

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

CSU Sacramento

Draft Student Success Plan

Graduation Initiative 2025 Goals CSU Sacramento

Metric	2025 Goal	Most Recent Rate
Freshman 6-Year Graduation	60%	46%
Freshman 4-Year Graduation	30%	9%
Transfer 2-Year Graduation	38%	26%
Transfer 4-Year Graduation	81%	71%
Gap - Underrepresented Minority	0	8 % points
Gap – Pell	0	7 % points

Executive Summary of Goals & Strategies CSU Sacramento

Goals	Strategies
<p>Long-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising • Data capabilities to disaggregate and use student progress data • Work with K-12 and community colleges 	<p>Long-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track all aspects of student progress to degree completion using an integrated technology ecosystem • On-demand mobile advising using digital dashboards • Integrate technology ecosystem to facilitate dynamic tracking and mitigation of achievement gaps • Implement fourth-year Math readiness programs • Peer advising and on-campus transfer center to facilitate two-year pathway for ADT students
<p>Short-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment management • Advising 	<p>Short-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer more summer, off-peak, and online courses, and reduction in fees • Advisors incentivize targeted students to pledge completion for priority registration and financial supplements



APPROVED

9/2/16

Robert S. Nelsen

Date

1. Long Term Plan

“Finish in Four,” Sacramento State’s plan for student success, is a university-wide, collaborative, student-centered strategy that combines research-based best practice and data-informed decision making to document quality learning, increase graduation rates, and close the achievement gap.

By 2025 Sacramento State will:

- Increase four-year graduation rates for first-time freshmen from 8.3% to 30%.
- Increase two-year graduation rates for transfer students from 25.7% to 38%.
- Eliminate achievement gaps, bringing graduation rates for underrepresented students (URM) and low-income students to the same level as that of other students (for example, eliminating the current 8% and 4% gaps for first-time freshmen and transfer URM students respectively).

President Nelsen and a newly appointed “Graduation Czar,” are leading the “Finish in Four” campaign, making student success our single, unwavering focus. “Finish in Four” resonates throughout the higher education community and the campaign has drawn national media attention. To rapidly increase our four-year graduation rate, we are implementing an outcome-driven long term plan animated by pragmatic, results-focused strategies.

To achieve our graduation goals, we will take the following actions:

1. Transform campus culture and operations to promote a “Finish in Four” mindset for native freshmen and a “Finish in Two” mindset for transfers.
2. Leverage technology and data-driven decision making to build a collaborative ecosystem that integrates student development and quality learning while optimizing progress to degree completion.
3. Focus on achieving outcomes, such as minimum unit loads and productive units, which are essential precursors to and drivers of student progression to degree.

Five implementation strategies comprise the “Finish in Four” campaign:

1. Campus planning, organizing and communicating to foster a culture of student success.

Sacramento State will operationalize the “Finish in Four” strategic plan so that every division, department, program and individual on campus has a collaborative and measurable role that contributes to meeting campus graduation goals. Key policies, operations, processes, and ways of working together will be restructured to create a climate that will transform the culture of our campus from one that is a well-intentioned collection of courses and programs to a **transparent, outcome-driven** enterprise. Our focus on results will drive **budget allocations**,

technology implementation, and policy priorities, inform course and program design and curricula, and determine how we assess learning. Our strategic plan includes:

- **Budgeting to the student success mission** rather than to FTES (full-time equivalent students). Budget allocations to colleges and programs prioritize student progress to completion, graduation rates, and closing of the achievement gap.
- **Setting University, department, and program priorities based on data-driven student success goals**, rather than based on history or special interests.
- **Designing for transparency and student development.** Course and program curricula will be scaffolded and streamlined to prioritize timely progress to degree as well as faculty interest or departmental planning.
- **Assessing learning and the quality of the degree** by using institution-level evidence of student learning and mastery of core competencies, in addition to course grades and unit completion.
- **Implementing technology as a cross-functional enterprise** rather than the individual projects of academic and student support-based units.

Implementation costs include hiring additional faculty beyond the 69 new hires that are already in process, as well as additional departmental major advisors, professional learning communities (for at least 100 faculty, 100 staff, and 100 students per year), annual strategic planning summits, summer academic retreats, and external evaluation consultants. Professional learning at all levels on content, including leadership, team and consensus building, course and curriculum redesign, outcomes-based and competency-based education, and data analytics is necessary to empower individuals to transform the campus culture. Strategic planning summits galvanize the campus community to ensure a sustained focus and communicate the commitment of leadership to “Finish in Four.”

