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**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

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**Year of Engagement: Reimagining Student Success**

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**Executive Summary: CSU Framework for Student Success**

This document provides an overview of the CSU’s ongoing Year of Engagement, with specific updates to the Board of Trustees on how the CSU will articulate student success and the six core commitments that will form our systemwide Framework for Student Success. This document provides the basis for an informed discussion during the January 2025 board meeting. Based on that conversation and further stakeholder engagement, the Division of Academic and Student Affairs (ASA) will then complete the Framework by identifying 1) specific objectives to underpin these commitments, 2) practices that can be scaled across the CSU to realize these commitments and 3) metrics to track the effectiveness of these practices. This executive summary provides a high-level view of our findings and what will be discussed in the January 2025 board meeting, with a more comprehensive account of our work to date included below.

Over the past eight months, we have conducted extensive stakeholder engagement, alongside internal and external research, to understand what is required for students to succeed at the CSU, to recognize which approaches have—and have not—worked in previous initiatives and to glean insights on how the CSU can approach student success in the future. In that process, several elements have become apparent:

- To serve the new modern learner, the definition of student success must not stop at graduation. For the CSU to declare “success,” we must ensure that our graduates are successful in securing their first jobs or other significant graduate opportunities. (<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2024-10-29/csu-shift-to-career-focus-for-student-success>)
- We have known for decades what is required to enable graduates to be prepared for the next step—be it a career or additional schooling—yet higher education writ large has failed

to create the conditions for universal student success. The CSU's path forward must challenge long-standing norms and embrace emerging tools to change this paradigm.

- Delivering on the six CSU commitments (outlined in the following document) will have a measurable positive impact not only on our students, who represent the most diverse community of learners in the United States, but also on the state's economic future and on the fiscal sustainability of the CSU.
- Achieving our shared aspiration of enabling each student to succeed will require a systemwide effort, in which we leverage the opportunity for systemwide solutions, think critically and make difficult decisions about how we align our resources and begin the work of evolving our culture to match the needs of today's modern learner.

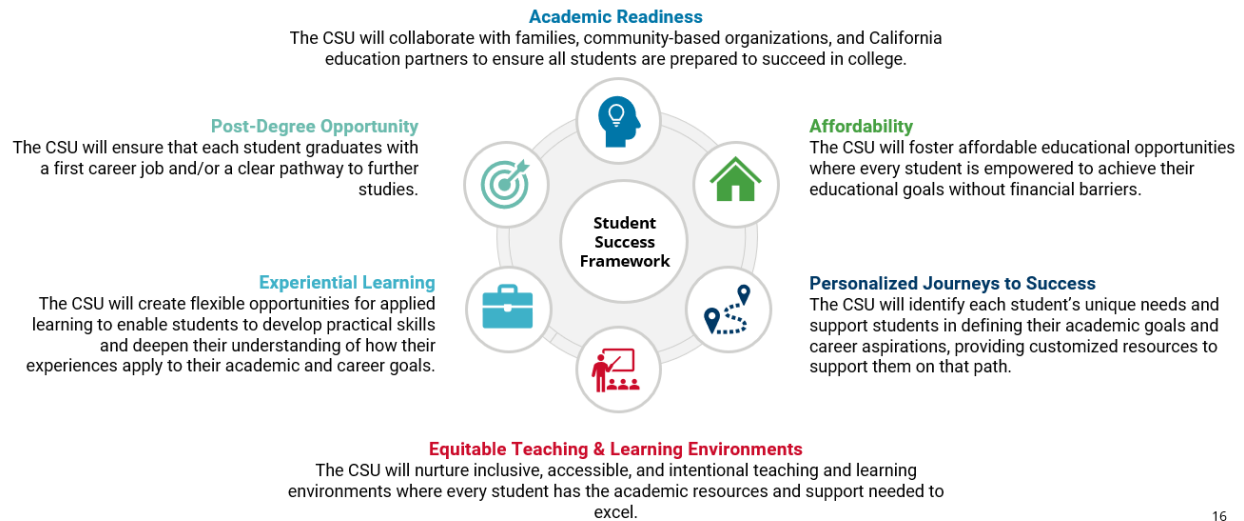
The elements of the Framework described in this document are the result of both extensive discovery conducted over the past several months across the system, as well as consultation with national experts on student success. This outreach included surveys sent to more than one million recipients, 23 university discovery sessions, conversations with each appointed Trustee and focus groups with more than 200 students, as well as participation from more than 700 additional stakeholders through focus groups, interviews and workshops. Additionally, the Discovery Phase involved quantitative and qualitative data analyses from internal and external sources, as well as a workshop at the 2024 Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI 2025) Symposium to identify core strengths and challenges and to inform the Student Success Framework.

As the Discovery Phase has come to completion, the activities revealed several key findings that will serve as a foundation for the Student Success Framework moving forward. Five key lessons emerged from the Discovery Phase that will shape the future of student success at the CSU:

1. Stakeholders across the system highlighted the need for the CSU to redefine student success, encompassing successful transfers, graduate school participation and career growth.
2. The CSU has an opportunity to use its size as an advantage to share effective practices, pilot and deploy emerging solutions, and innovate at a scale currently unmatched across higher education.
3. Evolving teaching and learning practices are foundational to driving student success. Faculty underscored that the highest opportunity for impact on student success is academic support.
4. The CSU must create systems and practices to use data to personalize student support systems and to meet the new modern learner where they are.
5. While support resources are currently available to all students, these resources are not accessed universally. The CSU must reduce barriers to access services and articulate the value of those services.

