

California State University, Los Angeles

Graduation Initiative 2025 Campus Plan

Introduction

Cal State LA has focused on five broad areas for targeted interventions aimed at improving our graduation rates. **Improving Advisement and Student Support** focuses on technology-based tools our faculty and staff need to guide students toward appropriate majors and courses; identify support services to promote students' success in their coursework; and initiate targeted advising campaigns at critical junctures to guide students toward timely graduation. **Engaged Teaching and Learning** stresses the importance of strong pedagogical training for faculty and strategic use of technology to enhance access and increase multimodal learning opportunities for our diverse student population. **Student Life and Sense of Belonging** recognizes the unique challenges our students face, with our higher than CSU average proportion of first generation students, Pell-eligible students, and students living off-campus. These initiatives focus on life skills and extracurricular support to foster a sense of community and academic efficacy for students. **Curriculum Structure and Degree Flexibility** aims at identifying and alleviating the unintended barriers that exist in our academic programs and policies. Finally, **Enrollment Management and Data Capabilities** recognizes the importance of providing user-friendly data tools to faculty and staff that build knowledge of key student success metrics and help to build course schedules that meet the needs of our students. We review key initiatives in each of these five areas below, highlighting the primary student populations and the success metrics targeted.

Additional Details on September 2016 Plan (2-4 pages)

Improving Advisement and Student Support

Soar in 4: Led by a student success team, “Soar in 4” works collaboratively with the Directors of Student Success and Advising in each college as well as staff of key units/programs (e.g., Career Development Center, Enrollment Services, EOP, Smart Start) to create a network of graduation support for **first-time freshmen** as they pursue their degrees in a timely manner. In early fall we hired a Student Success Strategist to spearhead our efforts to raise the four-year graduation rate among first-time freshmen (FTF). Targeting 12 programs that have historically graduated the most FTF by fall of their 5th year, we identified those fall 2013 FTF who were on track to complete at least 100 units by the end of the fall 2016 term. Each college’s advising unit worked on outreach to these students with critical course substitutions, advice on course selection, help in filing for graduation, and referrals to campus resources. Results have been promising, with targeted students carrying markedly higher average unit load than others in their cohort this past fall term and 55% on track to graduate by the end of summer 2017.

In spring 2017, these efforts continue as the “Soar in 4” program partners with each college-based advising unit to offer workshops to fall 2014 FTF who have been identified as candidates for a timely graduation in spring or summer 2018. “Soar in 4” has reached out to 340 juniors in 19 target programs across all colleges. The initiative involves numerous workshops and alternative avenues for seniors unable to attend a session. In addition to mapping out their senior-year schedules and learning about the graduation application process, all create CareerLink accounts for post-graduation exploration and planning.

⇒ **Success metrics targeted:** Average unit load and credit accumulation; 4-year graduation rate.

Expanding Supplemental Instruction: To address the high DFW rates in critical gateway courses, we are working to expand the number of courses linked to SI sections to embed tutorial services within **undergraduate students’** course-taking experiences.

⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Completion rates for high DFW courses; retention; time to degree; graduation rates.

Investment in Transfer Credit Evaluation and Registrar Support Staff: Cal State LA has had insufficient infrastructure for processing transfer students’ credit prior to registration for classes in their first semester. In fall 2016, none of our new transfer students had their transfer credits posted and available for degree audit and pre-requisite checking prior to their summer orientation session. Our investment in key staff positions has enabled us to set an ambitious goal of 90% of fall 2017 students’ transfer credits posted by their orientation session. Also, in fall 2016, we did not have complete transfer credit rules for General Education for any of our top 25 feeder community colleges. We have a fall 2017 goal to have these rules in place for 65% of those schools. These efforts will enable students and their advisors to make accurate course selections and start making progress in their majors from their first semesters.

⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Percentage of transfer student credit posted prior to registration; average unit load and credit accumulation.

EAB Student Success Collaborative: The University is set to “go live” with the Educational Advisory Board (EAB) Student Success Collaborative on May 1, 2017. This platform provides advisors and faculty with a technology-based, data-rich tool to conduct intentional academic advising and intervention at scale for **all undergraduate students**. Following the “go-live,” Undergraduate Studies will partner with each college advising unit and Enrollment Services to provide advisors and faculty support to use the platform’s data to inform their advising practice.

⇒ **Success metrics targeted:** Average unit load and credit accumulation; retention; graduation rates.

