



2023-'24 RETENTION YEAR END REPORT

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CSU GRADUATION INITIATIVE 2025: University Advising Retention Team Priorities

1. *Leverage Advising to close the graduation gap for Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, First-Generation and Pell-eligible students*
2. *Eliminate/reduce barriers to retention and graduation, focusing on those caused by and bias inherent in, academic policies/procedures*
3. *Develop and provide time-sensitive and student-centric interventions for students facing identified reenrollment or academic barriers*

Everything the Retention team does is in service of the **CSU Graduation Initiative 2025** and intended to leverage academic advising for graduating more students and closing Cal Poly's graduation equity gaps. The pages that follow outline the ways we have contributed to the broader campus goals over the 2023 – 2024 academic year.

I. Developed and provided student-centric interventions for students facing identified reenrollment, institutional or academic barriers

Taking Time Off

All time off campaigns are designed to notify students of enrollment periods, to nudge those close to being discontinued for non-attendance and to remove pre-screened reenrollment barriers. Time off outreach is conducted in support of achievement of key predictors of graduation which have been identified by the CSU and which can make the greatest impact on closing Cal Poly's graduation equity gaps.

Predictor: Full-time enrollment

Students achieving sophomore status by 1.5 years (45 units over 5 quarters)

Students taking a full academic load in the first 2 years (90 units over 6 quarters)

GI 2025 Predictor

All Dropped Units (NEW)

- Each term, all students who were previously enrolled in courses but drop to 0 units during the add/drop period are called and sent personalized follow-up emails. This outreach to 77 students was conducted by retention specialists and informed by data provided by the Dean of Students and the Office of the Registrar.

Active Not Enrolled Outreach

- All students not yet enrolled in units following first-round registration and again, at Census of each term, are contacted by the Retention team, and for small subgroups of students (first-year Cal Poly Scholars, EOP students, student athletes), by their affinity program advisors. Only students contacted through the other time-off campaigns or through the Red DPR outreach described in *Proactive Advising* are not part of this effort. This year we sent 5,303 emails, made 1,416 calls to students prioritized based on GI2025 goals and predictors, and worked directly with 229 students.

ITO Outreach

- The retention team responded with personalized emails and/or phone calls to 697 Informal Time Off inquiries. All students indicating mental health or campus climate concerns were called.

Leave of Absence

- Over the '2023 – '24 academic year 183 students requested Leave of Absence (LOA) forms. All students were screened for remaining access to Informal Time Off, the need to extend expect graduation term and additional reenrollment barriers before reaching out, determining students' needs and approving notifications.
- The retention team also reached out to all students on LOA who are scheduled to return for the subsequent term when class schedule became available. This year we helped 146 students return to Cal Poly by helping to remove reenrollment barriers (holds, housing and financial aid complications) and connecting returners to or providing academic advising support.

University Departure

- Retention screened responses for time-sensitive concerns and sent personalized emails to 248 students submitting University Departure forms to provide empathic support and the option of meeting with a retention specialist to discuss reason for leaving, next steps, transferring to another school and/or the possibility of returning.

Proactive advising

Most Retention team efforts are informed by “early academic behaviors” identified by the CSU as having the greatest impact on closing our graduation equity gaps. For those proactive advising interventions tied to these predictors, retention specialists conduct outreach to prioritized subgroups (those impacted by our equity gaps) and recommend college advising centers reach out to the remaining students. Cal Poly Scholars in their 2nd year and beyond or transfer students are part of our priority populations and they receive all advising communication through our team.

Proactive advising emails and/or calls were conducted based on the following factors:

Predictor: Full-time enrollment

Students achieving sophomore status by 1.5 years (45 units over 5 quarters)

Students taking a full academic load in the first 2 years (90 units over 6 quarters)

GI 2025 Predictor

- All Dropped Units, Active Not Enrolled, Informal Time Off, Leave of Absence and University Departure communication/reenrollment advising campaigns.
- Year 2+ and Transfer Cal Poly Scholars communications.
 - Below full-time enrollment at start of registration round two and prior to Open Enrollment (non-Scholars distributed to college advising centers)
 - Holds preventing registration

- Below 90 units and/or CPSLO GPA <2.5 90 units of completion at the start of fall year 3
- Red DPR reports to colleges three times per expected graduation term cohort including actionable record of all missing graduation requirements per student.
- Post-Batch Red DPR reports to colleges following each second batch degree awarding process by Evaluations including actionable record of all missing graduation requirements leading to degree denial.
- Change of Major
 - Portlet inquiries not responded to by coordinator within 10 academic days.
 - 1,516 change of major portlet actions tracked and recorded in 1Stop.
 - Year 2+ Students marked not eligible for a change into their intended major.

Predictor: Course Passing Rates in Years 1 and 2

GI 2025 Predictor

Receiving 1 or fewer non-passing grades in the first 2 years

Having a GPA above 2.5 at the end of the first 2 years

- Select students who were on AP for the second time in their first year as part of FSP 2.0
- Cal Poly Scholars on DQ each term encouraging appeal
- New interventions tied to non-passing grades are in development including outreach to students receiving incomplete or Repeat in Progress grades and support for students dropped from courses during Perc process.

