San Francisco State University

Draft Student Success Plan
Graduation Initiative 2025 Goals  
San Francisco State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>2025 Goal</th>
<th>Most Recent Rate</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman 6-Year Graduation</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshman 4-Year Graduation</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer 2-Year Graduation</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer 4-Year Graduation</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap - Underrepresented Minority</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10 % points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap – Pell</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 % points</td>
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# Executive Summary of Goals & Strategies

San Francisco State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long-Term</strong></td>
<td><strong>Long-Term</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enrollment management</td>
<td>• Utilize tool to predict/analyze student course demand, fund additional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advising</td>
<td>high-demand courses, get support for programs for curriculum revision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Physical space to support student success</td>
<td>• Hire new advisors across campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• First year for freshmen and transfers</td>
<td>• One-time support to complete renovation of Undergraduate Advising Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Targeted support services</td>
<td>and renovate College Resource Centers in certain colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short-Term</strong></td>
<td>• Provide more purposeful, accessible, and frequent opportunities for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enrollment management</td>
<td>students to engage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advising</td>
<td>• Improving lower-division curriculum, advising for undeclared students and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>career counseling to enhance major selection</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Expand College Success Program</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-Term</th>
<th>Short-Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Enrollment management</td>
<td>• Offer more sections of bottleneck courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advising</td>
<td>• Deploy advisors to college resource centers to identify/ support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>students close to graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hire temporary graduation specialists and Student Affairs &amp; Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>management staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide incentives for departments assuming overload advising</td>
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Summary

San Francisco State's ongoing student success efforts received a new boost from our new strategic plan, which sets ambitious goals to increase graduation by unprecedented margins. We are pleased to integrate our campus plan with the CSU Graduation Initiative 2025. The attached plan includes the following components:

1. the short-term strategies that we intend to follow to increase graduation in the immediate future (2016-17).
2. the rationale guiding our long-term plan
3. our long-term plan

1. Short-Term Strategy for 2016-17

Our short-term strategy represents a coordinated effort to identify and support students close to graduation, whose path could be shortened with additional attention. We expect this one-year pilot effort to produce immediate, measurable results—and to provide a sustainable model for continuous, long-term gains if permanent funds become available.

We plan to deploy advisors to the college resource centers to identify and support students close to graduation. Following a strategy that has been successful at CSU Fullerton, we will hire 10 temporary, full-time advisors (or more part-time equivalents) to serve as graduation specialists in the colleges, starting with two each in four of the largest colleges (Liberal and Creative Arts, Science and Engineering, Health and Social Sciences, and Business) and one in each of our two smaller colleges (Education and Ethnic Studies).

These graduation specialists will hold mandatory workshops for students who have completed 90 or more units and will work with students (and faculty advisors) to chart clear paths to graduation. They will maintain joint appointments in the colleges and the Undergraduate Advising Center and will receive up-to-date training in university graduation requirements and other relevant policies that affect students’ timely graduation from 2 coordinators, temporary positions we plan to offer to experienced retired annuitants.

The graduation specialists’ efforts will be coordinated with faculty advising in affected majors. Mini-grants to selected departments will facilitate training and offer incentives to faculty advisors who accept overload advising assignments.
In addition to the temporary advisors, we will hire 3 additional staff in Student Affairs & Enrollment Management in areas that will positively impact student graduation outcomes. For example, we need more capacity to evaluate transfer credit and review and approve applications for graduation in a timely manner. Understaffing in these critical areas currently represents a significant barrier to timely graduation for our upper-division students.

