

WSCUC
INTERIM REPORT
FEBRUARY 2023

Name of Institution: California State University, Chico

Person Submitting the Report: Dr. Daniel Grassian, ALO and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Report Submission Date: February 2023

Statement on Report Preparation:

Briefly describe in narrative form the process of report preparation, providing the names and titles of those involved. Because of the focused nature of an Interim Report, the widespread and comprehensive involvement of all institutional constituencies is not normally required. Faculty, administrative staff, and others should be involved as appropriate to the topics being addressed in the preparation of the report. Campus constituencies, such as faculty leadership and, where appropriate, the governing board, should review the report before it is submitted to WSCUC, and such reviews should be indicated in this statement.

As with the last full WSCUC self-study (submitted in 2018), ALO and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Dr. Daniel Grassian led efforts to complete this Interim Report. These efforts began in fall 2019, very shortly after the spring 2019 WSCUC site visit and the subsequent July 2019 WSCUC action letter. At this time (fall 2019), we assembled a steering committee of the following individuals to lead efforts for each of the five recommendations as noted below:

1. **Assessment and Program Review:** Dr. Daniel Grassian, ALO and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
2. **Institutional Research:** Dr. Andy Miller, Associate Vice Provost, Information Resources¹
3. **Transfer and Non-Traditional Learners:** Dr. Kaitlyn Baumgartner-Lee, Assistant Vice President for Student Success Initiatives and University Advising and Dr. Kate McCarthy, Dean, Undergraduate Education
4. **Stabilizing the Administration:** Dr. Debra Larson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs²
5. **Diversifying the Faculty:** Ms. Evanne O'Donnell, Associate Vice President for Academic Personnel³

From fall 2019 to fall 2022, the steering committee met several times to discuss progress to date and plans related to the five recommendations above. They also developed a timeline (Appendix A-Interim Report Timeline), focused mainly on the fall 2022 and early spring 2023 semesters, in order to ensure that there would be sufficient time to complete the report with engagement from key campus constituents. As detailed in the timeline, the individuals above composed drafts of their respective

¹ Effective spring 2022, Dr. Monique Sendze, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer and Tom Rosenow, Director of Institutional Research replaced Dr. Miller, who left Chico State in spring 2022.

² As detailed later in the Interim Report, Provost Larson resigned her position in December 2022, and Dr. Daniel Grassian took over as lead for this section.

³ Ms. Evanne O'Donnell retired in spring 2020. She was replaced by Dr. Brian Oppy, who assumed Ms. O'Donnell's role in this committee from summer 2020 to spring 2022, after which he was replaced by Dr. Mahalley Allen, who replaced Dr. Oppy in this committee and in this role.

areas, which the committee edited. Also, as detailed in the timeline, after the group completed an entire draft of the Interim Report, they shared it more widely for feedback: the entire Academic Senate for key faculty and staff feedback, the Chairs' Council, which includes department chairs of all 46 academic departments, the Provost's Academic Council for key administrator feedback, the President's Cabinet and the President herself. ALO Grassian processed the feedback, made corresponding updates, and then finalized the report.

List of Topics Addressed in this Report

As identified in the July 2019 WSCUC action letter, the following topics are addressed in this report: assessment; program review; learning outcomes; institutional data; academic senate; institutional research; data; additional resources; transfer students; non-traditional learners; interim administrative appointees; review of senior administrators; interim to permanent status process; faculty diversification; campus diversification.

In addition to the topics above, the report also addresses the following, which were significant campus developments from the conclusion of the site visit in spring 2019 to the present: the effects of COVID-19 and the relevant campus response to it; changes in key campus administration personnel; campus enrollment declines.

Institutional Context

Very briefly describe the institution's background; mission; history, including the founding date and year first accredited; geographic locations; and other pertinent information so that the Interim Report Committee panel has the context to understand the issues discussed in the report.

California State University, Chico was founded in 1887 as the Northern Branch State Normal School of California, opening its doors to 90 students in 1889 for the purpose of training and educating teachers. Throughout the years, the college grew and its name changed to reflect that growth—from Chico Normal School to Chico State Teachers College to Chico State College. In 1972, Chico State College joined the California State University (CSU) system and became CSU, Chico—affectionately known as Chico State. Chico State is a regional, comprehensive master's institution and the anchor institution of higher education in Northern California, serving a 12-county service area approximately the size of Ohio.

Chico State proudly enrolls students from throughout the state of California: over 80% of first-time freshmen come from regions outside the large but significantly less populated rural service area, including the greater Sacramento valley, the Bay Area, the Los Angeles basin, and San Diego. The University strives to serve all Californians interested in an affordable, high-quality college education. Chico State's student body is largely of traditional age (18–24). This combined with a location in a small to mid-size city (population nearly 102,000) in a largely agricultural area gives Chico State a distinct, residential character. Its proximity to downtown Chico—literally across the street from campus—reinforces a college town feel.

Chico State's beautiful 119-acre campus and 800-acre farm currently (AY 2022-23) host a diverse student body of over 13,000, served by a dedicated, highly qualified cadre of nearly 2,000 faculty and staff. Through the first decade of the 21st century, the student population was not particularly diverse (predominantly white with one of the most affluent student populations in the CSU system). Less than 15 years later, Chico State has become a significantly more diverse campus serving a high percentage of first-generation and low-income students. In fall 2014, Chico State's Hispanic student enrollment reached 25% (now over 35%) and the University officially became a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI).

Chico State's mission is to be “the comprehensive university of the North State with a global reach. Through excellence of inquiry, innovation, and experiential learning, we develop students who are critical thinkers, responsible citizens, diverse leaders, and inspired stewards of environmental, social, and economic resources.” Its vision is to “be known as a preeminent university solving the unprecedented challenges of the 21st century.” The University is operating under a 2019-2024 Strategic Plan (Appendix B-University Strategic Plan), which identifies the following strategic priorities, all of which are predicated on the primacy of student success, enabled by excellence of faculty and staff as well as communication, technology, and philanthropy: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion; Civic & Global Engagement; and Resilient & Sustainable Systems. The Strategic Plan also identifies the following enduring commitments or time-honored promises we make to students and one another, which we consider the building blocks for a high-quality college education and essential ingredients to student success: Academic Distinction; Transformative Student Experiences; Prominent Scholarship and Innovation; and a Culture of Excellence and Accountability.

Response to Issues Identified by the Commission

This main section of the report should address the issues identified by the Commission in its action letter(s) as topics for the Interim Report. Each topic identified in the Commission's action letter should be addressed. The team report (on which the action letter is based) may provide additional context and background for the institution's understanding of issues.

Provide a full description of each issue, the actions taken by the institution that address this issue, and an analysis of the effectiveness of these actions to date. Have the actions taken been successful in resolving the problem? What is the evidence supporting progress? What further problems or issues remain? How will these concerns be addressed, by whom, and under what timetable? How will the institution know when the issue has been fully addressed? Please include a timeline that outlines planned additional steps with milestones and expected outcomes. Responses should be no longer than five pages per issue.

Recommendation #1: Assessment and Program Review

Based on Chico State's submitted materials as well as a spring 2019 visit, in a July 2019 action letter, WSCUC provided us with the following program review and assessment related recommendation:

Although the university conducts annual assessments of academic programs and periodic program reviews, these processes could be connected in more substantial and meaningful ways with improving student learning outcomes and program effectiveness. They could also be better informed by institutional data, academic senate engagement, and external input, and would benefit from sustained commitment of resources. (CFR 2.4, 2.5, 2.7).

The following narrative details what the campus has done in these two areas to respond to this recommendation and what it intends to do in the future.

In fall 2018 and spring 2019, when the campus submitted its self-study and had its site visit, work had just begun and was still in progress on revising both the annual assessment and program review process and procedure by eliciting feedback from key constituents (e.g., deans, chairs, faculty, and other administrators).

After the campus received the corresponding assessment and program review recommendation from WSCUC in summer 2019, it determined that the best way to address the recommendations and to make both processes more meaningful and substantial was to set up a task force composed of faculty and administrators from all academic colleges to provide the campus with recommendations for how to improve both processes.

During the 2019-20 academic year, the Provost's Office worked with Academic Senate to develop a task force charge that identified key assessment and program review issues and questions to be addressed and answered. These issues and questions were derived from the WSCUC team report. For instance, the team report indicated that:

Like faculty on many campuses, CSU Chico's are divided in their support for formal assessment protocols and their utility in driving curricular or other program changes. Where some programs have taken extensive measures to address assessment findings, others see assessment as an

externally-driven compliance exercise rather than a useful component for program improvement.

To address this issue, among other questions, the task force attempted to address the following: What are some ways to make the annual assessment process more valuable and meaningful for faculty? What are the current barriers to meaningfulness? What, if anything, do faculty find beneficial or meaningful from the current process?

This charge was subsequently sent out to the campus (Appendix C—“Assessment-Program Review Task-Force”). While the committee intended to begin its work in spring 2020, due to COVID-19, it was delayed until the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year. Based on recommendations from the task force (which was composed of a faculty member and administrator from each of the seven academic colleges, for a total of fourteen participants) as well as subsequent feedback from other campus stakeholder groups such as the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate, the Chairs’ Council, and the Provost’s Academic Council, the following updates were made to the assessment and program review procedures and process during the 2021-22 academic year:

Annual Assessment Process and Form:

- In the WSCUC report, the team asked the campus to take “care” to “ensure” that programs, in particular graduate programs, are “hewing to a relatively coordinated vision and set of practices for assessment.” The report also stated: “Assessment methodologies at CSU Chico range from indirect to direct. The visiting team encourages placing additional weight on more direct methods going forward.” To address these recommendations and in order to provide clarity and consistency with the assessment process, Chico State created an entirely new Annual Assessment Guidelines document (Appendix D—Annual Assessment Guidelines) for departments and faculty. Among other things, this document includes specific directions for how to conduct a data-driven direct assessment by selecting key assignments, creating a rubric and benchmark, evaluating the assignments, compiling the data, and coming to a determination of how to improve the instructional program on the basis of the data. The guidelines have been distributed to administrators and faculty throughout the colleges and placed on our assessment focused [website](#).
- In conjunction with the development of our new assessment guidelines, we also revised our Annual Program Assessment Report (Appendix E—Annual Program Assessment Report), which, as described above, now asks programs to conduct direct assessment by identifying and then assessing specific artifacts using a rubric and a benchmark. Further, instead of leaving it completely up to programs to determine the method of assessment without any clear guidance, the updated annual assessment form now asks programs to detail the number and kind of artifacts they used, who evaluated them, the rubric, and the benchmarks. In addition, the form now asks programs to identify the percentage of students who met the benchmark, and what could account for evaluator rating differences, why some students did not meet the benchmark (if applicable).
- The updated Annual Program Assessment Report also now specifically asks programs how they would improve the instructional program on the basis of the assessment report.
- The updated Annual Program Assessment Report includes new sections on ‘Closing the Loop,’ which will help to ensure carry through of programmatic improvement suggestions made in previous annual assessment reports. More specifically, question #4 in the new template asks programs to address the following questions: “How was last year’s assessment results shared

with the departmental faculty? Please summarize and/or provide the results of this sharing or discussion? Was the program provided with any college dean-level feedback? If so, please summarize and provide any departmental feedback to the college feedback provided.” Question #5 asks programs to address the following questions: “What has the program done to implement the planned program improvement actions from the last annual assessment report or from previous assessment reports? What is left to do and how/will it be accomplished?”

