CAL POLY
University Advising/Retention
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

2024 -'25 Retention Year End Summary

Submitted August 1, 2025

Introduction

In 2015 the California State University Chancellor's office identified six operational priorities to effectively implement Graduation Initiative 2025 efforts across the system.

University Advising Retention, part of the campus-wide advising framework, and as directed by the Cal Poly GI 2025 campus plan, has centered our work on two of the original six priorities:

1. **DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING**
   Using data at both the system and campus level to inform the development and advancement of effective student support programs
2. **ADMINISTRATIVE BARRIERS**
   Modernizing administrative processes by discontinuing policies and procedures identified as impediments to student success

In 2021, the CSU, reviewed progress toward graduation and equity goals and established five equity goals and priorities to address persistent gaps:

Continuing our focus on data-informed decision making, our team has prioritized goals in service of two of these equity goals.

1. **REENGAGE AND REENROLL UNDERSERVED STUDENTS**
   Efforts are focusing specifically on reengaging with students of color, Pell-grant recipients and first-generation students to support their reenrollment to the CSU and meet their academic goals.
2. **ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO GRADUATION**
   Administrative barriers disproportionately impact underserved students who are often more susceptible to academic disruptions such as fee assessments, registration holds and cumbersome processes. Campuses are reviewing practices to eliminate barriers to timely graduation.

Everything the Retention team does is in service of the **CSU Graduation Initiative 2025** and intended to **leverage academic advising to improve retention and graduation rates and to close Cal Poly's graduation equity gaps**. The pages that follow outline the ways we have contributed to the broader GI 2025 campus goals over the 2024-2025 academic year.

RETENTION PRIORITY 1: Leverage Advising to close the graduation gap for URM (Hispanic/Latino, Native American, African American, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or Multi-Racial), First-Generation and Pell-eligible students

GOAL 1A: Encourage use of Retention data among advising community to shift resources toward those students with greatest need and to implement advising practices which increase graduation rates and close graduation gaps

Addresses CSU Priorities: Reengage And Reenroll Underserved Students, Data-Informed Decision Making

2024 – 2025 Accomplishments

Increased Data systems access and efficiency to benefit academic advising measures.

- Collaborated with ITS in the addition of EOP, CP Scholars and TRiO student group codes to quarterly Office of the Registrar APDQ BI Publisher reports to facilitate key performance indicator tracking and focused outreach
- Worked with Office of the Registrar to repair the "below full-time" Cal Poly Scholars query, removing duplicate records and ensuring accurate KPI tracking and focused outreach.
- Collaborated with ITS Portal Group on visual and functionality improvements to student and coordinator Change of Major portlets.
- Developed workflows and compiled required data points and communication templates for CP Scholars communication and Change of Major portlet SLATE functionality.
- Refined Office of Data Management Query (ANE) to include all reenrollment barriers, demographic and graduation predictor data necessary to facilitate removal of reenrollment barriers.
    - Query includes priority levels assigned based on the number of factors true of each student (URM, First Gen, Pell eligibility, Cal Poly Scholar flag, Math placement below MATH 141).
    - Query fuels *all* proactive advising, data requests and reporting functions.

Worked with Statistics faculty member, Dr. Matt Carlton, to inform FTF and NTR retention and graduation predictor analyses.

- Findings used to update prioritization of outreach efforts.
- *Predictive Modeling for FTF Graduation* and *Predictive Modeling for Transfer Student Graduation*

Fulfilled over 40 Campus Data Requests.

