



## Highly Valued Degree Initiative 2025

California State University Long Beach

# HVDI 2025

## Background

CSULB is fully committed to the vision articulated in the CA Assembly Bill 1602 to raise four-year graduation rates for freshmen, raise two-year graduation rates for transfer students, and eliminate the achievement gaps for both under-represented students and Pell eligible students. This vision aligns perfectly with the core academic purpose that CSULB has long articulated: *To graduate students with highly valued degrees*. The campus has been making significant progress over the past five years, specifically in the six-year freshman and four-year transfer graduation rates. CSULB has raised its six-year graduation rates from 53% to the current high of 67%, and four-year transfer graduation rates have improved from 69% to the current 80%. The achievement gap for freshmen has been reduced to 6% for underrepresented students and 4% for Pell eligible students, and the achievement gap for transfer students is close to 1% for the past three years. These gains were made even while more underrepresented students (42% in 2010 to 52% in 2014) and more Pell students (35% in 2010 to 49% in 2014) have enrolled on campus for the past five years. These accomplishments have taken place with proactive leadership at the university and college level. While there is considerable progress with the 6-year freshman and 4-year transfer graduation rates, there is significant work ahead in regard to 4-year freshman graduation rates and in reducing achievement gaps.

## Organization for Student Success – HVDI 2025

To continue our journey in student success, a renewed HVDI 2025 institution-wide Steering Committee will be formed with representatives from each of the academic colleges (including associate deans and faculty selected by academic senate), Division of Student Affairs, University Center for Academic Advising, Institutional Research, Enrollment Services, Faculty Center for Professional Development, and the Office of Undergraduate Studies. Chaired jointly by the Provost and the VP for Student Affairs, six taskforces will be formed for each of the following areas: Re-Imagining the First-Year of College (RFY), Time to Degree, Diversity and Support Services, Strategic Advising, Faculty Development, Research & Evaluation. They will meet every other week to sustain momentum and focus.

The goals for each taskforce are as follows:

- **RFY Taskforce:** dramatically improve the quality of learning and student experiences in the first year, both for first-time freshmen and transfer students, increase retention rates, and improve student success. RFY is a nation-wide, three-year project under the umbrella of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) with deliverables in the areas of Credit Accumulation, Credit Completion Ratio and Gateway Completion Rates. Thus, this effort is strategic to closing the achievement gap and further improve timely degree completion.
- **Time to Degree Taskforce:** focus on freshman 4-year and transfer 2-year graduation rate improvement strategies.
- **Diversity & Support Services Taskforce:** improve retention rates for freshmen and transfers and eliminate “achievement gaps” for low income and underrepresented minority students compared to other students.
- **Strategic Advising Taskforce:** ensure that all students meet with an advisor annually and all unit advisors implement university priorities using CSULB’s comprehensive suite of e-Advising tools.
- **Faculty Development Taskforce:** expand the use of the most effective instructional methods that contribute to retention and learning for all students, and to develop strategies to reduce and eventually eliminate bottleneck courses in 4-year roadmaps.

- **Research and Evaluation Taskforce:** support all task forces with data and analysis capabilities in planning, implementing and evaluating campus efforts toward the 2025 graduation goals.

Each year HVDI commits \$2.3M for student success proposals approved by the committee. This amount is funded by the Student Excellence Fee (SEF). These projects have helped shape student success innovations within various units of the university, particularly at the college level, where data-driven approaches to student success have produced unprecedented measureable outcomes for student success programming. While we are able to fund only two-thirds of the proposals submitted, every year we receive proposal requests in excess of \$3.9M. With the focus on renewed goals for Student Success 2025, we expect HVDI 2025 to receive a significantly greater number of proposals. Considering the potential to influence the campus through this effort, the campus will invest an approximately \$2.0M from CO Graduation Initiative funds to target the 2025 goals. This is a one-time investment for 2016-17, pending approval by the CA legislature.

### Goals & Timeline

Based on the current university strategic priorities and goals, the campus is already committed to meeting the 2017-18 goals of 20% graduation rate for freshmen and 40% for transfer students, as identified in Tables 1 & 2 below. In Fall 2016, when the University Strategic Planning committee meets, the team will formalize specific goals for 2025 proposed in the tables below.