- Last, the Annual Program Assessment Report has new signature lines and response areas for the department chair, college assessment coordinator (if applicable), and the dean or associate dean. This will help ensure that the reports are being read and considered by the appropriate faculty and administrators.

Program Review:

Based on recommendations made by the Assessment and Program Review taskforce as well as discussions with stakeholders (e.g., department chairs, deans, and faculty), CSU Chico has made the following adjustments to the program review process and procedure:

- In its report, the WSCUC site team recommended that the campus increase shared governance in the program review process “through the participation of more faculty and the academic senate.” In greater detail, the report also stated that “The visiting team noted that while the Academic Program Review process itself appears to have fairly broad support across the institution, the Academic Senate plays a limited or nonexistent role in it and recommends greater involvement of the Academic Senate in the future.” The Assessment and Program Review taskforce agreed with this recommendation as did campus administration. Consequently, in spring 2022, the Academic Senate unanimously passed a proposal (Appendix F- Undergraduate Program Review Committee) to establish a new Undergraduate Program Review Committee composed and led by faculty throughout the academic colleges, which will serve as an intermediate level of review between programs and administrators. As it had been doing before the site visit, the Graduate Council will continue to serve as intermediate level of program review between programs and administrators for graduate programs.
- More specifically, the Undergraduate Program Review Committee will
 - Be composed of faculty from all seven academic colleges;
 - Provide intermediate-level (between the programs and the Provost’s Office) reviews of the programs conducted by faculty peers;
 - Working with the Provost’s Office, update and finalize the program review process and procedure;
 - Working with the Provost’s Office, determine whether any externally accredited programs will be subject to an abbreviated program review process.⁴

⁴ Given the variance in rigor of externally accredited programs as well as the campus focus on graduation rates and equity gaps (which are not evaluated by external accreditors), among other things, the Assessment and Program Review Taskforce recommended that externally accredited programs be subject to a limited internal program review process. The Provost’s Office concurred, and the Undergraduate Program Review Committee as well as Graduate Council have been charged to determine whether externally accredited programs will be subject to an abbreviated program review, and if so, what the programs will be required to submit.

- The team report also asked the campus to “focus its efforts on narrowing the identified achievement gaps” in its program reviews and through other means. Previous to the WSCUC site visit, the program review process did not include the examination of equity gaps and graduation rates for first-time first-year students as well as for transfer students. This has now become an integral component of the program review process.
- Similarly, previous to the WSCUC site visit, the program review process did not include the examination of and recommendations related to the annual assessment process. This has also subsequently become an integral component of the program review process.
- Last, in response to the site visiting team’s recommendation that the program review process “could be further and better informed by institutional data,” working with the Provost’s Office, the Office of Institutional Research has finalized (as of fall 2022) data-driven interactive reports for programs to use with relevant program review data. In one location, these reports include all of the required data for conducting a program review, including the following, which was previously unavailable or not easily available to programs:
 - Enrollment for multiple (e.g., double and triple) majors. Previously this data had to be extrapolated from other sources.
 - Enrollment in options within degree programs. Previously this data had to be extrapolated from other sources.
 - Graduation and retention rates for options within degree programs. Previously this data also had to be extrapolated from other sources.
 - Year by year retention rates.

While we believe Chico State has made important strides in improving our assessment and program review processes in order to make them more meaningful and significant for faculty and the campus at large, there is more work on the horizon. The following is our list of to be completed items along with a timeline:

- 2022-23 Academic Year
 - Establishment and Ongoing Work of the Undergraduate Academic Program Review Committee
 - With guidance from the Undergraduate Academic Program Review Committee, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Council, and the Provost’s Office, finalize updates to the Program Review process.
 - With guidance from the Undergraduate Academic Program Review Committee, the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Council, and the Provost’s Office, the campus will determine whether externally accredited programs will be subject to any part of the campus program review process and, if so, how that process will work.
 - The Undergraduate Program Review Committee will begin reviewing program review materials.
 - The new program review data-driven reports will be released to administrators and relevant faculty, and used as part of the program review process.
 - Working with an external organization (Leepfrog), the Provost’s Office will begin digitizing the program review and assessment process, integrating them with one another as well as with the newly established program review dashboard. Doing so will make it easier to set up workflows, and it should also allow our annual assessment reports to be linked digitally with our also soon to be digitized program review process.

- 2023-24 Academic Year and Beyond
 - Finalize the digitization of the annual assessment and program review processes.
 - Make adjustments to the new program review data-driven reports as needed.
 - If the campus determines to review externally accredited programs internally, finalize a process and procedure, then determine a timeline, and begin reviewing such programs.

Recommendation #2: Transfer and Non-Traditional Students

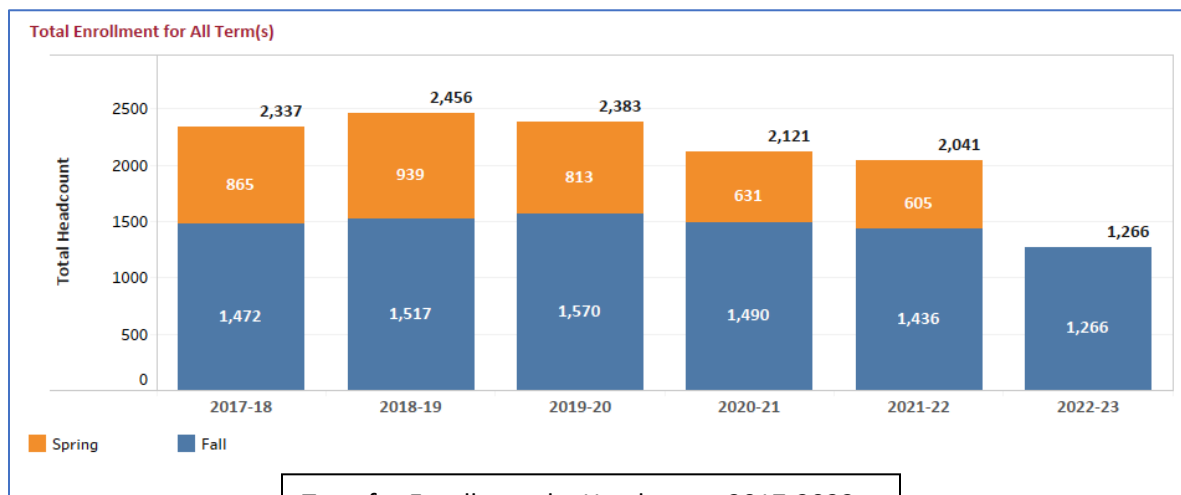
Based on Chico State’s submitted materials as well as a spring 2019 visit, in a July 2019 action letter, WSCUC provided us with the following transfer and non-traditional student recommendation:

Given its history, mission, location in the North State, and market position, CSU Chico serves and will increasingly serve transfer students and non-traditional learners. The Commission recommends a review of the institution's approach to supporting this growing body of students and learners on campus, with an ensuing alignment of resources. (CFR 2.14)

This recommendation calls attention to Chico State's responsibility to serve two distinct student populations: transfer students who seek a degree at Chico State after completing lower division requirements at a community college and non-traditional students, often defined as adult learners approximately ages 25 and above who have diverse academic backgrounds, constraints, and goals. The following addresses these populations separately in order to highlight their distinctive experiences and needs.

Transfer Students

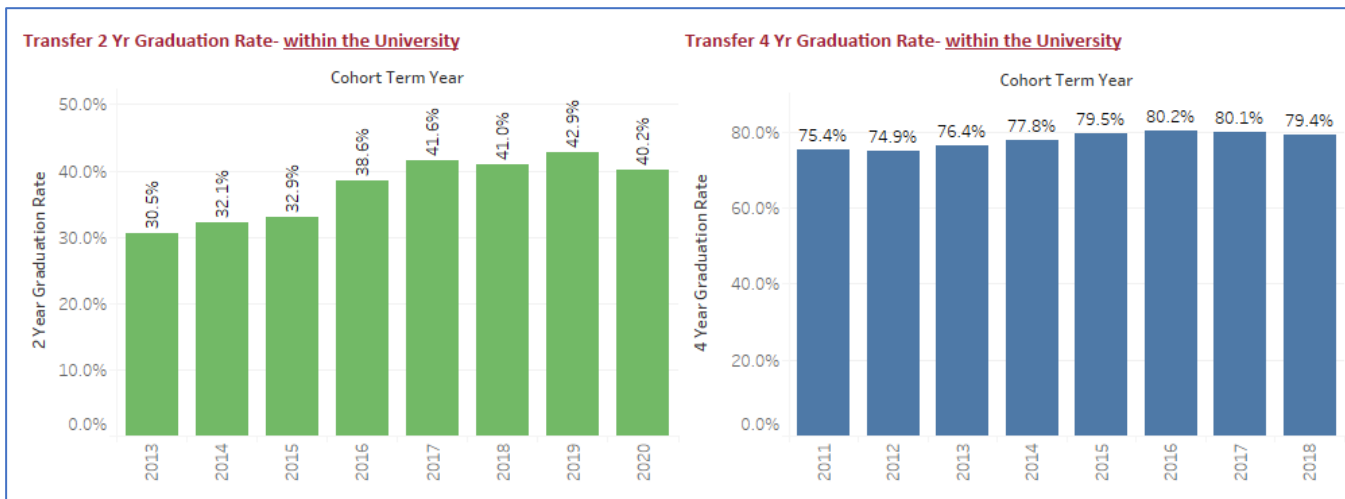
Chico State’s transfer enrollment has been declining since it peaked at 2,456 (headcount) in 2018-19. In 2021-22 our transfer enrollment was 2,041 and is on track to be slightly lower still for 2022-23.