With the help of Academic Institutional Research, we will identify specific courses that represent barriers to timely graduation for students in the upper division. We already know about many of these bottlenecks—for example, several majors’ capstone courses are consistently overenrolled. With additional funding directed strategically, we will offer more sections of bottleneck courses and, by increasing their availability, allow students to progress at a faster pace toward graduation.\(^1\)

**Total cost of short-term plan: $2,150,000\(^2\)**

- 10 new advisors (graduation specialists):
  - SSP II \(\times 10\) = $500,000
  - Benefits = $210,000
  - subtotal = $710,000

- coordinators for new advisors:
  - 2 = $76,800

- 3 staff in Student Affairs & Enrollment Management
  - SSP II \(\times 3\) = $150,000
  - Benefits = $63,000
  - subtotal = $213,000

- incentives for departments assuming overload advising:
  - $2,500 grants to 19 departments
  - subtotal = $50,000

- additional sections of upper-division bottleneck courses:
  - \(200 \times $5,512\) (per section) = $1,102,400

Numbers of students potentially affected (students currently enrolled at 120 units or above who have not yet applied for graduation):
- BA = 870
- BS = 1,836
- Total = 2,706

**Potential one-year gain in graduation rate: from 2% to 5%**
2. Rationale for Long Term Plan

Our long-term campus plan aims to improve our four-year graduation rates and our two-year transfer graduation rates, while eliminating the achievement gaps at all points for our first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented minority students, by addressing these key indicators of student success:

**Time to Degree.** When asked “Will you have graduated in the time you expected?” 41% of respondents to the most recent Senior Exit Survey respond that they will not, an increase of five percentage points over the preceding year. Of those students reporting a delay, 46% attribute it to an inability to enroll in required courses. When asked to identify “the one thing that, if changes were made, would have improved your overall SF State experience the most,” 38% cited course availability; an additional 18% cited advising. A lack of available courses is compounded by a lack of quality advising, which could help students navigate the complicated course selection and enrollment process; together, these challenges contribute to student attrition and delay time to degree. By addressing both, we expect to reduce attrition, speed students’ time to degree, and increase our four-year graduation rates significantly.

**Unit Load.** Currently students graduate from San Francisco State with an average of 135 units—which represents 15 units more than the 120 units required for the baccalaureate by Title V (the equivalent of taking an extra semester). In four years of surveys, 42% of students reported taking courses that were not needed for graduation because required courses were unavailable. In addition, nearly half (49%) of surveyed students reported never seeing an advisor for help selecting and enrolling in courses, which further exacerbates the problem. By addressing course availability and inadequate advising, we expect to reduce significantly graduates’ average unit loads—along with the costly delays that they represent.

**Probation.** Academic probation contributes to attrition, particularly among students of color. Our institutional research reveals that over 22% of FTF and 18% of new transfer students are placed on probation, most in their first term at San Francisco State. These students’ outcomes are discouraging; of those students placed on probation, 72% leave without completing a degree. Particularly discouraging is the racial and ethnic composition of probation students, at 36% African American, 26% Latino/a, and 21% Asian American. We need to help these students before they reach the crisis point of probation. We plan to do so by improving our ability to identify and reach out to students at earlier stages of academic difficulty in order to get them the advising and tutoring resources that they need; working with faculty and colleges, we will also promote course redesign and supplemental instruction in courses with high failure rates in order to improve student learning and achievement.

**Retention in the Lower Division.** Most of our students who leave without achieving their degrees do so in the lower division, with 34% of our first-time
freshmen leaving before beginning junior year. We believe that this attrition results from a variety of factors, including a lack of engagement at both the curricular and co-curricular levels that is indicated by our campus NSSE scores. By undertaking a systematic and campus-wide analysis of the first year, we aim to address the causes of lower-division student attrition by improving the academic, social, and emotional experiences of our students at every level.

3. Long-Term Plan

Our campus plan is structured around five major areas:
1. improved course availability and curricular planning;
2. coordinated, intrusive and strategic advising;
3. broad accessibility and visibility of student success data;
4. high-quality student experience in the first year of college for incoming freshmen and new transfers; and
5. effective, targeted support services to achieve educational equity (directed specifically at our first-generation, low-income and underrepresented students, with special attention to men of color).