2. Enrollment management from recruitment to graduation, ensuring that all needed course sections are offered based on students’ progression requirements. Using an integrated technology ecosystem including Smart Planner, Platinum Analytics, Civitas Illume, Degree Audit, and the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS), we will track all aspects of student progress to degree completion, intervening where necessary to ensure that students’ course schedules maximize progression to degree, providing timely academic support to increase course success, and adjusting the supply of course seats to match student needs.

Systematic data analytics focused on student cohorts will not only track progression but will predict future demand for specific course sections, enabling academic deans and chairs to prevent bottlenecks and streamline completion pathways. Integration of LMS and degree planning data will add early alert data, further refining predictions for enrollment management and early intervention for students in academic distress.

Implementation resources include ongoing contractual obligations with outside vendors, an additional three analysts/programmers, two research analysts, two student affairs student data specialists, one administrative coordinator, and an increased number of faculty members to teach high demand courses or develop online learning opportunities.

3. Advising. Advising will use a student development model to connect academic progression to cultural, motivational, and psychosocial development. In addition to course, program, and career advising, we will proactively build academic identity and a sense of belonging by

integrating intrusive advising, coaching, and mentoring to meet students “where they are” developmentally rather than where we think “they should be” administratively. This means:

- **Moving from a deficit model to a developmental model** where students are recognized for their strengths and the role they play in partnership with advisors by actively assessing needs, engaging in interventions, and improving the teaching and learning process.
- **Simplifying and realigning our course catalog** and internal customer relationship management (CRM) software to track student performance so that multiple advisors can understand each individual student’s story and deliver customized, proactive and just-in-time advising throughout the progression from orientation to graduation.
- **Frequent and proactive “call-outs” to reach students** at regular intervals to optimize course schedules and maximize progression, as well as on an as-needed basis for students in academic or social distress. These sessions will use motivational interviewing and other state-of-the-art techniques to promote student buy-in and engagement.
- **On demand, just-in-time, and mobile advising using digital dashboards** for monitoring student academic progress and financial aid, roving advisors with mobile advising tablets, and drop-in advising stations with the feel of an Apple “Genius Bar.”

Implementation costs include 10 tablet computers, 20 student advisors, \$10,000 in remodel costs, and development of a mobile advising dashboard.

4. Data capabilities to disaggregate and use student progress data by ethnicity, gender, first generation, underrepresented and socioeconomic status. Sophisticated analytics capabilities will be enabled by a fully integrated, centrally managed, technology ecosystem (Smart Planner, Platinum Analytics, Civitas Illume, EAB Customer Relationship Management, Blackboard LMS, Degree Audit, and direct assessment software such as Taskstream Aqua). These software products will facilitate dynamic tracking and mitigation of achievement gaps on the institution, program, and course levels. With the addition of data from our college-based retention programs and high-impact practices (i.e., college readiness, first year, and equity programs) we will be able to uncover complex relationships between multiple interventions and student success. Disaggregated data will be used to segment achievement gaps into those related to student preparation, so that we can target student support interventions where they are most needed, and those that may be a result of instructional or institutional factors, which can be addressed by institutional process changes. Data capabilities will also extend to the documentation and assessment of quality learning through digital portfolios of student work and other evidence of competence and mastery of institutional learning outcomes.

Implementation costs include direct assessment software, faculty and staff professional learning (for at least 100 faculty and 20 staff) as well as funds for ten course redesign projects per year to close the achievement gap.

5. Work with K-12 and community colleges to improve college-going and transfer. Through collaboration with K-12 schools and community colleges, Sac State focuses not only on our current students, but on our future students as well. These collaborations are helping to ensure that our students arrive ready for college-level work and timely progress to degree. Examples include:

- **College Ready Initiative.** Although remediation rates have been declining, about 50% of incoming freshmen still require remediation. By implementing fourth-year math readiness programs in 215 high schools from 34 school districts, we will continue to reduce the need for remedial courses, increasing timely progress to degree.
- **Transfer Ready Initiative.** The number of students transferring to Sac State with an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) is growing from the hundreds into the thousands. The 235 ADT students in the Fall 2012 through Spring 2014 cohorts, achieved a two-year graduation rate of 75%. By partnering with local community colleges, we will proactively facilitate a two-year pathway for ADT students utilizing pre-admission peer advising and an on-campus transfer center.
- In partnership with **Align Capital Region** (formerly Next Ed), we will lead regional efforts to align school districts, Sac State, state and local agencies, and businesses to increase the number of people who have attained a baccalaureate degree in Sacramento County from 29.7% to 38%.

Implementation costs include funding for math readiness programs, a high school outreach coordinator, a student affairs professional, and six student advisors per year.