The Student Success Framework will ultimately consist of five main components that build on one another: Definition, Commitments, Objectives, Metrics and Practices. The Framework

components, identified in the figure below and expanded upon later in this document, are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are designed to interact seamlessly and support one another.



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## The Current Definition of Student Success

The CSU's current Definition of Student Success has four components:

- Student success in the CSU is achieved through providing personalized and collective experiences within a supportive community that prioritizes flexible and impactful learning opportunities, self-discovery and holistic growth.
- Equipping students to achieve academic excellence, career success and economic mobility through accessible, inclusive and experiential learning environments.
- Developing curricular and co-curricular pathways for each student to graduate and excel in their career and/or further study and preparing them to thrive as engaged leaders and members of society.
- Fostering lifelong relationships with students and graduates by cultivating meaningful experiences with their university, alumni and communities.

This definition was created through a comprehensive and inclusive process. Stakeholders emphasized the need for a definition that accommodates the needs of the modern learner and adopts a broader perspective on student success beyond graduation. The commitments were identified by synthesizing key themes from comprehensive stakeholder engagement and data analysis conducted during the Discovery Phase, within the context of national research and best practices. Both the definition and commitments went through multiple iterations with more than 80 CSU stakeholders, including groups such as the universities' Vice Presidents of Student

Affairs, Provosts, the Executive Leadership Team, the Year of Engagement Steering Committee and the Year of Engagement Working Group.

### **Discovery Phase Report: The Year of Engagement: Reimagining Student Success**

#### *Discovery Phase: Overview*

In order to identify what worked well for the CSU in past initiatives, and what the CSU can improve moving forward, the CSU and Deloitte have spent the past 10 months engaging with students, faculty, staff and alumni across the system, synthesizing key insights alongside qualitative and quantitative data from the Year of Engagement survey, CSU data assets and documentation, and other publicly available data sets. This involved historic levels of outreach to involve the entire community, asking stakeholders to reflect on student success opportunities for current and future students. Activities to date include sending surveys to more than one million recipients, 23 university discovery sessions, conversations with all appointed Trustees and focus groups with more than 200 students, as well as participation from more than 700 additional stakeholders through focus groups, interviews and workshops. Additionally, the Discovery Phase involved quantitative and qualitative data analyses from internal and external sources, as well as a workshop at the 2024 GI 2025 Symposium to identify core strengths and challenges and to inform the Student Success Framework.

#### 1. Key Findings: Board of Trustees Conversations

- a. In October 2024, the Deloitte team met with all 20 appointed Trustees to discuss student success across CSU. These conversations highlighted that student success is the board's highest priority, with a key focus on equity and inclusion, and four key themes emerged to shape the Student Success Framework.
- a. Trustees emphasized the need for an equitable definition of student success, considering diverse student needs such as undocumented student rights and family involvement in academic advising. This priority was reinforced at the GI 2025 Symposium, where stakeholders drafted a systemwide definition of student success.
- b. Trustees stressed that collaboratively leveraging data-informed targets will be crucial for closing equity gaps and enhancing socioeconomic mobility. This approach will hold CSU accountable, strengthen its brand and attract investment from various partners.
- c. Trustees shared that engagement with alumni and communities is vital for addressing affordability and meeting regional economic demands. Alumni can support student needs through recruitment and campaigns, fostering a lifelong connection to CSU.
- d. Trustees highlighted how collaborations with intersegmental partners, such as expanding dual enrollment and streamlining graduate admissions, can differentiate CSU within California's higher education landscape.

2. Key Findings: Discovery Sessions

Deloitte conducted Discovery Sessions with leaders from each of the 23 universities to gain insights into student success initiatives, collaboration efforts and how a systemwide framework could address unique university needs. In all discussions, it was clear that breaking down siloes contributed positively to student success efforts. Key findings highlighted the importance of collaboration both within individual universities and across the CSU system, as well as with external partners, to advance student success. Cross-university initiatives and external partnerships were noted as essential in meeting student needs in a resource-constrained environment. Additionally, there were diverse preferences in funding models, with well-established funding for traditional student support programs, while many innovative initiatives relied on short-term grants and philanthropic support. There is a growing interest in new funding models that consider unique campus needs, promote equitable allocation of resources and support services, and allow for scalability of initiatives which have a demonstrable positive effect on student success.

The sessions also underscored the need to leverage “systemness,” which plays a crucial role in providing resources, setting strategic goals and facilitating collaboration across universities. While some universities with higher graduation rates were skeptical about a systemwide framework, it was acknowledged that the entire system could advance student success through collaborative sharing of expertise, guidance and support for initiatives, as well as strategic resource stewardship and allocation. Tracking post-graduation outcomes was identified as a key component of the new definition of student success, with metrics such as employment rates, salary levels and career progression being crucial for assessing program effectiveness and making data-driven decisions. Additionally, leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies was seen as a significant opportunity to enhance student support offerings while maintaining lower long-term costs. AI-driven advising platforms, early alert systems and predictive modeling can provide timely assistance to students, enabling staff to focus on more intensive support, thereby improving efficiency and effectiveness across the CSU system. These discussions of potential innovations to improve the efficacy and relevance of student service offerings were particularly salient given the student survey results highlighted below, which revealed a significant gap between student awareness of services and actual utilization of these services.

