016-17 participant surveys and evaluations indicates that the project’s non-cognitive skill building activities offered via the First Year Experience seminar successfully increased participants’ academic self-confidence (see Figure 10). Further, a quantitative analysis of freshmen participants’ academic transcripts over a five-year period (2011–2017) indicates consistent improvement in average cumulative GPAs for freshmen, with the exception of spring 2017 (see Figure 2). Freshmen who participated in the optional spring “Leadership Through Scholarship” seminar earned significantly higher grades than those who only participated in the fall semester seminar (2.93 versus 2.73 respectively). Accordingly, the project will make it mandatory for new freshmen to take a second semester of the First Year Experience seminar, with a focus on developing the leadership skills necessary for becoming the future stewards of their families and communities. An “opt out” from this requirement will be permitted for compelling personal reasons.
- **Continue to require weekly study sessions for freshmen each fall** – After the success of the REACH pilot in 2015-16, it was decided to require attendance at weekly study sessions for freshmen in cohort 2016. At the end of fall 2016, 91% of participants indicated that the study sessions had a positive impact on their academic performance. Participants were required to attend 1.5 hour study sessions once per week in the fall semester. They were not required to do so in the spring. The difference between the fall 2016 semester GPA (3.16) and the spring 2017 GPA (2.86) was quite stark. Based upon this data, the project will pilot mandatory *yearlong* study sessions in 2017-18.
- **Continue to require enrollment in U-courses for freshmen each fall** – After the success of the REACH pilot in 2015-16, it was decided to require that all of our freshmen enroll in U-courses in the fall semester of 2016. At the end of that semester, 96% of participants indicated that the U-courses had a positive impact on their sense of belonging and connection to Chico State. Based upon these evaluations, and the drop in GPA discussed above, the project director will advocate with university personnel to allow TRIO-SSS freshmen to have seats reserved for them in spring 2018 U-courses. The goal will be to require all freshmen to enroll in a second semester of U-courses and/or strongly encourage and incentivize this.
- **Continue to require math course enrollment and Math 290 tutoring unit of all new freshmen** – After the success of the pilot in fall 2016 resulting in 100% passing grades in math for all participants who followed program requirements. For this reason, the project will continue to require math and a

supplemental math tutoring course (290 or x-course) of all FOCUS participants during their first semester. The project will continue to track the success of this initiative on freshmen GPAs and graduation rates.

- **Continue to offer TRIO Distinguished Scholar program** – The number of coaching sessions with upperclassmen have increased ever since this program was implemented in fall 2015, as have cumulative GPAs (see Figure 1). Further data analysis needs to be conducted to determine the significance of the correlation between participation in project services and the TRIO Distinguished Scholar program. The project will thus implement a student survey (see Program Objectives for 2017-18) to determine the Career Track contracts' impact on academic success, applications to graduate school, and career-readiness upon graduation. In the meantime, the project will continue to offer the TRIO Distinguished Scholar program due to (1) its popularity among students, and (2) the structured support provided to students applying to graduate/professional schools and career-level jobs.
- **Continue to tie grant aid to completion of TRIO-SSS contracts** – Cumulative GPAs have improved since this requirement was implemented (see Figures 3 and 4). While quantitative and qualitative data for freshmen have been thoroughly reviewed and seem to be correlated to the efficacy of this approach, further data collection and analysis needs to be conducted to determine the significance of the correlation between these contracts and academic success for (1) sophomores and (2) AP students. In addition to analyzing transcripts, we will collect qualitative data through new student surveys for all sophomores and AP students (see Program Objectives for 2017-18).

## **VII. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR**

### **Program Objectives for 2017-2018**

1. Request a complete outside project evaluation from a campus committee, following the guidelines set forth in the 2015 grant proposal.
2. Develop, pilot, and assess the impact of a six-week information literacy unit during the First Year Enrichment seminar. This unit will be co-developed and taught by the project's student development coordinator and a faculty member from Meriam Library. The project director will analyze the impact of this intervention using qualitative data (student evaluations) and quantitative data (participants' grades in courses requiring research papers).
3. Collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data to assess the impact of the "Back on Track" and "Career Track" contracts on student success in the following areas:
  - cumulative GPAs
  - graduation rates
  - academic self-confidence
  - self-confidence in quality of resume
  - self-confidence in interviewing skills
  - rates of applications to graduate and professional schools
  - rates of acceptance to graduate and professional schools
  - rates of career placement immediately upon graduation

Implement programmatic changes accordingly.