

California State University Channel Islands

Institutional Report for Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Submitted February 2024



**WSCUC Accreditation**

**GAPS &  
LADDERS**

**BRECHAS Y  
ESCALERAS**

**Evidence · Equity · Effectiveness**

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This TPR report includes Components 1, 2, 8, and 9. There are three types of links in this report: external, internal, and appendices. External links take the reader to an appropriate website for review. Internal links direct the reader to specific locations within the body of the report itself. Finally, appendices are linked according to their component number and name of artifact. Under the List of Appendices, a list of acronyms common to CSUCI is provided (Appendix 01). Essays on WSCUC Standards are provided in Appendix I. Note that CSUCI is using 2022 WSCUC Standards and accompanying CFRs (Appendix 02). Distance Education components are also included (Appendices 03, 04, 05, and 06).

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## **Component 1: Introduction to the Institutional Report: Institutional Context and Response to Previous Commission Actions**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Established in 2002, California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) is the youngest institution in the California State University system. CSUCI is the only public four-year university in Ventura County and offers substantial economic and fiscal benefits to its surrounding communities. Our origins begin in 1965, when Governor Pat Brown signed a bill to study the need for a four-year, public college in Ventura County, and planning for a new university commenced. Over the next three decades, the University of California/California State University (UC/CSU) Ventura Learning Center and California State University, Northridge Ventura Campus were established. In 1996, the California State University (CSU) Chancellor appointed Planning President J. Handel Evans to lay the groundwork to establish the 23rd campus of the CSU in Ventura County. Later that year, a community panel adopted the name “California State University Channel Islands.” In 1997, the campus found a home when the CSU Board of Trustees accepted the site of the former Camarillo State Hospital.

Offering small class sizes with a student-to-faculty ratio of 18:1, CSUCI has twenty-nine undergraduate majors, six master’s programs, and numerous credential programs, with 3 new graduate programs launching in AY2024. CSUCI’s student population averages about 6,000, and the Fall 2023 student population was 60% first-generation, 63% historically underrepresented (61% identified as Latina/o/x), and 48% Pell Grant eligible. About 55% of students were transfer students (App 01.1).

The mission of CSUCI is: Placing students at the center of the educational experience, CSUCI provides undergraduate and graduate education that facilitates learning within and across disciplines through integrative approaches, emphasizes experiential and service learning, and graduate students with multicultural and international perspectives ([Link 01.a](#)) CSUCI has adopted four mission pillars to support this mission: *integrative approaches, service learning, and multicultural and international perspectives*. To facilitate the implementation of these pillars, there are four Mission Based Centers: integrative studies, community engagement, multicultural engagement, and international affairs. The centers offer programming and opportunities to students, faculty, staff, and programs, supporting a strong mission focus at every level (CFR 1.1).

CSUCI is one of twenty-three campuses within the CSU system, a system in which each campus is highly autonomous, but all share commonalities (CFR 3.7, 3.8). Each campus, led by a president responsible for shaping its identity within the CSU's broader mission, participates in shared governance between the administration and the Academic Senate as well as Staff Council and Student Government. Each is committed to preparing its students to contribute to California's robust economy and culture.

CSUCI achieved its designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution in 2010 (CFR 1.2) and continues to be recognized nationally for intentionally serving Latinx students. In June 2019, CSUCI received the Seal of *Excelencia*, a prestigious certification from *Excelencia* in Education, a Washington, D.C.-based organization, recognizing the institution's high level of commitment to successfully serving Latinx students. CSUCI was one of only nine institutions in the nation and the only California institution of higher education to receive the Seal in the award's inaugural year. Two of CSUCI's initiatives were named as "Examples of *Excelencia* Programs to Watch" in 2019 as well (see [Priority 2](#)). Further, CSUCI has also been nationally recognized for its contribution to social mobility. Most recently, *CollegeNET* ranked CSUCI 13<sup>th</sup> out of 1,198 universities in the nation for its ability to increase students' social mobility; *MONEY Magazine* ranked CSUCI 4<sup>th</sup> "Best College for Transfer Students;" and *Washington Monthly* ranked CSUCI 17<sup>th</sup> for "Best Bang for the Buck – West" for providing its students with an affordable and valuable education.

CSUCI has a predominantly undergraduate and transfer student population. In Fall 2023, of 5,127 full time students, 4,959 (97%) were undergraduates. To enable students to explore the full breadth of liberal arts, 78% of CSUCI's undergraduates are enrolled in the School of Arts & Sciences (A&S), which offers lower-division courses, majors, and graduate degrees in liberal arts-focused disciplines and interdisciplines. The Martin V. Smith School of Business & Economics (MVS) enrolls 11% of CSUCI's undergraduates in two undergraduate majors and two graduate programs as well: Master's in business administration (MBA), and a dual Master of Science in Biotechnology and Business Administration. The School of Education enrolls about 12% of students and offers several graduate and undergraduate programs as well as credential programs. The composition of CSUCI's student

population and academic offerings are guided by the California Higher Education Master Plan ([Link 01.b](#)), which was most recently updated in 2002 (CFR 3.7).

## **1.2 Navigating Change and Crisis**

Since 2015, CSUCI has experienced significant leadership changes (App 01.2.a; App 01.2.b) as well as a notable number of natural and human-made disasters. In Fall of 2018, a person committed an alleged armed assault on campus ([Link 01.2.a](#)). This event, along with the Borderline Mass Shooting that occurred shortly thereafter, pushed the campus to cancel classes and end Fall 2018 semester two weeks early. In addition, the campus survived two local wildfires and subsequent mandatory evacuations occurring at the same time. Like so many other colleges and universities in 2020, CSUCI has experienced the COVID-19 pandemic and the aftermath of the George Floyd murder associated with foundational shifts in the higher education landscape.

In summary, the region that CSUCI serves has survived five major wildfires (Thomas 2017, Woolsey 2018, Easy and Maria in 2019, and South 2023), a major mudslide (Montecito 2018), and a mass shooting (Borderline 2018) - all directly impacted the campus community. Every aspect of the region, from the economy and its healthcare system to K-12 educational system and housing to agriculture and tourism have been markedly impacted by these crises. Leadership transitions at the presidential, vice presidential, and decanal level also occurred in this same period, often felt by the campus as “seismic” in force (CFR 3.9). In the face of these many significant crises and challenges, we launched two programs (Mechatronics and Nursing), were awarded ACBSP accreditation ([Link 01.2.b](#)), and continued to move the needle on social mobility for our students. We were recognized as a national model for Latino student success, progressed in our diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) work, received major gifts from donors, and successfully sought out major grants to support our work.

## **1.3 Shared Governance**

Shared governance is a core feature and commitment of the CSU system and CSUCI (CFR 1.1, 1.3, 1.7). From its beginnings, CSUCI has had a “senate of the whole,” with every tenured or tenure-track faculty member automatically a senator. In 2014 a review of Academic Senate structure and practices was undertaken (App 01.3.a). After a few years of consulting relevant constituents, study, and reflection, a decision was made to move from a Senate “of the whole” toward a representative Academic Senate. In

Spring and Fall 2021, the Senate Structure Task Force made final recommendations on Senate Structure (App 01.3.b). The new representative Senate structure launched in Fall 2022. The new bylaws modified every aspect of the Senate, including its size, standing committees and their charges, Senate membership, the Senate Executive Committee and charge, rules for voting, elections and election order, and compensation for Senate service. CSUCI is now in just its second year of a representative Academic Senate ([Link 01.3a](#)) after the Senate Constitution ([Link 01.3b](#)) was last ratified in 2022, while the Senate Bylaws ([Link 01.3c](#)) were last updated in 2023. Senate leadership is intentionally building necessary infrastructure for a successful Academic Senate, including archiving meeting minutes, processing Senate work through the shared governance process, and working through questions about technology and representation, including from staff members (App 01.3.c).

CSUCI also established a Staff Council, which was created in March 2016 and each founding member was elected by fellow peers from their respective division. We are unique for giving a robust role and voice to a staff organization. The goal of the CSUCI Staff Council is to connect staff to the rest of campus as well as address issues and continue to build onto our campus culture for the betterment of the campus community, with the primary focus of supporting staff in their roles. All elected council members are staff members elected from each of the five campus divisions: Academic Affairs, Business & Financial Affairs, Office of the President, Student Affairs, and University Advancement. The Staff Council Constitution ([Link 01.3d](#)) is available on the university website, along with Council agendas, meeting minutes, and membership.

The third cornerstone of shared governance at CSUCI is student government, the recognized representative voice of the CSUCI student body. Associated Students Incorporated (ASI), established shortly after the university opened its doors, seeks to effectively communicate, create, and maintain community, as well as provide and support co-curricular learning. ASI has an active membership in the California State Student Association, which is recognized as the single recognized voice of all CSU system students. Student government's Bylaws (App 01.3.d) were last updated in 2021. The student representatives meet weekly as a body and are active participants in university-level conversations. Note that Academic Senate membership includes not only faculty members (App 01.3.e), but representatives from the Staff Council and Student Government as well.

## 1.4 Enrollment

For the first twenty years of CSUCI's existence, a "build it and they will come" approach worked to produce steady enrollment through AY 2019-2020. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, CSUCI exceeded its state-funded enrollment targets, even with a slight downturn in applications and admissions, in AY 2019-2020. Post-pandemic, however, these trends were quickly reversed (App 01.4.a; App 01.4.b).

Recognizing that previous successful admissions and enrollment approaches are no longer effective, CSUCI has taken aggressive action to reverse its recent enrollment decline. For example, a new Director of Admissions & Recruitment was hired in Spring 2023, who brought a level of expertise to enrollment management. Further, CSUCI contracted a highly regarded consulting firm, Best Practice Solutions, through 2024 enrollment cycles. This firm is currently supporting the enrollment and marketing team by evaluating organizational structures, operations, and retention efforts, while actively consulting on admissions and recruitment for Fall 2024 and 2025 cohorts. This work involves building the technical infrastructure to ensure access to real-time enrollment data to assess and inform CSUCI's progress.

Simultaneously, CSUCI has experienced growth in the diversity of its student population, overall, becoming more Latino, female, and Pell grant eligible over time (App 01.4.c). Student enrollment has varied over time, but we have seen steady growth in faculty and staff Full Time Equivalent (FTE) since 2015 (App 01.4.d). CSUCI's Enrollment Report from President Yao in February 2023 (App 01.4.e) detailed information about our challenges. In the final section, Our Way Forward (App 01.4.f), Yao described concurrent enrollment strategies already underway, leading to projected growth by AY 2025-26. CSUCI hit its budgeted planning enrollment projections for Fall 2023; projections indicate enrollment stabilization in AY 2024-2025, and we anticipate an upward trajectory once again beginning in the 2025-2026 academic year. Nonetheless, CSUCI is down 27% in FTE Students (FTES) since AY 2019-2020. Therefore, the university is facing a projected \$7M cumulative cut over three years to its permanent funding allocation by 2026-2027, and the current tuition revenue is \$9M below pre-pandemic numbers.

As enrollment management has emerged as the top priority for the immediate, intermediate, and long-term planning for the university, CSUCI is addressing enrollment recovery through a multi-year lens. While many external factors have contributed to our enrollment challenges, a rigorous examination of our internal data strongly suggests that there is much within CSUCI's control that will improve our enrollment.

Our data strongly suggests that CSUCI is unique in the CSU because of a strong regional market in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, and we have identified the crucial data points to inform a strategic enrollment plan. We anticipate that a combination of significant cuts, reserve draws, and the use of philanthropic support over the next two years will alleviate stress on the general fund.

To adopt a more strategic and active stance, in 2021 President Yao reconstituted the Institutional Research Office under a new Chief Data Officer (CFR 3.10, 4.4). Previously in 2018, the office had been decentralized and each division had its own analysts to meet the more specialized needs of each area. In hindsight, this led to diminished capacity to meet the data needs of a growing and changing university. Once recentralized, data that were previously not collected were finally secured, providing the campus with a clear picture of past and current ability to capture the regional market share.

Simultaneously, the President authorized a strategic Integrated Marketing Communication Plan. In the two years since, CSUCI has conducted market research and used the findings (i.e., App 01.4.g; App 01.4.h) to develop CSUCI's brand foundations (App 01.4.i) – or, CSUCI's unique brand promise, assets, and character. These will be integral in creating new brand visuals and for our website redesign; CSUCI recently awarded a contract for visual rebrand.

A longer-term strategy is to increase our portfolio of degree options through expansion of our new Academic Master Plan (AMP) ([Link 01.4a](#)). Twenty four new degrees have been approved by the Board of Trustees since Spring 2023 (see slides 5-7, App 01.4.j). Significantly, this represents the first substantive revision in the past ten years to CSUCI's AMP and was the result of 15 months of intensive work. Beginning in January 2022, over fifty faculty members worked on various teams organized by Provost Avila. These teams were tasked with studying regional workforce needs, developing ideas for new programs, examining academic structures and policies, revisiting the University's mission, and defining the distinctive features and value of a CSUCI education. This lengthy process included discussions about shared governance in relation to the academic curriculum, following established processes and structures, and applying criteria by which new programs were evaluated and submitted. The AMP serves as the foundation for long-term, strategic enrollment growth, rooted first and foremost in the strength of existing academic programs, the university's ability to serve the regional workforce and service needs, and strong post-graduate outcomes for our students (CFR 2.11).

Campus leadership recognizes tensions between expanding academic programs while navigating tuition revenue deficits, enrollment challenges, and the associated projected appropriation cuts. To address this, CSUCI has developed a cost model for new academic programs (modeled after former-Interim Chancellor Koester's Sustainable Financial Model Workgroup (App 01.4.k), of which President Yao was a member). The cost model outlines a methodology by which new programs will be prioritized with associated timelines and how existing programs will be identified for growth; the cost model is one aspect of the prioritization criteria, not the only factor, which will be utilized to prioritize new programs. Note that President Yao has set aside \$10M of CSUCI's recent gift of \$15M from Mackenzie Scott to support the phasing of our AMP implementation ([Link 1.4b](#)). The cost model also provides methodology for rigorous analyses of low-enrolled programs.

Additional considerations informing the expansion of academic programs include projections for enrollment growth, existing faculty and staff capacity, the degree of alignment with regional needs, and alignment with the organizing concepts of CSUCI's vision for its future. By doing this work, CSUCI has set the stage for the next iteration of a strategic plan that will be grounded by the university's location and commitment to the environmental and community wellness of our region—one of the most resource—and culturally-rich regional environments in the nation. The emerging strategic plan combines our strengths in providing liberal arts education and experiential, career-oriented academic programs while at the same time intentionally focusing on distinctive aspects of our campus and region. This in turn is at the heart of the theme the campus has pursued through the TPR process described in [Component 8](#).

### **1.5 Pandemic Impacts**

Like all universities, CSUCI was profoundly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, challenging every aspect of the university. CSUCI wrestled with new realities as students learned from off-campus locations as varied as homes, cars, parking lots, and public buildings. Immediately, CSUCI launched several efforts to connect with students via surveys and listening campaigns to best assess student needs. For example, ASI administered a survey and presented findings to university leadership (App 01.5.a). Division of Academic Affairs (DAA) also leveraged its artificial intelligence chatbot to send specific questions/listening campaigns to students via text message and received immediate responses, which lead to many actionable improvements to students' online learning experience (App 01.5.b). Many

students struggled with access, including access to health care, quiet locations, portable devices, and web connectivity. The physical and psychological trauma of the pandemic was (and still is) evident among students, even as the campus implemented various support structures (CFR 2.12, 2.13).

Evidence from the CSUCI's 2021 Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) on how pandemic impacted our incoming first-time freshmen is telling: they indicated diminished expectations of university providing help when struggling, lowered expectations that students would take advantage of help when struggling, and less experience with writing medium or long papers (App 01.5.c). Faculty were also impacted, as many added new ways of thinking and new language to their vocabulary: Zoom, asynchronous and synchronous, hybrid, blended, and in-person (CFR 3.3). The faculty redesigned pedagogy, curriculum, and assessments, learning about themselves and students in ways that they had not previously done before (CFR 2.8). The campus, meanwhile, provided extensive support for these activities, infusing funding (both campus and federal) for student support, faculty professional development called THRIVE referred to in [component 8](#), technology assistance, technologies for students, and more (CFR 2.13, 3.6; App 01.5.d)

Students' experiences during the pandemic seem to be reflected in part of the data gathered for this report. Overall, quantitative data come from a 10-year period, but there are marked differences in some instances between pre- and post-COVID year data. For instance: transfer applications decreased, and two-year transfer graduation rates dropped for the cohort that started remotely in 2020. For added context, it is useful to note that CSUCI, like all CSU campuses, was entirely or almost entirely remote from mid-Spring 2020 to mid-Fall 2021. In Spring 2022, a few weeks were fully virtual before returning to in-person instruction, with Fall 2022 the first fully in-person semester since Fall 2019.

During the pandemic, new collaborations were forged across campus. For example, the Basic Needs Program compiled a list of resources to assist students needing support ([Link 01.5](#)). The Broome Library collaborated with Basic Needs to build and maintain mobile learning technology for student use (CFR 3.5), with 209 hotspots with data plans and 187 long-term loan laptops. Additionally, short-term loan laptops were also available intended for students who had immediate needs. Broome Library continues this practice and during the last academic year, laptops and hotspots circulated over 1,900 times. The Broome Library also accelerated efforts to reduce the prohibitive cost of course materials through



expanded purchases, providing access to over 2,000 print books for nearly 750 classes, resulting in an estimated \$326,555 in savings for students. In addition, the Broome Library Streaming Media Program increased student access to multimedia with over 3,400 video links made available through Canvas. All the support outlined above was offered with no additional cost to students.

### 1.6 Context for this Study

Within this overall context, the Thematic Pathway to Reaffirmation (TPR) study provides the opportunity to consider the campus’s immediate past, current challenges, and long-range future. The study includes an overarching theme with three distinct priorities, each extending from findings from the TPR research that outline strategic next steps for the campus’ support for student learning. These priorities are especially important in light of the campus’s strategic planning and current enrollment reality, as well as the CSU’s Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI 2025) ([Link 01.6a](#)) and the Multi-Year Compact Between The Newsom Administration and The California State University signed in May 2022 ([Link 01.6b](#)). The initial GI 2025 was launched in 2009 and goals were set in 2016 as aspirational targets for each campus (for CSUCI-specific goals, [Link 01.6c](#)). Progress on these goals have been impacted by the pandemic and will be discussed in parts of [Component 8](#) of this report.