- All College Advising Centers: All non-Scholars <12 units 2x/term, non-Scholar, year 2 students with no college advising, Red DPR 4x per graduation cohort including one after Batch degree processing
- UA/Academic Programs/Advising Leads: <12 Scholar tracking, APDQ ad hoc request: 2016 - present, addition of CP Scholars, EOP subgroups, 2020-2023 Non-Resident Discontinued, Dismissed, DQ quantitative data, 2022 - 2024 Non-Resident departure qualitative data
- CLA: CLA APDQ Dismissal analysis, COMS department analysis of stalled graduation, "College Possible" participants enrolled in <12 units and no advising F'24, CLA Transfer numbers, 2 years + 1 quarter graduation rates
- BCSM: Annual 1Stop analysis, data requests to study longitudinal effects of Mentor Collective program on student success, pre-health data collection & analysis, Developed template for BCSM pre-health data for Open House, presentations, and pre-health applicants, Data Cookbook request guidance for Mentor Collective
- CAED: Grades data for courses critical to success in ARCE and ARCH, specific student lists for CM department
- CAFES: Students meeting MAP criteria, FDSC/NUTR department students who changed from these majors, First-Gen/URM RPTA students, Degrees conferred 2021 - 2025 AY and active students in Indigenous Studies and Natural Resources and the Environment minors
- OCOB: MBP/OCOB student demographics and longitudinal, comparative analysis of academic outcomes, OCOB students off-track from EAP quarterly, OCOB students with a CPSLO GPA between 2.0-2.3, Data cookbook request guidance for MBP analysis

GOAL 1B: Increase cultural competence and cultural humility across the advising community via training and education to create a more accessible and affirming advising experience for students historically marginalized by Cal Poly.

Addresses CSU Priorities: Eliminate Barriers to Graduation, Reengage and Reenroll Underserved Students

2024 – 2025 Accomplishments

Coordinated Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging sessions for campus-wide academic advising community.

- **Retreats**: Cultural Humility, Incorporating Anti-Racist and Trauma-Informed Practices into Advising; Cultivating Belonging: Empowering Advisors to Support Underserved Students at Cal Poly. **Guest Presenters**: Dr. Jon Paul Higgins, National Speaker and Author, Dr. Jerel Ezell, Berkeley Center for Cultural Humility, Dr. Sarah Macdonald, CTLT
- **Hour-Long Sessions:** Cultural Humility Strategies and Stressors, Intersectionality, Gender and Allyship, Introduction to Community Cultural Wealth, Blended Cultural Humility Booster, Integrating Cultural Humility into Advising Practice, The Academic Secret Research Menu, Belongness Model. **Guest Presenters:** Dr. Sarah Macdonald, Cal Poly CTLT, Dr. Susan Cheng, Cal Poly Academic Affairs, Ila Moncrief, Cal Poly Gender Equity Cente, Dr. Jane Lehr, Cal Poly Ethnic Studies, Cal Poly Advising panelists.
- **First-Generation and Latine (Cafecito) Advising Affinity groups** introduced and facilitated to provide identity-centric support for navigating advising role and professional growth.

Advisor takeaways

"Deeper understanding of the support this is needed as we ask students to constantly navigate systems that aren't set up to support them"

"Familial capital should be honored; not disparaged treating students solely as independent entities or resenting familial inquiry and involvement"

"Take time getting to meet/know students, not assuming about which pronouns to use, always believe and validate the student experience and provide support students may need'

"This experience reinforced the importance of not only showing up for students through everyday interactions but also being willing to speak up on their behalf when needed. I enjoyed when they talked about the power of advocacy, not just for students or other team members, but for myself as well."

"I left feeling more compelled to try harder to push back against systematic barriers that may seem impossible to change or fix."

Community gratitude

"Thanks so much for this important work and conversation."

"I loved this DEI session! I thought it was very well executed and made it feel very personable as though we are a learning community all learning amongst each other etc."

"I really enjoyed this workshop and I am grateful for the staff who organized this… workshops like these are critical."

"I am grateful to those that coordinated the event and the intention behind it."

