At California State University, Fullerton, our entire campus community is committed to doing everything possible to support our students’ academic dreams and life goals – from application to graduation and beyond.

A HISTORY OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Cal State Fullerton is a top national university and the most populated campus in the largest system of higher education in the country, with more than 40,000 students immersed in 57 undergraduate and 55 graduate degree programs. Cal State Fullerton is first in California in graduating Hispanic students, first in the CSU in graduating women, fifth in the nation for graduating students of color, and was recently ranked by US News and World Report as one of the “25 Most Innovative Schools.”

Cal State Fullerton has been working aggressively and successfully to increase graduation rates and eliminate disparities for underrepresented, first-generation and low-income (Pell) students.

With our sights set on becoming the model public comprehensive university of the nation, we embedded our commitment to student success in the four goals of our first-ever 2013-2018 Strategic Plan. Goal Two – Improve student persistence, increase graduation rates universitywide and narrow the achievement gap for underrepresented students – forged a strong infrastructure for student success, sparked fundamental organizational and culture changes, and inspired a new level of innovation and collaboration across campus.

In 2015, when the California State University (CSU) system unveiled Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI2025) – a systemwide plan that aims to improve graduation rates and bolster the workforce statewide – Cal State Fullerton was already ahead of the curve. On the heels of a 19 percent improvement in the six-year graduation rate and a 57 percent improvement in the four-year graduation rate in just the first three years of the University’s Strategic Plan, the work and initiatives necessary to achieve GI2025’s goals were already in place for Cal State Fullerton. Granted, GI2025’s charge for Cal State Fullerton to increase its four-year freshman graduation rate from 22 percent to 44 percent and two-year transfer graduation rate from 32 percent to 44 percent by 2025 – all while eliminating a historically stubborn achievement gap – is no small aspiration, but our success in recent years indicates we can and will achieve it.

Heeding the call, we recently submitted our Graduation Initiative 2025 plan to the Chancellor’s Office. Our long-standing efforts had evolved into an intentional, well-articulated, comprehensive, campuswide plan that inspires the care, support and collaboration of every individual working at Cal State Fullerton.

Four central tenets have emerged: in all that we do, we will 1) uphold each student’s best interest; 2) maintain the highest level of academic rigor and integrity; 3) scour our system to eliminate any obstacles that impede our students’ paths and 4) employ data to drive decision-making.

While we have sharpened our focus, we have broadened our definition of success to encompass student well-being, learning, retention, timely graduation, and fulfillment as productive members of our diverse society. This is our plan to ensure their success.
Since 2012, our campus has improved our six-year graduation rate from 51 to 67 percent, which is a 31 percent improvement. Further, our four-year graduation rate has gone from 14 to 23 percent, which is a 65 percent improvement. During that period, our achievement gap was cut in half for first-time freshmen and eliminated for transfer students. Shown here are our campus goals to greatly improve student graduation rates.

Each of Cal State Fullerton’s seven colleges with undergraduate programs has also established graduation rate goals, shown below. Programs with higher-than-average graduation rates were given smaller growth targets. Programs with lower-than-average graduation rates, including high-unit majors in the arts and STEM fields, have more aggressive targets.
LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

We know these ambitious goals can only be met with continued, close, campuswide collaboration. Since its inception, our Graduation Initiative 2025 leadership structure has ensured broad dialogue and participation by faculty, staff and students working with the Office of the President and across the divisions of Academic Affairs; Student Affairs; Information Technology; Administration and Finance; University Advancement; and Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion.

During our inaugural year – 2016-17 – efforts were led by our Graduation Initiative 2025 Steering Committee, including two associate vice presidents each from the divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. In addition, a 17-member Advisory Group and five task forces, enlisting experts from across campus, met regularly to identify challenges and solutions in the areas of strategic enrollment services; registration, records and graduation; advising; students in transition; and scheduling, curriculum and technology.

QUICK SUCCESS

While continuing the student success efforts launched in 2012 and piloting new long-term initiatives, this first year our team zeroed in on short-term strategies aimed at supporting and removing barriers for students who were candidates for graduation in summer 2017.

The Office of Institutional Research and Analytical Studies, part of the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness, identified 820 candidates who were on track for a 4.5-year degree. They became the focus of an aggressive outreach, advising and awareness program by our Student Success Teams to help them graduate in four years through summer completion. Twenty-one classes were added in winter and spring 2017 and 12 upper-division courses were added in summer session to accommodate student need. Success coaches were hired to ensure that these students remained on track.

With Graduation Initiative 2025 funding, 402 of these students were offered completion grants to enroll in summer 2017 courses. By summer’s end, approximately 379 of these students successfully became proud Titan graduates.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

As we celebrated these initial successes, our 2016-17 team was setting the stage for greater, long-term advances in enrollment management, advising and campus services meant to ensure continued support for our students, from recruitment, to first-year experience, to timely graduation and beyond.