### 1.7 Response to Previous Commission Actions

During CSUCI’s previous reaffirmation process, which concluded in 2015, WSCUC reaffirmed CSUCI’s accreditation for nine years, requesting an interim report be submitted in the Fall of 2020. During its last reaffirmation process, the Commission commended the institution for its continuous improvement efforts since its initial accreditation, which was granted in 2007. As part of the 2015 Action Letter reaffirming accreditation and the 2021 Interim Report Action Summary, the Commission requested the University to address several areas in our Institutional Report. The table below summarizes these requests, the University’s response(s) to these requests, and status on progress.

Table 1.7: CSUCI Response to 2015 and 2021 WSCUC Actions

WSCUC Requests	University’s Response	Progress
Academic programs need to have measurable program learning outcomes for every academic program (Meaning, Quality, and Integrity of the Degrees, 2015).	All programs have learning outcomes (CFR 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7). Summary can be viewed in App 01.7.a.	Completed and continuous.

<p>Demonstrate how core competencies are addressed at or near graduation (Core Competencies, 2015).</p>	<p>The Academic Programs, Planning, and Continuous Improvement (APCI) Office collects this data as part of the program review process (See Section <a href="#">1.7.1</a>).</p>	<p>In-progress and continuous.</p>
<p>Demonstrate how the University assesses experiential co-curricular programming (Student Learning, Retention, and Graduation, 2015).</p>	<p>Significant assessment of co-curricular programs, such as Learning &amp; Living Learning Communities (<a href="#">8.1.1b</a>), Math MINDS (<a href="#">8.1.2b</a>), and support from WMC for first year composition (<a href="#">8.1.2c</a>) are included in <a href="#">Component 8</a>. (CFR 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7).</p>	<p>Completed and continuous.</p>
<p>Demonstrate consistent assessment of program learning outcomes, including alignment between course content and program learning outcomes listed in course syllabi.</p> <p>Indicate how program review results are integrated with planning, decision-making, and budgeting.</p> <p>Conduct a General Education review addressing issues with comprehensiveness, consistency, and demonstrate alignment with program review and assessment.</p> <p>Demonstrate how program and GE review data and assessment results are used to inform improvement efforts. (Program Review, Assessment, Use of Data, 2015).</p>	<p>Program review policies and procedures updated (<a href="#">Link 1.7a</a>, <a href="#">Link 1.7b</a>, <a href="#">Link 1.7c</a>) (CFR 2.3, 2.4)</p> <p>The Program Review dashboard was developed and launched in January 2020, providing access to data to inform planning, decision-making, and budgeting (See <a href="#">8.1.2d</a>).</p> <p>Given statewide legislation that may significantly impact the general education programming offered by the CSU, University of California, and California Community College campuses, the University has not yet completed a comprehensive GE review (See <a href="#">1.7.2</a>). (CFR 2.5)</p> <p>The University has recently completed a culture of assessment self-study designed to strengthen its existing processes and build new infrastructure for sustainable assessment practices (App 01.7.b). (CFR 2.2, 2.4)</p>	<p>Completed and continuous.</p> <p>Completed and continuous.</p> <p>In progress.</p> <p>In progress.</p>
<p>Continue CSUCI's commitment to intentional planning, with the inclusion of priorities, action steps, and timelines, as appropriate. (Sustainability and Response to the Changing Ecology of Higher Education, 2015).</p>	<p>CSUCI is financially stable and has plans in place to help ensure sustainability into the future via enrollment growth (see <a href="#">1.4</a>), public/private partnerships (see <a href="#">goals</a>), and collaboration with the CSU Systems Office. As an outcome of our self-study, in Fall 2023 the President and Provost launched their initial vision for CSUCI's next strategic plan that encompasses four strategic focal areas (<i>LEAP</i>: Leading through Experiential Academic Programs; <i>LUX</i>: Creating the highest quality learner user experiences; <i>APEX</i>: Leading the Regional P-20 Educational Ecosystem; and <i>FAST</i>: Supporting Faculty as Artists, Scholars and Teachers) and 2 lenses (Outside-In Regional Perspective and Servingness), which speak to the University's sense of place.</p>	<p>Completed and continuous.</p>

<p>Provide updates on the implementation of the 2014-2019 strategic plan, the aligned academic plan, and divisional planning, including faculty hiring.</p>	<p>The University closed the 2018-2023 Strategic Initiatives (<a href="#">Link 01.7d</a>), developed under former President Beck, with notable expansion and enhancement (see <a href="#">8.3.1b</a>). In addition, the University hired a Director of Institutional Research/Chief Data Officer who centralized the IR team (<a href="#">Link 01.7e</a>), ensuring the campus has access to the information needed to make data-informed decisions related to strategic planning efforts (CFR 3.10, 3.11).</p> <p>A review of progress on all efforts related to the 2018-2023 Strategic Initiatives can be found in this benchmark report (<a href="#">App 01.7.c</a>). See <a href="#">Priority 3</a> for faculty hiring.</p>	<p>Completed.</p>
<p>Develop a plan for the growth in graduate programs aligned with the strategic objectives of the university, and results accomplished from the implementation of that plan by the time of the report (Alignment of Strategic Plans, 2021).</p>	<p>Graduate program growth and development is outlined in CSUCI's newly approved Academic Master Plan (See <a href="#">8.1.3</a>).</p>	<p>Completed and continuous.</p>
<p>Provide a comprehensive narrative that clarifies the progression from/ alignment of the different strategic plans (e.g., 2014-2015, 2015-2020) and strategic initiatives (e.g., 2018-2023).</p> <p>Describe the markers of progress in achieving the university's strategic initiatives (2021).</p>	<p>A brief narrative tying together the University's various prior strategic planning efforts is also included (App 01.7.d).</p> <p>Progress on all efforts related to the 2018-2023 Strategic Initiatives can be found in the aforementioned benchmark report (App 01.7.c).</p> <p>Looking ahead, Strategic Directions 2023-2025 have been developed (<a href="#">Link 01.7d</a>) and prioritize initiatives and efforts currently underway and necessitated by enrollment and budgetary realities, not new, aspirational directions.</p>	<p>Completed and continuous.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>In-Progress.</p>
<p>Articulate future goals for outside funding targeted for some of the strategic initiatives including its sustainability and implications for the financial aspect of institutional planning (Future goals, 2021).</p>	<p>CSUCI aligned campus resources with campus strategic initiatives by leveraging system funds, aligning internal funds, and strategically pursuing external grant and foundation resources (Links <a href="#">01.7f</a>, <a href="#">01.7g</a>; App 01.7.e, App 01.7.f).</p>	<p>Completed and continuous.</p>
<p>Clarify intentions for the development of strategic plans for Academic Affairs (2021).</p>	<p>Under the leadership of Provost Avila (hired in January 2021), the University immediately began to clarify intentions around developing a strategic plan for the DAA with the Charting</p>	<p>Completed and continuous.</p>

	<p>Our Course: Academic Planning for CSUCI's Future (<a href="#">Link 01.7h</a>) planning exercise, which took place during AY 2021-2022. This exercise resulted in the addition of nineteen new degrees to CSUCI's Academic Master Plan (AMP) in AY 2022-2023, which represented the first significant update to the university's AMP in more than 10 years.</p>	
<p>Establish and implement a comprehensive strategic plan for Graduate Studies that identifies structure, accountable leadership, development, and assessment (2021).</p>	<p>Significant strides in establishing the structure, leadership, development, and assessment necessary for high-quality, graduate programs. AY 2022-2023, the University established a Graduate Council (App 01.7.l) that conducted a gap analysis to identify needed support services for graduate students, began developing a graduate student handbook, and began work to develop critical policies related to graduate admissions, recruitment, and marketing.</p> <p>Plan to hire a Faculty Director of Graduate Studies in place (App 01.7.m).</p>	<p>In Progress and continuous.</p> <p>In progress.</p>

**1.7.1 Program Review, Assessment, Use of Data**

CSUCI has built a solid foundation for the practice and culture of assessment. The institution is maturing as it adapts to the demands of a changing world, with rapid shifts in the cultural and socio-economic composition of our student body and society. The many changes in Academic Affairs leadership over the past decade, plus the need to pivot to address the consequences to higher education from the COVID and post-COVID periods, fueled the opportunities to address assessment gaps realized through these periods as well as to identify potential areas for future growth. With this in mind, Vice Provost and Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) Lavariega Monforti consulted with external and internal experts to evaluate CSUCI's culture of assessment, with the goal to strengthen its existing practices and build new infrastructure for sustainable assessment practices. This initiative was in response to the previous finding of lack of a culture of assessment, characterized by strong but decentralized efforts across programs, departments, and schools. The University sent thirteen staff and faculty members to the Accreditation Resources Conference (ARC) in 2023, where they learned best practices from across the region. The University followed this experience with a strong coordinated effort, led by faculty and the ALO, to improve practice (and the demonstration of such practice) through an integrated and holistic cultural framework to ensure the process is grounded in best practices.

In Spring/Summer 2022-23, CSUCI began a deliberate development approach, evaluating its assessment culture (App 01.7.1a), underscoring the need to foster a campus culture that values reflective assessment. A Program Design process was subsequently initiated in Fall 2023-24 across all academic programs (App 01.7.1b), with a faculty-led Culture and Needs Assessment resulting in over 90% of programs engaging collective participation from their faculty. The customized three-phase process—Diagnosis, Focus, Implementation—created the conditions for constructive and inclusive dialogue. The summary report details Academic Affairs' advancements, highlighting how strategic capacity building has deepened commitment to assessment and cultivated leadership development (App 01.7.b). As CSUCI strives for continuous improvement, maintaining momentum will depend on ongoing institutional support, dedicated resources, and intentional integration across divisions.

In addition, the “culture of assessment” work includes a data-driven program review of Academic Advising, housed within the Division of Student Affairs (DSA), with Phase III of this work expanding to include the Division of Business and Financial Affairs (BFA), Division of University Advancement (DUA), and the Office of the President (OTP). For example, the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) will be doing a data-driven program review, partnering with the NACADA Excellence in Academic Advising ([Link 01.7.1a](#)) to improve our academic advising services for students. The Division of Student Affairs was also recognized by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) for its Data and Assessment Program and was a Gold Award winner in the “Assessment, Persistence, Data Analytics and Related” category for its ability to examine which Student Affairs programs were used by students, how much they were used, and how well students benefited from them (App 01.7.1c). DSA has also excelled at analyzing student demographics, applying student success metrics, and assessing the best co-curricular and support programs ([Link 01.7.1b](#)). Additional work related to assessment and program review is included in section [8.1.2d](#).

### **1.7.2: Core Competencies**

CSUCI has general education learning outcomes that reflect the core competencies, in particular critical thinking, information literacy, and written communication, and was recommended to demonstrate how all five core competencies are assessed at or near graduation. The Continuous Improvement

Committee oversees implementation of a comprehensive program review structure that applies to all programs; the timeline for periodic review is readily available online.

While CSUCI continues to assess Writing, Oral Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Information Literacy, and Critical Thinking, regrettably from 2016 through 2021-22 CSUCI has not had stable leadership in the Academic Programs and Continuous Improvement office, which is responsible for collaborating with faculty on the assessment of general education. The AVP position was vacant for nine months in 2019, bookended with long stints of interims before and after that, until a permanent appointment was made in July 2022. Thus, our assessment of core competencies remains in progress.

Nonetheless, the Commission's core competencies strongly align with workforce needs in entry level positions (App 01.7.2a; App 01.7.2b), ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to secure post-graduate opportunities commensurate with their degree (e.g., career placement or graduate school admissions). CSUCI aspires to become a leader in advancing the social mobility of our student body, and, as a first step towards achieving this vision, has collected data that explores post-graduate outcomes, including earnings data and pursuit of graduate study (CRF 2.9). With support from the Office of the President, a small task force collected various data sources assessing post-graduate outcomes ([Link 01.7.2](#)), assessed the relative limitations of each dataset, and began exploratory analyses of the data with a goal to explore what programmatic and/or co-curricular factors enhance post-graduate success.

#### **Component 8: Institution-Specific Theme**

In Fall 2021, WSCUC granted CSUCI permission to pursue reaffirmation via the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation (TPR). CSUCI then established a thorough process of engaging campus stakeholders, including administration, faculty, staff, and students, to collect input and develop our themes. Guidance and feedback were provided through advisory and steering committees as well as carefully obtained quantitative and qualitative feedback. These collaborative efforts helped develop the overarching theme of "Gaps & Ladders/Brechas y Escaleras."

The process to select a theme began when the provost discussed the TPR in a campus-wide town hall on September 9, 2021, and proceeded over several months. The TPR Advisory Committee was formed as a cross-divisional effort with student, faculty, staff, and administrator representation, and began the first round of data collection for input on themes with a survey that was administered to all students,

faculty, staff, and administrators from mid-November 2021 to late January 2022. With support from the Division of Academic Affairs Data Analytics Office, survey results were then used to inform faculty, staff/administrator, and student focus groups that were conducted in February 2022. Campus stakeholders were also invited to give additional feedback through Padlet boards throughout February and March 2022.

### **8a. Introduction and Background: Gaps & Ladders/Brechas y Escaleras Theme and Three Campus-Wide Priorities**

The TPR Advisory Committee used campus input to develop our unifying theme of “Gaps & Ladders/Brechas y Escaleras,” which speaks to our top priorities and mirrors campus’s strategic priorities regarding student success. When asked to identify areas at CSUCI that were important and/or in need of improvement via a campus-wide survey, over 400 survey respondents identified three broad areas: 1) Academic and Curricular Programs, 2) Student Services, Support and Development, and 3) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA). Coded responses to open-ended survey questions were used to identify priorities for campus stakeholders: academic quality and offerings, academic support, and DEIA initiatives. Additional qualitative data from eight focus groups further developed those areas of priority and identified campus programs, initiatives, and activities that addressed these priorities (App 08a.a).<sup>1</sup>

Once the unifying theme and top priorities had been established, the TPR Advisory Committee shared them with campus stakeholders via presentations to the President’s Cabinet, the Academic Affairs Council, Senate Executive Committee, Staff Council, and Student Government, along with forums for faculty, staff, and students. The consensus from these presentations and forums was that “Brechas y Escaleras,” which translates to “Gaps & Ladders,” represents the focus at CSUCI (App 08a.b).

Over the past several years, there have been multiple initiatives related to this theme, which lacked unified, cross-divisional assessment protocols or strategy. In response to the TPR theme, these disparate, multiple initiatives were then studied under each of the three priorities. By tying the three priorities and their respective initiatives together, the self-study led to greater operational effectiveness through coordinated, standardized assessment policies and tools. The narrative in [Component 8](#)

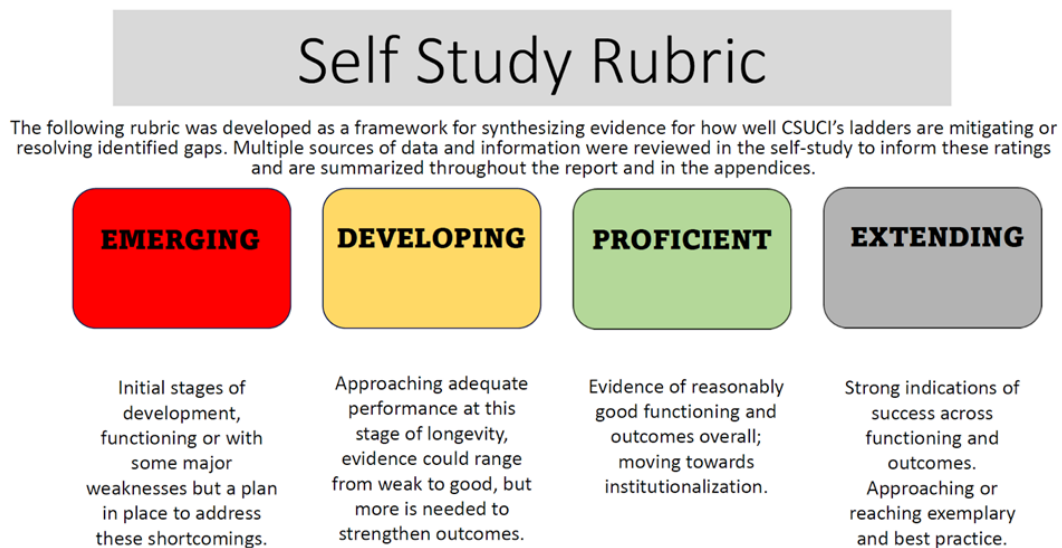
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<sup>1</sup> A more detailed analysis of the survey and focus group results can be found on CSUCI's Accreditation website.

describes each of the three priorities and associated initiatives and programs. Prior to this discussion however and to ground this discussion on core CSUCI values (CFRs 1.1, 1.2), the narrative begins with a reflection on efforts related to student success that occurred in conjunction with the TPR preparation. A summary of CSUCI's TPR self-study, each gap/brecha and ladder/escalera, can be found in App 08a.c.

To assess each ladder, a proficiency rubric was developed with four categories ranging from emerging to developing to proficient to extending. The category emerging is for ladders/escaleras that are in the initial stages of development, functioning, or have some major weaknesses, but have a plan in place to address these shortcomings. The developing category is meant for those ladders/escaleras that are approaching acceptable performance at its current stage of longevity, with evidence ranging from weak to good, but with more needed to strengthen outcomes. The third category, proficient, is for those ladders/escaleras where CSUCI has evidence of reasonably good functioning and outcomes overall, or where the ladder/escalera is moving towards institutionalization. The last category, extending, is reserved for those ladders/escaleras for which CSUCI has strong indications of success across functioning and outcomes, where the ladder/escalera is approaching or reaching exemplary and best practice.

Figure 8: Self Study Rubric



After reviewing data and narrative elements pertaining to each initiative, all stakeholders received the proficiency rubric. Each Reaffirmation Steering Committee (RSC) subcommittee group also received the proficiency rubric to rate the initiatives within their theme and the initiative consultants



(leads/practitioners) were asked to self-rate. Ultimately, the RSC leads gathered all ratings and determined the average along with reflective responses captured during consultation meetings and in collaboration with context from the report to frame the rationale for each rating. While some initiatives were rated squarely within one category, others were rated at the top end or lower end of the category, as demonstrated by the “X” position within the rating category columns. This placing accounts for either a wide variety of ratings averaged and/or some elements within an initiative rating higher than others.