3. Key Findings: Survey

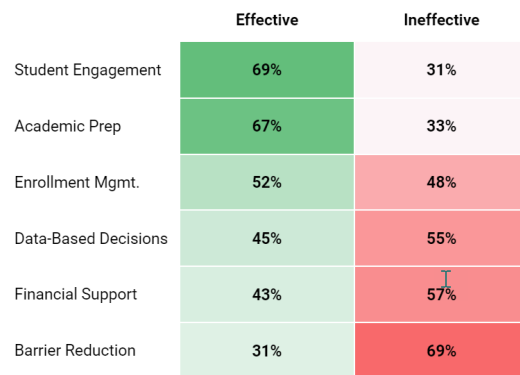
The Year of Engagement survey assessed the strengths, challenges and opportunities of the current student success ecosystem and asked faculty and staff to reflect on the effectiveness of GI 2025. Among other findings, the survey revealed that while students are aware of resources on campus, utilization of these resources remains low. For example, while 74% of student respondents reported that they knew how to find the resources they needed when faced with barriers to academic success, 48% of all respondents reported using academic advising rarely or never, and 71% reported using tutoring services rarely or never. This finding suggests that the CSU needs to better

understand the barriers that are preventing students from engaging in student support systems, which may include modes of support, timing, location or perceived value.

## Effectiveness of Graduation Initiative 2025 Operational Priority Efforts

Faculty and staff reported that most effective GI 2025 efforts were related to student wellbeing and academic preparation, but there is still work to be done in the efforts to reduce administrative barriers.

### Effectiveness Votes by GI 2025 Operational Priority<sup>1</sup>



### Key Insights

N = 3,797 out of 6,868

When asked to rank the effectiveness of their university's Graduation Initiative 2025 efforts, over half of staff and faculty noted their university effectively developed **wrap-around support** and **academic preparation** services.

Of the 6 operational priorities, staff and faculty found efforts around **barrier reduction** to be the least effective.

While many universities did deploy initiatives to reduce administrative barriers, this sentiment reveals previous efforts were insufficient and future efforts may require **systemwide deployment** for sustained impact.

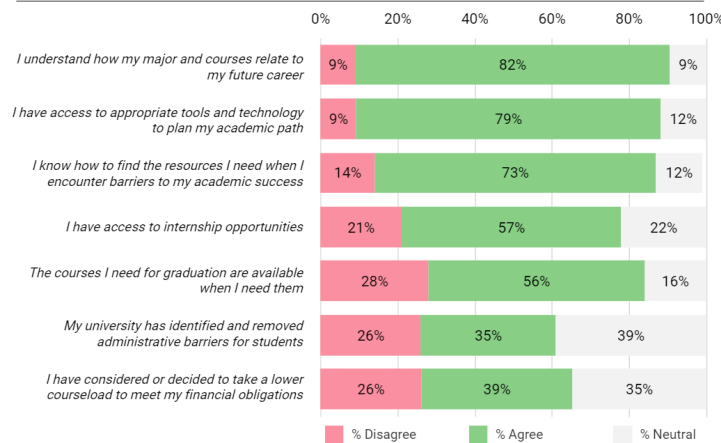
Source: Year of Engagement Survey, as of 1/8/25 <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Staff and Faculty were asked to rank their university's Graduation Initiative 2025 efforts in the 6 priority areas from most to least effective

## Student Survey Resource Awareness Responses

Student survey responses highlighted that students aware of the support services their university offers, with 73% of students believing that they know how to find the resources they need when they encounter barriers to their academic success.

### Student Sentiment Responses



### Key Insights

N = 3,599 out of 6,850

Students noted awareness around **degree planning tools** and **resources** for when they **encounter barriers** to academic success.

**Administrative barriers and affordability** were top concerns for students, with only 35% believe that their university has removed administrative barriers for students and 39% considering taking a lower courseload to meet financial obligations.

Source: Year of Engagement Survey, as of 1/8/25

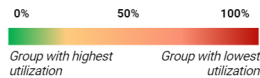
<sup>1</sup> Responses of "Strongly agree" or "Somewhat agree" were defined as "Agree," "Strongly disagree" and "Somewhat disagree" were defined as "Disagree"

## Student Survey Resource Utilization Responses

While 73% of student respondents noted awareness of support resources, across the board, more than half of students noted low support service utilization, highlighting a disconnect between support service awareness and utilization.

Proportion of Undergraduates Reporting Low Support Service Utilization

	Overall	White	Latinx	Asian	Black	5 <sup>th</sup> Year+
Academic Advising	61%	63%	60%	54%	63%	67%
Career Services	79%	84%	81%	57%	87%	86%
Counseling and Mental Health & Wellness Services	76%	79%	75%	70%	80%	79%
Tutoring	80%	85%	80%	67%	83%	83%
Diversity & Inclusion Programs	77%	83%	80%	63%	77%	80%
Financial Aid Office	63%	64%	63%	65%	67%	64%
Student Clubs & Organizations	62%	57%	75%	51%	67%	53%



### Key Insights

*N = 3,599 out of 6,850*

DEI, Counseling, and Career Services were the lowest utilized supports across the board with **over 70%** of students noting they never or rarely use the service.

5th Year+ students noted the lowest support service utilization rates across advising, career services, and tutoring. This may indicate the impact of support services on timely degree progression, as well as a potential gap in **resource accessibility**.

Source: Year of Engagement Survey, as of 1/8/25  
 \*Responses of "Rarely (1-2 times / year)" or "Never" were defined as low utilization

The survey also uncovered mixed faculty and staff perceptions of the impact of GI 2025. While 53% of respondents rated the effectiveness of GI 2025 as very or somewhat effective, 35% were neutral and more than 10% viewed it as somewhat or very ineffective. When asked which priority has been the most effective in improving student success through GI 2025 activities, 32% of staff respondents ranked the development of wrap-around services as most effective, while 32% of staff respondents ranked administrative barrier reduction as least effective, highlighting that work still needs to be done in this area.