Now in our second year, our 2017-18 Graduation Initiative 2025 leadership team is charged with growing data-proven programs while implementing new initiatives aimed at breaking down barriers to graduation. Our team structure was reworked to include an Advisory Group, chaired by the vice presidents for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, and eight work groups – each focused on a key building block for student success. Descriptions of the eight work groups begin on page 4. A ninth work group will ensure campuswide communication on GI 2025 intents, goals, accomplishments and future plans.

While our structure has changed, our commitment to cross-campus collaboration remains. Our Advisory Group and work groups reflect and involve diverse stakeholders from across campus, tapping into a wealth of expertise, ideas, needs and perspectives that will optimize our efforts.
GROUP 1: ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Mission: To ensure that all incoming freshmen and transfer students meet admission requirements, feel confident in the face of academic rigor and are fully prepared to begin earning college credits from their first semester on.

Results to Date: Cal State Fullerton has documented strong results from its Early Start Program (ESP) and developmental courses aimed at building a foundation of proficiency, confidence and persistence for new students struggling with English and math. The summer before their freshman year, targeted students are enrolled in Early Start Programs featuring smaller class sizes, graduate student assistants, an on-campus tutoring center, active advisement, and online and face-to-face courses redesigned to maximize student engagement. Data show students who complete these programs are retained at a rate equivalent to those who are college-ready upon entering the University.

To catch and support students early on, our University continues to build partnerships and pathways with local K-12 districts and community colleges. Cal State Fullerton is a CSU system leader in admitting SB1440 transfer students, having established strong community college relationships for STEM transfers via National Science Foundation and Department of Education grant programs and 2+2 articulation agreements. In 2016-17 we were awarded a sizeable Department of Education grant to partner with eight regional community colleges and the Orange County Business Council. Separately we have partnered with Fullerton high schools and Fullerton College in a grant program that supports student success from high school to community college to Cal State Fullerton.

In 2017-18, this work group will continue to assess and finesse Cal State Fullerton’s academic support for incoming students while advising the University on implementation of CSU Executive Order 1110. With the goal of supporting student success, the order calls on all CSU campuses to reexamine protocols for assessing college readiness and determining course placement, and to strengthen Early Start programs.
GROUP 2: FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

**Mission:** To greet new students at the door and set them on a path to timely graduation and career success.

**Results to Date:** Our University’s First Year Experience program welcomes incoming freshmen, connects them with multicultural peers and links them with a campuswide network of support. A partnership of the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs divisions, and founded on student development theories, the program is designed to impact retention and graduation rates by quickly building our students’ sense of belonging, proficiency and confidence through summer bridge programs, student mentorships, orientation programs and more.

Central to the program are new University 100 courses, offered for general-education credit, in which freshmen pinpoint their passions, explore career paths and develop the skills, habits and grit that will carry them through a lifetime. As of fall 2017, an impressive 85 percent of undeclared freshmen had enrolled, and another 584 freshmen registered for first-year courses in five colleges.

In 2017-18, this work group will support the development and expansion of customized First Year Experience programs for each of our eight colleges, while building a new First Year Experience for transfer students transitioning from community college.

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GROUP 3: WELLNESS & BELONGING

**Mission:** To cultivate each student’s sense of belonging and well-being, while promoting and improving support for students’ physical, emotional, social and financial health.

**Results to Date:** A sense of belonging and well-being are key to student persistence and success. Responding to a noticeable need, in 2012 Cal State Fullerton realigned multiple student resource centers under one governing body, the Diversity Initiatives Resource Centers (DIRC). These now include the African American, Asian Pacific American, Chicana and Chicano, LGBTQ and Titan Dreamers resource centers. The centers not only provide physical space, but also individualized support, a safe environment for intellectually charged conversations, and a sense of community for our diverse student body.

A flagship for the Division of Student Affairs, in concert with Graduation Initiative 2025 these centers have helped promote and link students with a wide range of campus support services, including new-student orientations, counseling and psychological assistance, medical care, recreation, health education and promotion, emergency food and housing, financial assistance, the Male Success Initiative (MSI), support services for students with disabilities and veterans’ support.

In 2017-18, our Wellness and Belonging work group will continue to expand, assess and fine tune the services and programs offered through the Diversity Initiatives Resource Centers while linking our most vulnerable students with the support they need to achieve their dreams.
GROUP 4: STUDENT SUCCESS TEAMS/ADVICEMENT

Mission: To provide all students with active and accurate advisement to illuminate a clear path to a pertinent major, degree completion and a fulfilling career.