Predictor: Full-time enrollment and Course Passing Rates in Years 1 and 2

GI 2025 Predictor

MEP STAR Program

- The MEP STAR Program is a year-long academic and scholarship program facilitated by retention team in Engineering Student Services that seeks to support second-year MEP students who may be at risk of not completing their degree. Program's goals include the following:
 - Collaborate to create a specific academic plan tailored to past experiences and current needs
 - Provide guidance on cultivating a supportive community at Cal Poly

II. Contributed to advising and campus strategies in support of student retention and closing graduation equity gaps

Campus participation and leadership

Each year the Retention team strategically serves on campus committees that directly influence policies, procedures or inclusive efforts impacting all students with special attention to those impacting our most marginalized student communities. Our primary intentions are to represent a retention and inclusive student perspective and to ensure advising expertise is always included in important campus discussions. Following is a list of communities and conversations in which retention specialists have been integral:

Policies and Practices

- Academic Senate Executive Committee
- Academic Senate Instruction Committee
- Academic Senate
- Withdrawal Policy/Practice Review Committee
- Change of Major Policy/Practice Review Committee
- CSU Student Success Data Analytics Group
- Finish Strong: CSU Community of Practice

- NACADA Excellence in Academic Advising Scholarship of Advising, Student Purpose/Pathways and the Advising Technology Conditions Competency groups
- Semester Conversion Academic Advising Workgroup
- Semester Conversion Committee (University Wide)
- Strategic Planning Initiative: Student Retention & Experience Committee

Inclusion

- Basic Needs Taskforce
- DEI Professional Education for Academic Advising
- Diversity Partners Network
- Students with Dependents Advisory Board
- Transfer Academic Onboarding Group

Capacity building

One of the methods used by the Retention team to influence policies, practices and removal of barriers involves building capacity. We focus on building capacity around diversity, equity and inclusion, data access and systems improvement, GI2025-driven data analysis and distribution for prioritizing proactive advising, and providing advising support to our partner centers across campus.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- **Liaison with marginalized student support programs** to better understand community needs and ways the advising community can better support marginalized student populations
 - **Build trusting relationships with staff**
 - Attended DRC staff meetings and hosted director at Retention team meetings to learn about accommodation requests, challenges students face and to connect our services.
 - Met with the SDAB Director, Assistant Director and Center Coordinators and attended all center staff meetings to introduce retention liaison and brainstorm ways we can better support and learn from each unique community.
 - **Build trusting relationships with students**
 - Conducted numerous collaborative events across SDAB centers
 - Open sessions at La CASA and the Dream Center to discuss challenges facing students utilizing the centers, with the goal of bridging access to Retention Specialists.
 - Changing major and time off workshop and advising drop-in at La CASA.
 - Dream Center Drop-in.
 - Email outreach, through NAICC Coordinator, to students utilizing the Native American and Indigenous Cultural Center introducing the retention team and our hopes to be part of their support community.
 - Participate in resource events to share with students how Retention can support them
 - Mental Wellness Resource Fair
 - Basic Needs Resource Fair
 - Students with Dependents Resource Fair
- **Support advising community in developing a more inclusive advising experience for students**
 - **Coordinate and facilitate DEI Professional Education for Academic Advisors:**
- Transforming Academic Advising through Cultural Humility using Just, Equitable, and Inclusive Advising Strategies: A Transformational Approach to Proactive and Holistic Advising, Half-day retreat facilitated by Dr. Jermain Pipkins, Ed.D. Dean, Success Coaching, Dallas College, NACADA Expert Consultant

- Holistic Advising, presented by DEIPE Committee
- Deficit and Asset Based Thinking, presented by Dr. Danny Almeida, HECSA program faculty
- Challenging Our Biases and Assumptions, facilitated by DEIPE Committee
- Help Seeking Behaviors, facilitated by Dr. Sarah Macdonald
- Data research on 1Stop interactions and marginalized student representation findings not useful for planned DEI session

Build Retention team capacity and efficacy through training and professional development to help us better shape interventions that prioritize the interests of marginalized student communities.

- NASPA Racial Equity and Social Change Conference
- Inclusion on Purpose book circle with the CTLT
- Regular attendance at monthly Diversity Partners Network sessions
- 2023 Cal Poly Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) Symposium: Pathway to Becoming an HSI.
- Attendance at State of Indigeneity, State of Latinx, and the MLK Jr. Legacy Celebration.
- Bi-weekly “morning learning” sessions intended for team members to explore articles, studies, webinars, etc. on relevant topics around DEI which we then debrief as a team.
- Trainings and allyship development around some of Cal Poly’s most marginalized populations including students with dependents, Guardian Scholars/Foster Youth, international students, the Undocumented community and survivors of sexual assault.

Data access and systems improvement

Retention works diligently not only to analyze and act on data but to help build systems which will facilitate access to actionable data for prioritizing and conducting proactive advising. There are several ways we have contributed to improving advisor access to crucial student-level and aggregate data.