#### 4. Key Findings: Data

Deloitte analyzed a breadth of qualitative and quantitative data to complement the findings gathered from the survey and discovery sessions. Data sources included the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), CSU internal documents and CSU Dashboards. The data analysis revealed key findings, notably around the composition of CSU faculty and staff. First, while the CSU has grown the number of faculty and staff from historically underrepresented backgrounds, there is still work to be done to align faculty and staff composition with student demographics. For instance, while a growing body of research shows that students of all ethnic backgrounds benefit from experiences with diverse faculty, the examination of disaggregated and racially and ethnically aligned student-to-faculty ratios revealed significant disparities, particularly with Hispanic/Latinx and Black students having higher ratios (meaning fewer faculty that reflect their race and ethnicity) as compared to White students. While new faculty hires show improvements in

diversity, retention remains a challenge, particularly with high turnover rates among Black faculty.

*Discovery Phase: Lessons Learned*

The CSU's Year of Engagement has uncovered five key lessons learned throughout the Discovery Phase that will inform the Framework moving forward.

1. Redefine Student Success

Stakeholders across the system highlighted the need for the CSU to adopt a broader systemwide definition of student success. For example, Chancellor García has discussed connecting graduation to either a career or graduate school, redefining the "finish line" of student success. Similarly, when GI 2025 Symposium participants were asked to develop their own definition of student success, 74% noted that mobility and career success should be included in the CSU's definition of student success. University discovery session participants also highlighted the value of having a systemwide definition of student success, and many universities expressed the desire for the CSU to track post-graduation outcomes as part of the new definition of student success.

2. Use the Size and Diversity of the CSU as an Advantage

All 23 universities noted that "systemness" plays a crucial role in providing resources, setting strategic goals and facilitating collaboration across universities. While the entire system can advance student success through guidance, resource allocation and support for student success initiatives, discovery session participants shared that disparate technology systems prevent the effective use of data and predictive analytics, as the CSU has lacked a systemwide approach to many technology solutions.

3. Focus on Teaching and Learning as Part of the Solution

While GI 2025 did not address the classroom experience, stakeholders across the system noted the impact of the classroom environment on student success. For instance, 32% of faculty who responded to the Year of Engagement survey noted that academic support has the highest impact on student success. University discovery sessions also highlighted the need to engage faculty in student success work and to address the teaching and learning experience, and student survey data revealed instances of microaggressions in the classroom, underscoring the importance of creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Addressing these issues is crucial for fostering a positive academic experience and ensuring that all students have an equitable opportunity to succeed.

4. Use Data to Better Meet Students Where They Are

Faculty and staff emphasized the opportunity for the CSU to improve data-informed decision making, citing that the CSU has not consistently put meaningful, timely data in the hands of both decision-makers and those supporting students. University leaders also noted the importance of data and technology, as well as expressing a desire for greater analytics capabilities to derive actionable insights from the data.



5. Improve Student Resource Relevance and Utilization

Survey results showed that students are aware of resources but do not frequently utilize them. Low resource utilization may be due to ease of access, perceived value or quality of service. Additionally, discovery sessions highlighted the need for support services and resources to cater to students who are not on campus full-time or who have other responsibilities outside of academics.

*Framework Structure*

The Student Success Framework consists of five main components that build on one another. The components of this Framework are:

1. Definition

CSU stakeholders emphasized the need for a systemwide definition for student success. This definition should outline how the CSU defines student success and should set expectations for what the CSU will deliver to its students.

2. Commitments

These represent the structured priorities designed to support and achieve the CSU's expectations for student success, prioritizing critical areas that need attention and resources. Commitments provide a foundation for setting clear, measurable goals and implementing research-informed strategies to achieve those objectives.

3. Objectives

These represent clear, measurable outcomes within each commitment, guiding the CSU's practices and decision-making. Objectives are outcome-oriented, reflecting key themes from stakeholder engagement and institutional priorities, and provide a foundation for setting research-informed strategies and innovations.

4. Practices

These represent research-informed strategies designed to achieve objectives. Practices are grounded in evidence-based approaches and tailored to meet the specific needs and priorities identified within the CSU Framework.

5. Metrics

These represent what standards the CSU will use to measure progress toward the objectives. Stakeholders across the system highlighted the need for an expanded and consistent set of systemwide metrics to achieve the vision of student success.

*Interaction of Framework Components*

The framework components are designed to interact seamlessly with one another and are not mutually exclusive. For example, Objectives, which represent what we seek to accomplish, can

span multiple Commitments, ensuring a comprehensive approach to achieving our goals, whereas Practices represent the research-informed strategies that focus on how we will accomplish those Objectives. This interconnectedness allows Practices to map to multiple Objectives, fostering a cohesive and integrated effort towards realizing the Definition of Student Success for the CSU.

### *Definition of Student Success*

The Definition of Student Success was created through a comprehensive and inclusive process. Stakeholders throughout the Discovery Phase emphasized the need for a definition student success that accommodates the needs of the modern learner, adopts a broader perspective on student success beyond graduation and boldly reimagines how the CSU serves its students. The definition is rooted in the feedback from students and their families, focusing on students' desire to graduate with better job prospects than they would have without a college degree.

Key concepts in the definition were identified during the GI 2025 Symposium, where nearly 300 stakeholders collaborated and voted on definitions of student success. The draft definition then underwent multiple iterations with input from more than 80 stakeholders, including the universities' Vice Presidents of Student Affairs, Provosts and Presidents, as well as the Year of Engagement Steering Committee and the Year of Engagement Working Group, supporting a well-rounded and representative vision.