Results to Date: With powerful impact, Cal State Fullerton ramped up its investment in student advising with the creation of college-based Student Success Teams – one for each college, one for our Irvine campus, one for special populations and one for graduate students. An innovative and award-winning partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, each college team consists of an associate dean, an assistant dean from Student Affairs, and a cadre of faculty and staff advisers, including retention, graduation and career specialists, who serve as a “think tank” for improving student success. The result is better campuswide communication, more cross-departmental referrals linking students with needed services, and active intervention and outreach. This model received a 2015-16 Outstanding Advising Program of the Year award from the National Academic Advising Association, and a 2016-17 Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education Promising Practices Award.

The Academic Advisement Center continues to provide centralized General Education advising to all students. Each Student Success Team operates a college-based Student Success Center to provide discipline-specific academic and career advising, plus “drive-through” advisement opportunities and workshops in a one-stop shop.

In 2017-18, this work group will continue to broaden student access to professional advisers, expand mandatory academic advising for freshmen on probation and students nearing graduation, strengthen degree audits and fine-tune assessment procedures to improve our advising efforts. This group will also continue to promote to students and faculty the benefits of taking an average of 30 units per year – if necessary utilizing summer and winter sessions, financial aid and degree planning – as well as the socio-economic advantages of timely graduation.

GROUP 5: STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT/ ADMINISTRATIVE BARRIERS

Mission: To provide incoming students with a clear, streamlined, easy-to-understand administrative experience, from outreach to commencement.

Results to Date: With an eye on eliminating any administrative hurdles that blocked student success, Cal State Fullerton adopted a Strategic Enrollment Management model in January 2017. Tying outreach, admissions, recruitment, orientation and financial aid under one umbrella in Student Affairs, this new model has allowed a proactive, strategic approach to enrollment management and ensured a seamless experience for students, from recruitment to commencement.

Several technological tools were put in place in 2016-17 to aid this process. To improve student access to required classes, Information Technology and the Office of Institutional Research and Analytical Studies developed a new Enrollment Management Dashboard, which uses historical trends coupled with real-time information to identify when additional course sections are needed, facilitate room changes to accommodate capacity needs, and confront bottleneck courses.

Also in 2016-17, our University implemented batch graduation processing, eliminating the need to evaluate degree audits by hand and increasing the processing rate by 15-fold. A much-improved transcript imaging and uploading software, Transcript Capture, was purchased with Graduation Initiative 2025 funding to streamline and speed the processing of paper transcripts to provide more accurate advisement for transfer students. The software improves articulation with local community colleges, with templates for a total of 35 campuses. Titan Degree Planner (TDP) was rolled out in July 2017 to allow students to create a personalized term-by-term plan for graduation while collecting course demand data.

In addition, the website Transferology now provides free online course planning, allowing students to explore college transfer options and find answers to transfer credit questions.

New on-site software allows students to change their major, add or drop a minor, or withdraw from a class online, without coming to campus in person to submit paperwork in multiple buildings. An interactive mobile application called iTuffy answers student questions 365 days a year.

In 2017-18, this work group will continue to assess and refine our University’s outreach, recruitment, orientation, admissions, financial aid, and registration and records processes, build our cache of technological tools and gather feedback from faculty and students on any remaining administrative barriers.
Following are just a few of Cal State Fullerton’s many recent achievements in pursuit of student success:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>30% improvement to our six-year graduation rate, since 2012.</th>
<th>The opportunity gap was <em>cut in half</em> for first-time freshmen and <em>eliminated</em> for transfer students.</th>
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<tr>
<td>65% improvement in our four-year graduation rate since 2012.</td>
<td>21 classes and 12 upper-division courses added in 2017 to meet student need</td>
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<td>85% enrollment of undeclared freshmen in University 100 courses (fall 2017)</td>
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<td>Through new-student orientation and advisement efforts, the number of freshmen who signed up for a <strong>15-unit course load</strong> was increased to <strong>42.5%</strong>.</td>
<td>Completion grants awarded to <strong>402</strong> students in summer 2017. Nearly <strong>380</strong> have completed their degrees.</td>
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<td>The Academic Advisement Center achieved <strong>99% attendance</strong> at mandatory Academic Probation Workshops for first-time freshmen and had a <strong>347% participation increase</strong> in their seven follow-up workshops on school success.</td>
<td><strong>4,593</strong> freshmen and <strong>2,021</strong> transfer students welcomed at summer 2017 orientation events.</td>
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<td>Reaching out to continuing students who hadn’t yet enrolled, retention specialists achieved a <strong>recapture rate of 40.5%</strong> in summer 2016 and <strong>43%</strong> in winter 2017. <strong>Bringing back a total of 727 potential graduates.</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong> freshmen accepted to a new Male Success Initiative scholarship program in fall 2017.</td>
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<td><strong>184 course sections</strong> that incorporated high-impact practices (HIPS) were taught by 106 faculty members universitywide in fall 2017. <strong>1.3 million</strong> hours of service learning reported by 14,240 Titans in 2016-17.</td>
<td><strong>$33 million</strong> Estimated amount students saved on course materials through programs at the Titan Shops since 2007. <strong>$140,000</strong> in Innovation Grants awarded to 14 faculty members and campus units to fund research, programs, practices and strategies aimed at student success.</td>
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GROUP 6: BOTTLENECKS

**Mission:** To pinpoint and address “bottleneck” courses, disengagement and other patterns that have slowed our students’ progress to graduation.