Transfer Enrollment by Headcount, 2017-2022

This decline is at least partly attributable to a shrinking community college pipeline. California community colleges are seeing [declining enrollments](#) across the state, and Butte Community College, Chico’s largest feeder institution, was additionally significantly impacted by the [population displacement and economic devastation](#) of the 2018 Camp Fire.

While the number of transfer students has declined, Chico State has made good progress over the past several years in serving these students as measured by two- and four-year graduation rates (see chart below).



Transfer Two- and Four-Year Graduation Rates by Cohort 2013-2022

Further, in 2021, Chico achieved the CSU Graduation Initiative 2025 target of 43% of transfer students graduating within two years, in 2021, four years earlier than its target. In 2022, likely as a result of extended pandemic disruptions, that rate dipped slightly to 40%. Transfer four-year rates have also slipped, but remain strong at 80%. Both of these rates are consistent with CSU system-wide averages (40% and 80% respectively).

Unfortunately, we have persistent equity gaps in the two-year graduation rate for Black and Native American transfer students (30% and 18% respectively) and in the four-year transfer graduation rate for Black students (72%). Closing these equity gaps is both a [CSU systemwide priority](#) as well as the focus of Chico State’s [Advancing Equity Project \(AEP\)](#). Since its launch in August 2021, the AEP has resulted in, among other things, policy changes (e.g., fee waivers for orientation and graduation as well as changing the language of “Academic Probation” to “Academic Notice”), the implementation of a Black Peer Mentor program, redesign of multiple high-enrollment courses with significant equity gaps, and a re-engagement campaign to reach disenrolled minority student populations.

Increased Support for Transfer Students

Declining enrollment and consequent budgetary challenges have made it difficult to launch major new initiatives; nonetheless specific investments and process improvements have had significant benefit for transfer students, as detailed below.

1. Recruitment and Onboarding

- The Office of Admission has made multiple investments including:
 - a. Admissions Transfer Advisors holding office hours at local area community colleges to perform on the spot admissions, providing accurate and accessible transfer advising.
 - b. The creation of a new position focused on transfer admissions recruitment.

- c. Streamlined transfer admissions by conditionally admitting students on self-reported grades for faster decision release.
- The Office of Orientation & Transition Programs is actively developing more cohesive online and virtual orientation experiences to accommodate transfer and adult learners. It has also developed multiple delivery modalities to better support non-traditional student needs. These include offering a comprehensive onboarding, advising, and course registration via an in-person or virtual orientation.
- Further, since 2019, the Office of Orientation & Transition Programs has significantly increased student attendance of transfer students at orientation by offering orientation fee reductions, a virtual option, and proactive outreach to engage students in early outreach support.
- All orientation session modalities are designed to accommodate diverse needs of the students and supporters, including an in-person and online Spanish Family Program, as well as specific orientation sessions for incoming student veterans.
- The School of Social Work has expanded its direct outreach to California community college students.

2. HSI Transfer Student Transition Support

- The First-Year Experience program now defines its mission to support the first year of a transfer student, as well as that of first-time college students. They launched a “Transfer Tuesdays” program that offers a range of engagement and support activities, as well as a kickoff “Steps for Success” event for transfer students at the start of every semester.
- In 2021, Chico State was awarded a five-year, \$5 million Department of Education HSI Stem grant that includes a Community College Transfer Support program to strengthen our collaboration efforts with Butte Community College, our largest feeder institution. The program provides peer mentoring, opportunities to participate in an online STEM research course, campus visits, and an Undergraduate Research Assistantship Program. The grant also funds three new Professional Development and Transfer Coordinator positions in the college of Natural Science; Agriculture; and Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management.

3. Data and Process Improvements:

- The transfer matriculation process was improved through investment in additional professional staff dedicated to addressing a backlog of articulation agreements.
- Newly disaggregated data in both the CSU Student Success Dashboards and our own [Institutional Research Fact Books](#) allow us to understand our transfer student population more deeply. For instance, the new General Education Grades and Equity dashboard allows us to see that while the overall GE course pass rate for transfer students is lower than that of first-time freshman cohorts and trending downward, underrepresented minority students have higher pass rates in these courses, prompting outreach to faculty teaching upper division GE courses with resources for closing course-level equity gaps.

4. **Exposure to research and post-baccalaureate opportunities**

- Knowing that undergraduate research is a high-impact practice for student retention and post-baccalaureate success, Chico State is expanding opportunities for both faculty-mentored and course-based undergraduate research. Outreach to transfer students about these opportunities is an intentional part of this effort. For instance, staff from our Title V HSI grant-funded [Adelante Post-Baccalaureate Pipeline Program](#) share information about Adelante's funded summer research program at our Transfer Orientation sessions and in other settings. These research experiences allow transfer students to quickly connect with faculty mentors and forge paths to graduate school or other opportunities.

Non-traditional Students

New program development, concerted grant-seeking, and technology investments are expanding our ability to serve adult and distance learners for whom our traditional on-campus degree programs are either not appropriate or not practical. Regional & Continuing Education's (RCE)⁵ Strategic Plan for 2020-2024 (Appendix G-RCE Strategic Plan) includes the expansion of degree completion, certificate, and graduate programs to meet non-traditional learner needs. As the elements of this plan are implemented, Chico State will significantly expand its capacity to meet the emerging educational demands of existing and new student populations, including student parents, veterans and military spouses, and non-degree seekers looking for workforce training. The following are highlights of recent program developments serving these populations.

1. **New degree and certificate programs serving working adults**

- Those who have completed some college but for various reasons have stepped out of the academic pipeline often find it difficult to return to college because of distance and/or the demands of work and family. Chico's fully online degree completion programs support a growing number of these post-traditional learners. Since our last WSCUC site visit, new programs have launched in Business Administration, Multicultural and Gender Studies, and Humanities, bringing our total number of online degree completion programs to seven. The online MBA program first offered in 2020 has also since added an option in Health Services Administration.
- In response to the pandemic, the Chico State School of Education has begun offering a fully online Certificate in Educational Technology & Distance Learning to help K–12 teachers deliver effective online education. The School of Education has also launched a post-baccalaureate fully online Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (PASC) for education professionals seeking careers as a public-school administrator.
- With the exponentially growing need for forest/land management education, the new interdisciplinary MS in Wildland Management is the first of its kind in the CSU and graduated students from its inaugural cohort in spring 2022. This program was designed specifically to serve adult professionals in the field.

⁵ Regional and Continuing Education (RCE) recently (spring 2022) changed its unit title to Professional and Continuing Education (PCE).

2. Grant funding to improve rural adult degree completion

- Along with Sacramento State University, Los Rios Community College, and Shasta Community College, Chico State is participating in an intersegmental grant, “Building a Rural Learning Community System,” whose purpose is to improve degree completion for rural adult learners. As part of the grant program, our Professional and Continuing Education leadership has been leading the campus through an assessment to identify barriers, needed services, and coordination strategies to support this population of learners.

3. Technology and data investments

- Hardware and software investments, driven by COVID-related necessities, will enhance the accessibility of campus programs and resources for distance and especially rural students. Such investment, for instance, has allowed the campus to begin offering courses in hyflex modality.
- Newly available data on course outcomes by mode of instruction will allow us to identify and intervene in those areas where online instruction is less effective, differentially affecting distance learners.

Future Activities

To maintain our momentum in improving our service to transfer and non-traditional students, we need to continue to invest in successful initiatives and act on the implications of new data findings.

- The Office of Orientation & Transition Programs is actively collaborating and planning a formal orientation program for distance education students (2023).
- Continue to expand outreach to non-traditional populations. As part of our efforts to grow enrollment overall, enrollment and marketing staff have designed and are beginning to implement strategic communications and marketing campaigns using geo-mapping and other tools to disseminate information about Chico State more broadly. We hope this will allow us to engage students within and beyond our region who might be served by our programs and especially our growing distance learning opportunities (2023-25).
- Identify key offices and support services that are difficult for working students (and others) to access during standard business hours and, if possible, adjust hours of operation accordingly (2023-24).
- Perform a campus-wide transfer and non-traditional student gap analysis to better understand current student needs and existing successful support programs and engagement strategies. This can be done using existing student feedback mechanisms, especially those available through Professional and Continuing Education (2024).
- Narrow our transfer student equity gaps (2023-25).
- Continue targeted outreach to faculty teaching upper division GE courses; provide them with resources for closing course-level equity gaps and assess progress to date (2023-25).
- Continue developing hybrid and hyflex modes of instructions for non-traditional learners, as determined by student and faculty interest and data reflecting student success in these modes of instruction (2023-25).

Recommendation #3-Institutional Research

Based on Chico State's submitted materials as well as a spring 2019 visit, in a July 2019 action letter, WSCUC provided us with the following Institutional Research related recommendation:

The university is applauded for recent efforts to reorganize and to reinvigorate the institutional research (IR) function in advance of the Accreditation Visit. The Commission encourages further development of the role of IR at the university, including a reassessment of how institutional research fits into the university's overall structure, clear visioning of how IR will support future data-driven decision-making, and identification of additional resources and professional development opportunities that match this vision. (CFRs 4.3, 4.5)

The following narrative details what the campus has done in these areas to respond to this recommendation and what it intends to do in the future.

Further Development of IR

The IR department, which has recently been renamed Institutional Research and Strategic Analytics (IRSA), supports all areas of the institution, including senior leadership, administration, academic areas, faculty, and students. IRSA's mission and focus is to build a data-driven culture at Chico State that supports strong, clear, and effective decision making. It intends to do so by focusing on the following areas: Data Governance, Data Literacy, Data Quality, Compliance Reporting and Support, Emerging Technologies, and Strategic Analytics. Further, IRSA serves the campus by providing the following: access and design of reports, dashboards, and visualizations; expertise in enrollment management; predictive modeling to support the University's admissions process and retention efforts; and advisory services on University committees and key initiatives to facilitate the use of central data resources.