Contributed to community efforts to improve access to actionable data and to grow inclusive advising practices

- Participation in Degree Audit Dashboard development with Strategic Enrollment Management
- Two team members presented "Putting Students and Equity First" at NACADA Regional conference
- Two team members attended the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education (NCORE)

GOAL 1C: Build advising-based systems to adequately support the growing Transfer and 2+ year CP Scholars community

Addresses CSU Priorities: Eliminate Barriers to Graduation, Reengage and Reenroll Underserved Students, Data-Informed Decision Making

2024 – 2025 Accomplishments

Delivered comprehensive proactive advising outreach campaigns for Cal Poly Scholars, tracked Cal Poly Scholar KPI achievement and provided inclusive advising support via campus advising centers and affinity spaces.

- Initiated over 8,000 emails and/or calls over the academic year via comprehensive Cal Poly Scholars Proactive Advising communication plan.
    - Welcome/Welcome back and key dates: Incoming Transfer and continuing students (years 2+)
- Developed sustainable KPI tracking system for APDQ and below full-time unit, term to term and year to year comparison.
- Provided ongoing Retention/Advising drop-in at La Casa and the Dream Center
- Provided inclusive advising support through college advising efforts with focus on serving Cal Poly Scholars.
    - College support: Transfer SLO Days, curriculum sheet reviews for incoming TR
    - APDQ and Academic Success workshop facilitation; APDQ process workbooks; Advising center coverage
    - (Cal Poly Scholars email campaigns and Active Not Enrolled emails are not included in this number)
    - 8,365 student appointments, drop-in and emails (Cal Poly Scholars email campaigns and Active Not Enrolled emails are not included in this number) in support of time off processes and college advising centers
        - Cal Poly Scholars made up 37% (3117) of 8,365 contacts
        - 91% (2,842) of Cal Poly Scholars served were continuing students in year 2 and beyond and transfer students

Student Comments

"Thank You so much for your call today, I was under the impression that I had already been dismissed from Cal Poly so you reaching out to me about my disqualification was very helpful. I will save this email for when I come back in a year"

"My advisor performed exceptionally well in answering my questions. She went above and beyond, despite my questions being answered she took the additional remaining time assisting me through the enrollment/ registration process. Great advisor!"

"My retention specialist is just phenomenal! Not only does she give you all the information you need and have all the resources for you, she is incredibly personable. I was stressed about taking time off, but after meeting with her, my stress was gone and I also felt personally supported by her. You feel like you are meeting with a friend. <She> is on it, she's kind, she's compassionate, she's just amazing. Please give this woman a raise. She deserves it."

"It's been a hectic past couple days making sure I resolved everything with my hold to enroll. I want to personally thank you again for being here for me. Hearing that you sympathize with what I was going through meant a lot, and I'm grateful for your continued support."

RETENTION PRIORITY 2: Eliminate/reduce bias in & barriers caused by academic policies/procedures

GOAL 2a: Analyze policies and practices to uncover inequities, recommend improvements

Addresses CSU Priorities: Eliminate Barriers to Graduation

2024 – 2025 Accomplishments

Served as key contributors to policy decision making workgroups, playing pivotal roles in shaping outcomes and influencing more student-centric campus policies

- Academic Probation and Disqualification policy review and practices development committee
- Change of Major policy review and practices development committee
- Regarded as a reliable and insightful member, synthesizing advising community input and impacting key decisions on the following:
    - Academic Senate
    - Instruction Committee
        - Credit/No Credit allowances, Semester Academic Calendar, Change of Major policy approval
    - Transfer Academic Onboarding Workgroup
    - Basic Needs Taskforce
    - Student Health Advisory Board
    - Students with Dependents Advisory Board
    - Disability Access and Inclusion Committee
    - First-Year Supportive Pathways Workgroup
- Provided input and transition plan for quarter to semester time off policies which were reviewed and accepted by the Office of the Registrar
    - Informal Time Off
    - Leave of Absence

RETENTION PRIORITY 3: Provide time-sensitive and holistic support to students facing reenrollment or academic barriers

GOAL 3a: Use qualitative and quantitative data to identify barriers and areas of agency and urgency

Addresses CSU Priorities: Eliminate Barriers to Graduation, Reengage and Reenroll Underserved Students, Data-Informed Decision Making