**Results to Date:** Every university has a small group of courses with a higher-than-average number of students who earn a D, fail or withdraw without authorization. Also called DFW courses, these bottlenecks are a clear obstacle to graduation. Likewise, nearly every course has a small group of students who are struggling to engage. In 2016-17 our team developed several technological tools to address these hurdles.

A new Bottleneck Dashboard allows colleges to easily identify and analyze DFW courses. The dashboard enables college deans to review multi-section courses for inconsistencies, and to make data-driven decisions on class scheduling and supplemental instruction.

With data in hand, the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and the College of Engineering and Computer Science piloted the use of ALEKS (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces) in 2016-17. This web-based assessment and learning system is designed to improve student preparation and vet student readiness for calculus.

To track individual student progress, Information Technology, in collaboration with the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness, developed an “early warning system” in 2016-17 to alert faculty and advisers to students who haven’t engaged with the campus learning management system, TITANium. With this “alarm,” faculty can now extend a hand to students and link them with resources and support.

In 2017-18, the Bottleneck work group will continue to assist our colleges and faculty in implementing an arsenal of solutions to remove stumbling blocks. While maintaining academic rigor, this may include adding sections to reduce class sizes, better enforcing prerequisites, linking students with supplemental instruction or peer mentors, adding exams and assignments for a broader chance at success, and capitalizing on online tools to boost readiness and comprehension. For our faculty, potential solutions include team-teaching opportunities, assistance from student interns, professional development for new hires, and training on how to better engage students in large classes.

GROUP 7: HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES (HIPS)

**Mission:** To ensure that 75 percent of Cal State Fullerton students participate in at least two high-impact practices (HIPS) by graduation.

**Results to Date:** Research suggests that participation in research projects, service learning, internships, study-abroad programs and other high-impact practices increases rates of student retention and engagement. For this reason, Cal State Fullerton made clear in its 2013-18 Strategic Plan the goal of ensuring that 75 percent of students participate in at least two HIPS by graduation.

Since then we’ve significantly increased the number of students engaged in HIPS by targeting large-enrollment courses such as English 101 and Math 110, integrating HIPS into popular co-curricular programs, and expanding other HIP opportunities on-campus, including supplemental instruction, student employment, service learning, research and creative activities.

Our innovative approach has been lauded by the CSU as a system model. We’ve been recognized as a Supplemental Instruction Center for Excellence for the CSU, our Center for Internships and Community Engagement documented more than 1.3 million hours of course-related service in 2016-17, and our HIPs efforts have received much attention from national organizations, such as the Association of American Colleges & Universities and the Chronicle of Higher Education.

In 2017-18, this work group will continue to expand our HIPS-related initiatives, empower faculty to incorporate HIPS into new and existing courses, track and scale HIPS for the most impactful allocation of resources, and ensure that HIPS are noted in our course catalog and transcripts so that students can record participation.

GROUP 8: DATA USE, IT INNOVATION AND ASSESSMENT

**Mission:** To employ innovative technological tools to drive assessment, decision-making and improvements across campus to support student success.

**Results to Date:** Working in concert, Cal State Fullerton’s Information Technology and Institutional Research and Analytical Studies teams pushed for the adoption of several technological tools in 2016-17 to advance student success. Many are listed under the Strategic Enrollment Management/Administrative Barriers work group on page 6.

In addition, a new Student Success Dashboard was developed to pull data from multiple sources into a single, cohesive, interactive tool allowing users to view student progress based on gender, race, family educational background, underrepresented status and other parameters. With expanded training across campus, the dashboard is now widely used by graduation and retention specialists to target students for active interventions and advising, with the goal of preventing attrition and graduation deferrals.

In addition to greatly assisting individual students, advisers, departments and faculty members, each of these technological tools has the ability to capture data for institutional use. In 2017-18, this work group will expand its focus on using data to assess our University’s overall student success efforts and to analyze impact across colleges, departments and student demographics. This careful consideration of data will allow us to make solid decisions on the allocation of resources, grow proven programs and better address areas of need.

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