## **8.0 Student Success Framework**

As the campus progressed through our self-study, engaging in the theme of Gaps & Ladders/Brechas y Escaleras, it became clear that the central, conceptual framework was actually rooted in “student success” at CSUCI. This highlighted the need to update the campus’ definition, or framework, of student success to align with the findings from the self-study with a shared definition. Again, because of broad campus participation, CSUCI adopted the following new student success framework:

As part of the Dolphin Pod, students are empowered to:

1. Identify and accomplish their educational goals.
2. Develop skills to positively contribute to their futures, along with that of their families, and their communities in a diverse society through high impact practices and experiential learning opportunities.
3. Engage in enrichment activities that further develop their whole self.
4. Prepare for post-graduate life by gaining knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for engaged citizenship and career success.

This new framework built on previous history and engagement with student success as central to strategic planning. In 2015, the CSU launched Graduation Initiative 2025, its ambitious plan to focus on student success through increasing graduation rates, eliminating equity gaps in degree completion and meeting California’s workforce needs. Within this context, each CSU campus was asked to develop and implement a definition of student success. Included in CSUCI’s 2015 strategic plan was the following:

1) students achieve established learning outcomes and are academically prepared to graduate, 2) students actively engage in curricular and co-curricular programs and support services that enhance their educational experience, and 3) students apply their academic and co-curricular experiences to further their education, advance their careers, and contribute positively to a diverse and dynamic society.

In December of 2016, with a campus-wide strategic plan in place, CSUCI President Beck charged Provost Geoff Chase with launching a strategic initiative planning process, who then convened a steering

committee composed of the Academic Senate Chair, the Student Government President, an additional faculty member, and Cabinet, including four subcommittees in Fall 2017 charged with leading campus-wide discussions to help identify, define, and outline strategic initiative recommendations to the President. In early 2018, the campus community received the draft Strategic Initiatives and by May of 2018, the President finalized Strategic Initiatives 2018-2023 ([Link 08.0](#)). Student success was one of four cornerstones of the plan with the institution's role in student success explained as "ensuring all students progress to degree completion in a timely manner regardless of their background" by "creating clear curricular pathways," "promoting timely degree progression," and "developing innovative partnerships between Academic and Student Affairs." Although this work generated impactful initiatives such as strengthening the Student Research Office, creating Academic Roadmaps, and improving First Year Math outcomes, nonetheless, at the close of the strategic plan's horizon, CSUCI had not yet adopted an updated university-wide concept of student success.

In 2021-2022, a new Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI 2025) Task Force was appointed and charged with developing a university-wide definition of student success at CSUCI. A draft proposal was shared with the campus community through in-person and virtual gallery tours (221 individual students, faculty, and staff participated in the tours and provided nearly 1,500 comments). At the same time, the Reaffirmation Steering Committee was formed, and charged with advancing a student success conceptual framework. This resulted in a cross-initiative working group formed between the committees to hasten the adoption of a new student success framework.

After another round of feedback with 500 participants (App 08.0.a; App 08.0.b), over 90% of respondents affirmed that the student success concept presented by RSC aligned with their idea of what the concept should be at CSUCI. About a third of these respondents had previously participated in a brown bag discussion. In a time where post-pandemic faculty and staff burnout significantly impacted the level of engagement in service and committee work, the breadth of involvement and engagement from various stakeholders across campus was significant, especially from faculty. After review by the joint working group, a final draft was included in a Senate Resolution (App 08.0.c) submitted to the Student Academic Policies and Procedures (SAPP) Committee to be reviewed and voted on and overwhelmingly approved on November 28, 2023 (App 08.0.d).

Through this significant cross-campus engagement, we identified processes and practices that will enable us to engage in implementation efforts. For example, while much of the stakeholder feedback was constructive and positive, some faculty expressed concerns about the implementation and operationalization of the student success framework, specifically around assessment. The next step is the development of a student success strategic plan that will dig into the details of the framework, set benchmarks and methodologies for data collection and measurement, and outline needed resources. This will involve more campus-wide dialogue to further explore the varying ideas about where holistic (whole person development) student success work should happen across the campus to better support academic success. We will also need to align faculty concerns about prioritizing academic success with campus wide supports that aim at developing students' whole person. Bridge building is planned to better connect academic, engagement, and business sides of the institution to adopt university-wide accountability and collaboration. At our core, CSUCI's faculty and staff care deeply about the success of our students. The considerable response to this effort also speaks to CSUCI's stewardship of consistent participation year after year despite leadership transitions, as institutional agents "on the ground" continue to be engaged.

In summary, the identified gap was the need for an updated, universal student success framework. The ladder/escalera was the work of the GI 2025 task force and the RSC to engage in research and, with unprecedented engagement of campus constituencies, develop a resolution of student success. Through the shared governance process, a resolution was developed, reviewed, and approved by the Academic Senate. [Table 8.0](#) captures the student success concept within the theme of Gaps & Ladders:

Table 8.0: Summary of Student Success Framework Gap/Brecha & Ladder/Escalera

GAP	LADDER
Lack of an updated, guiding student success concept for the university.	Leverage existing work (GI2025 and self-study) to engage and consult the campus community on student success.

### 8.1 Priority 1: Academic Quality and Student-Centered Infrastructure (CFR 4.2)

Central to student success and interpretation of the success framework is academic quality and student-centered infrastructure. For Priority 1, we discuss multiple initiatives that increase the quality of

our academic offerings (e.g., the development of a new academic master plan), strengthening student-centered infrastructure by removing administrative barriers (e.g., Guided Registration & Block Scheduling and Learning/Living Learning Communities (L/LC)), and initiatives that enhance both quality and infrastructure while addressing DFWI rates, (e.g., First Year Math interventions, Math MINDS, First Year Composition, and Data Champions). The way the initiatives and programs included in this priority are thought of in terms of the overarching theme is captured in [Table 8.1a](#):

Table 8.1a: Summary of Priority 1 Gaps/Brechas & Ladders/Escaleras

GAP	LADDER
*Lower than desired retention & graduation rates for FTFT students, particularly HUGS. *Lower than average unit attempt per semester by undergraduate students	*Develop and implement <b>block scheduling</b> via <b>guided registration</b> *Funding, scale, and redesign <b>L/LCs</b> , including institutionalizing Faculty Director, Coordinator EPM Co-Lead roles
High DFW rates, particularly in First Year Math (FYM) and First Year Writing.	*Create and train on data dashboard *Embed peer educators in <b>1st year math</b> ; pilot FYM coordinator *Consistent funding to support LRC; develop and scale <b>Math Minds</b> *Consistent funding to WMC; scale EMT in A2 <b>composition</b> courses *Development of <b>Data Champions</b>
Future growth of academic programs was unclear.	*Charting our Course strategic planning *New Academic Programs and Continuous Improvement (APCI) leadership *Clarified curricular processes *New <b>Academic Master Plan</b> approved

### 8.1.1: Guided Registration and Learning & Living Learning Communities

#### 8.1.1a: Guided Registration

CSUCI fully implemented a guided registration process to support first year student success through increasing attempted units, completing required math and composition courses, and supporting undeclared students to develop a pathway towards general education completion. Major wins throughout this work included expanding shared governance across four of five divisions at CSUCI, improving the predictability of first year course demand, and improving compliance with Executive Order (EO) 1110 ([Link 08.1.1a](#)) regarding general education quantitative and composition requirements (App 08.1.1a.1).

As a result of the GI 2025 work across the CSU and the strategic plan for student success at CSUCI specifically, CSUCI started block scheduling incoming first-year students into at least two classes

in summer 2018. The plan was for students to be pre-registered into one writing class (GE A2) and one quantitative reasoning (QR or GE B4) class. Students were advised at New Student Orientation (NSO) to make sure they were on the correct track for their major. Undeclared students were surveyed about what they were likely to major in, and then placed in a track based on their survey responses. One major, chemistry, piloted block scheduling for all classes.

Results from these block scheduling efforts were strong. In comparison to other students, new first-time, full-time (FTFT) students generally enrolled in a higher number of units in 2018 and beyond. Data in App 08.1.1a.2 represents the mean units attempted by new FTFT first year students from 2017 before block scheduling as well as 2018 to 2023 as block scheduling was implemented and transitioned to guided registration. Each fall the students who were blocked into two courses had a higher number of units attempted than their peers, and the percentage of students with fifteen units or more attempted grew from about 42% in 2017 to a high of nearly 65% in 2019. Recall that in Spring 2020 the pandemic pushed courses online and impacted enrollment and units attempts by students globally.

In January 2022, the Vice Provost was charged with expanding the implementation of block scheduling from two to a minimum of four (4) courses at CSUCI for Fall 2022 for all incoming FTFT students as part of the Chancellor's Office GI2025. Simultaneously, a decision was made to scale up the number of Learning & Living-Learning Communities (L/LCs) for this student population. CSUCI had already successfully implemented blocks for required Math (B4) and English (A2) courses, in alignment with EO 1110, and the next step was to expand on these existing blocks based on GI 2025 and student success goals. A cross-divisional team came together to begin discussions about the technical requirements for expanded block scheduling. The Provost informed the campus of CSUCI's plan for Fall 2022, "to pre-populate students for a minimum of four courses each semester for the first two years."

Research showed that *block scheduling* exacerbated equity gaps for students of color at other CSU campuses (App 08.1.1a.3) therefore CSUCI decided to institute a *guided registration* strategy used to build blocks to mitigate that outcome (for a detailed account of the development of guided registration at CSUCI, see App 08.1.1a.4). A review of Block Scheduling by the workgroup highlighted several gains achieved by the transition to guided registration that have had a positive impact on CSUCI student success. For example, this work helped CSUCI to:

- Identify barriers to student retention, progress, and success: for instance, pinpoint a disconnect between the scheduling road maps and planning.
- Rethink the way CSUCI implements L/LCs
- Explore additional barriers within General Education.
- Nurture a culture of planning for student needs among Enrollment Management, Associate Deans, General Education Committee, and Department Chairs.
- Establish process for projecting course needs and to meet those needs proactively instead of reactively.
- Revisit the academic program roadmaps and aligning scheduling to the roadmaps.
- Implement the new digital degree planner for department chair planning.
- Address ways to factor in students' choices for courses; and
- Pair the block scheduling process with Directed Self Placement (DSP) that includes composition courses within the first-year experience.

Implementing block scheduling for Fall 2022 required a substantial cross campus commitment, including the Registrar's Office, Student Systems, Academic Advising and New Student Orientation, the Learning Communities Director, and Department Chairs. Student and faculty facing communications (e.g., block scheduling FAQ ([Link 08.1.1b](#)) and a web-based guided registration tutorial ([Link 08.1.1c](#))) were developed and launched to support student utilization of the program. A series of logistical challenges were navigated to institutionalize guided registration over the last two years. At this time, however, additional registrar's office staff are still needed to support implementation of our campus-wide approach to meet requirements of GI 2025 for block scheduling ([Link 08.1.1d](#)) and EO 1110 ([Link 08.1.1a](#)). The institution recognizes that the scheduling process needs further revision to better support guided registration, and that continued assessment and evaluation of student success via guided registration is necessary.

### **8.1.1b Learning & Living-Learning Communities (L/LC) Program**

The L/LC program ([Link 08.1.1e](#)) has grown considerably at CSUCI since this high-impact practice was instituted more than a decade ago. In 2021, 25% of CSUCI full-time, first-year students were enrolled in a learning community, almost doubling from the 13% enrolled in 2011. In Fall 2023, that percentage roughly tripled, with 84% of our first-time, full-year students enrolled. Embedding L/LCs in guided registration through cross-collaborative committees and working groups constitutes another major accomplishment. LCs offer students an opportunity to connect with other students of similar backgrounds or who share their academic interests by creating a cohort of students; currently, the cohorts take three courses a year together. LLCs provide an additional opportunity for students to live together on the same floor of student housing and participate in activities outside of classroom instruction centered around the

theme of their community. L/LCs also have peer mentors who are embedded in their courses and help students transition to University life by holding events, connecting students to campus resources, and acting as a mentor and role model. To help scale the program, a L/LC Task Force was formed in 2022 to make recommendations about the program's processes and structure. The Learning Community Task Force work summary and recommendations can be reviewed in App 08.1.1b.1.

A large body of educational research indicates that learning communities improve academic success and retention, especially underrepresented minority students and those who are first generation. At CSUCI, learning communities appear to provide similar benefits. In Spring 2023, the Institutional Research generated a report that gathered ten years of data on learning and living-learning communities from Fall 2011 to Fall 2021 (App 08.1.1b.2). This report suggests that students who participate in an L/LC are 5-6% more likely to graduate than those students who do not. L/LC participation was also associated with a 3-4 percentage point improvement in one-year retention for the Fall 2011-2021 FTFT cohorts. They also had on average, higher GPA in their first semesters (2.87) than students not enrolled in a learning community (2.69) over the decade of the analysis. Moreover, during AY 2020-2021, the majority of students enrolled in learning communities were from underrepresented minority groups (68%). In addition, 45% were first-generation college students, and 50% were Pell-eligible students.

By AY 2023-2024, CSUCI students had the opportunity to participate in seventeen unique learning communities, six of which are living-learning communities, and six of which specifically focus on issues of identity, culture, and diversity. Nearly half (48%) of the Fall 2022 FTFT cohort participated in LC/LCC (App 08.1.1b.2). In Fall 2022, L/LCs served more students from demographic groups that have been historically underserved by institutions of higher education, including more historically underrepresented minority groups, Pell-eligible students, and students who have the opportunity to be the first in their family to graduate from a four-year college or university than their overall FTFT population at CSUCI. Nearly all (88%) Black/African American FTFT students participated in L/LCs. Descriptive statistics show that Fall 2022 FTFT students who participated in L/LCs had better first-term and first-year outcomes than non-L/LC participating peers. For most measures of academic success, the benefit of L/LC participation was greater for students from historically underserved groups. Propensity score matching was used to statistically assess the effect of L/LC treatment using a quasi-experimental design

where a L/LC student was matched with a similar non-L/LC student. These analyses show that L/LC participation is significantly associated with: higher probability of achieving sophomore status by the start of the second year, increased units attempted and completed in the first term and first year, higher first-term and first-year GPA, lower number of DFWI grades in the first term, higher probability of being in good academic standing at the end of the first term and first year, higher probability of meeting with a staff academic advisor in the first year, and increased completion rate of the Golden Four GE requirements within the first year.

The goal is to stabilize and institutionalize the L/LC program by allocating permanent funding to support the program's scale up and expanding support staff, while considering shortcomings identified by the data. For example, an interesting finding was that there was no statistically significant impact from enrollment in an L/LC for students of color. As an HSI and given the value of DEIA at CSUCI, the L/LC program is now focused on addressing this gap. We plan to increase the number of faculty of color teaching in the program, as well as require DEIA pedagogical training for faculty. Increased collaboration between the L/LC program and academic advising is needed to improve student placement in L/LCs through guided registration and the timing of the L/LC schedule needs to occur earlier in the AY.

### **8.1.2: High DFWI Rates and Equity Gaps**

GI 2025 at CSUCI continues to address equity gaps and improve student success across the system's campuses. In alignment with Equity Priority 5 of that initiative, CSUCI identified 10 high-impact courses with significant numbers of D/F grades, withdrawals, or incompletes, which also exhibit equity gaps (App 08.1.2.a). Working with Institutional Research, Academic Programs and Continuous Improvement, and the Vice Provost's office, academic leadership discussed these courses with program chairs and faculty to recommend strategies for overcoming barriers to student success. The focus is particularly on quantitative reasoning (B4) and first-year writing (A2) courses in English composition, as these are linked to lower retention and graduation rates. The initiative aligns with CSU EO 1110, emphasizing the enrollment of first-year students in credit-bearing courses to fulfill general education B4 and A2 requirements. CSUCI is focused on improving outcomes in these courses and supporting EO 1110's directives on student placement in recommended courses.

#### **8.1.2a: *First Year Math (FYM)***



In the last five years, CSUCI's Learning Resource Center (LRC) collaborated with the Mathematics Program to establish a First Year Math (FYM) program, focusing on enrolling and supporting students to successfully complete the quantitative reasoning requirement within the CSU's General Education. Key components of this success include improved placement through Math MINDS, embedded tutors in quantitative reasoning courses, and the introduction of a FYM coordinator role. These efforts have positively impacted retention rates, DFWI rates in FYM, and encouraged students to seek additional support from the LRC (App 08.1.2a.1, 08.1.2a.1a; [Link 8.1.2a.1](#)).

Across the CSU, students are assigned one of four math/quantitative reasoning placement statuses ([Link 08.1.2a.2](#)): M1 (fulfilled GE B4 requirements), M2 (placement in GE B4 course), M3 (GE B4 course with support recommended), M4 (GE B4 course with support or stretch required)([Link 08.1.2a.3](#)).<sup>2</sup> The GE B4 requirement is fulfilled by completing a FYM course, ideally in the first year. The university offers support and stretch courses ([Link 08.1.2a.4](#)), interventions like the Early Start Program (replaced by the Summer Success Academy)<sup>3</sup> ([Link 8.1.2a.5](#)), embedded peer tutors (EPTs) ([Link 8.1.2a.6](#)), Math Institute for Nurturing Developing Skills (MINDS) ([Link 8.2a.7](#)), and the Academic Student Success Excellence Team (ASSET) Scholars program's FYM community (see 8.2 PEEP; [Link 8.1.2a.8](#)).

The First Year Math Report 2018-2023 (App 08.1.2a.2) explored FYM attempt and completion rates, DFWI rates,<sup>4</sup> retention rates, and performance in subsequent math courses ([Link 8.1.2a.9](#); [Link 8.1.2a.10](#)). Key takeaways include: 1) Completion of B4 courses predicts high retention rates; unsuccessful attempts are associated with lower retention, particularly for certain student groups. About 96% who completed the requirement in their first term are retained from Fall to Spring. 2) About 87% of Fall 2022 FTFT students attempted a B4 course in their first year compared to 91-95% for previous cohorts. Just 58% of Fall 2022 FTFT students completed a B4 course in their first year compared to 71% to 81% for previous cohorts. We think COVID-related learning loss contributes to a decline in B4 course attempt and completion rates, raising concerns about FYM completion rates and their impact on

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<sup>2</sup> Currently, the recommendation or requirement to enroll in a FYM support or stretch course is presented to students through orientation and advising as well as [guided registration](#), but students are ultimately able to enroll in the FYM and FYM support/stretch courses of their choice through self-directed placement regardless of their math/quantitative reasoning placement status.

<sup>3</sup> Currently, the recommendation or requirement to participate in the Early Start Program is not enforced. Additionally, CSUCI students can complete their early start requirements at a host CSU campus prior to matriculating at their home campus of CSUCI.