Since the site visit, IRSA continued the development of the [Chico State Fact Books](#) to enable the campus and the public to view data about the campus in various ways and to take corresponding action, where appropriate. The dashboards include data related to enrollment; graduation and retention rates; and equity, diversity, and inclusion. Where possible and in order to enable a common language when using data, IRSA continues its focus on aligning its data definitions with those used by IPEDS and the CSU. IRSA also has also built additional "Special Topic" dashboards in Tableau and utilizes IBM Cognos for internal reporting and for dashboards which allow users to view student-specific details. In addition, IRSA produces discussion briefs, case studies, reports, and other analyses, which are available on the [Chico IR home page](#).

After the WSCUC site visit, the Chico State Fact Books were further developed and have helped establish IRSA as a trusted source of information and a reliable source of usable data, as noted by how the campus has been engaging with IRSA and requesting additional data to support their initial inquiries, observations, or analysis. One example of this is the creation of an Employee Diversity Fact Book (Appendix H-IRSA Employee and Student Diversity). This Fact Book started a campus discussion focused upon significant gaps between student and employee demographics, with the former being much more diverse than the latter. The data in the Fact Book inspired leadership to rethink how we advertise for campus positions, reach out to a broader demographic market, and reflect on how our campus staffing can represent similarly to our student demographics (gender/gender identity; race and ethnicity).

In addition, IRSA continues to support the CSU and Chico State Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI 2025) with reports and data analysis. For example, in 2021, IRSA found and shared with the campus community and GI 2025 groups that first-time first-year students in the Underrepresented Minority and PELL-receiving groups have an increased probability of dropping out of the University if they receive one to two failing grades (DFW) in the first two semesters or do not maintain a minimum 1.8 GPA (Appendix I-IRSA GI 2025 Data). The GI 2025 committee utilized this finding to create actionable items related to course re-design, increased student advising, and working groups to identify financial barriers.

As the campus addressed additional equity issues for students where courses had a high number of failing grades (DFW) impacting overall student success, IRSA created a series of Lower Division GE dashboards to allow students and employees (faculty) to examine which courses had the highest impact on student success. The GI and Advancing Equity Project (AEP) team determined that these new dashboards (available from the [IRSA Fact Book pages](#)) are a valuable tool for the campus. The AEP team has formed working groups within an Academic Subject Area (such as History) and has started to review the most impactful courses and what kind of redesign can be accomplished to improve student success. This data and analysis (Appendix J-IRSA GE Course Dashboard) is another example of how IRSA has taken on a larger, university-wide role after we received the corresponding WSCUC recommendation.

IRSA has also broadened its ability to use data across the campus, for instance, by creating both Tableau (external-facing) and IBM Cognos (internal-facing) dashboards related to students and employees (Human Resources). Further, to assist other campus constituents, IRSA created an Executive Dashboard (Appendix K-IRSA HR Executive Dashboard) in IBM Cognos that allows Human Resources (HR) to dynamically filter and drill into departments and sort a list of employees for a particular topic. This data allows HR and Executive Management to make data-driven decisions and review employee turnover trends, which they can then use to improve hiring and retention practices.

Reassessment of IRSA Within the University's Overall Structure

In Fiscal Year 2021-22, the President created a new Division of Information Technology (DoIT) with a Vice President as a direct report to the President. This restructure effectively moved the old IT department from Academic Affairs to a cabinet level division. Within this restructure, IRSA is now a direct report to the new division Vice President, Dr. Monique Sendze. This move empowers IRSA, which now has a closer relationship with the Cabinet and the President. Further, through this relationship, IT and IRSA now have a stronger voice and more of a university-wide role with data, data warehousing, data transformation, data security, and data governance. This includes reporting of official university data, development of data dashboards visualizations, and other business intelligence resources in addition to the administration of the University's Data Governance Program.

Clear Visioning of How IRSA Will Support Future Data-Driven Decision-Making

The IRSA department will expand its vision and direction, becoming more university-wide, collaborative, innovative, and efficient, while adding value and providing data-driven, actionable information and insights. Under the leadership of the Senior Director, IRSA will lead and mature DoIT's capability of ensuring that there is one single place of access which can supply all relevant data for data-driven decision making. It will lead the development and deployment of strategies, such as data analytics and business intelligence, to support a wide range of business decisions ranging from operational to strategic. It will also be responsible for ensuring that data is used as an asset improving links between

siloes databases and data stores, thereby making information and data easier to access online, which will, in turn, make it easier for analysts and policy makers to quickly access and utilize data as knowledge to effectively manage academic and operational functions.

In addition, IRSA staff will serve as data strategists and advisers, stewards for improving data quality, champions for data sharing, technologists, and developers of new data products. By evaluating student records, university financials, research data, and more, IRSA supports Chico State's responses to higher education's biggest challenges such as:

- How to address declining enrollment
- How to support the most at-risk and under-served populations
- How to evaluate programs to best support student success
- How to use institutional data to predict outcomes

By responding to these and other challenges, IRSA will mature from its previous (before the WSCUC site visit) main function of providing standardized data analysis to where data is:

- Integrated and used as an asset and governed accordingly and where data analytics helps inform decision making through predictions and specific actions that lead to improvements.
- Optimized to make data analytics core to Chico State's culture and operations.
- Experimentation and innovation are encouraged and output is actionable.

To support this vision, IRSA is being re-organized into four distinct capabilities as depicted in its new organization chart (Appendix L-IRSA Org Chart).

The ongoing goal of IRSA at Chico State is to improve decision making at all levels of the institution. It aims to do so by dramatically enhancing the availability of timely, relevant, and accurate information through improved data, models, processes, and interactions. This will help address key business questions for academic and administrative unit decision makers by combining data from many different systems. IRSA will also provide current, integrated data to better inform time-sensitive planning and operating decisions throughout the academic year. IRSA's efforts support many strategic initiatives at Chico State through data-centered products that include dashboards and visualizations, report centers, and self-service Business Intelligence (BI) systems. Some of the most significant accomplishments thus far are:

- Analysis that identifies factors that influence four-year graduation rates and one- and two-year retention rates at Chico State (Appendix I-IRSA GI 2025).
- Adding data points and filters for tracking graduation and retention rate data beyond GI 2025 (i.e., retention rate by major). These data points and filters are currently utilized by colleges and departments to help retain more students that enter in their major (Appendix M-IRSA Grad and Retention Rates).
- Creating multiple dashboards to explore and take action to decrease equity related GPA gaps and DFW rates in lower division general education (Appendix J-IRSA GE Course Dashboard).
- Creating a dashboard comparing student and employee demographics to gain an understanding of the differences between the two. The data demonstrated a significant difference between student and employee demographics, with the former being much more diverse than the latter. This caused concern for our Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and encouraged HR to take action related to hiring practices. As an example, advertising or

marketing of a job broadened beyond our traditional campus and CSU HR posted web pages publications, web posting (Linked-In/Indeed) to include other posting sites whose target audiences are more diverse.

Identification of Additional Resources and Professional Development Opportunities

Since the WSCUC site visit in winter/spring 2019, IRSA has received two additional Senior Research Technician positions. With the new VPIT/CIO of DoIT and a call to centralize IT services under the Division of IT, IRSA is anticipating adding at least one more report-writing staff member. As new staff enters the organization, professional development beyond LinkedIn Learning and other passive training tools related to data science will be provided. As part of professional development, continuous engagement with local and national institutional organizations is available to staff as well as participation in several CSU system and Chico State committees. (Appendix N-IRSA Professional Development).

Future Activities

Going forward, IRSA intends even more activities to cement how it fits into the university's overall structure, how it will support future data-driven decision-making, and the identification of additional resources and professional development opportunities that match this vision, as detailed below.

- Develop and nurture a Data Fellows Program for faculty and graduate students that will promote the usage and understanding of Chico State data (2023-2024).
- Have a set of processes and procedures to define data roles and responsibilities for campus; provide appropriate training for the roles and collaborate with stakeholders on managing data landscape, data quality and developing transparency of defining data, reports, and dashboards (2022-2024).
- Foster more efficient customer focused report writing services for campus constituents (faculty, staff and administrators) (2022-2024).
- Explore the usage of our learning management tools and determine how we can use data to help inform our students of their progress towards graduation (2023-2025).
- Develop a course progress data source that dynamically informs faculty, students and advisors about a student's progress in a course (2023-2025).
- Develop and implement a suite of student surveying that provides feedback on a yearly basis to administrative and academic departments to help inform retention and student success (2023-2025).

Recommendation #4-Stablizing the Administration

Based on Chico State’s submitted materials as well as a spring 2019 visit, in a July 2019 action letter, WSCUC provided us with the following administrative related recommendation:

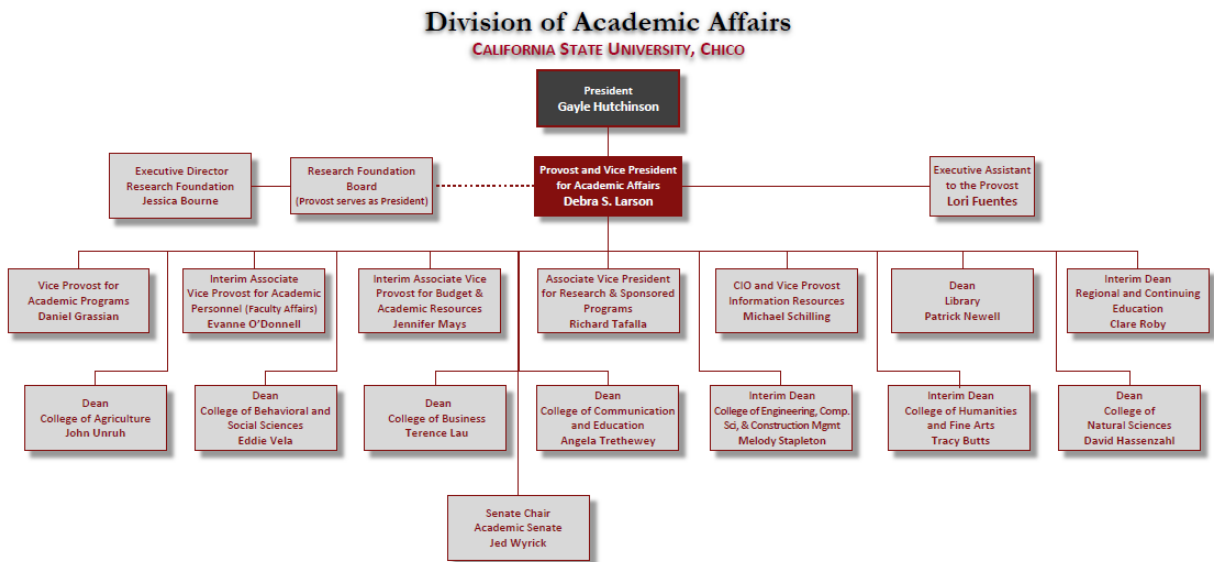
The university should prioritize stabilizing the administration by making permanent appointments for positions currently held by interim appointees, and by increasing the transparency of regular reviews of senior administrators. (CFRs 3.7, 3.2)

The following narrative details what the campus has done in these two areas to respond to this recommendation since our last WSCUC site visit and what it intends to do in the future. Since, as conveyed during the site review, the focus of this recommendation was on Academic Affairs, this response is centered on that unit.