At San Francisco State, the campus-wide Student Success and Graduation Initiative has identified the following challenges to persistence, graduation, and achievement:

Course Availability and Curricular Planning
In senior exit surveys, students consistently report “course availability” as one of the top two barriers to their timely graduation; indeed, a preliminary diagnostic report reveals that 46% of the university’s undergraduate courses are filled at or above 96% capacity, corroborating students’ complaint that many courses that are required for graduation are inaccessible to them.

Our campus strategy to increase course availability includes three components: 1) data-informed analysis of student course demand to enable effective curricular planning; 2) a fully-funded curriculum, including adequate funding for lecturers, GTAs, and tenure-line faculty to teach required courses in high-demand major and general education requirements; 3) support for programs to analyze and restructure their curriculum—with a special focus on pre-requisites, requirements, and electives—in order to reduce students’ excess unit load and advance their academic achievement and success.

These plans require the following resources:
1. A tool to predict and analyze student course demand (Ad Astra Platinum Analytics; purchased with 2015-16 SSCI funds; additional funding sought to expand user training to department chairs and associate deans)
2. Funding for additional sections of high-demand courses (to be determined)
3. Support for programs to undertake curriculum revision (funded until 2017 with grants from Teagle and Keck Foundations)
4. Funds to support expanded Teaching & Learning Center programs and services to assist with and complement faculty efforts to review and revise the curriculum to better align with student success and graduation outcomes.

**Advising**
The second-most identified barrier to timely graduation, according to the same senior exit surveys, is inadequate advising. In response, Academic Affairs conducted an operational review of advising in 2015-16, which utilized student surveys, focus groups, and analysis by external consultants. The final report concluded that advising at San Francisco State is understaffed, uncoordinated, and unwelcoming or inaccessible to students; the report then offered cogent recommendations for building an integrated, strategic campus-wide advising system. We are preparing to implement these recommendations.

In response, we plan to hire new advisors in both the central Undergraduate Advising Center and the college-based resource centers who can share data and up-to-date knowledge about advising best practices and university policies and structures affecting student success. Advising that takes place in other administrative units will also be reevaluated. We have also begun to raise funds to renovate our central advising center into a more accessible and welcoming space for students in one-on-one and group advising sessions. And we are attempting to build out our data capacity (as well as the training necessary to advising staff) in order to facilitate a more strategic, case-management-based advising system that can direct help where it can best meet student need (as detailed in the next section). We also will strive to proactively identify students in need of assistance earlier in each academic term so that we can deliver “just in time” intervention and more structured, intrusive support.

These plans necessitate the following resources:

1. Hiring a minimum of 27 new advisors across the campus, including 6 advisors jointly appointed in each college and the Undergraduate Advising Center, who can be trained in e-advising and student success data management; 5 advisors to serve in the six colleges as retention specialists, focused on lower-division students (with one in each of the four largest colleges and one shared between the two smaller colleges); 10 advisors to serve as graduation specialists, focused on upper-division students (with two each in our four largest colleges and one in each of our two smaller colleges); 2 new advisors serving full-time in the Undergraduate Advising Center to focus on undeclared students and students changing majors, and 4 new career counselors serving in Career Services in the Dean of Students Office. *(4 of the 27 will be hired with SSCI funds)*

2. One-time support to complete renovation of the Undergraduate Advising Center and to renovate College Resource Centers in the College of Science and Engineering (COSE), the College of Health and Social Sciences (CHSS),
and the College of Business. ($1.2 million of estimated $6 million already raised through grants and donors; additional funding sought.)