<sup>4</sup> DFWI rates are a measure of the percentage of students who have unsuccessful outcomes in each course or class section, with grades including D+, D, D-, F, NC, W, WU, I, and IC.

graduation rates. 3) First Year Math interventions, such as visiting the LRC (App 08.1.2a.1), having an Embedded Peer Tutor, and participating in the Math MINDS program, are associated with higher pass rates in B4 math courses for all students.

#### **8.1.2b: *Learning Resource Center's (LRC) Math Institute for Nurturing Developing Skills (MINDS)***

The Math MINDS program at CSUCI, established in Fall 2022, addresses challenges faced by first-time full-time (FTFT) students in First-Year Math (FYM). It focuses on students identified as most vulnerable (Category M3 or M4) based on their incoming math skills. The program aims to enhance students' self-beliefs, dispel math-related myths, and provide academic success behaviors and strategies applicable to all higher education pursuits. Individualized math skills development is offered through LRC tutoring sessions. The program includes four core workshops, co-facilitated by the LRC Director and the FYM Coordinator, promoting non-cognitive and conceptual development through active and collaborative learning. The Math MINDS pilot aimed for a target enrollment of 10% of Category 3 and 4 incoming first-year students.

In the Fall 2022 pilot, eighteen students enrolled, with fourteen completing the program. Those who completed all program elements showed a higher persistence rate (92.9% persisted to Spring 2023) compared to all other students (87.5%). These completers were also more likely to pass their FYM (B4) course (71.4% vs. 63.7%). In Spring 2023, 33 students enrolled, and twenty-nine successfully completed the program. Students reported increased self-beliefs, growth mindset adoption, coping skills for math anxiety, help-seeking behavior, use of SMART Goals, time management strategies, effective learning strategies, and a sense of community and belonging at CSUCI (App 08.1.2b). Overall, the Math MINDS program demonstrated higher pass rates, mean semester GPA, and retention rates compared to students not in the program during AY 2022-2023, indicating promising results despite the small sample.

#### **8.1.2c: *First Year Composition & the Writing & Multiliteracy Center (WMC)***

The WMC ([Link 08.1.2c.1](#)) at CSUCI aims to promote a culture of writing and communicative arts through various initiatives, including tutoring, workshops, faculty consultations, web resources, and interdisciplinary programs like Plot-A-Thon ([Link 08.1.2c.2](#)). In FY 2022, the WMC supported eighty-seven courses and 55 faculty with embedded multiliteracy tutors (EMTs) who provide tailored support for writing and communication-intensive courses. The EMTs engage in in-class visits, mini-workshops, writing boot

camps, review sessions, and tutoring (CFR 2.13, 2.14, 4.3).

The WMC's focus on the CSU General Education A2 requirement involves offering EMTs for First Year Composition courses ([Link 08.1.2c.3](#)), incentivizing faculty collaboration through mini grants. Data from 2022-2023 indicates that embedded tutoring in writing improves A2 pass rates, supports first-year student success, and increases WMC visits. A2 students in embedded courses who visited the WMC had higher pass rates by twenty percentage points, emphasizing the positive impact of embedded tutoring on student success behaviors.

In Fall 2022, the Writing & Multiliteracy Center (WMC) was able to increase the number of first-year composition courses that were embedded with tutors from 65% in Fall 2021 to 73% in Fall 2022 (refer to Table 5 in the App 08.1.2c.1 to view all writing intensive first year courses including courses outside composition that have embedded tutors from the WMC). Because writing is required in many first-year courses, the WMC strategically supported first year students in courses in and outside composition to reinforce their writing habits and skills. Overall, CSUCI's A2 Completion Rate in Fall 2022 dropped 2 percentage points when compared to Fall 2021; however, a closer look reveals that students who were in embedded A2 courses and visited the WMC for tutorial visits were more likely to pass than students who were not in embedded A2 courses and did not visit the WMC for tutorial visits. Embedded courses have significantly more WMC visitors (56%) than non-embedded courses (41%), suggesting that embedded A2 courses contribute to increasing student success behaviors in seeking academic tutoring support. Additionally, the A2 student group with the highest fail rate are students who are neither enrolled in embedded A2 courses nor visiting the WMC (34.7%).

In addition to embedded tutors, using the services of the LRC and WMC have a positive impact on retention. The latest LRC and WMC Retention Report shows cohorts of first-time, full-time, first-year CSUCI students (Fall 2021 and Fall 2022). This report compares retention rates for students who visited either the LRC or WMC with the retention rates of students who did not visit either center. The overall analysis reveals a higher retention rate for students who visit either center with the greatest benefits occurring for the HUG student population (App 08.1.2c.2). For example, for the Fall 21 First Year Cohort, the overall retention rate from Spring semester to Year Two was 79.6%. By comparison, Spring to Fall retention rate for students who visited either LRC or WMC was 87.1% (7.5% higher). This trend persists

for the FTFT Fall 22 cohort. This was the first semester that the campus returned fully to in-person instruction. The overall retention rate from Spring semester to Year Two for the Fall 22 FTFT cohort was 77.7%. By comparison, Spring to Fall retention rate for students who visited either LRC or WMC was 84.5% (6.8% higher).

In summary, the embedded tutoring program in writing increases A2 pass rates and supports first-year student success by increasing students' visits to the WMC. Like the LRC with math, data suggests first year writing students are more likely to pass if they have tutorial visits at the WMC; in addition, students in embedded A2 courses are more likely to visit the WMC than students in non-embedded A2 courses. Impact of embedded courses and visits to the Center are even greater on HUGs A2 students.

#### **8.1.2d: Data Champions**

In Spring 2022, the Division of Academic Affairs Data Analytics office and Academic Programs & Continuous Improvement office joined forces to create a more intensive and supportive academic program review called "Data Champions" that provided six faculty from academic programs in their self-study year with four, two-hour workshops as well as individual support by Institutional Research (IR) analysts, program review and assessment coordinators, and a community Canvas course with resources that could be accessed asynchronously. Previously faculty went through the self-study for program review on their own, many times in a silo. In 2022-23, the IR office was restructured under new leadership, and the office significantly improved upon the pilot Data Champions model for program review. Additionally, training sessions were provided through the academic year to faculty and staff on data retrieval and analysis. IR also used the training sessions to identify improvements on data needs for subsequent program reviews.

During that academic year, two dashboards were built to capture Student Equity Analytics (SEA) and explore equity gaps across a variety of student characteristics: the Program Review and Class Dashboards. University wide trainings were presented to highlight best use of the dashboards. Currently, all CI faculty, staff, and administrators have access to the program review and class dashboards (as well as many others). As of January 2024, the program review dashboard has had 3,400 views and the class dashboard has had 2,100 views. The Class Dashboard was also used extensively in the course redesign

projects by the Equity Inquiry Project (EIP) Fellows (described in [Priority 3](#)).

To better support institutional research and a culture of continuous improvement at CSUCI, IR partnered with the Student Academic Success & Equity Initiatives office to encourage applications to an expansion of the Data Champions initiative. Over the course of one and a half years, Data Champions will work closely with IR to access, understand, and present institutional data such as DFWI rates and equity gaps, as well as with SASEI to strategize ways to communicate findings and recommendations back to the campus. Additionally, Institutional Research and Teaching and Learning Innovations (TLI) partnered to develop a web-based resource ([Link 08.2d](#)) to help faculty explore equity gaps in their courses and address them with research-based pedagogical techniques to improve student success.

### **8.1.3: Academic Master Plan (AMP)**

CSUCI has made considerable progress on academic program planning and development since 2015. After seven years without new academic program offerings being added to CSUCI's Academic Master Plan (AMP), a shared governance process resulted in a total of twenty-three new undergraduate and graduate programs being approved on the new AMP by the CSU Board of Trustees (BOT). Specifically in Fall 2022, upon recommendation from the Academic Policy and Planning Committee (APPC) eighteen new programs were submitted to the CSU Board of Trustees (BOT) to be developed for implementation between 2024 and 2027. An additional five new academic programs were submitted and approved in Spring and Fall 2023. The current Academic Master Plan approved by the BOT is published on the Academic Programs website ([Link 01.4a](#)).

One of the most important aspects of a university is to stay aligned with the needs of the community it serves at a regional and state level. In 2022, a strategic planning exercise was initiated to identify degrees and academic programs to grow the university after years of a dearth of new academic programs. The development of new academic programs at CSUCI was at a standstill after the contentious approval of a new mechatronics engineering program in 2015 that left many with a feeling of mistrust in the process. Further, some academic programs had been previously approved but were left sitting on the AMP for prolonged periods of time without support for their launch and timelines for these programs to move forward had expired at CSUCI. This context made it apparent that it was time to re-initiate the AMP process, clearly outlined campus processes and/or criteria by which new academic

programs would be prioritized and implemented, and thereby restore trust; there was also a need to integrate discussions about budgeting for new programs into these processes, which had not been comprehensive in the past.

The “Charting Our Course” ([Link 01.7h](#)) Initiative was designed to meet these challenges and identify new academic programs that the campus could potentially offer within the next 5-7 years. The main goal of this initiative was to grow the program offerings in alignment with the needs of the region and the state, conducive to social mobility of the regional community. The effort began in earnest in January 2021 when Provost Avila initiated a faculty-led three week-long working retreat. Faculty were divided into eight teams with five charged with developing academic program proposals (Arts and The Region, Cross-Disciplinary, Humanities and Ethnic Studies, Lab and Health Sciences, and Social Science) and three addressing institutional needs (Academic Organizations, Educational Distinction, and Mission Pillars). Faculty created a list of sixty-one potential degrees to consider developing and implementing in the coming years. A subsequent workforce demand analysis provided insight into regional workforce needs and wages ([Link 08.1.3.a](#)). Additional insight on degree priorities came from conversations with the President and Provost and external regional partners.

The focus on the AMP allowed for the campus to experience a cultural shift centered around growth, development, and academic strategy. Conversations between faculty, department chairs, and administration allowed for a deeper discussion about curriculum, program offerings, future growth and development, and future regional needs. During the AMP development, the Academic Programs and Continuous Improvement Office identified a professional development need for program chairs as well as a focus on being more proactive, strategic, and intentional. In addition, it allowed for clarity and process development for minors and credentials, graduate studies growth, and we are now identifying when to offer programs through Extended University. Administrators and faculty partnered in strategically looking forward into 2030 and beyond while also creating criteria for academic program development.

The Academic Master Plan initiative evolved into a Multi-Year Academic Plan, and, in 2022-23, led to a campus-wide call for new academic program proposals based on this initial study to respond to the annual call for new program proposals from the CSU’s Chancellor’s Office (CO). The Academic Programs and Continuous Improvement (APCI) office clarified processes and worked collaboratively to

build faculty ownership ([Link 01.4a](#), [8.1.3.a](#)). Clarity is still needed regarding processes and procedures for curriculum development, faculty responsibilities, and administrator responsibilities. In addition, the AMP development revealed a need for budgetary alignment during the process and to ensure early conversations would take place as well as research into degrees that are in demand by students, listing of the job market for such degrees, and alignment of new programs with the identity of the university.

The faculty and administration will continue to work together to explain what the AMP means, bringing budgeting discussion to the forefront and continuing to clarify the process. A concerted effort by APCI to educate and communicate with the Academic Senate earlier in the process to ensure awareness and discussion needs to continue. APCI offered twenty-one training sessions on curriculum development, along with numerous one-on-one individual sessions with faculty, to explain current required processes, timelines, and procedures in 2023. CSUCI also needs a process for removing programs from the AMP and ensure timeliness for new academic program launches to alleviate deadline expirations. Once the AMP is implemented, blended programs also known as “4+1” will be created between undergraduate and graduate programs, allowing students to graduate with a baccalaureate and a masters in five years. In the meantime, CSUCI elevated the following programs from their previous status as emphasis to stand alone programs per the CSU EO 1071 ([Link 08.1.3.b](#)): B.A. in Art History, B.A. in Music, and B.A. in Theatre.

Overall priority one is benchmarked as proficient, as ladders/escaleras are established and functioning, some working very well ([Table 8.1b](#)). The ladder/escalera of embedded tutors in First Year Composition (A2) courses is evaluated as at the beginning phase of extending. The intervention is now well-established and data in terms of impact on student success is positive. CSUCI will continue to monitor the data over the long term, specifically, examining the impact this ladder/escalera has on persistence and degree completion. The Academic Master Plan (AMP) has been developed and received several approvals for new academic programs from the CSU Board of Trustees (BOT) ([App 08.1.3](#)); further, the budget and planning elements of new program development is embedded in new processes, bringing much needed grounding and data to curriculum development efforts. The AMP is benchmarked as a proficient, almost extending ladder/escalera. More widespread education about the processes developed for the AMP is still needed for this ladder/escalera to become extending.

Table 8.1b: Assessment of Priority 1 Ladders/Escaleras

	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Student Success		X		
Guided Registration			X	
L/LCs			X	
First Year Math		X		
First Year Comp				X
Data Champions			X	
AMP			X	

Guided registration, L/LCs, and the Data Champions work regarding high DFWI courses are all benchmarked as proficient. Each of these ladders/escaleras is now well-established and functioning, with promising evidence of impact. Each is positioned for institutionalization and fine tuning over the next few years. The work with First Year Math and Math MINDS is benchmarked as developing, almost proficient. Thus far, small pilot cohorts have completed Math MINDS, and institutional support is needed to scale up the program once initial impact is assessed. The First Year Math coordinator role is new, and it is not yet functioning on sustained, operational dollars. Quantitative reasoning placement, performance, and completion is improving, but like the work with A2 courses, CSUCI will continue to monitor the data over the long term, specifically examining the impact this ladder/escalera has on persistence and degree completion. Finally, the student success framework has been approved at CSUCI but this ladder/escalera is still emerging. university-wide conversations about the framework are needed, along with decisions about assessment, benchmarking, and investment and ownership in the framework.

## 8.2: Priority 2: Student Services, Support, and Development

One of the ways CSUCI prioritizes student retention and success is through student support initiatives. For example, we are moving toward more responsive and dynamic academic advising by providing two- and four-year academic road maps and a digital degree planner. Efforts also include removing administrative barriers for low-income and first-generation students, particularly related to student payments and debt. In expanding a wrap-around support approach, basic needs services have



been augmented to address out-of-classroom factors impacting academic functioning, such as food and housing insecurity, and Peer Education and Equity Programs (PEEP) and the CSUCI Initiative for Mapping Academic Success (CIMAS) co-curricular intervention provide peer mentorship and support for students with negative course outcomes. Finally, the university collaborates with regional community college partners to enhance regional transfer initiatives through cross-institutional teams and regular summits (see [Link 08.2.a](#) re:cross-institutional data sharing and App 08.2). The ways initiatives and programs included in Priority 2 are thought of in terms of the Gaps & Ladders theme is in [Table 8.2a](#) below:

Table 8.2a: Summary of Priority 2 Gaps/Brechas & Ladders/Escaleras

GAP	LADDER
Lack of clear pathways for students through curriculum to degree	Develop and publicize <b>academic roadmaps</b> and <b>digital degree planner</b>
Time to graduation, stop out, and dropout rates were higher than desired	<b>Remove administrative barriers</b> for students
Lack of support for vulnerable student populations on campus beyond academics	Launch fully funded <b>basic needs</b> initiative and technology to enhance accessibility
<p>*Creation of multiple “peer mentor” positions and peer-led intervention initiatives: no standard expectations, siloed, and under resourced</p> <p>*Need to support college transition, foster a sense of belonging, promote engagement in campus culture, empower peers to make use of campus resources that support student success, and build peer networks</p>	Expand CSUCI Initiative for Mapping Academic Success ( <b>CIMAS</b> ) pilot. Strengthen <b>PEEP</b> organizational umbrella and leadership competencies that inform training and development to better equip peers helping peers
<p>*Lack of opportunity for incoming Full-Time, First Time (FTFT) students to complete college-level work prior to fall enrollment</p> <p>*Student melt across the New Student Orientation (NSO) process</p>	Launch <b>Summer Success Academy (SSA)</b> Begin Middle Leadership Academy (MLA) team’s work on New Student Orientation ( <b>NSO</b> )
Need for more support in college transition, fostering a sense of belonging, promoting engagement in campus culture, and building networks with community colleges in the region	Expand <b>Regional Transfer Student Success</b> team and annual summit

### 8.2.1: Academic Roadmaps and Digital Degree Planner

Two tools have been shown to improve CSUCI students’ time to degree completion in higher

education: the use of academic pathways, or roadmaps, and degree planners ([Link 08.2.1a](#)). In 2018, two-year and four-year roadmaps were developed and distributed widely ([Link 08.2.1b](#)), and in 2020-21 the resulting roadmaps were included in the university catalog ([Link 08.2.1c](#)). By using a roadmap along with a degree audit, students can plan timely progress toward their academic goals. In September 2022, CSUCI converted to a new digital degree planner for student and faculty usage. The websites for Academic Roadmaps have received 74,147 unique visits from nearly 61,000 unique visitors. Analysis demonstrates that Health Sciences, Psychology, and Nursing roadmaps are the most accessed roadmaps, and users spend the most time on the roadmaps for Psychology, Global Studies, Health Sciences, and Political Science. Trend data show that the Business roadmap usage is picking up since summer 2023.

Digital Degree Planner is an interactive tool that allows students to plan courses for future semesters and, degree completion. The tool helps students view recommended course sequences for their academic program (General Education, major, and minor categories) and identifies prerequisites and corequisites. To improve adoption of the Digital Degree Planner, CSUCI updated videos, created a webpage ([Link 08.2.1d](#)), created a direct link from the myCI portal, and designed new marketing materials. Degree Planner sessions were incorporated into New Student Orientation, Admitted Dolphin Day, Spring into Registration events, and Advising & Registration workshops to educate students about these tools. In September 2022, CSUCI converted to a new degree planner, where usage as of early November 2022 was at 36%; as of December 2023, usage of the Digital Degree Planner is at 81% of students. I. As of June 4, 2023, the Degree Planner has been visited over 17,000 times by over 5,000 students. For students who are eligible to enroll in Fall 2023, the use rate is at 73% (CFR 4.1, 4.5).

One goal is to significantly increase the use of the Degree Planner to improve student success and course demand data. Because the degree planner is an automated digitized interactive four-year roadmap, students can plan their two-year or four-year path to graduation more easily. It provides students with the best recommended sequence of courses for success, customized to their specific individual needs via a degree audit to determine what has already been met, including test credits, transfer credits, course substitutions, and prerequisites. Evidence from the Chancellor's Office ([Link 08.2.1a](#)) shows that planners provide students with an accurate, real-time understanding of what courses

they need to graduate and real-time corrections when key academic milestones are missed. As we analyze course demand data, we can better plan the schedule of classes and offer the appropriate number of sections. We observed a need to publish the University Catalog earlier so that Academic Programs, with support from Academic Advisors, can develop the Academic Roadmaps by the end of every February for the upcoming Fall term, allowing the Student Systems office to program the roadmaps in the Digital Degree Planner in time for new student registration in April (CFR 1.2, 2.12, 2.13). Targeted funds to support a marketing campaign to encourage student participation of CSUCI's Digital Degree Planner are needed and as the academic roadmaps become an institutionalized resource, additional staff is needed to support 2- and 4-year academic road maps and their linkages to guided registration.