2. Rationale

In each of the past thirty years, only 4% to 10% of Sacramento State first-time freshmen have graduated in four years. Over that same period, less than one-half of first-time freshmen graduated in six years or more. This unacceptable graduation rate was further exacerbated during the economic recession of 2007-2009 when the California State University system, including Sacramento State, reduced faculty hiring, course availability, and expansion of classroom space in order to manage a corresponding reduction in the number of enrolled full time equivalent students. Historically, students entering Sac State generally demonstrate a high need for remediation in Math and English, low socioeconomic status, and a high percentage of first generation students. Sac State students were often advised to limit their semester academic load to 12 units and minimize summer session attendance in favor of outside employment.

Over the past two years especially, Sacramento State has refocused its student success goals by encouraging graduation in four years for native students and graduation in two years for transfer students. We have implemented "Finish in Four," a comprehensive, student-centric approach that emphasizes student success through personal, social, and academic development programs and services. A number of high-quality developmental support programs and services are directed at the general student body, as well as specific groups, such as underrepresented minority students.

These student development programs, primarily within Student Affairs, include general support and learning assistance offered through Project PASS, our peer assisted learning program that helps students pass gateway math and science courses, and PARC (Peer and Academic Resource Center), which offers an array of supplemental instruction and embedded tutoring programs for general education courses. Also included are our targeted support services that focus on low-income students or single ethnic groups; these include EOP (low-income students), Full Circle (Asian Americans), CAMP (migrant farmworkers), The Serna Center (Latinos), and Cooper Woodson College Enhancement (African Americans). Student Affairs also provides coaching and

advising in safe physical spaces for student support, such as the Dreamer Resource Center, MLK Center, PRIDE Center, and the Women's Resource Center. Our approach also includes fully expanding our DEGREES program, which now provides an array of coaching and mentoring services to underrepresented students.

As noted previously, Sacramento State has already begun implementation of the "Finish in Four" branding campaign and it is already bearing fruit. From the first day of Orientation, new students are acculturated to the expectation that they can and will finish their degree in four years if they wish and that Sac State will make sure they have the academic support and access to courses they need to succeed. We achieved this through orientation messaging, such as "Class of 2020" banners" and the Finish in Four Pledge (i.e., student incentive program and reduction in tuition for Summer Session), which 62% of incoming freshmen signed. In addition to these visible changes, behind the scenes our academic departments and transitions staff ensured that new sections were opened up whenever student demand began to exceed the supply of existing course seats.

We can already see the results in both students' expectations and course unit loads. In past surveys of new freshmen, only 45% said they expected to graduate in four years. Among Fall 2016 freshmen, 66% say they expect to graduate in four years. As of the first day of the Fall 2016 semester, 64.3% of new freshmen are taking 15 or more units, compared with 50.4% in Fall 2015, 29.5% in Fall 2014, and 22.2% in Fall 2013.

We intend to expand the "Finish in Four" concept to a "Finish in Two" expectation for transfer students, and we are expanding the cultural and operational changes embodied in "Finish in Four" so that all of our operations are focused on optimizing students' progression and success throughout their Sac State education.

Partially as a result of our outreach programs, including the Expository Reading and Writing Curriculum (ERWC), a high school English course intended to increase college readiness, the remediation rate for incoming freshmen has dropped from about 65% in Fall 2010 to 51% in Fall 2016. In Fall 2014, we implemented Directed Self Placement (DSP) for English remedial students, reducing the number of incoming freshmen taking remedial English courses. As a result of DSP, lower remediation rates, and rising unit loads, more of our freshmen are progressing to sophomore or higher status by the end of their first year. In the Fall 2010 freshman cohort, 23.9% had progressed beyond freshman status by the beginning of their third semester. For the Fall 2015 cohort, the figure is 35.9%.

The President's Office, Academic Affairs and the Colleges have aggressively supported the mission of timely graduation with a number of ongoing initiatives. In 2016, Sac State initiated the hiring of 69 tenured faculty members and prioritized budgets to allow for more course sections, resulting in an increase of more than 10,000 additional class "seats" in Fall 2016. In addition, faculty work groups completed recommendations to reduce impaction, reviewed the First Year Experience, continued its review of general requirements, fostered aligned pathways with secondary and community colleges, and proposed increased offerings in the summer semester.

In cross-institutional collaboration efforts, Sac State has partnered with Sierra College and the Los Rios Community College District to develop a new Fourth-Year Math curriculum (the EAP Senior Year Math Course), designed for high school students who score "conditionally ready" or below on the CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress) in their

junior year. The course is intended to ensure that students are ready for college-level math when they finish high school. In addition, Sacramento State is redesigning its remedial math courses as it expands established and successful programs including CAMP, EOP Summer Bridge, and an array of programs through the Center for College and Career Readiness (high school boot camp, readiness workshops, and mindset interventions) in order to assist students as they prepare for the transition to college. These combined efforts allow for a more customized entryway for students joining the Sac State community.