Interim and Permanent Administrative Appointments: Background and Overview

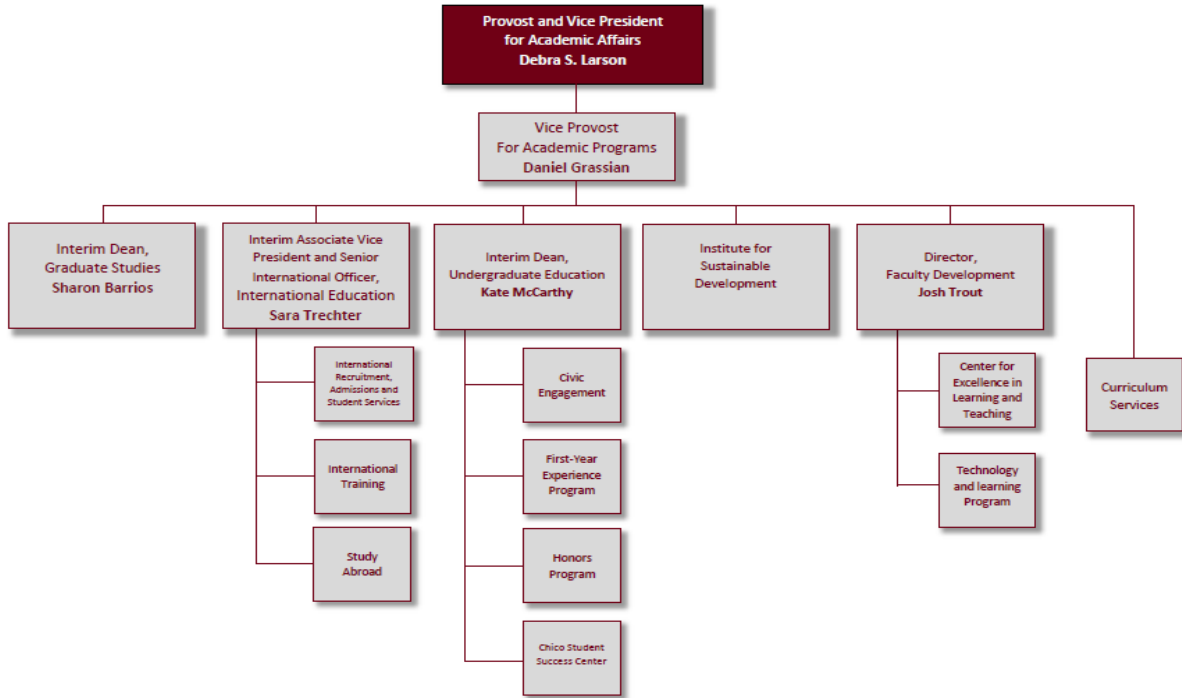
At the time of the WSCUC site visit (spring 2019), the Division of Academic Affairs leadership team consisted of those directly reporting to Provost Larson (Figure 1) and those reporting directly to Vice Provost Grassian (Figure 2). The charts below reflected the ongoing organizational evolution occurring in the division with the arrival of new provost in spring 2017 (before which there were several provosts and interim provosts over the previous several years), a new vice provost in the spring 2018, and personnel changes due to retirements, illnesses, and performance.

Division of Academic Affairs Leadership Organization (Reporting to the Provost), Spring 2018



Division of Academic Affairs, Vice Provost⁶ Organization⁷, Spring 2018

Academic Programs
Division of Academic Affairs
 CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO



In spring 2019, at the time of the WSCUC site visit, five of the seventeen direct reports to the Provost and three of the five direct reports to the Vice Provost were serving in interim positions. In most cases, the interim appointments were being staffed by individuals whose performance was exemplary, but, as detailed below, the campus was, at the time, constrained in its ability convert these individuals to permanent positions and needed to develop a clear process to do so before determining whether permanent internal or external searches were in order.

The process for searching and selecting executive level administrators at Chico State is governed by EM 18-022: Executive Management Selection Committee & College Dean Selection (Appendix O-Executive Management Selection Committee). This process applies directly to the selection of new senior administrators. However, the EM is silent on acting, interim, and other non-traditional situations. As a result, preceding the site visit, Academic Affairs was limited in its ability to transparently and effectively resolve the interim appointments. However, this WSCUC recommendation had a very positive effect upon the campus in that it encouraged the Office of Human Resources and the Cabinet to engage in a

⁶ In 2019, Dr. Grassian’s position title shifted from Vice Provost for Academic Programs to Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, as the latter title more accurately represents his responsibilities, which go beyond Academic Programs.

⁷ In fall 2018, as a way to expand its scope and influence, the Institute for Sustainable Development left Academic Affairs and moved into Business & Finance, where it became the more campus-wide (instead of just Academic Affairs specific) Division of Energy & Sustainability.

consultative process with the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate to establish a clear process involving campus-wide stakeholders for interim, acting, and other non-traditional and temporary appointments.

This new procedure can be seen in the Interim Appointment Process Flow (Appendix P-Interim Appointment Process Flow), which was first established and implemented shortly after the site visit in late spring and summer 2019. Since summer 2019, utilizing this process, we have converted four senior appointments in Academic Affairs from interim to permanent: Associate Vice President for Academic Personnel; Dean, Undergraduate Studies; Dean, Graduate Studies; and Associate Vice President for International Education & Global Engagement. Due to reorganization and/or after the completion of searches, Academic Affairs also secured permanent appointments for the following positions, which were previously held by interim appointees: Associate Vice President for Budget & Academic Resources; Dean, College of Humanities and Fine Arts; and Dean, College of Engineering, Computer Science & Construction Management.

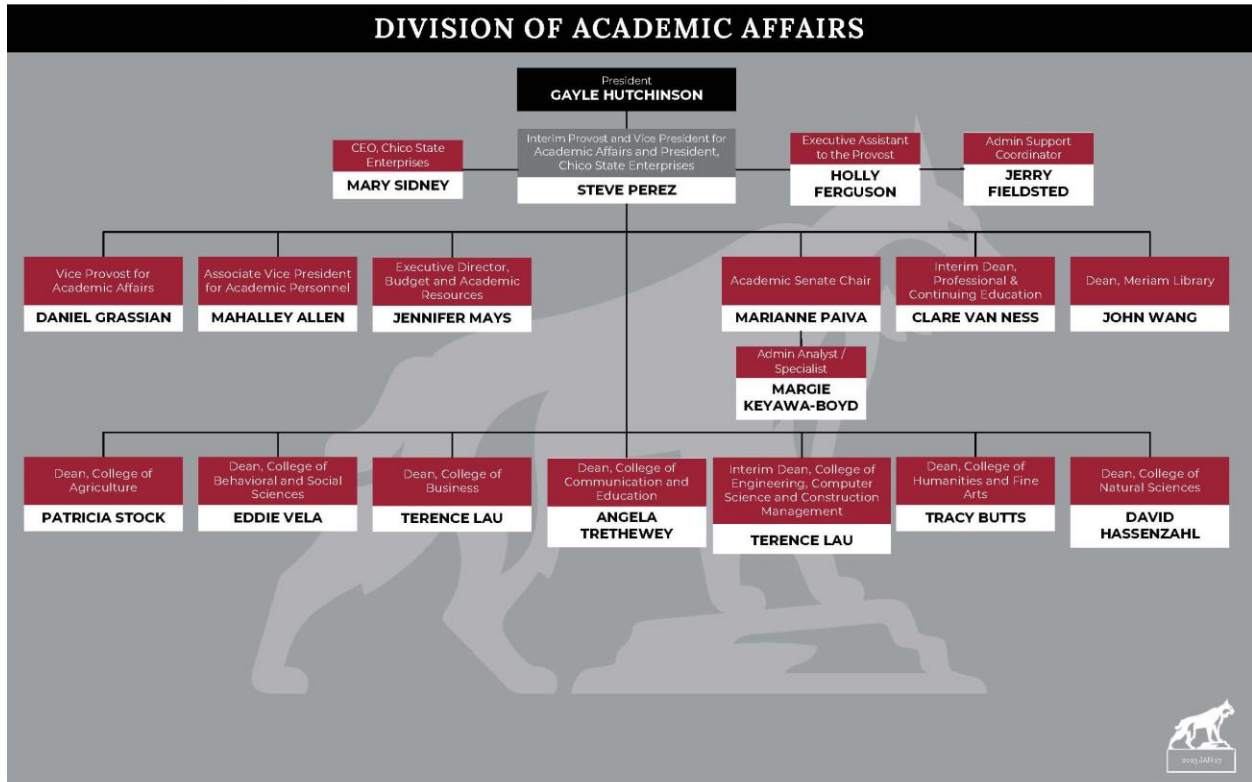
In sum, between fall 2019 and fall 2021, through a newly established process to convert individuals in interim positions to permanent positions and through successful external searches, Academic Affairs transitioned seven of the eight interim positions into permanent ones. Through the late fall 2022 semester, the Division only had one senior interim position left to process: the Interim Dean of Professional & Continuing Education. However, with the resignation of Provost Larson in December 2022 (as detailed in the section 'Identification of Other Changes and Issues Currently Facing the Institution') as well as the late December 2022 resignation of the Dean of the College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management, Academic Affairs now has an additional two Interim positions in spring 2023.