2024 – 2025 Accomplishments

Conducted data analysis to identify trends and reveal reenrollment and graduation barriers

- Completed and presented I/RP grading impact report to Advising leadership, developed proactive Incomplete mitigation campaign and student guide
- Completed quantitative and qualitative Active Not Enrolled and Informal Time Off analysis, disaggregating findings to reflect challenges faced by a variety of student populations
    - Over 800 comments coded and outlined in report

Collaborated with Strategic Enrollment Management to refine Office of Data Management Query (ANE) which includes all re-enrollment barrier, demographic and graduation predictor data necessary to facilitate removal of re-enrollment barriers (more details in Priority 1a)

GOAL 3b: Develop and provide time-sensitive and student-centric interventions for students facing identified reenrollment or academic barriers

Addresses CSU Priorities: Eliminate Barriers to Graduation, Reengage and Reenroll Underserved Students, Data-Informed Decision Making

2024 – 2025 Accomplishments

Managed all campus, student-facing time off systems and processes, each of which provides individualized support, includes screening and mitigation for multiple reenrollment barriers and ensures Cal Poly maintains a caring connection with students most at risk of permanent university departure

- Informal Time Off (ITO) form submission management and individualized outreach to
  - 727 students
- Leave of Absence request screening, approval and individualized exit and reenrollment guidance
  - 281 outgoing students
  - 99 returning students
- University departure form management and individualized outreach
  - 369 University Departure forms
- Active Not Enrolled – enrollment and reenrollment outreach
  - 3,523 Emails sent
  - 1551 Calls placed
  - 245 Direct student contact
- All units dropped outreach
  - 116 students dropping all units during first 8 days of term

Student Comments

"My retention specialist has been incredibly helpful in guiding me through my graduation requirements after taking time off. Even though it wasn't part of her usual responsibilities, she went out of her way to support me—reaching out to others to find the resources I needed and helping clarify the process. She also reassured me that my existing credits would still be sufficient to graduate, which gave me a lot of peace of mind."

"I want to start by sharing how grateful I am that I had the opportunity to meet you. Thank you for being there for me on such a scary day. You really helped me recollect myself and find peace in a moment of fear and uncontrolled emotions. I thank God for people like you! Thank you for simply wanting to help someone who really needed it. I hope it's okay to add you as a support contact on campus seeing that I don't really know anyone on campus. I actually ended up visiting the Counseling Center shortly after we spoke where I met with a therapist and even have a next appointment scheduled"

"Sweetest people who made me feel less anxious about taking time off to have my baby. Made me feel confident and supported in my choice to take time off and excited to come back when I was ready!"

"Everything is going great! I'm enrolled in all my classes, I decided to stick with Construction Management, and I got my FAFSA pretty much all figured out. I'm currently living at a house in SLO and attending outpatient therapy. I can't think of anything I need help with right now, but you have been a tremendous help, and I can't thank you enough for guiding me back onto the right path!

"That is so great to know about the ITO form, and I am really grateful that you reached out to student accounts for me. It is a bummer that the price is still so high, but alas, I must do what I must do!"

Highlights 2024 – 2025 University Advising Retention

Direct Student Support

- 8,379 student appointments, drop-in and emails (Cal Poly Scholars email campaigns and Active Not Enrolled emails are not included in this number) in support of time off processes and college advising centers
- Cal Poly Scholars made up 34% of all Retention student appointments
- ANE: 3,523 Emails sent / 1551 Calls placed
- 20+ proactive advising campaigns facilitated each term
- Over 8,000 proactive advising emails to Cal Poly Scholars over academic year
- 727 individualized emails or calls placed to students taking Informal Time Off
- Almost 500 seniors and Cal Poly Scholars receiving grades of Incomplete