### **8.2.2: Removing Administrative Barriers**

Since 2015 CSUCI has reviewed and simplified student-facing administrative processes associated with business operations. In particular, the multi-step process for re-entry to the university for students who stopped out, or interrupted/paused their studies before graduation, was streamlined to reduce the bureaucratic burden put on students seeking a return to the university. Moreover, the institution partnered with Inside Track to reach out to students who previously stopped out and to mitigate disenrollment due to debt or enrollment holds. Significant collaboration between Academic Affairs, Business and Financial Affairs, and the Office of the President enabled the campus to systematically approach these issues and maximize opportunity for students to re-enter or persist (CFR 1.5).

#### **8.2.2a: Removing Administrative Barriers: Streamlined Re-entry for Stopped Out Students**

In 2019 we revamped the process for students who left for more than one semester to re-enter the university ([Link 08.2.2a](#)). CSUCI now serves as a model for other CSUs. Previously, students had to reapply to CSUCI as brand-new students; often lower-division students needed to go to another college/university and accumulate at least sixty units before they could return as a new transfer student. We instituted a simple re-entry form in lieu of that process; students can submit the form by July 1 for fall re-entry and December 1 for spring re-entry. In this new process, all students are required to meet with an academic advisor prior to approval (CFR 1.2, 2.12). The data (App 08.2.2a) suggest a general increase in the number of students who have completed the simplified reentry process. There is a noticeable growth from Fall 2019 (16 students) to Fall 2022 (37 students). Overall, the trend indicates an upward trajectory,

suggesting an increasing utilization of the simplified re-entry process by students in recent terms.

### **8.2.2b: Removing Administrative Barriers: Re-Engage & Re-Enroll**

Each fall, CSUCI conducts a Stop Out Survey targeting students who were new first-year students or new transfers the previous year but did not return for the following fall semester. The survey aims to uncover reasons for non-return, assisting CSUCI in identifying institutional barriers to student persistence, retention, and timely completion. Survey data (response rate is 20-25%) is analyzed and presented in a data dashboard for further insights and informed decision-making (App 08.2.2b). Among the Stop Out Survey respondents, just over one-third cited personal reasons (such as health or family situations) for stopping out. Since the initial Fall 2017 survey, 28% reported financial constraints as a reason, while 22% felt CSUCI was not the right fit for them. Academic challenges were also identified, with 18% struggling to pass classes and 15% being ineligible to return due to grades. A smaller proportion cited issues like inability to enroll in needed classes (10%) or lack of their desired major at CSUCI (4%). Notably, respondents can opt to be contacted by a peer mentor to facilitate their return to CSUCI, an option available since Fall 2017. In Spring 2023, the CSU Chancellor's Office allocated \$1M for a systemwide re-enrollment campaign and to meet campus retention targets. CSUCI received \$55,125 under Equity Priority 1 to support community-wide marketing for re-engaging stop-out students. This included Geofencing, Google Ads, YouTube, and Social Media advertising, along with data analysis to target specific areas based on attrition rates.

During the Summer of 2023, CSUCI partnered with InsideTrack (funded by ECMC and Strada Education network) for a three-year project aiming to re-enroll 2,000 Californians. InsideTrack's Re-enrollment Coaching focuses on students away for at least one academic term, helping them develop a plan to complete their education. The coaching involves outreach through multiple channels to understand students' interest in re-enrolling. Students indicating interest receive up to four months of coach support. The collaborative efforts of cross-section partners resulted in 105 out of 854 (12.3%) students on the outreach roster returning to CSUCI for the Fall 2023 term.

### **8.2.2c: Removing Administrative Barriers: Disenrollment Mitigation**

At the end of Spring 2021, CSUCI formed a Retention Strikeforce Committee (RSC) to address the re-enrollment of continuing students for Fall 2021. The committee, composed of cross divisional

members, was tasked with forwarding funding requests, and developing communication strategies for re-enrollment (CFR 1.7, 2.1). In response to the RSC and Middle Leadership Academy (MLA) report (App 08.2.2c.1), modifications to the disenrollment operation were implemented, including reducing payment due dates to four, embedding outreach activities in the disenrollment process, developing a student business messaging plan, and increasing cancellation from \$600 to \$1,000. Outstanding tasks include developing a dashboard with real-time data on disenrolled students. Preliminary data indicates a higher proportion of non-Pell students being eligible for disenrollment (App 08.2.2c.2; App 08.2.2c.3). CSUCI made significant changes to disenrollment practices related to non-payment, reducing the number of payment/disenrollment dates from four to two and being more proactive with student-facing communications. These changes led to a dramatic reduction in the number of students subjected to disenrollment, from 1,200 to approximately four hundred students. The ongoing assessment of removing administrative barriers is in the developing stages, awaiting outcomes from the dashboard and survey implementations. The RSC presented actionable items for Student Business Services to enhance disenrollment processes, emphasizing a student-friendly, equitable approach. Participation in the MLA aimed to review disenrollment processes, particularly their impact on historically underrepresented groups, leading to approved recommendations for immediate action (CFR 1.2, 1.4, 4.1, 4.5).

### **8.2.3: Basic Needs Initiative**

Since CSUCI's last accreditation, CSUCI's Basic Needs ([Link 08.2.3.a](#)) significantly expanded support services for students. Now offered are emergency food and toiletries, connecting students to on and off-campus resources, and providing educational opportunities for personal responsibility in wellness. A primary goal for the Basic Needs Initiative was to decrease limitations for Emergency Grants ([Link 08.2.3.b](#)). In Fall 2022, the Division of Student Affairs updated procedures to remove barriers, anticipating an increase in applicants and awards. Additionally, CSUCI partnered with Advancement to seek a \$25,000 donation from the Living Peace Foundation to support the Emergency Grant program (CFR 1.4, 2.7, 2.10, 2.14). The Basic Needs Emergency Grant Program experienced an expansion in the number of grants awarded in the 2022-2023 academic year, reflecting changes made to the application process (App 08.2.3). Although the average grant amount decreased, the total cost increased, indicating a responsive approach to evolving student needs and financial circumstances.

The Basic Needs program also addressed housing challenges through on-campus emergency housing, collaborating with Housing and Residential Education. Grants totaling \$408,685 were received to provide emergency housing and prevent homelessness among students aged 18-24 until 2027 ([Link 08.2.3.c](#)). Committee involvements within the Ventura County Continuum of Care aim to improve campus and community relationships regarding housing issues. On campus housing now serves as our primary emergency housing resource, while we will continue to utilize our motel voucher program for special situations. Data provides a summary of the Basic Needs Emergency Housing Program from 2019 to 2023 (App 08.2.3). Overall, the data shows the fluctuation in the number of students housed, the duration of their stays, and the associated costs over the four-year period covered by the Basic Needs Emergency Housing Program. These grants and committee involvements demonstrate our commitment to supporting young students facing housing challenges as we strive to create a supportive environment that allows CI students to focus on their education and future success (CFR 1.4, 2.7, 2.10, 2.14).

Basic Needs expanded CalFresh ([Link 08.2.3.d](#)) onto campus payment systems and sought and received nearly \$400K in external grants for the CalFresh Healthy Living program and CalFresh Outreach. The program exceeded CalFresh application assistance goals by 215% in the second year of the CalFresh Outreach grant. The Dolphin Pantry services ([Link 08.2.3.d](#)) were enhanced with an online ordering system, additional food donors, and satellite locations for hygiene products (CFR 1.4, 2.7, 2.10, 2.14). This has resulted in CSUCI exceeding CalFresh application assistance goals by 215% for year 2 (2022-2023) of our CalFresh Outreach grant (CFR 1.4, 2.7, 2.10, 2.14).

Another way Basic Needs provides food assistance is through an innovative system of alerts. Partnering with IT and Campus Events, Basic Needs implemented a push notification within the goCI app called the Ekho Bites Food Alert Program. This program allows students to sign up to receive alerts from Campus Events when prepared food is available at the end of scheduled campus activities/events.

Finally, Basic Needs is partnering with United Way to offer the “Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program Collaboration with United Way.” This program supports individuals who make under \$60,000 annually, individuals with a disability, individuals with limited ability to speak English, and/or individuals over the age of sixty. Basic Needs will assist with marketing and intake related to the program, while the VITA program will train and assign volunteer tax preparers to our campus. This project is

underway, and we expect it to be complete by Spring 2024.

#### **8.2.4: CSUCI Initiative for Mapping Academic Success (CIMAS)**

CIMAS is a cohort-based student success program that recruits students who experienced negative course outcomes in the prior semester (non-passing grades, INC, course drops, term withdrawal) because these are students CSUCI tends not to retain. It is designed to develop students' academic skill sets while building critical affective assets, including a sense of academic efficacy and motivation, and increased sense of belonging. CIMAS is based on an *Excellencia* in Education "Program to Watch" commended initiative designed by CSUCI Sociology faculty in partnership with Academic Advising. The new model was recently recognized again by *Excellencia* in Education as a promising program to advance Latinx student success and the success of all student participants.

CIMAS cohorts meet weekly, and the program curriculum integrates exploration and development of academic skill sets and efficacy, as well as metacognitive reflection on the application of these skills. Some of these skills and strategies include identifying and overcoming academic challenges, strengthening foundational study skills like notetaking, focused reading, and time management, as well as identifying, navigating, and leveraging campus resources. Upon successful completion of CIMAS, students earn a summer scholarship. Thus, by participating in this program, students can avoid delays to graduation by strengthening their academic skill sets and completing a course over the summer.

This scaled version was first developed to meet the needs of a pandemic-impacted student population to address learning-loss, teaching-loss, decreased academic engagement and sense of belonging. While CIMAS began in Spring 2022, we provide comparative data for Fall 2021 to demonstrate before/during/after impacts of participation. In Fall 2021, prior to their participation, a smaller percentage of CIMAS students ended the semester in good standing (80% of CIMAS participants vs 90% of remaining student body), yet this difference evens out in the Spring 2022, after participation, (93% vs 92%, respectively) and again in Fall 2022 (94% for both groups).

Focusing only on the students who completed CIMAS, the average number of DFWIs decreased from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022 but rose slightly Fall 2022 (from 2.02 to 0.82 to 0.88). CSUCI GPA rose from Fall 2021 to Spring 2022 and stayed consistent in Fall 2022 (from 2.51 to 2.60). The percent of CIMAS students who were in good standing at the end of each semester increased across each semester

(from 80% to 93% to 94%). Overall, students performed better in Spring 2022 when they were participating in CIMAS and maintained a better performance into Fall 2022, compared to their performances in Fall 2021 (App 08.2.4.a).

Regarding retention, more students who participated in CIMAS, even partially, were retained to the next academic term. Data (App 08.2.4.b; 08.2.4.c) presents the retention rates for different cohorts related to CIMAS from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023.<sup>5</sup> The retention rates for each cohort are shown for the Spring 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023 terms. For instance, the completion rate for the CIMAS Cohort in Spring 2022 was 87%, and this varied across different cohorts and terms over the time period.

### **8.2.5: Peer Education and Equity Programs (PEEP)**

PEEP at CSUCI is a collective of peer mentor programs aiming to assist students in navigating the college transition, fostering a sense of belonging, promoting engagement in campus culture, empowering peers to use campus resources, and building peer networks. Designed to be a “high-impact job,” PEEP focuses on training peer mentors through a specialized curriculum built around thirteen leadership competencies. In the academic year 2022-2023, survey responses from 31 PEEP mentors indicated high confidence levels in understanding barriers to higher education and their role boundaries. A significant majority (90%) felt confident or very confident in all competencies.

A hallmark of the PEEP experience is the specialized training curriculum covering High Impact Engagement Techniques, Equity & Inclusive Excellence, Facilitation Skills, and Community Building. PEEP peer mentors spend over 30 hours in core training and individual program areas to ensure readiness for the academic semester. Ongoing training throughout the year encompasses specific roles and program requirements, enhancing skills in tabling, peer mentoring, and outreach. This comprehensive approach ensures that PEEPs are well-prepared to contribute to the academic success and retention of their peers (App 08.2.5.a; App 08.2.5.b). In their reflections about PEEP Training, most peer mentors had positive experiences and shared they had gained increased knowledge in how to provide feedback, facilitate groups, and understand their “why,” or the driving purpose of their mentorship role.

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<sup>5</sup> The data is categorized into CIMAS Completers, CIMAS Non-Completers, and Non-CIMAS but CIMAS Qualified.



The valuable skills acquired through PEEP have potentially had a positive impact on peer mentors' success beyond their time at the university. In a study focusing on embedded peer mentors (EPMs) in the Living Communities/Living-Learning Communities (L/LC) program, 40% of PEEP peer mentors served as EPMs (refer to section [8.3.1](#)). The research examined outcomes for former EPMs, specifically those who graduated since the program began in 2011 and supported students in L/LCs between academic years 2011-12 and 2022-23. Of the 63 EPMs who supported L/LC cohorts, post-baccalaureate study or employment information is available for fifty-four. At least half of these former EPMs have either completed a post-bac degree or are in graduate school, with a focus on master's level programs. Moreover, at least 73% of the 63 L/LC EPMs are employed, with Education and Health Care being the leading sectors. This data suggests that the EPM program within PEEP has had a significant impact on the post-graduation success of students who worked as instructional student assistants supporting students in L/LCs and beyond (App 08.2.5.c; App 08.2.5.d). The base PEEP training and leadership competencies allow for the development for targeted peer-led interventions to support a variety of student needs. Additional peer-led initiatives under PEEP includes:

- **Academic Student Success Excellence Team (ASSET) Scholars:** ASSET Scholars aims to increase student engagement and connection to CSUCI in the first year. Using a student success team approach consisting of Faculty, Staff, and Peer Mentors, ASSET Scholars Program brings together specialized knowledge to provide academic success and campus connection to first-year, first-generation, and undeclared students (CFR 1.2, 1.4, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13).
- **Channel Your Success (CYS) Student Success Coaching:** A peer-led communication strategy that promotes co-curricular engagement opportunities by delivering culturally relevant strategic communications that increase student engagement. The initial method of communication is the artificial intelligence chatbot, Ekxobot, backed by student-crafted messaging and direct peer mentor follow up to address individual student needs (CFR 1.4, 1.6, 2.7, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14).
- **Embedded Peer Mentors (EPMs)/Learning Communities Mentors:** EPMs support the academic success of students enrolled in courses that anchor Learning & Living-Learning Communities and transfer transition courses, as well as their success in navigating university life outside of the classroom. Each EPM is assigned to support a specific course section in each semester and will facilitate small learning communities outside of the classroom (Dolphin Interest Groups) (CFR 2.11, 2.13, 2.14.).

### 8.2.6: New Student Onboarding

CSUCI recognizes the challenges in the onboarding process, especially for first-year students, and is actively developing a robust First Year Experience (FYE) to enhance student success. A cross-divisional task force, formed through the CSU-sponsored Middle Leadership Academy, is conducting a comprehensive examination of the onboarding and FYE for incoming first-year students ([App 08.2.6.a](#)). This examination covers various aspects, including recruitment and bridge programs, the application

process, admission, financial aid, registration, housing, summer bridge, orientation, Learning Communities, transition programs, and second-year registration. The task force has organized subgroups to delve into specific elements of the FYE, such as student communication, cultural relevance, and academic identity. These subgroups aim to provide initial recommendations for implementation in the upcoming Fall 2024 admission cycle. The goal is to create a more effective and supportive onboarding experience that addresses the unique needs of first-year students and contributes to their overall success.

We have responded to the need for summer bridge opportunities by transitioning from Early Start to the Summer Success Academy, discussed below. Additionally, the university recognized challenges in recruitment and admissions outreach, where communications to new students were originating from various offices without proper coordination, resulting in overwhelming and disjointed messages. Anecdotal data indicated a lack of connection between activities, communications, and events, potentially contributing to student attrition. In addressing these issues, we aim to strengthen faculty involvement in the orientation program, with plans to expand participation from Deans, Program Chairs, and program designees throughout the entire onboarding process. The overarching goal is to create a more intentional onboarding program that familiarizes students with crucial information for academic success, fosters a sense of community, belonging, and connection to resources. The university recognizes that a well-coordinated onboarding program is essential for enhancing students' sense of community, belonging, and connection to people and resources, leading to increased academic success and retention.

#### **8.2.6a: *New Student Onboarding: Summer Success Academy***

The Summer Success Academy (SSA) program, initiated in Summer 2022, aimed to provide eighty entering first-year students with an opportunity to complete college-level coursework before their first year and facilitate a successful transition from high school to college. The program, a summer bridge initiative, integrated foundational college courses, peer advising, academic advising, and social support. The comprehensive offering, including two six-unit general education courses, housing, peer mentoring, writing tutoring, and programming, was provided free for students. Out of the sixty-eight participants, 97% successfully completed both classes with C or better grades, and the average GPA for Summer 2022 was 3.5 (CFR 1.2, 1.4, 2.7, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13, 4.1).

All 68 SSA participants enrolled in at least 12 units (full-time status) in Fall 2022, with 50% enrolling in 15+ units. Compared to similar first-year students (non-SSA, first-generation, and Pell Eligible) in the Fall 2022 cohort, SSA participants were more likely to enroll in 15+units (50% vs. 40.4%). Also, SSA participants exhibited a higher retention rate for the Spring semester (97.1% vs. 89.9%) than similar first-year students. Preliminary data as of June 2023 indicates that despite similar GPAs between SSA and non-SSA first-year, first-time students (2.55 vs. 2.58 for non-participants), SSA students were more likely to re-enroll for Fall 2023 (70.6% vs. 67.9%). The SSA program has shown positive outcomes in terms of academic success, full-time enrollment, and retention (App 08.2.6.b).

### **8.2.6b: *New Student Onboarding: Recruitment***

CSUCI has focused on improving both its onboarding process and recruitment efforts. The university has expanded its recruitment team's outreach to high schools and community colleges in multiple counties, including Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles, Kern, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, and San Diego. On-campus tours have increased from 1 to 2-3 daily, Monday through Friday, with each tour accommodating up to seventy visitors. Additionally, a Saturday Dolphin Tour is offered once a month from September through February. In 2022, CSUCI introduced two new recruitment events: "Get Ready for College at CSYouCI" and "The Black Student Forum." The former aimed to inform prospective students and their supporters about CSUCI's academic programs, services, and the application process for Fall 2023. The latter targeted prospective Black students, offering insights into academic programs, resources for success, student life programs, and the university's suitability.