**Student Success Data**

Our plan to develop a more strategic advising system necessitates a responsive, accessible platform that makes student success data available to departments, colleges, and the central administration in order to monitor and address student degree progress. Such a technology solution will also enable more effective data analytics and predictive analytics to inform strategic decision making. Ideally, data will be captured in “real time” and longitudinally in the following ways:

- By class cohort, to track impact of large scale interventions over time
- By targeted student communities, to ensure that we close and keep closed any achievement gaps
- By major/program, to ensure ongoing curricular and co-curricular improvements are achieving intended goals and outcomes
- By courses/sections, to help improve teaching and learning outcomes

This plan requires the following resources:

1. Ongoing support for a student success platform, such as EAB Student Success Collaborative, with additional support to train advisors, chairs, and other college administrators in data-driven student success efforts. *(source not yet identified)*
2. Support for a campus-wide data warehouse

**The First Year of College**

San Francisco State experiences its highest levels of attrition in the lower division, when 34% of our beginning FTF students leave without a degree before beginning their junior year. Institutional research has identified a number of factors that contribute to this unacceptably high attrition rates (in addition to course availability and advising):

1. **Academic and social engagement**: our campus NSSE results reveal disappointing levels of engagement among students overall, especially in the first two years of college, which we hope to address by scaling up our high-impact practices and emphasizing high-quality student experience across the curriculum and co-curriculum; this will necessarily involve concerted efforts by both faculty and staff across the campus.
2. **Poor fit with major**: many of our students declare a major prematurely, without adequate guidance about appropriate majors that would align with their goals and skills, contributing further to low engagement, underperformance, and attrition. Improving our lower-division curriculum, advising for undeclared students and career counseling will address this need;
3. **Sense of belonging**: with a campus that is extremely diverse, we will provide more purposeful, accessible and frequent opportunities for students to engage in meaningful ways around issues of inclusion, intersections of
identity and social justice, as well as global community citizenship and service-based learning, which the research has shown can be powerful conduits for student connection, while also helping to improve the campus climate;

4. **Bureaucracy**: Surveys of students consistently identify campus “bureaucracy” and “runaround” in the student-facing functions and units as a source of anxiety, discouragement, and stereotype threat. By better understanding the many points and levels at which students engage with the university, as well as identifying and resolving points of both overlap and inconsistency, we intend to create a more welcoming, user-friendly environment for beginning students and others.

5. **Health and wellness barriers**: The most prevalent health-related factors that SF State students report as negatively impacting their academic performance include: stress (31.4%), anxiety (20.8%), sleep difficulties (20.1%), and depression (15.7%).

While San Francisco State historically served as a transfer institution, its growing numbers of entering first-time freshmen (including many from Southern California) require a new level of attention that involves a broad-scale culture-change on our campus among faculty, staff, and administrators. Similarly, an intentional shift from being a primarily commuter institution to one that increasingly serves students who live on campus requires us to restructure our models of campus life and student community, as well as organizing when and how we deliver instruction and student amenities.

To enhance our capacities to improve student engagement, new personnel resources needed include but are not limited to: (1) student organization advisers who will coach, mentor and develop student leaders and future leaders; (2) experienced student activities and events professionals who know how to involve students actively in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of comprehensive student programs, both small and large scale; and (3) health and recreation professionals to improve student wellbeing, decrease stress and increase active learning capacities. Work should be planned and delivered to purposefully close the student engagement gaps identified in our own NSSE survey results, particularly with lower-division/first year students. Implemented effectively, these programs can produce higher than predicted graduation rates.

To effect these changes, we have contracted with the John Gardner Institute to undertake a campus-wide “Foundations of Excellence” program over the next two years, beginning Fall 2016. We expect this program, which involves broad collaboration and inquiry across the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, to help us better understand the experience of beginning students from a holistic, integrated perspective, while also fostering coalitions of faculty, staff, and administrators dedicated to advancing lower-division student success.
This plan necessitates the following resources:

1. Foundations of Excellence contract (*funded with SSCI allocation, shared across AA and SAEM*)
2. Supplemental funds for meals, campus events, campus retreat
3. FYE program manager (*to be hired by SAEM with SSCI funds*)

**Targeted Support Services**

We are committed to eliminating the achievement gap that affects too many of our first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students. For example, 24% of our new freshmen are placed on probation at least once in their first year, of whom 72% leave without completing a degree; among these students, URM, first-generation, and Pell-eligible students are overrepresented in these figures.