The below are charts reflecting updated (spring 2023) organizational charts in Academic Affairs

Division of Academic Affairs Leadership Organization (Reporting to the Provost), Spring 2023



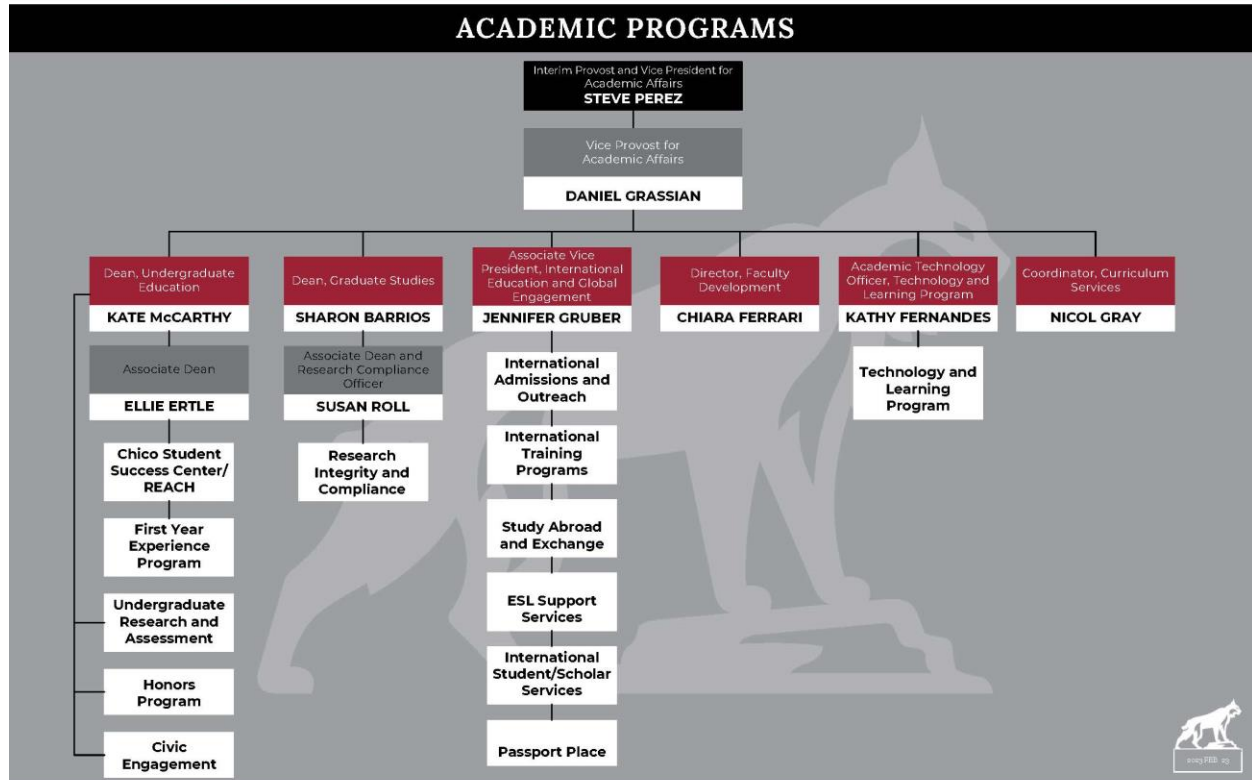
California State University **Chico**



Division of Academic Affairs, Vice Provost Organization, Spring 2023



California State University **Chico**



While we are pleased that we have developed and implemented a new procedure to evaluate those in interim positions, the campus still has some ongoing work to complete. More specifically, the Academic Senate intends to open up EM 18-022 later in the 2022-23 academic year not only to incorporate our new procedure and process to hire, evaluate, and make determination about those in interim positions, but also to determine what level of senior administrators the EM applies to and which divisions (e.g., all University divisions or just Academic Affairs).

Review of Senior Administrators

Running parallel to our process for searching and selecting executive or senior level administrators (EM 18-022), the process for evaluating executive or senior at Chico State is governed by EM 18-021: Executive Management Evaluation Development (Appendix Q-Executive Management Evaluation Development). At the time of the WSCUC site visit (spring 2019), the University had not been utilizing these reviews for several years. However, with the stabilization of the University leadership that began with the appointment of President Hutchinson in 2016, followed by the appointment of Provost Larson in 2017, and the subsequent WSCUC site visit, the University began resuming the Executive Management Evaluation and Development Committee led (EMEDC) review process.

Specifically, very soon after the WASC site visit in spring 2019, Academic Affairs notified all faculty (Appendix R-Initiation of the EMEDC Review Process) that it had begun engaging with the Executive Management Evaluation and Development Committee (EMEDC) on conducting reviews for three senior administrators who had been in their respective positions for at least five years: the Vice Provost of Information Resources (IRES), the dean of Natural Sciences (NS), and the dean of Communication and Education (CME).

However, due to timing as well as the need to clarify parts of the process, these reviews were not scheduled to be completed until the 2019-20 academic year. In addition, shortly after the spring 2019 announcement, one of the three people in the position (the Vice Provost of IRES) announced his imminent retirement. While his review was thereby removed, it was replaced with another senior administrator in Academic Affairs, the dean of Behavioral & Social Sciences (BSS), who had been in his position for at least five years. Provost Larson provided the campus with an update about these searches in late fall 2019 (Appendix S-EMEDC Review of College Deans), and followed up with another detailed e-mail after these reviews were completed shortly after the end of the spring 2020 semester (Appendix T-EMEDC Dean Review Completed).

Due to the challenging campus-wide effects of COVID-19 and an unexpected number of senior administrator searches, EMEDC only had the bandwidth to conduct one senior level administrator review (Vice President for University Advancement) during the 2020-22 academic years. However, as detailed in their schedule of senior administrator reviews (Appendix U-Senior Administrator Review Schedule), they are back on track to review each position/individual after a five-year incumbency in their respective positions.

Future Actions

While we believe Chico State has made important strides in improving hiring, appointment, and administrative evaluation processes in order to make them more meaningful and significant for faculty and the campus at large, there is more work to come. The following is our list of to be completed items along with a timeline:

- Update Executive Memorandums related to administrative hiring and appointments (2022-24).
- Pending campus stakeholder feedback, evaluate and make updates to the manner in which senior administrators are evaluated and how this information may be disseminated to stakeholders or the campus at large (2023-24).
- As needed, make adjustments to the Interim Appointment Process Flow document (2023-24).
- Determine whether units beyond Academic Affairs (e.g., Student Affairs, Information Technology, Business & Finance, and Advancement) should be subject to a similar process for interim appointments as Academic Affairs (2023-24).
- Resume review of senior administrators, following our timeline (2023-) (Appendix U-Senior Administrator Review Schedule).

Recommendation #5: Faculty Diversity

Based on Chico State's submitted materials as well as a spring 2019 visit, in a July 2019 action letter, WSCUC provided us with the following administrative related recommendation:

CSU Chico should consider implementing its own initiatives, and participating in system wide initiatives, to accelerate progress in diversifying the faculty, so that its demographics will more closely align with the students it serves. (CFR 1.4)

The following narrative details what the campus has done in this area to respond to this recommendation and what it intends to do in the future.

Since our last WSCUC site review, the campus finalized and implemented its 2019-2024 [University Strategic Plan](#). Reflecting the intentional focus of the campus, the first priority in the Strategic Plan is *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion* (EDI). More specifically, the goal of this priority is "to cultivate and nurture a welcoming and inclusive campus where students, faculty, and staff have an equitable opportunity to thrive." This priority also includes a commitment to: "Promote hiring and retention of staff and faculty that contribute to a diverse and inclusive community that reflects student demographics," and, "Honor the distinct values, beliefs, identities, and cultures of our students, faculty, staff, and community."

Related to the above in October 2021, President Hutchinson institutionalized the [University Diversity Council](#) (UDC), thus establishing it as a permanent committee to provide the University with expertise critical to accomplishing its equity, diversity, and inclusion goals. With faculty, staff, and student representatives from across campus divisions, the UDC works to achieve key performance indicators associated with UDC priorities that are aligned with the University Strategic Plan.

More specific to the recommendation, the UDC developed a workgroup focusing on increasing workforce diversity, which has been led by a Faculty Diversity Officer (Dr. Michelle Morris). This position collaborates with the Office of Academic Personnel (OAPL), Human Resources (HR), the UDC, the President's Office, the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), and campus [Faculty and Staff Associations](#) to increase recruitment and retention of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)/diverse faculty.

In large part to aid with our retention efforts of BIPOC faculty, Dr. Morris reviewed 45 retention, tenure, and promotion (RTP) department standards and made recommendations for equity-minded language for personnel committees to adopt. She also secured a \$29,000 CSU Chancellor's Office grant to facilitate the *@RealRTP: Navigating the Academy as a Diverse Teacher-Scholar* learning community in 2020-2021. The learning community brought together 16 early-career BIPOC/diverse faculty across disciplines to provide support for successfully navigating the RTP process, developing a sense of belonging and network of colleagues toward enhancing their Chico experience, and envisioning and exploring their potential for leadership positions at later career stages. Meeting topics included managing microaggressions in and outside of the classroom, navigating the scholarly demands of career advancement with teaching and service responsibilities impacted by invisible labor/cultural taxation levied on diverse teacher-scholars, identifying mentors for professional and personal growth, career considerations in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and positioning oneself for future leadership roles (e.g., chair, dean, center director, provost).

The CSU Chancellor's Office grant also provided funding to each of the seven Chico State Faculty and Staff Associations to engage in diverse faculty recruitment and retention efforts. This funding was used for multiple purposes; for example, members of the Chicano Latino Council and Black Faculty and Staff Association hosted faculty candidates during their on-campus interviews. They also contributed to retention goals by providing professional development as well as social opportunities beyond new faculty orientation in order to create a sense of belonging for our diverse employees. For example, funding went toward multicultural welcome receptions and campus celebrations, such as for Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month events.