However, the university faced challenges post-pandemic, experiencing fluctuations in student applications, particularly impacting the transfer population. Transfer applications were down by 12% in Fall 2022 compared to the previous year (App 08.2.6.c). Nationally, enrollment numbers have been declining, with local community colleges reporting a 35-40% enrollment decrease. Intent-to-enroll numbers among transfer students dropped by 15% in Fall 2022. While Spring 2023 applications increased by 8%, there was a 4% decrease in intent-to-enroll and an 11% decline in enrollment. First-time first-year applications increased by 20% for Fall 2022, but intent-to-enroll stages stabilized headcount compared to the previous year. Despite a 5% increase in intent-to-enroll for Fall 2022 compared to 2021, data suggests a decrease in first-time first-year applications in the coming years, with an anticipated

increase in the 2025 application cycle. As outlined in [section 1.4](#) , CSUCI is addressing enrollment recovery through a multi-year approach built around three main pillars: 1) launching a strategic Integrated Marketing Communication Plan to enhance its reputation through visual rebranding and marketing materials; 2) revamping our admissions and enrollment management operations based on recommendations from an outside firm; and 3) by significantly expanding out academic programs, (see [Priority 1](#)).

### **8.2.6c: New Student Onboarding: Orientation**

Traditionally, orientation has been hosted in the months of June and July for our incoming students. June for our first-time full-time (FTFT) and July for our transfer students. Students who attend orientation have completed the three-step intent to enroll process. After analyzing the Fall 2022 orientation cohort, we observed that the university loses students after they have completed the three-step intent-to-enroll process and continues to lose students after attending orientation. About 78% of FTFT and 82% of transfers who complete their intent to enroll attend orientation, but there is further “melt” through the start of the fall semester. Some of these students are choosing other campuses over CSUCI for a variety of reasons including financial circumstances, class offerings and modalities, location, and limited interactions with faculty in their respective program (App 08.2.6c.1).

In response, CSUCI adopted a more efficient student-facing communication approach that has resulted in students receiving the same information from one office with one voice and without repetition. Both guided registration and learning communities have been incorporated into new student orientation. We anticipate that next year, new student orientation will leverage Learning Communities’ embedded peer mentors to serve as orientation leaders. The New Student Onboarding process also includes student clubs and organizations that are invited to table at Resource Fairs following New Student Convocation. Finally, for incoming students who seek a summer bridge opportunity, CSUCI transitioned from Early Start to the Summer Success Academy in 2022 as discussed above (see Fall 2022 data in App 08.2.6c.2).

An additional important change that has already been implemented for Fall 2023 incoming class is how new students register for classes (CFR 1.2). Previously, incoming students registered for their fall classes during orientation. Now course registration happens earlier ([Link 08.2.6c](#)) and is separate from Orientation. There are multiple benefits to this approach (CFR 2.12, 2.13):

- Transfer students now register as they are accustomed to for fall semester (usually March/April).
- Early registration is incentivized to ensure students get their preferred classes and schedule.
- Students are encouraged to make an earlier commitment to the campus and enjoy the security of knowing that their schedule is set.
- Orientation sessions are now closer to the start of the fall semester with a focus on developing a sense of belonging rather than the coordination of course registration.

### **8.2.7: Cross Institutional Transfer Success Team and Regional Transfer Student Success Summit**

To strengthen our transfer student pipeline and improve upon the transfer student experience, CSUCI hosted an annual Regional Transfer Success Summit ([Link 08.2.7](#)), gathering more than 500 practitioners from across the region and state to highlight transfer student innovations and share insight on best practices for improving the experience of the region's transfer students (CFR 1.2, 2.12, 2.14, 4.3). The Fall 2022 Transfer Summit featured a keynote presentation "Power to the Transfer: Critical Race Theory and a Transfer Receptive Culture" by Dimpal Jain, Santiago N. Bernal Melendez, and Alfred Herrera. This was followed by data-dive mini-sessions with CSUCI's Institutional Research office to review dashboard data and explore use of data for regional transfer initiatives (e.g., admissions, enrollment, course-taking patterns, retention and graduation rates, and student engagement). Sharing data and resources in this way facilitated connections, fostered collaboration, and ensured alignment with our various efforts to keep student success at the center of our work.

This data sharing approach has proved critical for alignment with our regional and state partners. During Academic Year 21-22, CSUCI and Oxnard College participated in the Certificate Program in Student Success Analytics as an intersegmental team. One of the outcomes of this work was the recommendation to develop a data sharing agreement to support transfer success. In Summer of 2022 CSUCI, a memorandum of understanding focused on data collection and sharing was developed with Oxnard College. The purpose of this agreement was to facilitate the analysis and sharing of aggregate student data about students who transferred to CSUCI from Oxnard College. The overall goal of this collaboration was to support transfer success, degree completion, and track job placement data after completion of a degree (CFR 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 4.3).

Each campus will provide one another with access to dashboard data through each institution's Research Offices. The data will be used for conducting studies and to assist with the development of interventions to increase transfer success, retention, and degree completion. The Institutional Research

Offices at OC and CSUCI plan to meet at least once per year to review dashboard data and identify data needs to evaluate transfer success, completion success, and job placement after leaving CSUCI. These dashboards will include: 1) application, admission, and acceptance trends, 2) enrollment trends and course taking patterns, 3) success metrics such as retention and graduation, and 4) post-graduate employment and graduate degree trends. This work will generate similar agreements with other regional colleges.

Overall Priority 2 is also benchmarked as proficient ([Table 8.2b](#)). Again, the ladders/escaleras embedded in this priority are established and functioning, with some working very well. The removal of administrative barriers to student success, expansion of the Basic Needs program, and peer educators' programs have become models across the CSU and beyond and are thus benchmarked as extending ladders/escaleras. These three ladders/escaleras are now solidly routinized and/or institutionalized and are part of standard practice at CSUCI. The cross-divisional transfer student success work is similarly situated as the aforementioned ladders/escaleras; however, the efforts need to be less siloed and better institutionalized to transition into the extending category.

Table 8.2b: Assessment of Priority 2 Ladders/Escaleras

	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
Academic Roadmaps			X	
Digital Degree Planner			X	
Removing Barriers				X
Basic Needs				X
CIMAS			X	
PEEP				X
New Student Onboarding		X		
Transfer Student Success			X	

Academic roadmaps, digital degree planner, and CIMAS have been benchmarked as proficient ladders/escaleras. These student success tools are well-established and data in terms of impact on student success is positive. CSUCI awaits the arrival of improved technology from the Chancellor's Office (CO) to improve the Digital Degree Planner, and more widespread utilization by faculty is needed to

convert this to the next category. Academic roadmaps are available to students, faculty, and professional advisors, and therefore they are serving their purpose. However, as the administrative home for the roadmaps moves from Academic Advising to Academic Programs and Continuous Improvement, CSUCI will be pushing for improvements and expansions of the roadmaps that include faster updating after curricular changes, additional information for typical double major pairs, and other common concerns. New student onboarding is benchmarked as nearing proficiency. Some impressive and impactful changes have been made such as allowing students to enroll in courses in advance of new student orientation, more intentional leveraging of student-facing communications, and purposeful planning for new student convocation. There is much work to complete beyond these accomplishments, and CSUCI has a plan in place to complete that work. Finally, the Summer Success Academy is a relatively new program at CSUCI. The institution is looking for ways to leverage this program to impact first to second year retention, improve persistence trends in terms of units attempted and completed, as well as to increase Golden Four course completion. Cross-divisional collaboration about the future of the Summer Success Academy is needed as this program continues to roll out.

### **8.3 Priority 3: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA)**

Efforts to advance DEIA have been underway since CSUCI's earliest years through a variety of faculty-led grassroots efforts such as: Academic Senate resolutions and formation of a Committee on Equity & Anti-Racism; professional development opportunities and campus events made available through faculty and staff collaborations in the Center for Multicultural Engagement, the Center for Community Engagement, and a variety of federal grants; an Annual Conference for Social Justice in Education; and faculty and staff leadership in elevating the A in DEIA. The campus's growing maturity in this work is an exemplar of shared governance, with University leadership institutionalizing previously faculty-and staff-led efforts to grapple with DEIA gaps. For example, in Summer and Fall 2020, several commitments to action and recommendations toward realizing racial justice at CSUCI were made by the President and the President's Advisory Council on Inclusive Excellence (PACIE) ([Link 08.3.a](#)). Many campus organizations and programs supported this work directly and indirectly (e.g., the Asian/Asian American Pacific Islander Association, the Black Faculty & Staff Association, the Chicana/o, Latina/o Faculty & Staff Association, Academic Senate, Staff Council, and academic programs) with some writing

statements of their own in support of racial justice. Development of the **Inclusive Excellence Action Plan (IEAP)** Framework in January 2021 sought to bring this plethora of racial- and social-justice oriented intentions, recommendations, and commitments into actionable focus. We will focus on initiatives resulting from this work for this priority.

The University is now engaged in the **expansion of Ethnic Studies curriculum and cultural affinity centers**. In Fall 2023 CSUCI celebrated the grand opening of the Latinx and Black Cultural Centers and the Social Justice & Inclusion Center (IEAT 3.4) which coordinated with the launch of Chicano/a Studies and Africana Studies programs. The University also plans to include the development of an associated center for Asian American and Indigenous Studies programs. The Center for Community Engagement continues to work with faculty in ethnic studies programs to integrate service learning into their courses, further institutionalizing this high-impact practice and the benefits it offers students as well as promoting outreach with community stakeholders in our region. Students' ability to give back to and build their community is often cited as a goal for degree attainment by Latina/o/x students ([Link 08.3.b](#)).

CSUCI continues to expand **DEIA professional development opportunities** for faculty around teaching and learning as well as for staff and administrators, e.g., through Faculty Development; Teaching & Learning Innovations; CSU Learn, and mission-based centers. Beyond offering opportunities, the goal is to transform campus culture through shared responsibility for actualizing DEIA values.

Finally, *Excelencia* in Education established the **Seal of Excelencia**, a national certification for institutions that strive to go beyond enrolling to intentionally serving Latina/o/x students. CSUCI was certified with the Seal in 2019, and we received recertification in 2022. Criteria for certification include data, practice, and leadership requirements. The initiatives and programs included in this DEIA priority are framed in terms of the Gaps & Ladders theme, captured in [Table 8.3a](#):

Table 8.3a: Summary of Priority 3 Gaps/Brechas and Ladders/Escaleras

GAP	LADDERS
Need to institutionalize DEIA work across the university	President's Advisory council on Inclusive Excellence ( <b>PACIE</b> ) established to address DEIA work via <b>IEAP</b> and <b>professional development</b> across the university
Lack of a robust ethnic studies curriculum and campus	Funding, faculty hires, student-facing programming, new degree programs, <b>Ethnic Studies Council</b> , collaboration with local Title I



adoption of “servingness” mentality

schools, and community outreach. Established **cultural affinity centers** and pursued the **Seal of Excelencia**.

### **8.3.1: President’s Advisory Council on Inclusive Excellence (PACIE) & Inclusive Excellence Action Plan (IEAP)**

President Yao has strengthened the historical commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) at CSUCI with an eye towards institutionalizing efforts that move the needle in substantial ways. President Yao leverages the President’s Advisory Council on Inclusive Excellence (PACIE) and initiatives like the Inclusive Excellence Action Plan (IEAP) to operationalize DEIA best practices and make the values of DEIA on campus actionable. This includes such things as a half-day workshop for the entire senior leadership team (i.e., President, Cabinet, Associate Vice Presidents, Deans) in January 2022 on “Disability Awareness, Responsibility, and Advocacy,” a professional development experience for upper administration that was unprecedented on our campus; creation of an Equity Lens Framework (ELF) for academic programs and units across campus to assess the status of their DEIA progress, using results to create action plans for areas in need of improvement; the creation of a new role, the Provost’s Faculty Liaison to Disability Accommodations and Support Services (DASS), which yielded several very positive outcomes ([Link 08.3.1](#)); and the continuing work of a PACIE subcommittee on disability, now in its second year, which has launched an awareness, advocacy, and education campaign on visible and invisible disabilities. Improved communication between DASS and faculty has also resulted in faculty and staff learning how to request accommodations for themselves.

#### **8.3.1a: *History of PACIE***

In 2017, the President’s Advisory Council for Inclusive Excellence (PACIE) was established by then President Beck and charged with “[advancing] a culture of excellence, assisting the President in building social justice leadership capacity throughout the university and ensuring that campus dialogue and decisions at every level are rooted in the core values of equity, justice, and inclusivity.” In 2018, one of CSUCI’s four Strategic Initiatives (2018-23) was to “foster a campus culture of inclusive excellence.”

While there were several faculty and staff-led DEIA efforts across campus, the establishment of the PACIE unambiguously seated accountability for inclusive excellence and social justice leadership in the Office of the President. The PACIE was created to advise the President from a 10,000-foot view of the

campus on all topics related to inclusive excellence and social justice at CSUCI. PACIE recommendations to the President were provided annually from 2018 forward and were published to the campus community in 2020-2021 (App 08.3.1a.1).

The PACIE created the Equity Lens Framework (ELF) ([Link 08.3.1a.1](#)) for assessing DEIA strengths and weaknesses in units across campus on six dimensions: (1) philosophy and mission of DEIA, (2) faculty support for and involvement in advancing DEIA, (3) teaching, research, and service supporting DEIA, (4) staff engagement and involvement in advancing DEIA, (5) student support for and involvement in DEIA, and (6) administrative leadership and institutional support for DEIA. A streamlined, interactive version of the ELF ([Link 08.3.1a.2](#)) was created in 2022-23 and will be piloted in Spring 2024. This tool will allow for automated data collation and lead toward creation of a DEIA Dashboard, making campus strengths and weaknesses across the six dimensions quantifiable and actionably visible, both in terms of current status and change over time. PACIE members also researched and developed shared definitions ([Link 08.3.1a.3](#)) and a set of group norms (i.e., operational agreements) for the campus ([Link 08.3.1a.4](#)). Greater use of these resources represents a growth area for the campus.

### **8.3.1b: *Inclusive Excellence Action Planning (2021-2022) and Implementation (2022- present)***

CSUCI was shaped by individual and group commitments and actions (e.g., by the Center for Multicultural Engagement, the Multicultural Dream Center, the Chicana Latinx Faculty & Staff Association, the Black Faculty Association, the Academic Senate, and the School of Education's Annual Conference for Social Justice in Education). In 2021-2022, CSUCI moved to create a coherent plan for institutionalizing DEIA values to advance racial and social justice at an institutional level.

In Summer and Fall 2020, several recommendations for improving racial justice efforts at CSUCI were acted on by units across campus (e.g., the Black Faculty & Staff Association, the Chicana/o, Latina/o Faculty & Staff Association, Student Government, Academic Senate, Staff Council, academic programs, PACIE). Development of the Inclusive Excellence Action Plan (IEAP) Framework in January 2021 sought to bring this plethora of racial- and social-justice oriented intentions, recommendations, and commitments into focus. Qualitative analysis ([Link 08.3.1b.1](#)) ultimately yielded the following six Inclusive Excellence Action Teams/Themes (IEAT)\* to organize this work:

1. Provide Professional Development & Leadership Development for Racial & Social Justice ([Link 08.3.1b.2](#))

2. Recruit, Hire, and Retain a Diverse Workforce ([Link 08.3.1b.3](#))
3. Promote Inward- & Outward-Facing Advancement & Community/Government Relations Efforts for Racial & Social Justice ([Link 08.3.1b.4](#))
4. Work Continuously Toward Realizing a Campus Culture of Inclusive Excellence ([Link 08.3.1b.5](#))
5. Improve Data-Based Decision Making & Planning Processes ([Link 08.3.1b.6](#))
6. Facilitate Student Access & Success ([Link 08.3.1b.7](#))

See IEAP website ([Link 08.31b.8](#)) for status reports on funded DEIA initiatives.

### **8.3.1b.a: Inclusive Excellence Action Plan: Diverse Workforce (CFR 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)**

Our greatest area of strength toward diversifying our faculty is in our proportion of Hispanic/Latinx faculty, which increased from 15% in 2015 (21.6% of tenure track, 12.1% of lecturers) to 19.1% in 2022 (23.8% tenure track, 16% lecturers) and 19.2% in 2023 (24.2% tenure track, 15.7% lecturers). Notably, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics,<sup>6</sup> in Fall 2021 only 6% of full-time faculty in U.S. universities were Hispanic, which was 17.8 percentage points less than CSUCI's proportion of Hispanic/Latinx tenure-track faculty in Fall 2022.

From 2015 to 2017, the racial/ethnic composition of our staff (App 08.3.1b.a.1) was predominantly White; however, since 2017, the number of Hispanic/Latinx staff has steadily risen. From 2015 to 2023, the proportion of White staff decreased 9.2 percentage points and Hispanic/Latinx staff increased by 4.5 percentage points to become the largest demographic group (42.6%). It is important to note that, as with all categories of race and ethnicity, this group is not monolithic, but very diverse. A small percentage of staff identify as AAPI and African American/Black, some identify as multiethnic/racial, and some do not specify their ethnicity/race.

Conversations and concerted actions to diversify CSUCI's workforce specifically in terms of racial/ethnic diversity began with faculty leadership, having started prior to the current period of review. In 2011, the Academic Senate passed Resolution #11-03 (App 08.3.1b.a.2) to Advance the Ethnic and Racial Diversity of Faculty, Staff, and Administrators from Historically Underrepresented Groups. Early efforts toward this goal was led by individual faculty champions, and included a variety of strategies (e.g., make data visible on such topics as the impact of disproportionate representation (App 08.3.1b.a.3), tenure track diversity by race/ethnicity and sex (App 08.3.1b.a.4), and diversity by academic program (App 08.3.1b.a.5); host workshops on search committee best practices (App 08.3.1b.a.6) and how to

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<sup>6</sup> See <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61#fn1>.

write an invitingly inclusive job ad). A review of Promoting Faculty Diversity at CI: A Timeline of Events ([Link 8.3.1b.a](#)) shows the move toward institutionalization of these efforts beginning in 2016 – a positive indication of growing shared governance for DEIA efforts at CSUCI.