Advising & Campus Community Support

- Planned and coordinated three half-day retreats, six one-hour sessions and two advising affinity groups - First-Generation and Latine (Cafecito)
- Contributed to academic policy review and decision making including: Quarter to Semester time-off policy, APDQ and Change of Major, CR/NC allowances, Semester Academic Calendar, and others
- 43 data requests for colleges, UA, campus leadership
- Change of Major Portlet
  - Oversight of student and coordinator campus change of major portlets, coordinator communication, contact list management and follow-up for inquiries not addressed
  - 1,300 change of major inquiries tracked and recorded
- Red DPR Reports 4x per graduation cohort including one after Batch degree processing

Administered 20+ Proactive Outreach Campaigns Quarterly

ALL STUDENTS		CAL POLY SCHOLARS
Outreach Data to Colleges	Retention Interventions	
1-11 Units Lists to colleges Day 1 of term	ITO Outreach	Remove Holds Before Registration
1-11 Units Lists to colleges start of R2 registration	Leave of Absence	Registration Support 1-11 Units (Start R2 Registration)
Red DPR Run 1, Next Term's grads (Class Search opens)	University Departure	Registration Support 1-11 Units (Day 1 of term)
Red DPR Run 2, Next term's grads (start of open enrollment)	Change of Major No Response Over 10 days	Year 2 and New Transfer with no college advising
Red DPR Run 3, Current term grads (Census)	All Dropped Units (1st 8 Days of each term)	Academic probation with no advising calls
Post Batch Red DPR Run 4, (after 2nd round batch posting)	Leave of Absence Returner Outreach	Disqualification status/SAP appeal calls
<12 NTR Lists morning after NTR registration to colleges	ANE outreach after first round registration	Year 3 below 90 units completed and/or 2.5 or below CPSLO GPA
Non-Scholar Year 2 lists to colleges	ANE calls at Census	Year 2, Fall term 1. Below 90 Cal Poly units 2. CPSLO GPA <2.5
		Incomplete grade Outreach
		Welcome/Welcome back and key dates: Incoming Transfer and continuing (years 2+)

Measurable Impact

> "My <retention specialist> performed exceptionally well in answering my questions. She went above and beyond, despite my questions being answered she took the additional remaining time assisting me through the enrollment/ registration process. Great advisor! Great look for the team!"
>
> "Thank you so much for being detailed, clear and helpful in your response. You have been a wonderful resource for me, and I have taken action to complete the steps you have listed here. I'm looking forward to working alongside you in the upcoming months. Thanks again for being so awesome as your job!"
>
> "At the time, I was going through a tough situation and didn't know where to turn, but you were there for me. I want to express my deepest gratitude. I truly don't know how I would've gotten through that period without your support. Thanks to you and others, I've learned to stop being so hard on myself."

- ANE/ITO analysis process development and implementation revealed the following:

2023 - 2024	ANE @ End of 1st Round Registration	ANE @ Term Census
ALL Active Not Enrolled	**Enrolled by Term Census**	**Enrolled Subsequent Term**
No Intervention	38%	32%
Receiving Intervention	57%	42%
URM Active Not Enrolled		
No Intervention	44%	33%
Receiving Intervention	63%	63%
First Generation Active Not Enrolled		
No Intervention	51%	32%
Receiving Intervention	66%	40%
Cal Poly Scholars Active Not Enrolled		
No Intervention	48%	34%
Receiving Intervention	66%	41%
Non-CA Residents Active Not Enrolled		
No Intervention	39%	37%
Receiving Intervention	57%	44%

- Outreach to Cal Poly Scholars Year 2+ and Transfers under enrolled at the start of second round registration.

Term	Fall 2024	Winter 2025	Spring 2025
% Underenrolled at start of second-round registration	40%	27%	25%
% Underenrolled by Term Census	2%	1%	5%

- Red DPR Reports 4x per graduation cohort including one after batch degree processing (in collaboration with Evaluations Unit). Project launched in Spring 2019.

Spring Graduation	2019 (Launch)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Graduation Award Rate	**75.95%**	81%	87%	81%	82%	85%	**86.94%**