The CSU's current Definition of Student Success has four components:

1. Student success in the CSU is achieved through providing personalized and collective experiences within a supportive community that prioritizes flexible and impactful learning opportunities, self-discovery and holistic growth.
2. Equipping students to achieve academic excellence, career success and economic mobility through accessible, inclusive and experiential learning environments.
3. Developing curricular and co-curricular pathways for each student to graduate and excel in their career and/or further study and preparing them to thrive as engaged leaders and members of society.
4. Fostering lifelong relationships with students and graduates by cultivating meaningful experiences with their university, alumni and communities.

### *Framework Commitments*

The Commitments were identified by synthesizing key themes from comprehensive stakeholder engagement and data analysis conducted during the Discovery Phase, within the context of

national research and best practices. This process involved understanding which approaches worked and which ones did not work in implementing GI 2025, as well as recognizing significant priorities for enhancing the student experience and addressing major barriers and challenges that can impede degree progress. These insights were then integrated with research-based strategies known to enhance student outcomes. The Commitments were designed to align with the broader Definition of Student Success, ensuring a cohesive strategy. Like the Definition, the Commitments also underwent multiple iterations with the universities' Vice Presidents of Student Affairs, Provosts and Presidents, as well as the Year of Engagement Steering Committee and the Year of Engagement Working Group.

The Student Success Framework features six Commitments:

1. **Academic Readiness**  
The CSU will collaborate with families, community-based organizations and California education partners to ensure all students are prepared to succeed in college.
2. **Affordability**  
The CSU will foster affordable educational opportunities where every student is empowered to achieve their educational goals without financial barriers.
3. **Equitable Teaching and Learning Environments**  
The CSU will nurture inclusive, accessible and intentional teaching and learning environments where every student has the academic resources and support needed to excel.
4. **Personalized Journeys to Success**  
The CSU will identify each student's unique needs and support students in defining their academic goals and career aspirations, providing customized resources to support them on that path.
5. **Experiential Learning**  
The CSU will create flexible opportunities for applied learning to enable students to develop practical skills and deepen their understanding of how their experiences apply to their academic and career goals.
6. **Post-Degree Opportunity**  
The CSU will ensure that each student graduates with a first career-focused job and/or a clear pathway to further studies.

Explanations of the importance of each of the six Commitments is provided below.

*Academic Readiness:* Stakeholders across the CSU emphasized the importance of being "student-ready" and meeting students where they are academically. According to California Department of

Education data, only 52% of high school graduates in 2022-23 completed A-G requirements, with even lower completion rates among students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. University leaders highlighted the disparities in K-12 academic preparation across the state, underscoring the need for targeted academic preparation and support services. Faculty also stressed the significance of academic readiness, with 32% of surveyed CSU faculty ranking academic support as the resource with the highest impact on student success.

Systemwide CSU data further illustrated that students with GPAs below 2.0 comprise the largest segment of those who leave initially, and almost 80% of students with a CSU GPA below 2.0 leave by the end of their second year.

The ACSU Student Success Paper and CSU Executive Order 1110 provide additional insights. Premature departure is particularly likely in the first year for underrepresented minority, first-generation and underprepared students of lower socioeconomic status attending predominantly White institutions. Such students often struggle academically and socially, necessitating support and intervention, including early warning systems to catch them in safety net programs. While the CSU has made steady progress in improving college readiness, nearly 40% of first-time students (approximately 25,000 each fall) are informed that they are admitted but not ready for college-level coursework. These findings highlight the critical need for the CSU to address academic readiness in order to enhance student success and retention.

*Affordability:* Affordability related to the total cost of attendance has emerged as a major concern for students and alumni, particularly due to California's high costs of living and of transportation. Among students surveyed, 39% had considered taking a lower courseload to meet their financial obligations and only 32% agreed that their university provides adequate financial assistance. Students in discovery sessions also expressed the desire for further cost transparency. Many students noted the need to balance full-time or part-time jobs alongside their academics in order to cover living expenses. The CSU At All Costs Paper illustrates that the lowest-income students at most universities would need to work 20 or more hours per week to cover net costs. Further findings indicate that nearly two in three CSU baccalaureate degree recipients who left college with student loan debt had family incomes no greater than \$54,000 per year. Despite decreases in overall borrowing rates, equity gaps persist, with historically underserved students continuing to be more likely to graduate with debt than their White and Asian peers.

Moreover, the majority of CSU campuses have seen annual net price increases (i.e., the out-of-pocket costs for students) for the lowest-income students, ranging from \$8,100 to \$20,200, largely due to surging cost-of-living expenses and insufficient need-based financial aid to cover those expenses. Data from the California Legislative Analyst's Office on the total cost of attendance shows that the percent change in the cost of attendance since 2000-01 has increased faster than inflation, further exacerbating the financial burden on students. Addressing affordability for students can significantly reduce financial stress, allowing them to focus more on their studies and extracurricular activities, which ultimately improves academic performance and graduation rates. It can also promote greater equity by ensuring that students from all

socioeconomic backgrounds have equal access to higher education opportunities, thereby fostering a more diverse and inclusive university experience.

*Equitable Teaching and Learning Environments:* Discovery data has shown that a student's teaching and learning environment significantly impacts their success. Student survey data revealed that approximately one-fifth of students perceive microaggressions in the classroom, underscoring the urgent need to support and enhance inclusivity. Committee members from the Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) have highlighted their commitment to creating equitable learning environments through mentoring, counseling and connecting students with essential resources, strategies that are crucial for overall wellness and success. They stress the importance of inclusive teaching practices, addressing mental health issues and recruiting diverse faculty to reflect students' lived experiences. Additionally, faculty emphasized the need for relevant course materials and flexible teaching approaches to accommodate diverse student backgrounds, ultimately enhancing student engagement and success.