**Table 1: Freshman graduation goals and cohort size**

Year	Freshman Cohort Size			4-Year Graduation Rate & Gap		
	Cohort	URM	Pell	Grad Rate	URM Gap	Pell Gap
2010-11	4,217	42%	35%	14.0%	3.9%	6.1%
2011-12	4,606	43%	36%	14.8%	6.2%	6.3%
2012-13	3,551	49%	41%	16.1%	6.6%	6.3%
2013-14	3,988	50%	49%	15.0%	5.1%	8.4%
2014-15	3,987	52%	49%	16.1%	7.0%	10.2%
<b>Goal</b>	<b>2017-18</b>			<b>20.0%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
Goal	2024-25			39.0%	<2.0%	<2.0%

**Table 2: Transfer graduation goals and cohort size**

Year	Transfer Cohort Size			2-Year Graduation Rate & Gap		
	Cohort	URM	Pell	Grad Rate	URM Gap	Pell Gap
2010-11	2,077	37%	36%	25.7%	0.0%	5.0%
2011-12	2,275	37%	39%	26.7%	-1.6%	1.6%
2012-13	2,686	38%	46%	26.4%	-0.3%	6.3%
2013-14	3,940	45%	52%	30.4%	0.7%	6.4%
2014-15	3,284	47%	53%	36.6%	1.0%	0.9%
<b>Goal</b>	<b>2017-18</b>			<b>40.0%</b>	<b>&lt;2.0%</b>	<b>&lt;2.0%</b>
Goal	2024-25			45.0%	<2.0%	<2.0%

# HVDI ORGANIZATION

**Executive Sponsors:** Provost & VP Student Affairs

**Co Leaders:** Vice Provost for Academic Planning & AVP for Health & Wellness or Director of Career Development Center

**Steering Committee:** At least one Associate Dean for each College, Senate Chair, Director of IR&A, AVP for Enrollment Services, Director of UCUA, AVP Undergraduate Studies, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, AVP for Faculty Affairs, Director of Faculty Center for Professional Development, AVP for Academic Technologies, AVP for Health & Wellness, Director of Career Development Center, AVP Student Retention and Co-Curricular Experience

**Taskforces:** Each taskforce will include one to two faculty nominated by Academic Senate along with key staff with expertise in the area, and will be led by a steering committee member and/or a faculty.

## Task Force 1: Re-Imagining the First Year (RFY)

**Proposed Lead:** AVP Undergraduate Studies & other

**Goal:** Dramatically improve the quality of learning and student experience in the first year, increase retention rates, and improve student success.

**Charge:** Establish action groups that will be responsible for recommending innovative strategies for comprehensive first-year student success (i.e., first time freshmen and new transfer students). Action groups will recommend policies and procedures affecting first year students, examine successful practices, coordinate initiatives for the improvement of campus-wide first year student support and build student learning outcomes and program effectiveness measures into RFY initiatives.

## Task Force 2: Time to Degree

**Proposed Lead:** Vice Provost for Academic Planning & other

**Goal:** Reduce time to degree.

**Charge:** Identify reasons why only 16% of the FTF graduate in 4 years and 30% of the transfer students graduate in 2 years. Develop a comprehensive strategy that includes effective communications campaign to increase the 4-year graduation rates to 39% and increase 2-year transfer graduation rates to 45%. Give specific attention to low income and underrepresented minority students.

## Task Force 3: Career Development and Student Services

**Proposed Lead:** Director of Career Development Center &/or other

**Goal:** Improve student preparation for career and post-graduate opportunities. Improve student motivation for timely graduation and eliminate “achievement gaps” for low income and underrepresented minority students compared to other students.

**Charge:** Identify currently unmet student support needs giving specific attention to needs of low income and underrepresented minority freshmen and transfer students. Implement strategies to track progress

to ensure all targeted students are actively engaged in the process and prepared to apply for internships, employment, graduate school, or other post-graduate opportunities. Implement strategies to eliminate “achievement gaps” for low income and underrepresented minority students.

#### **Task Force 4: Strategic Advising**

**Proposed Lead:** AVP Undergraduate Studies or Director of UCUA and other

**Goal:** Ensure that all students meet with an advisor annually and all advisors strategically use the e-Advising tools.

**Charge:** Identify and implement strategies to ensure that all students meet with an advisor at least once a year and use degree planner and all other e-tools effectively to support timely graduation. Develop standardized advising practices to ensure e-Advising tools are efficiently used by all staff and faculty involved in student advising within all colleges and units.

#### **Task Force 5: Faculty Development**

**Proposed Lead:** Director of Faculty Center for Professional Development and other

**Goal:** Expand the use of the most effective instructional methods that contribute to retention and learning for all students.

**Charge:** Identify most effective instructional methods that contribute to reducing course failure rates and improving retention and learning. Develop and nurture a culture of faculty development to sustain and celebrate effective instructional methods that have the highest impact.

#### **Task Force 6: Research and Evaluation**

**Proposed Lead:** Director of IR&A and other

**Goal:** Support, through research and evaluation, all task forces in planning, implementing and evaluating campus efforts toward graduation goals.

**Charge:** Support the development of both quantitative and qualitative data collection, archival, and reporting methods. Support task groups in the analyses and evaluation of current and future campus interventions. Develop user-centric reports on key indicators of student success to support taskforce initiatives. Design reports to be useful for specific departments, units and programs. Monitor and track campus progress toward 2025 goals.