Smart Planner Implementation: We are implementing Peoplesoft’s Smart Planner to help all **undergraduate students** navigate a clear path to completing their degree in four years. The implementation process will also help departments understand student pathways to graduation and call attention to scheduling and curriculum challenges students may face. Finally, Smart Planner will provide valuable data to departments regarding enrollment management (i.e., scheduling courses to adequately meet student demand). We aim to have 20% of majors coded in Smart Planner by fall 2017 and 100% by October 2018.

⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Average unit load and credit accumulation; retention rates; graduation rates.

Engaged Teaching and Learning

Focus on Our Students: We must ensure that our faculty are well prepared to cultivate learning in Cal State LA students. Our Center for Effective Teaching and Learning has developed a program of linked workshops for faculty on teaching first-gen students, addressing unconscious bias, and creating inclusive learning spaces for all students.

⇒ **Success Metric Targeted:** Retention rates; equity gaps; grade improvement.

Focus on Evidence-based Student Learning: Our **undergraduate students** may encounter multiple bottleneck courses with high rates of non-completion/failure during their academic career. The campus must work toward scalable programming that impacts entire programs rather than individual faculty, using a (multi-section) course or department as the unit of measure. The focus is on providing departments with data on course completion rates and bottleneck courses to galvanize efforts, redesigning multi-section courses with common learning outcomes and shared appropriate assessments, and developing/rewarding expertise in departments’ assessment of student learning.

⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Completion rates for high DFW courses; reduction of bottleneck course waitlists.

Technology-Enhanced Pedagogy: Technology-enhanced courses can increase student access to bottleneck courses, encourage students to use learning support services, and create more flexible learning environments. We are emphasizing faculty development on the use of the campus LMS (Moodle) and technologies to develop quality online instruction for all **undergraduate students**.

⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Number of courses offered in hybrid/online formats; reduction of bottleneck course waitlists.

Student Life and Sense of Belonging

Spotlight on Persistence: Social media analytics have demonstrated that the posts that get the most “likes” are student spotlights. Starting in summer 2017, Academic Affairs and Student Life will create videos to be shown during **freshmen and transfer** orientation that showcase student persistence and academic efficacy. Later videos will feature “Why I stayed/persisted” stories of students to help “normalize” the experience of self-doubt and challenges, available on student life websites and in social media posts, with a specific focus on **sophomores and juniors**.

⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Retention rates, graduation rates.

Cal State “Wise” Initiative: A wealth of recent research supports the positive effects that brief social psychology interventions at the beginning of students’ college career can have on disadvantaged and/or minority students. Our campus has developed its own web-based series of videos featuring our students revealing their challenges (e.g., cultural/family expectations, first generation concerns) and how they mastered them. We piloted the project with our **freshmen** in summer and fall 2016 and will incorporate it into required Introduction to Higher Education Courses beginning in fall 2017. Preliminary results suggest positive effects on average unit load and GPA and we expect similar impacts on retention and graduation rates.

⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Average unit load and credit accumulation, GPA, retention rates, graduation rates.

Mind Matters: President William Covino and First Lady Dr. Debbie Covino, created the Mind Matters initiative to provide resources and programs to help students navigate the demands of academic excellence, family responsibilities, and jobs. The initiative encompasses a wide range of outreach events on topics such as stress management, positive thinking, and healthy lifestyle. The initiative has particularly focused on training on mental health issues and resources for administrators, faculty and staff across campus units to facilitate wrap-around support for our **undergraduate and graduate students**.

⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Retention rates, graduation rates.

Curriculum Structure and Degree Flexibility

Streamlined Roadmaps and Degree Pathways: Academic Affairs is working with colleges on a detailed review of curriculum, roadmaps, and transfer pathways that will identify areas for immediate and longer term improvements for **all undergraduate students**, such as: identifying majors that limit effective use of 60 transfer units towards graduation; that exceed 120 units due to hidden pre-requisites; have few or no lower division courses and mostly upper division courses; have overly restrictive course sequencing; and rely on advisor approved electives.

⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Graduation rates.

Major Specific Degree Criteria: Cal State LA has expanded the number of majors on campus instituting major-specific degree criteria for declaring a major, both for **transfer students** and for **native freshmen**. This approach emphasizes preparation that predicts success in the major and promotes timely degree completion while granting priority consideration for local students and veterans. For transfer students, these criteria encourage completion of prerequisite courses at community colleges, thereby reducing bottleneck courses on our campus. For native freshmen, these criteria enable advisors to intervene early with students who fail to complete milestones.

- ⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Reduction of bottleneck course waitlists; retention rates; graduation rates.