The racial/ethnic composition of our faculty (App 08.3.1b.a.7) remains predominantly White, though our efforts to diversify our faculty has been fruitful, reflecting in recent years a steady increase in the hiring of faculty of color. From 2015 to 2023, White faculty decreased by 6.5 percentage points (pp), Hispanic/Latinx faculty increased 4.2 pp, Asian/Pacific Islander faculty increased 3.3 pp, and Black faculty increased by a headcount of two. Interestingly, proportions of *tenure track faculty* who are Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, and Hispanic/Latinx are greater than their counterpart proportions of *lecturer faculty*. Only for White faculty is the proportion of lecturers greater than of those on the tenure track. Native American/Indigenous faculty are not mentioned here because there were no faculty who identified as such in 2015 or 2022; however, we are currently working to recruit for a new Native American and Indigenous Studies program that is under development.

The racial/ethnic composition of administrators (App 08.3.1b.a.8) has remained predominantly White since 2015 (53.6%), though there was a sharp increase in Hispanic/Latinx administrators from 2021 to 2023. Nevertheless, that number jumped seven percentage points in recent years. The largest representation of administrative Historically Underrepresented Groups (HUGS) is Hispanic/Latinx, followed by Asian American Pacific Islander and Black/African American. Similar to faculty and staff, there is an equity gap of representation of other ethnic/racial groups among administrators in comparison to our student population. White administrators decreased by 11.8 percentage points and Hispanic administrators increased by seven percentage points from 2015 to 2022.

It is important to also examine how CSUCI hiring, and retention practices have impacted gender representation for faculty, staff, and administrators in relation to our student body population. Examining data between 2015-2022, the CSUCI student gender composition (App 08.3.1b.a.9) is comparable to most CSU campuses, with a higher percentage of female students than male and non-binary students. The gender composition of our CSUCI faculty (App 08.3.1b.a.10), staff (App 08.3.1b.a.11), and administrators (App 08.3.1b.a.12) show similar trends with higher percentages of females in our

workforce. In 2022, CSUCI recognized the need to be more gender-inclusive, adding fifteen gender-neutral restrooms to the few that had been available throughout our campus.

Though CSUCI has made progress recruiting and hiring minoritized employees to be more representative of our student population, we recognize retention as a related but separate challenge. Our retention efforts for faculty, staff, and administrators (App 08.3.1b.a.13) provide a nice segue into ways CSUCI has fostered opportunities for professional development.

### **8.3.1b.b: *Inclusive Excellence Action Plan: Campus Climate Surveys (2018, 2020, 2022 to present)***

Since Fall 2018, CSUCI has been conducting Campus Climate Surveys (CCS). In recent years, CSUCI has moved beyond simply administering (CCS) to engaging employees across faculty, staff, and administrator stakeholder groups in conversation about how to improve campus climate. In 2022, we moved from using the Higher Education Research Institute's very long, very broad CCS in 2018 and 2020 to shorter, more focused surveys developed in-house and nationally validated. While CCS data had been analyzed externally prior to 2021, we created in 2022-23 a process for internal analysis and publication of findings via campus dashboards ([Link 08.3.1b.b](#)), fully accessible to every member of the campus community (upon login). This demonstration of transparency has anecdotally done much to grow trust in this process and in our Institutional Research team – only recentralized in Spring 2022.

Collecting, analyzing, and publishing CCS data are important, but making effective use of the findings is another challenge entirely (CFR 4.3). In 2022-23, following the first administration of in-house developed CCS, we created a number of Critical Learning Collectives (CLCs) ([Link 08.3.1b.c](#)), charged with studying CCS findings and making recommendations for improvement (App 08.3.1b.b.1; App 08.3.1b.b.2) to the President and his Cabinet. These recommendations were incorporated in strategic planning efforts for 2023-2025, demonstrating the valuing of innovative strategies to not only make campus pain points visible, but to also be willing to openly name and directly address them.

### **8.3.2: Expansion of Ethnic Studies**

CSUCI has been successful in seeking external funding to develop ethnic studies programs such as Native American and Indigenous Studies, in addition to funding for this purpose that all CSUs received from the CO. Further, an Ethnic Studies Council was recently established to guide and advocate for ethnic studies programming on campus. Promising data demonstrate that CSUCI is on the right track to

create a transformative learning experience through Ethnic Studies expansion. Students participating in a Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow (SURF) course conducted a faculty-led study with student research assistants using data collected from Fall 2011 to Fall of 2019 ([Link 08.3.2.a](#)) to examine retention and graduation rates as measures of student success. They found significant differences with higher graduation rates for those who took a Chicano/a Studies course as first-year students (both among Hispanic and non-Hispanic students) compared to students who had not taken a course focused on Ethnic Studies. In particular, Chicana/o Studies courses seem to have helped Chicanx/Latinx students learn about their own history and culture, empowering them to make connections with others who share their culture while validating their experiences and building confidence. In sum, it seems clear that cultural confidence leads to higher graduation rates for minoritized students. For non-minoritized students, these courses help them develop empathy and understanding of diverse cultures, integrate into a multiracial/ethnic society, and broaden their worldview ([Link 08.3.2.b](#)).

CSUCI's efforts to expand Ethnic Studies (ES) began well before the passing of the California Assembly Bill 1460 ([Link 08.3.2.c](#)) and CSU Chancellor's Office mandates. CSUCI builds on a strong foundation in Chicana/o Studies, and recently launched the Black Studies program, implemented a Black Studies cluster hire, and launched a search for Indigenous Studies faculty. Additionally, there is strong faculty involvement and more opportunities for shared governance through the ES Council.

Since its inception, CSUCI's focus on multicultural engagement has been one of the four mission pillars of the university and is reflected in its curriculum. Historically, students have fulfilled a 3-unit multicultural general education course requirement for graduation. With the passing of AB 1460 by the California state legislature in 2020 and associated mandates from the CSU Chancellor's Office since then, CSUCI added three-units of ethnic studies (designated Area F in the CSU GE) to its graduation requirements for undergraduate students.

In 2020, the Ethnic Studies Council was established to help develop Ethnic Studies program areas and to assist with hiring and retaining Ethnic Studies faculty and staff and with recruitment of students. The Council developed Ethnic Studies Council Bylaws (App 08.3.2.a), and the Academic Senate recently passed a resolution affirming the body and need for formalization (App 08.3.2.b). The Provost charged an Ad Hoc Ethnic Studies Budgetary Advisory Committee to make recommendations

regarding the allocation of funding from the Chancellor's Office (approx. \$626,000 annually) was developed. The committee met multiple times each fall and spring, multiple experts were consulted with, and campus collaboration contributed to the development of the Ethnic Studies Program.

In Fall 2021, CSUCI launched a cluster hire to recruit and hire three tenure track faculty to develop and teach an Africana/Black Studies program. The impact of this hire on student engagement and success is currently being assessed. In April 2023, the Provost established a Black Studies Department at CSUCI. Funding was provided to hire four tenure/tenure-track Black Studies faculty members, one more than originally intended. After a failed search in AY 2022-2023, CSUCI is in the process of hiring new faculty in Indigenous Studies, as our campus goal is to further expand ethnic studies to include Asian American and Indigenous Studies. A \$250,000 award from the U.S. Department of Education for the *Native American Indigenous Studies Curriculum Development at California State University Channel Islands* project (Principal Investigator Provost Avila) ([Link 08.3.2.d](#)) will help support the creation of a Native American and Indigenous Studies Program at CI, increasing students' cultural knowledge and understanding, advancing racial reconciliation, inclusive excellence, and economic justice, and preparing future PreK-12 teachers to teach new Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. In Spring 2023, Asian American Studies, Black Studies, and Native American & Indigenous Studies (NAIS) were approved on CSUCI's Academic Master Plan by the CSU Board of Trustees.

Relatedly, in 2022-2023, an IEAP initiative (App 08.3.2c) focused on working with the Ethnic Studies Coordinator and faculty to develop and pilot service-learning in Ethnic Studies courses. This project involved a year-long faculty development program called Service-Learning in Ethnic Studies where leaders in the fields of service-learning and Ethnic Studies facilitated monthly faculty workshops. In Spring 2023, two Ethnic Studies faculty members Drs. Raul Moreno Campos and Nicholas Centino, embedded service-learning into their CHS 200 courses: Diversity in the Latina/o Community and CHS 383: Chicana/o-Latina/o Identity, respectively.

Additionally, Institutional Research created a dashboard developed on the expansion of Area F (Ethnic Studies) by cohort in terms of courses attempted and courses completed with data disaggregated by demographics. This data dashboard also includes attempted and completed units prior to the requirement change to allow for pre-/post comparisons. Prior to the change, about one-third of all

students completed an Area F course. Beginning with the 2021 cohort, when the change was made, two-thirds of all students have now completed it. CSUCI still needs to close the gap so that every student completes the requirement within Ethnic Studies, however the use of the dashboard will impact better informed decisions on course development and offerings.

There is still much work needed to guide the continued growth of Ethnic Studies at CSUCI. While the Ethnic Studies Council was formed and meets regularly and much work has been accomplished, it does not sit in any official body or maintain any formal or official role. Additionally, there is a need for the campus to understand how CSU Chancellor's Office funds for Ethnic Studies can be used and to establish a set of guidelines and principles to distribute funding. A question remains how Ethnic Studies exists as both a stand-alone academic discipline as well as an academic program that acts in service to the General Education Curriculum, especially as we consider continued investment amidst enrollment declines. Another challenge is the need for resources (e.g., marketing materials, outreach, and recruitment) to focus on developing the student pipeline into Black Studies.

An immediate project is the development of a multi-year comprehensive plan for budget, curriculum, and hiring (including proformas) for new programs in Ethnic Studies. With a successful Native American Indigenous Studies faculty search, the faculty will begin in the Fall 2024 academic year. Meetings will continue between the Provost and Ethnic Studies Council leadership to talk through shared governance. With the creation of two new cultural centers, there is opportunity for the programs to collaborate with the Division of Student Affairs and continue meetings with Student Affairs and Academic Affairs leadership to discuss current and potential collaborations including summer programming, building Ethnic Studies into Guided Registration and Serros and Pinkard L/LCs, the potential creation of a Center or Institute, and the creation of an Ethnic Studies archive in the Library. Retaining faculty of color remains an important priority and one that requires additional investment and a strategic plan. Additionally, there is discussion to advance our HSI mission to be a model Minority Serving Institution and prepare intentionally for Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution designation in the next five years, if those enrollment numbers grow as planned.

### **8.3.3: DEIA Professional Development (CFR 4.6)**



During the review period of 2015-2023, a significant and concerted effort has been undertaken to advance DEIA professional development across all divisions of the university. These efforts included improving knowledge of and supporting a diverse student population which helped lead to national recognition for these efforts through the Seal of *Excelencia*. A combination of institutional planning (i.e., IEAP) and decentralized efforts (i.e., Teaching and Learning Innovations (TLi), Student Academic Success and Equity Initiative (SASEI), and Faculty Affairs, Success, and Equity (FASE)) has ensured a comprehensive approach to increasing DEIA capacity across campus. TLi, in particular, has been invaluable to CSUCI's ability to immediately respond to emerging needs as well as to serve as a repository of various resources and best practices through the TLi Knowledge Base ([Link 08.3.3.a](#)). The institution has invested in building a Faculty Equity Advocate Program (FAEP) ([Link 08.3.3.b](#)) (note IEAP calls for growing the Equity Advocate model beyond tenure-track faculty hires in [IEAT 2.2/2.3](#)), as well as offering pedagogical training such as OneHE, Equity Inquiry Projects, and THRIVE. DEIA training programs for staff and administrators have also been rolled out during the period of review.

### **8.3.3a: DEIA Professional Development: Faculty Development**

Efforts to improve faculty knowledge of and supports for a diverse student population at CSUCI have been central to a wide range of campus efforts, some of them structurally built into the campus from its early days (e.g., mission centers ([Link 08.3.3a.1](#)), Teaching and Learning Innovations (TLi) ([Link 08.3.3a.2](#)), with many of these efforts having been Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) grant-supported. CSUCI has implemented various initiatives to enhance faculty knowledge and support for a diverse student population. The Office of Faculty Development, established in Fall 2021, leads comprehensive faculty development efforts ([Link 08.3.3a.3](#)). While there are abundant opportunities, efforts are made to coordinate and support faculty effectively without overwhelming choices. Units like Faculty Affairs, Success, and Equity, the Academic Senate's Committee on Equity and Anti-Racism, and Faculty Development collaborate to hire, retain, and support the career success of BIPOC faculty. Programs like the Faculty Equity Advocate and workshops on Review, Tenure, and Promotion contribute to equitable practices. TLi focuses on developing faculty capacity to teach a diverse student population effectively in an online format, crucial during the COVID era. For example, they increased programming that develops faculty capacity to teach a diverse student population more effectively in an online format, which was

essential through COVID. Efforts include: 1) THRIVE program (T, Teaching & Technology; H, High-Touch & Human Centered; R, Revised & Reenergized; I, Interaction & Impact; V, Vulnerability & Variability; E, Equity, Empathy, & Engagement) for all faculty interested in learning to support online course preparation. 2) Teaching and Learning Continuity (TLC) ([Link 08.3.3a.4](#)) promotes learning continuity between face-to-face and online teaching and learning. All classes benefit from an online presence (an "asynchronous backbone") with some basic elements that socialize students to the online presence, include a disruption plan, and make use of a basic module structure to organize digital elements of the course (e.g., assignments; resources). 3) The Equity Inquiry Project (EIP) ([Link 08.3.3a.5](#)), led by Dr. Tadashi Dozono, was awarded campus recognition for its work to help faculty more effectively support students' learning. The EIP is a structured program that brings faculty together in small pods (led by one veteran of the EIP program and two new faculty) to assess their courses for inequities, and to select some aspect of their course to redesign and implement, with a focus toward systematically assessing the impact of the redesign (App 08.3.3a). 4) Quality Assurance Faculty Leads conduct workshops for their colleagues, For example an "Evolving Digital Technologies for Enhancing Student Access, Equity, & Accountability " workshop was shared with the campus and at a recent writing conference, and 5) OneHE ([Link 8.3.3a.6](#)) offers microcourses tailored to the needs and limited time of faculty that have helped bring national and international experts to CSUCI.

### **8.3.3b: DEIA Professional Development: Staff Development**

CSUCI is actively working on improving staff knowledge and practices related to DEIA to better support the diverse student population. Efforts occur at the divisional, university, and system levels ([Link 08.3.3b.1](#)), with the implementation of the Inclusive Excellence Action Plan (IEAP) in 2022-23 providing a more comprehensive and systematic review. The Employee Development and Learning Advisory Council (ELDAC) collaboratively works on university-wide professional development, while specific workshops like SAFE and UndocuAlly training address equity issues through the Center for Multicultural Engagement and the Multicultural Dream Center.

The Critical Learning Collectives (CLC) on Campus Climate, part of the IEAP, fostered discussions and collaboration across the university to improve campus climate, with participants citing the initiative's success in building relationships and sharing perspectives. Ongoing efforts aim to turn CLC

recommendations into specific actions for the university in 2023-24. Feedback from CLC participants shows that 47% of survey respondents cited the CLC “foster[ing] relationships and opportunities to share perspectives across divisions and across roles within the University” as the most meaningful aspect of participating, with 74% believing this goal was accomplished very well by the CLC initiative and an additional 24% believing it was accomplished moderating well (App 08.3.3b).

### **8.3.3c: DEIA Professional Development: Administrator Development**

CSUCI is emphasizing the importance of embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEIA) values in all aspects of university work, particularly for administrators, and has included a statement in new Manager position descriptions to reflect this commitment. Existing administrator position descriptions have been updated to incorporate this responsibility, influencing performance evaluations starting in the academic year 2023-24.<sup>7</sup> The university is providing DEIA-focused professional development opportunities for administrators through initiatives like the MPP-Dismantling Racism initiative, workshops, and participation in Critical Learning Collectives ([Link 08.3.3c.1](#); [Link 08.3.3c.2](#); App 08.3.3b). The Inclusive Excellence Action Plan (IEAP) is integral in fostering continuous assessment, reflection, and strategic actions to support a diverse student population. For faculty in their initial two years at CSUCI, the Faculty Development Office is gathering and curating offerings to support student success initiatives, with plans to establish a council for strategic coordination of efforts. Specific faculty development activities, such as the Embedded Peer Educator Collaboration Faculty (EPEC) Summer Institute, require coordinated and institutionalized support for sustained impact.

### **8.3.4: Cultural Affinity Centers**

CSUCI introduced three new student cultural affinity centers in 2023: a Latinx and Black Student Cultural Center, and a rebranded Social Justice and Equity Center, formerly the Multicultural Dream Center. These centers were designed based on student input, highlighting shared governance between the Division of Student Affairs and students. Open since Fall 2023, the centers aim to foster a sense of connectedness and belonging for historically underrepresented and underserved student populations. The goal is to enhance student retention by creating safe and welcoming environments that promote a

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<sup>7</sup> Responsibilities” section now states: “Take an active role in helping to embed the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of university work, in every division, and participate at least once annually in professional and/or leadership development opportunities that will contribute to campus efforts to advance racial and social justice in and through education at CSUCI and beyond.”

sense of belonging. The centers provide numerous services, including academic support, resources, advising, and cultural programming to build community connectedness.

CSUCI has swiftly hired students as mentors and leaders for its cultural affinity centers. Collaborating with staff, students are actively involved in developing culturally relevant programming to engage their peers. Initial usage assessments indicate student interest and early signs of success in outreach efforts. Continuous assessment throughout 2024 will further evaluate the impact of the Centers on student sense of belonging and academic success. Long-term operational funding is a collaborative effort between Center Staff, University administration, and supportive students. Cross-divisional collaborations between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs aim to align and enhance the Centers' impact on student success.

The spaces also provide opportunities to build deeper connections with their peers, share culturally relevant experiences, and engage in brave conversations unique to their own identity. Additionally, current students will have employment opportunities to staff the centers and provide mentoring support within the Centers. These spaces ideally will become defined as culturally relevant opportunities for students to help themselves thrive and build a strong affinity to CSUCI. Data on the number of visits to the Student Cultural Center (SCC) from August 2023 to December 15, 2023, presented on a monthly basis, demonstrate student interest; overall, the SCC received a total of 1,356 visits during the Fall 2023 period (App 08.3.4).

### **8.3.5: Seal of *Excelencia* & HSI “Servingness”<sup>8</sup>**

Emerging in the literature is the concept of “servingness” in relation to the “S” of HSI. The concept of advancing servingness puts greater onus and responsibility on the institution to accept responsibility for ensuring the success of the students we enroll, to be “student ready,” and responsive to the changing needs of our students.<sup>9</sup> CSUCI has embodied this concept to make meaning of its HSI designation, having earned the Seal of *Excelencia* not once but twice.