The CSU Black Student Success Report recommended developing and implementing inclusive and culturally relevant curricula, supported by faculty development programs, to better serve students from diverse backgrounds. This approach aims to create equitable teaching and learning environments by reducing racial microaggressions, addressing mental health issues and enhancing student engagement and success. Survey data points from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) indicate that 76% of students consider academic support very important to their campus experience. Lastly, the ASCSU Student Success Paper also notes the necessity for faculty to build communities within their classrooms and to support non-residential and commuting students in spending time with peers. Institutions must be student-centered, be characterized by supportive faculty-student interactions, hire faculty with learner-centered teaching philosophies, set high performance standards, support undergraduate research and employ best practices in teaching. Cultivating an inclusive teaching and learning environment fosters a sense of belonging, promotes diversity and enhances the overall educational experience for all students.

*Personalized Journeys to Success:* Shifts in the traditional student profile underscore the need for personalized journeys to degree completion, as more students are balancing responsibilities as student parents, part-time workers and non-residential students. Data reveals that a significant portion of the student population may not be on campus full-time and are juggling additional responsibilities on top of academics, with 7% of students being parents, 19% of students attending part-time and 83% of students being non-residential. Not only do students need tailored support services and a variety of flexible course scheduling options to navigate their unique academic and career journeys effectively, but they also require holistic advising services, advanced technological tools and student-centered administrative processes to enable those journeys to be streamlined. Feedback from students, faculty and staff indicates that administrative processes continue to be a barrier for students. Of the staff and faculty surveyed, 69% found the GI 2025 operational priority regarding barrier reduction to be ineffective, and only 39% of surveyed students believed that their university has identified and removed administrative barriers for students. Students also face challenges around course availability, as discussions

with 150 students uncovered that required course times often conflict, while approximately half of surveyed students believed that the courses required for graduation are available when needed.

Furthermore, discussions with students and analysis of National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) reports revealed areas for improvement in academic advising programs across the system, including data and technology usage, advisor caseloads, standardization of advising practices, communication and collaboration. Systemwide technology data also revealed a lack of a systemwide approach, with inconsistencies in the implementation of tools like EAB Navigate and PeopleSoft Student Information System, which hinders the ability to provide a cohesive and personalized experience for students. The CSU can leverage technology to create a more integrated and supportive environment, resulting in personalized educational journeys for students and enabling each student to receive the guidance and resources they need to succeed. This approach not only addresses current challenges but also positions the CSU as a leader in student-centered education, ultimately leading to higher student satisfaction, better academic outcomes and successful career paths.

*Experiential Learning:* Conversations with students, faculty, staff and alumni highlighted the impact of experiential learning on the student experience, as such opportunities enable students to develop practical skills and deepen their understanding of how their experiences apply to their academic and career goals. Conversations with 13 Chancellor's Office staff members revealed that expanding access to high-impact practices—such as study abroad, paid internships and research opportunities—is important to the CSU, as these experiences are critical to students' academic and professional development. University discovery sessions revealed that many universities are working to make high-impact practices more accessible to the new traditional learner, including service-learning projects, undergraduate research opportunities embedded into courses, and short-term, low-cost study-abroad experiences.

The ASCSU Student Success Paper indicates that students who connect to affinity groups are more likely to participate in educationally purposeful activities and become more committed to studying and persisting. Additionally, the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BSCEE) data on experiential learning shows that more than 95% of first-year students believe it is moderately important or very important that their university provides campus activities and events, opportunities for social involvement, and non-academic support.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities has found that students who participate in high-impact practices are more likely to graduate, with those involved in undergraduate research, internships and field placements, and study abroad reporting high satisfaction rates (74%, 75% and 87%, respectively). This commitment to experiential learning is further supported by findings from the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, which show that 49% of students who received credit for prior learning completed their degree compared with 27% of students who received no credit. By fostering an environment rich in experiential learning opportunities, the CSU aims to enhance student engagement, satisfaction and success, ultimately preparing students for their future careers and for lifelong learning.

*Post-Degree Opportunity:* Students, faculty, staff and alumni across the system underscored the importance of effective career preparation. The Chancellor's vision emphasizes that every student should graduate with either a full-time job or acceptance into graduate school, highlighting the importance of career readiness. Governor Newsom's Master Plan for Career Education further supports this commitment by creating high-paying career pathways, both with and without four-year degrees, and facilitating the recognition of real-world experiences for college credit. Alumni feedback has highlighted the critical role of career preparation, emphasizing the need for students to build both job-specific skills and self-efficacy to navigate the job search process effectively. Among the GI 2025 Symposium's nearly 300 participants, 76% of their student success definitions included mobility and career success, reflecting the high value placed on these outcomes. Additionally, discussions with more than 150 students revealed a desire for more effective post-degree support, including strong role models, guidance and increased opportunities for alumni engagement and networking.

In today's higher education landscape, the return on investment of a degree is increasingly important, making it essential to ensure that CSU students are well-prepared for successful careers post-graduation. A multifaceted approach to career preparation is crucial for fostering a sense of connection and for building awareness of potential career pathways, which will ultimately support students in achieving their professional goals. By including this Commitment in the Framework, we are ensuring that the educational experience is not only about academic achievement but also about equipping students with the tools and opportunities they need to thrive in their careers and beyond. This focus on post-degree opportunities is vital for students as it directly impacts their future success, financial stability and overall satisfaction with their educational investment.