Further, the OAPL created a committee (entitled Action Now) focused on advancing the hiring of diverse faculty. This committee developed a new [hiring guide](#) for tenure-track faculty recruitments (implemented fall 2021) that includes equity-minded strategies to attract diverse applicant pools and mitigate the impacts of implicit bias throughout the search process (Appendix V-Equity Minded Strategies). It also developed diversity and equity-oriented questions for use by all search committees. To reduce application barriers and broaden the applicant pool, the OAPL also reduced the number of materials that search committees could require. This included eliminating the requirement for letters of recommendation. In addition, with the fall 2021 implementation of the Common Human Resources System (CHRS) Recruiting PageUp software platform, the following EDI specific language was added to the top of all vacancy announcements:

Our Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

California State University (CSU), Chico is a comprehensive and residential public university, holding Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation. Chico State operates as part of the 23-campus CSU system, which educates the most ethnically, economically, and academically diverse student body in the nation. The University enrolls over 13,000 students, with over half identifying as first-generation college students.

Chico State is committed to recruiting outstanding candidates who reflect the intersectional identities of our student body. The ideal candidate will embrace our values predicated on the primacy of student success and the elimination of equity gaps, have demonstrated experience working with diverse populations, and will contribute to policies, programs, and practices that support an inclusive, accessible, and equitable learning and working environment. Black, Indigenous, People of Color, veterans, and those with bilingual and/or diverse abilities are encouraged to apply.

The CHRS PageUp software includes the ability to standardize the lecturer recruitment process for the first time, such as having standard campus policies and procedures for opening lecturer recruitments, managing and screening applicants, and making lecturer job offers, as well as providing an opportunity to determine at what stage in the recruitment process BIPOC/diverse candidates are eliminated for further consideration across all faculty recruitments, thus allowing for targeted interventions.

Since the WASC site visit in spring 2019, as another way to increase hiring of BIPOC candidates, the *Avoiding Bias in Hiring* training became required of all faculty and staff search committee members and was updated to reflect current best practices in hiring a diverse workforce. In fall 2022, a Human Resources EDI Recruitment and Retention Specialist was hired and will collaborate with Faculty Diversity

Officer Morris to advance our goal of increasing workforce diversity. Specifically, the EDI Recruitment Specialist is undertaking a major revision of the two-hour *Avoiding Bias in Hiring* training this academic year into two, one-hour sessions: 1) an online overview to raise awareness utilizing CSU Learn curriculum, and 2) an in-person Recruitment Best Practices session immediately before a faculty or staff recruitment search commences. The EDI Recruitment and Retention Specialist is also developing “Equity Advocate” training(s) for inclusion on faculty and staff search committees, is developing relationships with minority serving institutions to increase recruitment pipelines, and is researching recruitment websites and social media venues to advertise positions.

We took advantage of one such pipeline program during the 2021-2022 AY, when the [California State University Pre-Professor Program](#) (PREPP) was expanded beyond CSU Long Beach to include Chico State. The PREPP Handbook notes: “PREPP is designed to support [Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program](#) (CDIP) Fellows transition to faculty positions by engaging them in a semester-long program within the California State University (CSU) system. The goal of PREPP is to immerse participants in faculty life at a comprehensive master’s-granting institution to encourage them to consider the CSU for their careers. Another overarching goal is to increase the pipeline of highly competitive individuals from diverse backgrounds who apply for faculty positions to increase the diversity at CSU campuses.”

During the 2021-22 AY, the UDC *Increase Workforce Diversity* workgroup asked division vice presidents and college deans to reflect on their employee race and ethnic demographics and describe goals and strategies for increasing the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff. These are included as an [appendix](#) in the 2022 University Diversity Council Year End Report. The aim of this exercise was to identify innovative best practices and share across colleges. In their reports, deans shared strategies their colleges have implemented to recruit and retain racially and ethnically diverse faculty and staff. The College of Business, for example, has identified potentially diverse faculty candidates and sent targeted invitations to apply for open faculty positions and introduced diverse candidates to campus affinity groups and/or other faculty of color during the recruitment process. The College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management has advertised for faculty positions in targeted publications, such as Society of Black Engineers and Society of Hispanic Engineers, and developed relationships with PhD programs at HSI and HBC universities. For the first time in the college’s history, the College of Communication and Education created a joint faculty appointment with another college to recruit and retain a Native American faculty member.

Aligned with diverse faculty retention goals, language was added to the Chico State [Faculty Personnel Policies and Procedures](#) (FPPP) in 2021-2022 in order to address inclusive pedagogy and service to an increasingly diverse student population in faculty dossiers. In addition, in the [2022-2023 FPPP](#), changes were made to the RTP evaluation categories which now include “exceeds expectations, meets expectations, does not meet expectations,” thereby decreasing ambiguity and potential for implicit bias among personnel committees evaluating candidate files. These changes were made, in large part, to retain our faculty, especially our BIPOC faculty.

Within the [Office of Faculty Development](#), an increasing emphasis on social justice, inclusive pedagogy, and eliminating equity gaps has occurred since 2019. For example, a [Teaching Racial and Social Justice Series](#) was added and the development and funding for a [Hub for Research in Equity, Antiracism, Diversity and Inclusion \(READI\)](#) was realized during the 2021-22 AY. READI engages in the production of

new and innovative scholarship on EDI and serves as a hub for pairing faculty needs with resources on EDI and antiracism. This includes implementing equity working in the tenure and promotion process.

The Office of Equal Opportunity and Dispute Resolution (EODR) is planning to recruit for a position to oversee a campus Bias Incident Reporting and Response system to address incidents including those impacting campus climate for BIPOC/diverse employees, including faculty. This position will employ a restorative justice approach for addressing identity-based harm and will collaborate with campus stakeholders to identify themes related to education and policy needs of our campus. Campus leadership recognizes that the retention of diverse faculty depends in large part on creating an inclusive campus climate and sense of belonging among employees, especially those historically marginalized in the academy.

In fall 2022, a national search was conducted for Chico State's next Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), resulting in the hiring of Dr. Joseph Morales, who began in January 2023. The CDO serves on the President's Cabinet, chairs the University Diversity Council, oversees the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and supervises the Office of EDI Associate Director, Faculty Diversity Officer, and Director of Latinx Equity and Success. This new EDI organizational structure will increase collaboration among campus EDI leadership for greater impact advancing the EDI Strategic Priority goals, including increasing faculty (and staff) diversity.

While we believe Chico State has made important strides in improving our process, procedures, and commitment to recruit, hire, and retain a diverse faculty, there is more work to come in the future, as evident by how our faculty demographics over the past few years have remained largely unchanged (Appendix W-Faculty Diversity Data).

Still, we are heartened by our progress in tenure-track hiring for the 2022-23 academic year. This cohort is a BIPOC majority: Hispanic/Latino faculty-21%, Asian faculty-35%, Black/African American faculty-9%, and American Indian or Alaska Native faculty-3%. While, given our current enrollment and budgetary issues, we may not be able to hire many additional tenure-track faculty in the immediate future, we believe this most recent hiring season reflects real progress that can be used as a model for hiring to come.

The following is our list of to be completed items along with a timeline:

- Collaborate with the new Chief Diversity Officer on the faculty hiring process (spring to fall 2023).
- Provide additional faculty training on use of CHRS system for faculty recruitments (spring to fall 2023).
- Develop a workshop to educate department and college Personnel Committee members on best practices in retention, tenure, and promotion evaluation procedures (spring to fall 2023).
- Implement a revised Avoiding Bias in Hiring training (spring to fall 2023).
- Collaborate with the Office of Faculty Development on the creation of a faculty exit survey to better understand why faculty leave the university (spring to fall 2023).

Identification of Other Changes and Issues Currently Facing the Institution

Instructions: *This brief section should identify any other significant changes that have occurred or issues that have arisen at the institution (e.g., changes in key personnel, addition of major new programs, modifications in the governance structure, unanticipated challenges, or significant financial results) that are not otherwise described in the preceding section. This information will help the Interim Report Committee panel gain a clearer sense of the current status of the institution and understand the context in which the actions of the institution discussed in the previous section have taken place.*

While, as of the writing of this report (late fall 2022/winter 2023), the President (Dr. Gayle Hutchinson), Vice President for Business & Finance (Ms. Ann Sherman), and Vice President for Advancement (Mr. Ahmad Boura) have continued in their respective positions since the 2019 WSCUC site visit, there have been three personnel changes in the Cabinet, two forthcoming changes, as well as two additions.

After Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Milton Lang left the institution in fall 2019, Chico State appointed a series of two Interim Vice Presidents for Student Affairs, before the appointment of Dr. Isaac Brundage in July 2022 as permanent Vice President for Student Affairs.⁸ In addition, the Cabinet expanded with a new position of Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, an inaugural role that Dr. Monique Sendze assumed in 2022. In summer 2022, the Cabinet welcomed Dr. Hutchinson's new Chief of Staff, Dr. Seema Sehrawat, to the role, after the previous Chief of Staff left Chico State to take another position. More recently, Dr. Joseph Morales joined the Cabinet as the inaugural Chief Diversity Officer in January 2023.

In October 2022, President Hutchinson announced her retirement, effective June 2023. The system launched its search for a new Chico State President in February 2023, with the expectation that the new President will assume the role in July 2023. In December 2022, Provost Larson announced her immediate resignation as Provost as well as her impending retirement. After a very brief period, mainly during the Winter Break and Winter Session in which President Hutchinson served in the role of President and Provost, an Interim Provost, Dr. Stephen Perez, former Interim President at San Jose State and former Provost at Sacramento State, was announced and began on January 17, 2023. We anticipate launching a search for a new Provost in late summer or early fall 2023, soon after the new President takes office. In February 2023, Vice President for Business & Finance Ann Sherman announced her resignation, effective April 2023. The campus intends to name an interim to this position soon, and also anticipates launching a search for a permanent incumbent in late summer or early fall 2023.

Following the resignation of former Chancellor Joseph Castro and an ongoing California State University Title IX investigation, Chico State and other CSU campuses have been scrutinized for issues related to sexual misconduct. In addition, nationwide, there continues to be ongoing concerns regarding campus safety. In light of these developments, in December 2022, two online higher education-focused news sources (*Ed Source* and *Inside Higher Ed*) published a series of articles that impacted the campus (e.g., [EdSource-December 8](#), [December 9](#), [December 12](#), [December 13](#), [December 14](#), [December 18](#), [December 20](#), [January 6](#), and [January 7](#); *Inside Higher Ed-December 19*). Subsequently, for the remainder of January and February, the reporting slowed down with a more targeted focus on campus

⁸ The search for a Vice President for Student Affairs took longer in part due to the sudden retirement and subsequent passing of the first Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, which necessitated the appointment of a second Interim. It also took longer due to the ongoing effects of COVID-19.

safety, as indicated in the [February 9 article in EdSource](#) and the [February 14 article in the Chico State Orion](#).