In 2010, CSUCI was designated a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) having achieved just that year the federal designation’s requirement of a student body that is at least 25% Hispanic and at least

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<sup>8</sup> Servingness is a concept that Garcia, Núñez, and Sansone (2019) argue is a multidimensional and conceptual way to understand what it means to move from simply *enrolling* Latinx students to actually *servicing* them.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.equityinhighered.org/resources/ideas-and-insights/defining-servingness-at-hispanic-serving-institutions-hsis-practical-implications-for-hsi-leaders/>

25% Pell grant eligible. Our Hispanic/Latinx student population has more than doubled since then and is our largest ethnic group, rising from 48.1% in 2015 to 60.3% in Fall 2022. In 2019, CSUCI was recognized by *Excelencia* in Education through their awarding the Seal of *Excelencia* to CSUCI ([Link 08.3.5.a](#)). For the initial application, CSUCI provided evidence and best practice examples related to enrollment, retention/persistence, transfer success, financial support, degree completion, representation, and leadership. Two CSUCI programs were also recognized by *Excelencia*: 1) Channel Your Success: University Cultures Pathways, provides culturally relevant university programs to support Latinx and first-generation college students, connecting them with peer mentors from CSUCI’s Peer Education & Equity Programs (PEEP). 2), Project Aligning Learning & Academic Success, created clear pathways and smooth transitions from the county’s two-year community college programs to a four-year degree at CSUCI. In 2022, we were again one of nine colleges and universities in the country and the only one in California to be Seal-recertified ([Link 08.3.5.b](#)).<sup>10</sup> CSUCI’s intentionality and successes toward diversifying our faculty informed our 2022 application for recertification (App 08.3.5) and contributed greatly to our capacity for effectively serving all of our students.

Overall priority three is benchmarked as proficient ([Table 8.3b](#)). Again, the ladders/escaleras embedded in this priority are established and functioning, some working very well. The Seal of *Excelencia* and CSUCI’s Seal re-certification is benchmarked as an extending ladder/escalera. The multiple external recognitions of CSUCI’s effort to intentionally serve Latino and all students at the university, by definition, demonstrate that the campus is a model for HSI best practices. That several programs have individually been designated as “programs to watch” by *Excelencia* in Education reinforces this conclusion. While the work of the President’s Advisory Council on Inclusive Excellence (PACIE) and the Inclusive Excellence Action Themes (IEAT) have been significant and positive, these efforts are still working towards institutionalization and un-siloing DEIA work that is making a difference on campus. CSUCI is confident that these ladders/escaleras will transition to extending given the unwavering support they receive from President Yao and the values held across the university.

Table 8.3b: Assessment of Priority 3 Ladders/Escaleras

	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
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<sup>10</sup>Included in the Seal of *Excelencia* application are initiatives and evidence that CSUCI is intentionally serving Latino, and all, students. Please see Priority 2 (CIMAS and PEEP) sections for student success efforts as part of HSI initiatives.

PACIE			X	
IEAP			X	
Ethnic Studies		X		
Professional Development			X	
Cultural Centers		X		
Seal of Excelencia				X

Professional development on DEIA includes all constituency groups across campus, has solid administrative homes, and is consistently offered at CSUCI. CSUCI now has a critical mass of employees with significant expertise and training around DEIA. Like many campuses, there are questions about how to engage the faculty, staff, and administrators at the 80%+ participation level. The institution needs to simultaneously support sustained development for those who are already engaged as well as strongly encourage, if not require, the disengaged to join the conversation. The student cultural affinity centers just opened their doors in late October 2023, and it is clear from student visit data that they are meeting a previously unmet need on campus. However, long term funding and integration with academic programming is still in process, and so this ladder/escalera is benchmarked as developing but nearing proficiency at the time of this writing. Finally, CSUCI’s self-study revealed that CSUCI’s expansion of Ethnic Studies is solidly developing. Existing Ethnic Studies programs were already offering courses recently required by changes to the GE curriculum, an Ethnic Studies Council was established, and external funding has been secured to develop new academic programs. There are significant infrastructure, resource, shared governance, and institutionalization strides the university still needs to make for this ladder/escalera to move into the proficient category.

**Component 9: Conclusion, Reflection, and Plans for Improvement**

CSUCI’s Gaps & Ladders/Brechas y Escaleras TPR self-study included one umbrella theme and three priorities with twenty-one embedded programs/initiatives selected that address the theme priorities. The self-study was inclusive of all five of CSUCI’s divisions (DAA, DBFA, DSA, DUA, and OTP), and students, faculty, staff, and administrators played a role in the self-study, offering feedback and input, and reflecting on the results. This study has also involved the collection and analysis of data to provide the

campus with added information and perspectives on the student experience and role of the university as it relates to opportunities for greater student success, i.e., how CSUCI supports students who bring a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. As a university committed to inclusive excellence and student success, our challenge was to investigate gaps in our infrastructure, processes, and policies, and examine the ladders/escaleras we've put in place for students to succeed such that CSUCI can meet the needs of our diverse students and learn from them how to create an institution that truly reflects this intertwined commitment. Having completed the self-study and benchmarked the ladders/escaleras, the University intends to focus on three objectives to continue its work on understanding and building Gaps & Ladders/Brechas y Escaleras. A visual summary of assessments across all priorities and embedded ladders/escaleras can be reviewed in App 09.a.

In sum, campus stakeholders have participated in the planning, execution, and reflection of CSUCI's self-study. CSUCI's Gaps & Ladders/Brechas y Escaleras across all three priorities are benchmarked overall as proficient, with many model initiatives and best practices into the extending category as well as many developing initiatives with solid plans to advance to proficient and the resulting benchmarking process and invaluable time invested in the self-study through campus dialogue and consultations has provided clear direction for the development of plans for continuous improvement. The self-study encouraged data collection, discussion, and reflection on a variety of initiatives and programs intended to further realize CSUCI's student-centered mission and vision.

### **9.1: Bridging Across Gaps and Institutionalizing Ladders**

Moving forward, CSUCI will focus on three main objectives to continue its engagement with its continuous improvement cycle (App 9.1) regarding the Gaps & Ladders/Brechas y Escaleras theme. The first objective is to embrace and enhance **CSUCI's distinctive identity**, and communicate it clearly to internal and community constituencies, via a new, comprehensive strategic plan. This new strategic plan will include essential components such as enrollment management, ensuring that it includes a Black student recruitment, yield, and retention plan, improved programmatic and support experiences for transfer and commuter students, and an integrated marketing and communication strategy, as well as incorporating the Division of Academic Affairs' Academic Master Plan (AMP) (CFR 3.4). The plan will also

detail how, when, and who will be responsible for institutionalizing proven student success initiatives and programs, and what policy development or change is required to support those efforts.

The second objective is to anchor a university-wide **student success strategic plan** with the newly approved student success framework that was developed at CSUCI (CFR 4.8). Elements of this objective will include ways to empower and support faculty and staff to address disparities in student academic achievement such as expanding engagement in professional development, developing the infrastructure for a university-level early alert system, and continuing to invest and expand student access to support programs and wellness services. Central to this work will be an intensified effort to streamline and improve new student onboarding processes for cross divisional services and operations. This will involve particular focus on student-facing communications and strengthening a sense of academic identity and efficacy at CSUCI. All the work embedded in this objective requires CSUCI to buttress an assessment culture in and beyond Division of Academic Affairs (DAA), collecting and utilizing data to understand and improve retention rates and persistence rates, eliminate equity gaps, and remove administrative barriers. The third and final objective is to reinforce and sustain a campus climate that nurtures a healthy **sense of belonging at the university**, particularly within all academic programs with an eye towards advancing ethnic studies, place-based experiential learning opportunities, and transitional DEIA projects to the “extending” category of the rubric.

Table 9.1: Summary of CSUCI Objectives

Objective	Element	Targeted Outcome
1: Embracing and Enhancing CSUCI's Distinctive Identity	CSUCI's 2030+ Strategic Plan	Realizing the distinctiveness of CSUCI's unique identity across divisions
1: Embracing and Enhancing CSUCI's Distinctive Identity	Strategic marketing and enrollment plan	Increasing application and enrollment yield
1: Embracing and Enhancing CSUCI's Distinctive Identity	Academic Master Plan	Instituting new academic programs, and strengthening co-curricular programming
2: Creating a Student Success Strategic Plan	Student Success Framework	Setting benchmarks for student success beyond graduation and retention rates
2: Creating a Student Success Strategic Plan	New Student Onboarding & First Year Experience	Integrating new student onboarding and FYE for FTFT and transfer students
3: Campus Climate and Sense of Belonging	Inclusive Excellence Action Plan	Making progress on campus climate metrics



3: Campus Climate and Sense of Belonging	Culturally relevant programming	Increasing sense of belonging reported by students
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**Objective 1: Embracing and Enhancing CSUCI's Distinctive Identity**

CSUCI has closed out all previous strategic plans and is embarking on the process to develop a new vision for the next iteration of the university. A President's Select Committee of faculty, staff, and administrators worked in Nov-Dec 2023 on fleshing out the President's and Provost's CSUCI for 2030+ vision; this vision will ultimately drive the launching and development of CI's next full strategic planning effort. During Spring 2024, the President and Provost will engage again with the Select Committee to develop a white paper, and then engage in conversations with the campus with efforts leading to the launching and development of our next strategic plan (CFR 4.8).

President Yao introduced several place-based assets in Fall 2023, with these unique place-based assets making experiential education at CSUCI truly distinctive in all higher education. These include CSUCI's: 1) **identity** as the ancestral land of the Barbareño Ventureño Band of Chumash Indians and home to sat'wiwa, a Chumash mountain shrine on the CSUCI campus, 2) **location** in the heart of the nation's 11<sup>th</sup> largest county in crop value, 3) **interdisciplinary engagement** in coastal health and ocean affairs, 4) **proximity** to one of the biggest independent biotech firms in the world, 5) **status** as one of only 11 universities in the country with a research station on National Park Service land, with opportunities for extensive, interdisciplinary engagement by faculty and staff with the Santa Rosa Island Research Station and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, 6) **future home** for the Santa Barbara Zoo Conservation Center, the first zoo-owned and managed facility accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums on a university campus, 7) **proximity** to the heart of the nation's entertainment industry – one of the main global hubs for the industry, 8) **Eastern border** framed by the Santa Monica Mountains, and 9) **commitments** to interdisciplinarity, multicultural and international perspectives, community engagement and service learning – with each of these pillars given meanings, opportunities, and partnerships unique to our region, in the diverse communities of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.

Closely aligned with the University's work in developing a Strategic Plan is enrollment, the first two of three phases for CSUCI's Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Plan (see pp. 4-5) ([Link 09.1.a](#)) were accomplished from 2021-23. In 2021-22, ADV Marketing Research & Consulting company

conducted market research on CSUCI brand perception with broad engagement from students, staff, faculty, and administrators as well as with external partners and stakeholders. In 2022-23, the University contracted with Beacon Technologies to conduct a web audit, and again with ADV to develop a new Brand Foundation. Phase III is underway in 2023-24 and will continue through 2024-25, involving visual rebranding and a website redesign (CFR 4.8). Of note, the updated AMP represents a critical piece of the University's long-term enrollment management strategy (App 09.1.a), with the ultimate goal of better meeting the needs of our region while simultaneously driving enrollment growth. Essential to this effort is a strategic enrollment management plan that highlights and utilizes CSUCI's status as a Seal of *Excelencia*-recognized, Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) ([Link 09.1.b](#)) to ensure institutional commitment to impactful, student-centered "servingness."<sup>11</sup> Moreover, CSUCI plans to intentionally expand its focus from HSI to Minority Serving Institution (MSI), serving African American/Black and Asian American, Pacifier Island and Native American students in our region (CFR 3.4).

The third strategic element is the campus Academic Master Plan approved in 2022-2023 by the CSU Board of Trustees (BOT). To meet the challenge of successfully planning to launch multiple new academic programs, academic leadership began by working within the shared governance structure on three key areas:

- Clarifying respective roles and responsibilities for faculty authors and proposers, the Academic Senate and its committees, and administration.
- Developing criteria for prioritizing program launch dates. The four criteria are: 1) contribution to the emerging unique vision and distinct educational mission of Channel Islands; 2) potential contribution to enrollment growth; 3) financial sustainability and resource requirements; and 4) internal and external constituency support and resistance.
- Creating and utilizing a robust cost model to project costs. This was the first time the campus engaged in this planning work and was achieved through regular consultation between the Chief Academic Budget Officer (England), the Chief Financial Officer (Rex), the Provost (Avila), and the President (Yao).

We are prioritizing the launch dates for the remaining degrees on the AMP, creating a queue beginning in Fall 2025 through 2030. This planning queue will include multiple enrollment scenarios, target dates for new tenure track hires, and other resource requirements such as space and equipment, with both enrollment and fiscal milestones. While this will be a live document, subject to regular revision and updating, we anticipate it will serve as a cornerstone of our planning through at least 2030.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.equityinhighered.org/resources/ideas-and-insights/defining-servingness-at-hispanic-serving-institutions-hsis-practical-implications-for-hsi-leaders/>

Finally, within this objective CSUCI will work towards institutionalization and strengthening of proved co-curricular programs (i.e., ones determined to be proficient or nearly proficiency through the TPR self-study) such as guided registration, the Learning & Living Learning Communities program, Data Champions, CIMAS, transfer student success efforts, and First Year Math, and move towards policy development or change required to sustain those efforts.

***Objective 2: Creating a Student Success Strategic Plan***

The adoption of a university wide concept of student success at CSUCI is a major win. Next steps involve the development of a detailed student success strategic plan based on the foundation of that framework. Discussions about the roles that various constituencies play in the student experience at CSUCI and how to best support students to pursue their goals are needed. The institution needs to empower and support faculty to address disparities in student achievement.

Given the whole-person framework the university adopted, the burgeoning culture of assessment at CSUCI will be strengthened in and beyond the Division of Academic Affairs (DAA). All divisions need to collect and utilize data to understand and improve retention rates and persistence rates, eliminate equity gaps, and remove administrative barriers, as well as move to include benchmarks beyond graduation and retention rates to measure success (refer to [App 01.7.1.c](#)) The institution's goal is that students persist, graduate, feel supported as students, and perform well after graduation. Therefore, additional effort to improve and expand post-graduate outcomes ([Link 01.7.2](#)) are required. This will be accomplished by aligning academic programs' continuous improvement efforts to outcomes data more effectively. CSUCI will examine the impact of students' engagement in high impact practices during their undergraduate experiences on post-graduate outcomes.

Incorporated into the student success strategic plan will be details regarding the expansion of academic roadmaps to include high impact practices, student access to the Basic Needs Program and wellness services ([Link 09.1.c](#)) such as Counseling & Psychological Services ([Link 09.1.d](#)); Student Health Services ([Link 09.1.e](#)). Further, the university will develop and communicate a menu of place-based experiential learning opportunities available to CSUCI students, using it to promote current student engagement and retention efforts and to market our distinctive identity to prospective students. The planned improvements to the New Student Onboarding ([App 09.1.b](#)) processes for cross-divisional

services and operations will also factor into this plan. CSUCI has pre/orientation programs, learning communities, embedded high impact practices, and academic advising activities during the first year of student onboarding, and will better integrate them to improve our First Year Experience (FYE) approach, particularly given that our student population is comprised of a large number of first generation, Pell-eligible, and historically underrepresented students. We have developed a timeline of current new student onboarding and signature events (App 09.1.c) that will guide continued planning. A leadership team wrote and disseminated a white paper (App 09.1.b) outlining the philosophical underpinnings of this approach as well as outlining the details of the work. The work of the three teams is currently underway and recommended changes to the student onboarding process are being implemented.

The vision is to create and sustain a widespread culture of recruitment, enrollment, and retention across campus so that we can reach our GI 2025 goals of 94% student retention from fall to spring and 76% retention from spring to fall. The campus proposes three overarching goals:

1. Reduce fragmented approach to new student onboarding for full-time, first-time & transfers.
2. Develop culturally relevant onboarding experience; and
3. Leverage new student onboarding to cultivate students' academic identity.

***Objective 3: Healthier Campus Climate and Strengthening Students' Sense of Belonging***

Significant investment will be made in equity and inclusion initiatives. CSUCI will continue to invest in and assess initiatives of the Inclusive Excellence Action Plan (IEAP), monitoring for accountability and outcomes, revising as needed to ensure continuous growth in realizing DEIA values, and publishing updates to the campus community in each of the six Inclusive Excellence Action Themes. As discussed in section [8.3.2](#), the institution is developing and making widely available dashboards to track attempts and outcomes of students taking ethnic studies courses, along with specific data regarding how and when in their academic career students complete the newly instituted Ethnic Studies General Education requirement. A steady focus on the progress for the development of existing and planned ethnic studies programs is also required. This means moving towards clear-cut understandings about the role of the Ethnic Studies Council, collaboration between faculty and the student cultural affinity centers, and successfully hiring and retaining faculty and staff to support these efforts.

CSUCI will provide support to increase students' sense of connection within their major and to learn general and discipline-specific career readiness skills. For example, CSUCI aims to build students'

sense of academic efficacy and motivation within their academic disciplines; increase students' sense of connection to the university and sense of belonging in college; deepen students' sense of preparedness for the workforce as "first-generation professionals;" and increase students' knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for engaged citizenship and career success. Starting in Spring 2024, student sense of belonging will be regularly benchmarked by an in-house developed survey. Future CLCs will be tasked with reflecting on the results of this survey and making recommendations to improve sense of belonging.

## **9.2 Conclusion**

"Gaps & Ladders/Brechas y Escaleras" has provided CSUCI with deep insights into the progress CSUCI has made over the last nine years. The findings from analyses provide the campus new insights about where to focus attention and resources to support outcomes for all students, as reflected in the outcomes of this study. The outcomes of this study, from the development of a new university-level strategic plan to institutionalization of DEIA efforts, will provide overall principles and a framework for this activity. When this goal is achieved, it will represent an important improvement in outcomes for all students, and especially for students: a) during the onboarding process; b) throughout their first year at CSUCI; and c) through timely and impactful graduation. This achievement will be reflected in quantitative data; it also will be reflected in students feeling welcomed and their perception that their degrees are meaningfully related to their goals while at CSUCI and for career preparation and world-readiness. These outcomes, then, will help CSUCI fulfill its role as a Hispanic-Serving (HSI) and Minority Serving (MSI), regional, comprehensive institution committed to excellence and equity, access, and success.