Expanding Articulation Agreements: Lack of articulation agreements can mean that **transfer students** do not receive proper credit for coursework taken at community colleges, and therefore extend their time to degree by retaking coursework or delaying enrollment in courses due to uncredited prerequisites. Undergraduate Studies is hosting multiple articulation workshops to bring together representatives from campus departments and community colleges to stress the need for, and promote the creation of, course articulation agreements.

- ⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Number of articulation agreements completed; average unit load and credit accumulation

Enrollment Management and Data Capabilities

Data Culture: Recognizing that faculty and staff are key to the success of any graduation initiative, we have developed and adopted tools to provide them with data about our current and historic graduation rates and encourage discussion of institutional challenges that our students currently face. We have deployed user-friendly data tools that promote transparency and stimulate curiosity as well as conversations about obstacles and interventions. We have created dashboards and reports for retention, persistence, and graduation rates; current and historic admissions data; courses with significant historic unmet demand in prior terms (bottleneck courses), course enrollments; historic trend lines to facilitate add/drop course decisions; and registration and orientation. We also have collected freshmen and senior survey data (e.g., NSSE) and are working to highlight and encourage application of the results. We have engaged department advisors in exploration of EAB success markers to identify milestone courses in majors and graduation bottlenecks.

- ⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Graduation rates.

Data-Informed Scheduling: It is not possible for our students to make timely progress toward graduation without a robust schedule of courses. We must accurately predict, schedule, and provide the courses our students need. To these ends, we have built extensive Tableau data capabilities that: enable department chairs and associate deans to track course schedule and enrollment details against prior terms to guide decisions about adding and cancelling courses; identify “available classrooms” needed to meet emerging enrollment demands; and reflect “available seat” data to enable advisors and faculty to point students toward open seats in courses that maintain progress toward the degree. In AY 2016-17, in response to student need during the registration cycle, we added 223 additional course sections, including 137 major-required courses and 53 GE courses. We are using Ad Astra to match class size to room capacity to ensure our classroom resources are used efficiently to meet student demand. We are actively enforcing on-grid course scheduling to minimize “waste” in classroom usage, and to enable students to streamline their course schedules with standard class times.

- ⇒ **Success metric targeted:** Reduction of bottleneck course waitlists; average unit load and credit accumulation; graduation rates.

Communication Plan (1-2 pages)

At Cal State LA we have integrated ownership of the Graduation 2025 plan into our strategic planning process. In 2016, the University concluded a very inclusive strategic planning process and affirmed its commitment to four strategic priority areas:

- Engagement, Service, and the Public Good
- Academic Distinction
- Student Success
- Welcoming and Inclusive Campus

The University formed consultative groups with broad campus representation to coordinate campus efforts in each area. The Graduation 2025 Consultative Group, chaired by the Provost and Vice Provost, Budget and Planning, has been charged with coordinating student success and graduation initiatives. The group meets monthly during the AY and includes the following representatives:

Director, Institutional Research
 Director, Student Financial Services
 EOP Rep
 Two Student Reps
 Department Chair Rep
 Library Faculty Rep
 Senate Exec Rep
 Strategic Success Strategist
 Academic Support Services Rep
 Director, Honors College
 Dean of an Academic College

Vice Provost Enrollment Services
 Two At-Large Faculty Reps
 Advising Subcommittee Faculty Rep
 AVP, Information Technology Services
 Associate Dean of an Academic College
 Student Policy Committee Faculty Rep
 One College Director of Student Success & Advising
 Senior Director, New Student and Parent Programs
 AVP/Dean, Undergraduate Studies
 Senior Director, Center for Effective Teaching and Learning

This group is charged with coordinating and monitoring our Graduation 2025 activities and metrics, as well as with drafting this plan. We are also using existing shared governance structures to ensure broad participation and ownership. The Graduation 2025 initiative was launched in fall 2016 with a kick-off meeting that included the Academic Senate, faculty chairs of Senate committees, students, administrators and staff from all divisions. The Provost meets regularly with the Executive Committee of the Senate to provide updates and discuss initiatives. The following Senate Committees are also involved: Educational Policy Committee, Student Policy Committee, and the Academic Advising Sub-committee.

We have created other working groups or used existing bodies (beyond formal Senate Committees) to share information, manage work, and maintain focus. These include: President's Leadership Team; Vice Provost, AVPs, and Associate Deans; Academic Affairs Leadership Team; Student System Coordination Group; AVP/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and college Directors of Student Success and Academic Advising; Student Life Directors; the Enrollment Implementation Team; Student System Coordination Team.

The Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee will meet with the chairs of the Consultative Groups in May to review current efforts, discuss 2017-18 priorities and identify funding priorities for the campus's Resource Allocation Advisory Committee. It is also critical that we continue to include as many university members as possible. To that end, we will host in May a Strategic Planning Open Forum for all faculty and staff and student leaders to get university feedback on this plan, to provide updates on metrics and to initiate discussion about the following year's priorities. We have also created a Graduation 2025 website on the university's Strategic Planning website to share plans and progress reports.

Unlike some initiatives that can be owned by one or two groups, Graduation 2025 and student success must inform all that we do. Embedding the Graduation 2025 Initiative into the Strategic Planning process ensures university participation and ownership, and keeps it at the center of all we do at Cal State LA.

Success Metrics (2-4 pages)

In the prior section, we detailed the incremental progress we estimate is needed on our 4- and 6-year graduation rates for the University overall and each college individually in order to meet our ultimate goals on these metrics by 2025. In this section, we define other intervening metrics we are targeting in our initiatives and the progress on these we estimate is necessary to meet our overall graduation goals.

Average unit load and credit accumulation: The table below reflects estimated necessary growth in AUL to meet our graduation goal. Figures are averages of fall and spring terms across quarter and semester years.

Period	AY	Started as Freshmen		Started as Transfers	
		Avg AUL	% AUL 15+	Avg AUL	% AUL 15+
Actual	2009-10	12.7	26.5%	11.6	23.9%
	2010-11	13.1	29.1%	11.9	24.1%
	2011-12	12.6	24.3%	11.6	21.0%
	2012-13	12.7	22.9%	11.7	20.3%
	2013-14	12.9	25.0%	12.0	22.7%
	2014-15	13.8	29.7%	12.3	27.9%
	2015-16	13.4	33.0%	12.8	33.0%
	2016-17*	13.1	31.3%	12.0	26.2%
Targets	2017-18	13.3	33%	12.8	28%
	2018-19	13.5	36%	12.9	29%
	2019-20	13.7	39%	13.0	30%
	2020-21	13.9	42%	13.1	31%
	2021-22	14.0	43%	13.2	32%
	2022-23	14.1	44%	13.3	32%
	2023-24	14.2	45%	13.3	32%
	2024-25	14.3	46%	13.3	32%

*Start of semester system

Beyond unit load by term, we have identified overall credit accumulation as a key metric and are in the process of developing benchmarks in this area. After we fully launch EAB's Student Success Collaborative, we will use this tool in refining these benchmarks.

Retention rates: The table below shows the estimated incremental increases needed in our retention rates for first-time freshmen and transfer students in order to meet our graduation goals.

		Freshmen	Transfers
Period	Year	1st year	1st year
Actual	2005	77.3%	77.6%
	2006	73.7%	74.9%
	2007	74.4%	76.9%
	2008	74.3%	76.6%
	2009	82.7%	84.2%
	2010	81.5%	83.4%
	2011	80.6%	86.4%
	2012	82.2%	84.9%
	2013	84.0%	88.3%
	2014	84.0%	87.3%
Targets	2015	79.2%	87.8%
	2016	82%	88%
	2017	84%	89%
	2018	86%	90%
	2019	88%	90%

Equity gaps: For our four-year transfer graduation rate, the equity gap is currently -.2%, so our goal is to maintain that level of equity in future cohorts. The table below shows our estimated gains needed to eliminate the equity gap in our 6 year freshmen graduation rates:

<u>6 yr Graduation Rate</u>				
Period	Cohort	Non-URM	URM	Gap
Actual	2006	45.9%	32.3%	13.6%
	2007	44.0%	32.1%	11.9%
	2008	48.4%	38.5%	9.9%
	2009	55.6%	41.7%	13.9%
	2010	52.6%	43.1%	9.5%
Targets	2011	55%	47%	8%
	2012	55%	48%	7%
	2013	55%	49%	6%
	2014	55%	50%	5%
	2015	55%	51%	4%
	2016	55%	52%	3%
	2017	55%	53%	2%
	2018	55%	54%	1%
	2019	55%	55%	0%

Reduction of bottleneck course waitlists: In fall 2016, we had waitlists totaling 6,183, out of 125,713 enrolled, leaving about 5% of enrollment demand left unmet. Of these, 3,847 were in upper division undergraduate courses (of 61,026 total enrollment), yielding 6% unmet demand. As we strive to increase our average unit load and credit accumulation, we must provide access to the courses students are seeking to take. Our goal is to reduce the waitlist proportion by 10% per year over the next 5 years, which would cover almost 1/3 of the estimated needed increase in average unit load and credit accumulation.