## **Conclusion**

With the information from the Discovery Phase Report above to provide context, Academic and Student Affairs welcomes the Trustees' perspectives and input regarding the Framework's Definition of Student Success and its Commitments.

# Year of Engagement

CSU Board of Trustees  
Committee on Educational Policy  
Agenda Item 4  
January 27-29, 2025



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## Year of Engagement Status: Framework Development

We have synthesized findings from the Discovery Phase and have begun to develop a draft Student Success Framework, which is currently being socialized with stakeholders across the system for feedback and input.



### Broad Engagement & Discovery

Engagement of the CSU's faculty, staff, students and alumni has involved a systemwide survey, discovery sessions with all 23 institutions and individual discussions with all 20 appointed Trustees, as well as the Graduation Initiative 2025 Symposium.



### Synthesis & Framework Development

We will leverage Discovery Phase outputs to co-create essential Framework components with project leadership and governance groups. We will then socialize those components with broader stakeholders.



### Socialization & Consultation

Following the Synthesis phase, we will socialize the Framework draft with the CSU community.

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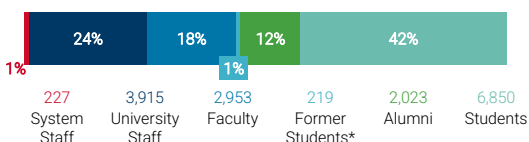


# Comprehensive Engagement

We have engaged several stakeholders across the system to gain their insights around the current student success ecosystem. These findings have informed the components of the draft Student Success Framework.

<p><b>1M+</b> Survey Recipients (All Students, Faculty, Staff)</p> 	<p><b>16K</b> Year of Engagement Survey Responses (as of 01/08/2025)</p> 	<p><b>700+</b> Stakeholder Discovery Session Participants</p> 	<p><b>23</b> University Discovery Sessions</p> 	<p><b>20</b> Board of Trustees Conversations</p> 
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## SURVEY RESPONSE BREAKDOWN



All internal CSU stakeholder groups have been engaged in the effort to develop a holistic understanding of the current state.

Representatives included:

- |                  |                               |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Students         | Board of Trustees             |
| Former Students* | Systemwide Leadership & Staff |
| Faculty          | University Leadership & Staff |
| Alumni           |                               |

\*Students who did not complete their degrees

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# Discovery Findings: Lessons Learned

What have we learned that will shape the Framework of the future?

<p><b>1</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Redefine Student Success</b></p> <p><i>Graduation is not the end point – the definition should encompass graduate school, transfer and job/career attainment.</i></p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Use the Size of the CSU as an Advantage</b></p> <p><i>Acting as a collective, the CSU can afford to do more.</i></p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Focus on Teaching and Learning as Part of the Solution</b></p> <p><i>Faculty note that the highest opportunity for impact on student success is academic support.</i></p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Use Data to Better Meet Students Where They Are</b></p> <p><i>The CSU has not consistently put meaningful, timely data in the hands of both decision-makers and those supporting students.</i></p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Make Student Resources Easy to Access</b></p> <p><i>Remove barriers to access. Students are aware of resources, but are not accessing what they need, when they need it.</i></p>
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## Effectiveness of GI 2025 Operational Priority Efforts

Faculty and staff reported that the most effective GI 2025 efforts were related to student well-being and academic preparation, but there is still work to be done in the efforts to reduce administrative barriers.

### Effectiveness Votes by GI 2025 Operational Priority<sup>1</sup>

	Effective	Ineffective
Student Engagement	69%	31%
Academic Preparation	67%	33%
Enrollment Management	52%	48%
Data-Based Decisions	45%	55%
Financial Support	43%	57%
Barrier Reduction	31%	69%

### Key Insights

When asked to rank the effectiveness of their university's Graduation Initiative 2025 efforts, more than half of staff and faculty noted their university effectively developed wrap-around support and academic preparation services.

Of the six operational priorities, staff and faculty found efforts around barrier reduction to be the least effective.

While many universities did deploy initiatives to reduce administrative barriers, this sentiment reveals that previous efforts were insufficient and that future efforts may require systemwide deployment for sustained impact.

N = 3,797 of 6,868

Source: Year of Engagement Survey, as of 01/08/2025

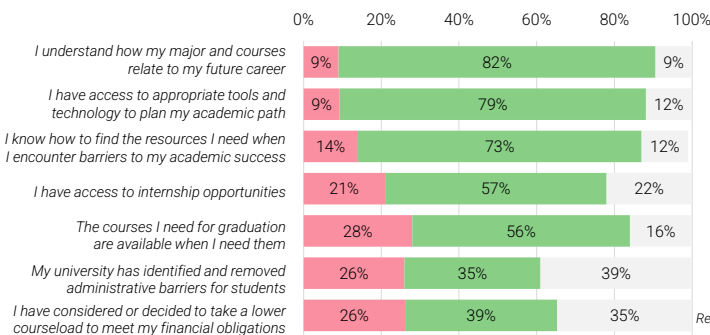
<sup>1</sup>Staff and Faculty were asked to rank their university's GI 2025 efforts in the six priority areas from most to least effective.

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## Student Survey: Resource Awareness Responses

Student survey responses highlighted that students are aware of the support services their university offers, with 73% of students believing that they know how to find the resources they need when they encounter barriers to their academic success.

### Student Sentiment Responses



### Key Insights

Students noted awareness around degree planning tools and resources for when they encounter barriers to academic success.