3. Objectives Key indicators

The table below summarizes key outcome indicators to ensure that we are achieving our student success goals.

Metric	Goal	Most Recent Rate
Freshmen six-year graduation	60%	46%
Freshmen four-year graduation	30%	9%
Transfer two-year graduation	38%	26%
Transfer four-year graduation	81%	71%
Achievement GAP URM Freshmen Graduation Rate	0%	8%
Achievement GAP URM Transfers Graduation Rate	0%	4%
Achievement GAP Pell Freshmen	0%	7%
Achievement GAP Pell Transfers	0%	7%
Third-term Retention Freshmen	85%	79%
Fifth-term Retention Freshmen	80%	73%
Third-term Retention Transfers	91%	87%
Percent of freshmen taking 15 or more units in first semester	75%	64%
Percent of transfers taking 15 or more units in first semester	60%	28%
Increase utilization of nonstandard times for classes including summer and weekends by 30%		

4. Timeline Highlights

1. Ecosystem for Enrollment: Implemented in Fall 2016 and Integrated in Fall 2018.
2. Planning and budgeting for student success model: Implemented in 2015 and Extending through 2025.
3. "Finish in Four" campaign: Implemented in summer 2016.
4. "Finish in Four" "call-out" campaign: Piloted in summer 2016. Full implementation during 2016-17 academic year and extending through 2020.
5. Integrate data analytics ecosystem: 2016 through 2020.

5. Short term 2016-17 strategies (one page)

For the 2016-17 academic year, we will operationalize our long term strategies to target students in their junior and senior years (Fall 2013 and Fall 2014 freshman cohorts and Fall 2015 and Fall 2016 transfer cohorts) to maximize the 4-year and 4.5-year graduation rates for first time freshmen and 2-year and 2.5-year graduation rates for transfers. We propose strategies with immediate impact and visible metrics to track our progress.

Short term “intrusive” advising strategies

- **The 80+ Unit Call-Out.** Students in the target cohorts with 80+ units will be contacted by trained faculty, staff, and student advisors and asked “How can Sac State help you Finish in Four” (or “Finish in Two” for transfers). Advisors will gather data on remaining course requirements for degree completion, as well as financial and personal obstacles. Students will be incentivized to pledge to “Finish in Four” with priority registration or financial supplements for tuition, parking, and campus employment. We estimate 1,000 students per cohort can be identified and contacted based on a pilot test of this strategy on the 2013 freshman cohort this summer. Call outs are scheduled for January 2017, summer 2017, and January 2018. Data will be compiled and crowd-sourced for a cross-functional advising team to analyze and act on.
- **Mobile, Just-in-Time Advising.** Using mobile devices, social media, and the concept of the “Apple Genius Bar,” student, staff and faculty advisors will be deployed to high traffic areas, study sessions, and club, athletic and social events, where customized “Finish in Four” advising will be delivered to and pledges will be solicited from individuals and groups with a focus on the target cohorts. Advisors visibly wearing “Finish in Four” campaign shirts will blanket the campus and focus campus culture on the graduation imperative.

The short term target (for Fall 2013 freshmen and Fall 2015 transfers) is to advise the 1,078 freshmen and 2,966 transfers identified as having 80+ units at the start of the Fall 2016 semester. The target for the “call-out” and mobile advising strategies is for 78% of the 1,087 freshmen (842 students) to graduate in 4 to 4.5 years and for 60% of the 2,966 transfers (1,774 students) to graduate in 2 to 2.5 years.

Enrollment management strategies

Summer, off-peak, and online courses, reduction in fees. Using data from the 80+ call-out program, leadership will prioritize spring, summer, and intersession budget allocations so that courses needed for graduation are fully funded. Students with a pledge to “Finish in Four” will be incentivized to take courses at non-standard times, including evenings, weekends, winter intersession, and summer. The University will identify resources, such as additional faculty, needed to add course sections, including classes at non-standard times. Incentives such as discounted university goods and services, priority parking, summer housing, campus employment, and reduced fees or free intersession and/or summer courses are part of the plan. Special attention will be given to “finish-line courses” such as senior project, capstone, and gatekeeper courses, as well as simplifying curriculum requirements.

Short term targets include 100% of the students eligible for graduation from the “call-out” will get their 1st or 2nd choice semester course schedule needed for on-time degree completion.