Overall, the articles included information regarding a 2020 investigation that had found, based on a preponderance of evidence that, in violation of the CSU's policy prohibiting such relationships, a faculty member had a consensual relationship with a student. The articles also contained information regarding the subsequent settlement agreement with that faculty member, which enabled him to continue his tenured position after certain actions were taken against him in response to the finding. Additionally, the articles also referenced alleged threats of violence by the same faculty member against campus employees. While the administration disputes some of the assertions, details, and timelines set forth in the various articles, it has been limited in its response given that they involve confidential personnel matters, including what steps and processes were used to assess the alleged threats. However, because of campus concerns expressed in response to the articles, the administration agreed to a series of open forums, held by Chico State's Academic Senate, for campus constituents to share their thoughts and to discuss with the administration.

The end result of these forums was an Academic Senate resolution (Appendix X-Academic Senate Resolution), issued on December 20, 2022 that, among other things, calls for the CSU Board of Trustees to authorize an independent investigation into the campus response of the related matters. In a December 20 e-mail to the campus (Appendix Y-December 20 E-Mail from President Hutchinson), President Hutchinson expressed her support for this resolution and detailed a number of immediate actions the campus has taken to address concerns expressed in the forum. This was followed up by a December 23 e-mail to the campus (Appendix Z-December 23 E-Mail from President Hutchinson), in which President Hutchinson indicated that she and Vice President for Business and Finance, Ann Sherman, have already begun working on other requests in the resolution. In addition, as the December 23 campus e-mail as well as a subsequent January 12 campus e-mail (Appendix AA-January 12 E-Mail from President Hutchinson) details, the campus held two on-campus safety forums for faculty, staff, and students in late January. In the coming months, we anticipate that there may be some continued media and campus attention on these topics as Chico State releases additional records pursuant to ongoing Public Records Act requests. At the same time, President Hutchinson has also affirmed that campus safety and transparent communication are priorities for the remainder of her tenure, which can be seen in a recent campus e-mail (Appendix AB-February 1 E-Mail from President Hutchinson).

While these recent events have been unsettling, overall, the largest campus-wide impact after the site visit has been the effects of COVID-19. As with virtually every college or university throughout the United States, Chico State shifted to nearly all remote learning in March 2020. This was a significant change and challenged the primarily residential campus, which, pre-COVID-19, offered 95% of its course sections in-person, shifting to nearly all online in a matter of days. However, with leadership from the campus at large (faculty, staff, and administrators) as well as shared, ongoing commitment to student success, the institution navigated these rough waters successfully.

While virtually every faculty, staff, and administrator on campus deserves credit and praise for making this transition to remote education swiftly and effectively, the campus benefitted from strong Presidential and Cabinet-level leadership as well as that of the campus-wide Pandemic Management Team (PMT), which was established in March 2020 to provide guidance on all pandemic related issues. The PMT includes faculty, staff, and administrators throughout campus, with ongoing engagement with local, regional, state, and Chancellor's Office representatives to ensure, as much as possible, that the Chico State community remains as healthy and safe as possible, while being provided with frequent and

clear information related to COVID-19. Another critical unit was the Office of Academic Technology, whose Technology & Learning Program and Information Technology Consultants (ITCs) guided faculty and students in how to teach and learn in, for most, new modes of instruction: online, hybrid, and hyflex. As it became increasingly clear that the campus would need to continue to offer mostly remote instruction beyond spring 2020, during the subsequent summer and winter intersessions (in 2020 and 2021), the campus began offering paid training to faculty in teaching in online, hybrid, and hyflex modes through multi-day 'Go Virtual' (Appendix AC-Go Virtual) and 'Go Flex' sessions (Appendix AD-Go Flex).

While, beginning in fall 2021, the campus resumed teaching a majority of its course sections in-person, some of the aftereffects of COVID-19 will continue with the campus for the indeterminate future. More specifically, evident by how in fall 2022, 20% of its course sections remain online (as opposed to 5% pre-pandemic), the campus has responded to student and faculty interest for ongoing multiple modes of instruction—in-person, online, hybrid, and hyflex.

As with many colleges and universities nationwide, COVID-19 impacted Chico State's enrollment. More specifically, the campus' annualized headcount was 17,120 during the 2018-19 year. This number dropped to 16,592 during the first year of the pandemic (2019-20), and dropped even further the next two and half years: 15,987 in 2020-21, 14,770 in 2021-22 and 13,840 in fall 2022. While the campus has been fortunate to be supported by HEERF funds during the pandemic and by the Chancellor's Office, it realizes that emphasis must be placed upon increasing enrollment over the next couple of years and beyond. Consequently, Chico State has stood up a campus-wide Enrollment Continuum group to provide leadership and guidance in the areas of admissions, recruitment, retention, academic programs, marketing, and communication. Throughout the 2022-23 academic year, this group has been engaging campus and assembling teams to support campus-wide enrollment yields. While it is too soon to know the results, initial data in the form of fall 2023 applications, which are up over 6% from fall 2022, indicates promise for a larger incoming class in the 2023-24 academic year.

Concluding Statement

Instructions: *Reflect on how the institutional responses to the issues raised by the Commission have had an impact upon the institution, including future steps to be taken.*

Overall, the issues raised by the Commission have had extremely positive effects upon the institution. The Commission has given us the impetus to rework our assessment and program review processes from the ground up and in a manner more inclusive of faculty. We recently completed our assessment updates, and are nearing completion of our program review updates, which include a newly established Undergraduate Program Review Committee. We are pleased with the progress we have made with assessment and program review, but we have additional work in front of us to ensure, as much as we can, that both are being used as much as they can to improve our academic programs and to ensure, as much as possible, that we are offering an equitable, engaging, and rigorous education for all students.

In the area of transfer and non-traditional students, we realize that we need to address our transfer student equity gaps and are hopeful that our most recent actions, such as the implementation of a Black Mentor Program, a redesign of multiple high-enrollment courses with significant equity gaps, and a re-engagement campaign to reach disenrolled historically underrepresented students will help narrow the gaps. Our investment in a new position focused on transfer admissions recruitment, and our new process of advising potential transfer students through in-person office hours at local area community colleges now also provide a more personalized connection for transfer students. We have made important strides forward in serving non-traditional students through the implementation of additional online degree programs, certificates, and in-person programs like the Interdisciplinary MS in Wildland Management. We aim to develop more such programs in the future as well as programs with additional hybrid and hyflex modes of instruction, which can be especially attractive to non-traditional students.

The commission also shined a needed spotlight on institutional research, whose recent revitalization has benefitted the university at large. Further, since the last WSCUC site visit, Chico State has expanded its Information Technology (IT) division into a cabinet-level unit, with IRSA reporting directly to the Vice President for IT. In this time, IRSA has also developed critical campus-wide databases and reports that have resulted in significant campus-wide actions or results from hiring practices to targeted equity work. In the coming years, to engage the campus further and to cement its role campus-wide, IRSA plans a Data Fellows Program to promote the usage and understanding of Chico State data. They also plan to provide more clarity for data definitions and governance while fostering a more efficient customer service model for campus.

The commission's recommendation in the areas of executive management and interim appointments resulted in, as of late fall 2022, the conversion and permanency of all but one senior leadership position in Academic Affairs. It also led to the creation of a transparent and detailed process on how and when to convert interim positions into permanent ones and pushed the institution to conduct more regular reviews of senior administrators. While the campus needs to solidify some changes to its formal policies on executive searches and appointments, we feel we have made significant progress in this area.

Last, the commission made a valuable recommendation to devote more resources to increasing the diversity of its faculty. As Chico State's student demographics shifted significantly in recent years from predominately white to a near majority of historically underrepresented students, the faculty

demographics have been slower to follow. To some degree, this is understandable as students cycle out of college and universities much more quickly than faculty. While the campus has set up what we believe to be a strong infrastructure to recruit and retain BIPOC faculty, there is more work to do in this area, which can take time. Still, we are encouraged by the faculty demographics of our most recent class of tenure-track faculty, who are majority BIPOC, and who began in fall 2022. We believe that by using similar hiring practices and procedures, we can continue to increase the diversity of our faculty, even though our hiring is likely to slow down in the immediate future due to our declining enrollment.

With a new President anticipated to begin in July 2023, a permanent Provost and Vice President for Business and Finance to begin shortly thereafter, and with our current strategic plan lapsing in 2024, we anticipate that the university will engage in significant campus-wide discussions about its future in the upcoming months. The Commission's recommendations will undoubtedly play a role in these discussions and corresponding campus-wide initiatives.

List of Appendixes

1. Appendix A-Interim Report Timeline
2. Appendix B-Strategic Plan
3. Appendix C-Assessment-Program Review Task-Force
4. Appendix D-Annual Assessment Guidelines
5. Appendix E-Annual Program Assessment Report
6. Appendix F-Undergraduate Program Review Committee
7. Appendix G-RCE Strategic Plan
8. Appendix H-Employee and Student Diversity
9. Appendix I-GI 2025
10. Appendix J-GE Course Dashboard
11. Appendix K-HR Executive Dashboard
12. Appendix L-Org Chart
13. Appendix M-Grad and Retention Rates
14. Appendix N-IRSA Professional Development
15. Appendix O-EM18-022
16. Appendix P-Interim Appointment Process Flow
17. Appendix Q-EM18-021
18. Appendix R-Initiation of the EMEDC Review Process
19. Appendix S-EMEDC Reviews of College Deans
20. Appendix T-EMEDC Dean Reviews Completed
21. Appendix U-Senior Administrator Review Schedule
22. Appendix V-Equity Minded Strategies
23. Appendix W-Faculty Diversity Data
24. Appendix X-Academic Senate Resolution
25. Appendix Y-December 20 E-Mail from President Hutchinson
26. Appendix Z-December 23 E-Mail from President Hutchinson
27. Appendix AA-January 12 E-Mail from President Hutchinson
28. Appendix AB-February 1 E-Mail from President Hutchinson
29. Appendix AC-Go Virtual
30. Appendix AD-Go Flex