Administrative barriers and affordability were top concerns for students, with only 35% believing that their university has removed administrative barriers for students and 39% considering taking a lower courseload to meet financial obligations.

N = 3,599 of 6,850

Source: Year of Engagement Survey, as of 01/08/2025

<sup>1</sup>Responses of "Strongly agree" or "Somewhat agree" were defined as "Agree." Responses of "Strongly disagree" and "Somewhat disagree" were defined as "Disagree."

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## Student Survey: Resource Utilization Responses

While 73% of student respondents noted awareness of support resources, across the board, more than half of students noted low support service utilization, highlighting a disconnect between support service awareness and utilization.

### Proportion of Undergraduates Reporting Low Utilization

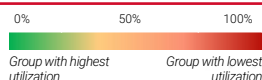
	Overall	White	Latinx	Asian	Black	5 <sup>th</sup> Year+
Academic Advising	61%	63%	60%	54%	63%	67%
Career Services	79%	84%	81%	57%	87%	86%
Counseling and Mental Health & Wellness Services	76%	79%	75%	70%	80%	79%
Tutoring	80%	85%	80%	67%	83%	83%
Diversity & Inclusion Programs	77%	83%	80%	63%	77%	80%
Financial Aid Office	63%	64%	63%	65%	67%	64%
Student Clubs & Organizations	62%	57%	75%	51%	67%	53%

### Key Insights

Tutoring, DEI, Counseling and Career Services were the lowest-utilized supports across the board with more than 70% of students noting they never or rarely use the service.

5th Year+ students noted the lowest support service utilization rates across advising, career services and tutoring. This may indicate the impact of support services on timely degree progression, as well as a potential gap in resource accessibility.

N = 3,599 of 6,850  
Source: Year of Engagement Survey, as of 01/08/2025  
\*Responses of "Rarely (1-2 times/year)" or "Never" were defined as low utilization.



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## Framework Structure

The Framework will be comprised of five distinct but interconnected elements that inform and build upon each other.

	ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Today's Focus	<b>Student Success Definition</b>	<b>Who we are and what we deliver</b> How we define student success and a baseline expectation of what the CSU will deliver
	<b>Commitments</b>	<b>How we structure the work</b> Critical areas of focus to realize our definition of student success
Ongoing Discussions with Governance Groups	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>What we will accomplish</b> Clear, measurable goals within each commitment that guide our practices and decision-making
	<b>Metrics</b>	<b>What we measure</b> Outcome metrics, importance and assigned accountability entities
	<b>Practices</b>	<b>How we get there</b> Research-informed strategies to achieve our objectives

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## Definition for Student Success (Draft)

The following draft definition was developed through discussions at the Graduation Initiative 2025 Symposium, then revised through multiple conversations with University Presidents, Provosts, Vice Presidents of Student Affairs, Diversity Officers, the Steering Committee and the Working Group.

.....  
Student success in the CSU is achieved through...

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*Equipping students to achieve academic excellence, career success and economic mobility through accessible, inclusive and experiential learning environments*

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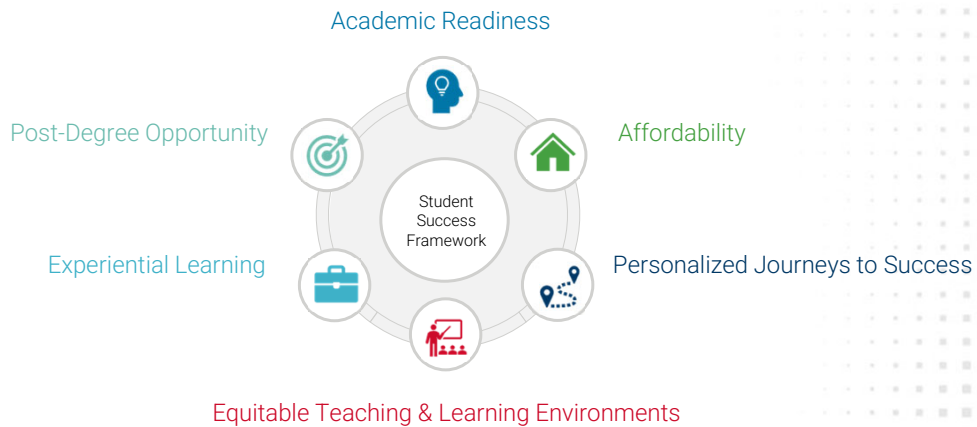
*Providing personalized and collective experiences within a supportive community that prioritizes flexible and impactful learning opportunities, self-discovery and holistic growth*

*Equipping students to achieve academic excellence, career success and economic mobility through accessible, inclusive and experiential learning environments*

*Developing curricular and co-curricular pathways for each student to graduate and excel in their career and/or further study, and preparing them to thrive as engaged leaders and members of society*

*Fostering lifelong relationships with students and graduates by cultivating meaningful experiences with their university, alumni and communities*

## Proposed Framework Commitments (Draft)



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The CSU will collaborate with families, community-based organizations, and California education partners to ensure our universities help students succeed in college.



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## Experiential Learning

The CSU will create flexible opportunities for applied learning to enable students to develop practical skills and deepen their understanding of how their experiences apply to their academic and career goals.

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## Affordability

The CSU will foster affordable educational opportunities where every student is empowered to achieve their educational goals without financial barriers.

## Post-Degree Opportunity

The CSU will collaborate with California employers to ensure that each student graduates with the opportunity for a first career job and/or a clear pathway to further studies.

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# Next Steps

The Year of Engagement team will continue to engage CSU stakeholders to provide feedback on the draft Framework.



# Thank you