Campuses that serve a significant number of students who are first-generation and/or low-income in particular must invest in the requisite level of quality, responsive programs/services that promote and sustain both academic and social integration for students in a structured systemic manner. We know that targeted support works: Metro College Success Program, which enrolls first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students in learning communities with integrated tutoring and academic support, achieves five-year graduation rates of nearly double the university's average. We are addressing our achievement gaps by expanding Metro to include more than 1400 students, while also expanding our targeted support services to reach more students outside Metro.

Our low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students currently lack a sense of belonging on our large, urban campus. In order to foster community and deliver targeted support on the co-curricular level, the campus is launching a search for a Director of Human Relations in Fall 2016, with expected hire date by January 1, 2017. That inaugural incumbent will begin campus climate assessment efforts and initiate program planning to increase opportunities for meaningful engagement around issues of diversity and dialogue across difference, as well as strive to support civil discourse, reduce stereotype threat and promote intercultural learning.

This plan necessitates the following resources:

1. Expansion of Metro to 10 academies across the campus (*currently funded through the Governor's Innovation Award but in need of permanent funding to support additional faculty, staff, and advisors*)
2. Expansion of tutoring, particularly in writing and math (*currently funded through SSCI; additional support sought*)
3. Expansion of supplemental instruction aligned with high failure-rate courses (*currently funded through grants but in need of permanent funding*)
4. Expansion of the newly established Office of Human Relations (*currently funded in part through SSCI; additional funding is needed to sustain programming expenses and additional educators/support staff*)
This long-term plan to improve student outcomes by addressing course availability, advising, student success data, the first year of college, and targeted support services will mobilize faculty, staff, administrators, and others who care about San Francisco State and its students. We have already made considerable investments as a campus; by directing future funding toward these identified areas of need, we expect to achieve dramatic improvements in our retention and graduation rates.
Our campus has recently adopted Ad Astra Platinum Analytics to analyze student course demand and better align our supply to meet it. Ad Astra’s diagnostic report of course availability at SF State reveals that we will need to add 150 sections in order to student demand for critical courses and an additional 481 sections in order to ease further bottlenecks, so the anticipated 200 sections is a modest estimate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addition candidates</th>
<th>150 sections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential addition candidates</td>
<td>481 Sections</td>
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</table>

The total cost of $2,149,700 has been rounded up to $2,150,000, the amount of funding allocated to San Francisco State in one-time student success funding.

1. Academic Institutional Research, SF State Senior Exit Survey (San Francisco State: February 5, 2016), 3
2. The total cost of $2,149,700 has been rounded up to $2,150,000, the amount of funding allocated to San Francisco State in one-time student success funding.
3. Academic Institutional Research, Summary of Highlights from Surveys and Studies, 2009-14 (San Francisco State University, 2015), 7.
5. Summary of Highlights from Surveys and Studies, 2009-14, 4.
6. According to the most campus recent NSSE report, SF State students experience significantly lower levels of engagement than their peers at other campuses within comparative CSU, Carnegie Class, and NSSE 2013 and 14 campuses, particularly on measures of “Campus Environment,” including both “Quality of Interactions” and “Supportive Environment.” National Survey of Student Engagement, Engagement Indicators: San Francisco State University (NSSE 2014), 3.
8. SF State Senior Exit Survey, 5.
### CSU Advising Comparisons

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Long Beach</th>
<th>Pomona</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>(plus 3 vacant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Professional</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Advisors</td>
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<td>16.5</td>
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<td>1:1100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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9 SF State Senior Exit Survey, 3.

10 American College Health Association. American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment II: San Francisco State University Executive Summary Spring 2016. Hanover, MD: American College Health Association; 2016.