Percentage of transfer student credit posted prior to registration: At 0% for 2015-2016; Our goal is 90% for fall 2017 and 95% for fall 2018.

Articulation agreements: By fall 2017, we will have agreements in place for top 15 feeder community colleges, and by fall 2018 for the next top 35 feeder community colleges. This will cover 90% of our transfer students. According to assist.org, Cal State LA currently has under 9,500 articulation agreements in place, a slight reduction from our prior numbers due to our conversion from quarters to semesters. A sample of peer LA Basin CSUs shows that we have less agreements in place than Long Beach (10,200), Dominguez Hills (11,096), Northridge (18,106) and Cal Poly Pomona (18,455). We have set a goal of 5% increases per year for the next five years, reaching over 12,000 by 2022.

Grade Improvement: The proportion of students who do not receive a passing grade in their courses varies widely by discipline and course level, and there is no universally agreed upon “correct” proportion who should receive DFW grades. In fall 2017, we had 19 courses on campus with DFW rates >25%, resulting in over 2,700 students who did not receive credit in those courses. These courses were heavily concentrated in the STEM fields and in gateway sequences. An improvement goal of 25% in DFW rates in these courses translates to 675 additional students per term who successfully complete a required course. In addition to DFW rates, some of our initiatives are aimed at improving overall student performance, resulting in higher proportions of A and B grades.

Number of courses offered in hybrid/online formats: In addition to the pedagogical benefits of quality hybrid and online courses noted in academic literature, these courses can facilitate student success goals by offering students and faculty flexibility in course scheduling, and enable efficient use of scarce classroom resources. We look to peer institutions for benchmarks in our development of technology-enhanced curriculum. In fall 2016, we had 31 departments offering hybrid courses, and 18 offering online courses. In fall 2016, we offered 104 sections of hybrid courses and 6 fully online courses. One peer institution, CSU Fresno, offered 232 online/hybrid courses: 36% more than Cal State LA despite having 15% lower enrollment. Given our commitment to faculty training, we are setting a relatively modest goal of a 10% increase in hybrid/online courses per year.

Appendix: Additional Student Success Initiatives

Cal State LA has a wealth of faculty and staff who dedicate their talent and vision to various efforts on behalf of our students. Here we note current or proposed programs that have the potential to positively impact student success through more broadly defined metrics.

Data Fellows: Our “Data Fellows” program will develop faculty and select staff experts in use of data for student success to promote data awareness and application within their colleges and units, and launch campaigns around college-specific graduation challenges.

Academic Coaches Program: This program would focus on study skills (e.g., time management, note-taking, test-taking, and studying) presentations and individual follow-up with students requesting additional assistance. Current trained tutors would serve as the Coaches and apply for Peer Mentor Certification through the College Reading and Learning Association.

Expansion of Subject Area Content & Writing Tutoring: To accommodate growth in our student population, as well as provide subject-area support for high DFW courses, we are looking to realign services and include online tutoring.

College-Based Advising Councils: Based on the College of Health and Human Services model, these Councils include faculty and staff representatives from each major who would work closely with professional advisors within the college to enable communication and collaboration.

Integration of Career Information & “College Knowledge” into Advising & Curriculum: Career information/resources and skills development (e.g., time management, textbook reading, note-taking, test-taking, and studying) could be integrated into advising services and curriculum, such as Freshman Mandatory Fall Advising and Introduction to Higher Education (IHE) courses.

Support for Non-Tenure Track Faculty: Lecturers provide a large portion of academic instruction. This initiative is focused on providing greater pedagogical support, training, and opportunities for inclusion to non-tenure track faculty,

Promote Mobile App Usage: Encourage students to utilize the mobile app to increase participation in campus events and connection to campus.

Revise Introduction to Higher Education Courses: To create consistent learning outcomes and enhance inclusiveness, colleges are currently revising these courses to emphasize meta-disciplines rather than specific majors and integrate the Successful Navigator Assessment.

Time Management and Time to Degree: We plan to create time management tools, housed on Student Life pages and incorporated into programming including mentoring programs, Welcome Week, 101 classes, and EOP curriculum. The content will note the consequences of certain choices, e.g., taking fewer units impacts financial aid and increases the terms needed to graduate.

Support for Students Considering Leaves or Re-entering after a Leave: A future goal is to work with technology tools, communication campaigns, and advisors to identify student intending to transfer out of Cal State LA and/or returning after a leave to target them with retention/re-entry support efforts.