- Ongoing individual Elevate Excel training and weekly team debrief
- Participation in Design Thinking Lecture
- Submitted SLATE proposal for CP Scholars Communication
- Submitted SLATE proposal for Informal Time Off
- ANE query refinement: Collaborated with Office of Data Management to develop a new dataset combining necessary demographic, student-level data, a multitude of data points tied to graduation predictors and the ability to easily identify students who are active but not enrolled. This tool allows the retention team to incorporate and understand additional factors that may necessitate extra support. This project increases our ability to analyze and develop interventions or outreach with the ultimate goal of closing graduation gaps. The ANE query has been turned into a BI Publisher report for on-demand access

Data analyses and distribution for prioritizing advising to close graduation gaps

One of Retention’s primary objectives is to use qualitative and quantitative data to identify barriers and areas of agency and to facilitate the prioritization of proactive advising with the aim of closing graduation equity gaps. Following is a sample of the projects we completed this year for centralized and college/center-specific efforts.

- Coded all qualitative data from NACADA Excellence in Academic Advising Student and Faculty/Staff outcomes surveys, summarized themes, compiled, analyzed and provided data to campus leadership and advising community.
- Conducted analysis of Non passing grades, I and R/P grades, and Perc data uncovering inequities and identifying barriers which require attention and mitigation with support from IR, the CTLT and Dr. Matt Carlton, Statistics department.
- Provided reports and analyses for colleges, Strategic Enrollment Management and the Mustang Success Center in addition to centralized projects (e.g. Red DPR, Below full-time, etc.) including:
 - Students behind on EAP as of Spring 2024 OCOB Student Services
 - All 5th Year ARCH students CAED Advising
 - Pre-health Data Analysis
 - Graduate Students ANE
 - CAED Selection Yield Rates/Community Colleges most represented in Transfer population
 - Multicultural Business Program/URM analysis
 - 5th year ARCH students
 - Scholars/Non Scholars APDQ quarterly comparisons
 - Scholars/Non Scholars <12 units comparisons
 - 1Stop annual reports for CAFES and BCSM

Advising support for college partners

The Retention team provides advising support to our college centers in many ways. These efforts allow us to reduce the impact of retention interventions on advisor workload and to build trust across the advising community. Following are some of the ways Retention conducts academic advising through the colleges.

- Transfer SLO Days and Open House college sessions and registration support
- Incoming Transfer evaluations in preparation for SLO Days
- Incoming FTF block schedule reviews
- DQ decision process
- Drop-in advising hours
- Providing appointments for CP Scholars and students taking time off or departing (included with advising center staff links)

III. Identified Barriers, Strategized and Recommended or Implemented Proactive Measures/Interventions

Policy and practices review and improvement

In the Graduation Initiative 2025 campus plan, a key goal for Retention was to “remove and reduce barriers to graduation”. Coupled with the goal of closing Cal Poly’s graduation equity gaps, a crucial role for our team is to critically examine policies and practices, uncover inequity and barriers caused by those institutional systems and make recommendations for improvement. This year we made great strides to put previous research into practice and to explore new barriers in order to expand proactive outreach campaigns.

Grades Analysis and intervention development

- Partnered with CTLT Director and Institutional Research to request large D,F,W and grade equity gap dataset

- Analyzed student-level data to disaggregate CP Scholars from non-Scholars in D,F,W, I/RP Grades and Perc
- Drops Number/frequency of non-passing grades (predictor)
- Participated in faculty grading workshop given by Records via CTLT to understand faculty use of I/RP
- Analyzed given Perc dataset and requested additional data necessary from ODM
- Brought current analyses together as a team to form retention-based research questions and begin formulating overlap across practices and targeted points of inequity

Withdrawal policy and guide for approvers

- Centralized and CENG retention specialists created a guide for withdrawal approvers that outlines procedures for student outreach, review, and approval of course and term withdrawals

Drops, withdrawals and leaves website

- Built updated Drops, Withdrawals and Leaves section of the Office of the Registrar site, integrating a complete overhaul of student-facing information and including details of new withdrawal policy and procedures.

ODM Query utilizing identified predictors and barriers to prioritize students for advising

- Continued to refine query with new graduation indicators, and actionable proactive advising markers.

Campus wide involvement

- Committees outlined in campus participation and leadership in section II.

CSU system-wide involvement

As a department representing the goals of the CSU Graduation Initiative it is fitting that we should be knowledgeable about and engaged in conversations happening at a system level. To that end, our participation in CSU-wide opportunities grew significantly this year through the following:

- Along with colleagues in Retention and the Office of the Registrar, presented on *Reenrollment Partnerships: Overcoming Limited Technology Through Campus Collaboration* for the 2023 Cal State Tech Connect Virtual Conference.
- Attended CSU GI2025 Finish Strong Symposium in San Diego with campus colleagues
- Served with members of Cal Poly leadership in CSU Finish Strong community of practice exploring various efforts being implemented across campuses to meet our graduation goals and close graduation equity gaps.
- Participated on RNL Student Success Initiative Workgroup with colleagues across campus
- Participated on CSU Student Success Data Analytics Group