#### **Working principles:**

- Benefit all our students
- Mindful of CSULB’s mission of “access and success”
- Improve quality and value of our degrees
- Mindful of faculty and staff workload (work smarter, not harder)
- Work cooperatively in support of students
- Use data for planning and decision-making

## STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

### Task Force 2: Time to Degree

**Eliminating Bottleneck Courses:** Bottleneck courses often complicate student progress by delaying completion of pre-requisite or sequenced courses and increasing time-to-degree. The bulk of our campus bottlenecks arise from low completion rate courses rather than poor enrollment planning. However, in order to improve the 4-year graduation rates, we need to revisit enrollment planning very strategically. We are committed to implementing a predictive enrollment-planning tool, *Platinum Analytics*, in the 2016-2017 academic year to ensure availability of seats in the high priority courses that students need to make progress toward their degrees. Currently, 83% of the continuing students maintain their degree plans. We need to implement advising strategies that will increase student compliance above 95%. Accurate degree plans will be key to predicting course demands and tracking student progress toward 4-year graduation goals.

Platinum Analytics and Degree Planner data mining are in preliminary stages. The full potential of these tools will be realized when there is a dedicated staff assigned for data mining, data analysis, validation, and tracking reports to influence the planning process. Considering these tools are very new, it is critical to devote resources to lead this effort and fully integrate these tools into the university planning process.

**Provost's Graduation Incentive Award:** In Summer 2016, we piloted a fee waiver incentive, named the Provost's Graduation Incentive Award, to increase the latest 4-year graduation rates. We targeted the 2012 cohort of first-time freshmen with less than six units to complete their degree requirements. Considering that summer course fees are higher and financial aid is not necessarily available, it is highly likely that such students will postpone graduation until the following fall. We invited 97 students to partake in this initiative and 37 students accepted. We are currently in the process of surveying the students who did not accept the award to learn the reasons why they did not participate and how we can improve the acceptance rate for the future. Based on preliminary feedback it is clear we need to build financial incentives for students to graduate in four years. The total cost for funding 37 students in this program was approximately \$150K. As we better understand the structure of the award that is most effective, we need to develop a special pool of incentive funds that are targeted at students who can graduate in four years. The 4-year graduation gap is larger for Pell eligible students, who graduate at a rate of 10.2% compared to non-Pell students who graduate at a rate of 21.1% for the Fall 2011 cohort. Over the years, this gap has widened.

Financial challenges are clearly a hurdle for 4-year graduation. As part of the expanded Provost's incentive award, CSULB should dedicate additional non-general funds targeted at 4-year graduation, which can target about 300 additional students per year.

## STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

### Task Force 3: Career Development and Student Services

**Targeted Career Readiness Initiative:** To promote student success and 4-year graduation, it is critical that students receive intentional career development opportunities that pertain to their discipline of interest. Successful internships leading to employment or coaching and mentorship for pursuing graduate education are indispensable. There is no better incentive for a student to graduate than having a job or graduate school lined up. As part of the initiative to improve 4-year graduation rates, we will require all juniors and seniors who are on track to graduate in 4 and 4.5 years (see Table 3) to attend mandatory career development services and/or graduate school mentorship programs. These programs are currently offered on a voluntary basis through the Career Development Center and Graduate Studies Resource Center.

We need counselors who will be integrated as staff members of the Career Development Center to focus entirely on this critical initiative. The Career Development Center and Graduate Studies Resource Center staff can organize specialized workshops and events to support this critical task, in partnership with employers and other agencies. They should track progress to ensure all targeted students are actively engaged in the process and prepared to apply for internships, employment, or graduate school.

### Task Force 4: Strategic Advising

**Advising Campaigns:** Our recently adopted suite of student- and/or advisor-facing e-Advising tools provide the structures that allow students to engage more in their own educational planning by recognizing the benefits of a full-unit course load and the importance of early major and career exploration. On the academic advisor's end, our new e-Advising tools enable us to conduct pro-active advising campaigns targeting the 2025 goals and to respond quickly to early alerts with intentional advising. Although we are in the early stages of full implementation, we are certain that growing competencies in the use of these tools will yield large gains in lowered units to degree and increased degree attainment. The implementation includes the development of a standard university-wide advising calendar that highlights advising and "nudge" opportunities throughout the academic year. Advisor training is ongoing to ensure maximum adoption of our new e-Advising capacities.

The Degree Planner automatically recommends a multi-year plan to graduation for students based on their remaining requirements. Students and advisors can further individualize these plans as needed. Almost 31,000 of our 32,800 undergraduates can utilize the planner. Approximately 83% of continuing students have utilized the tool and we have already seen 90% adoption among the Fall 2016 incoming freshmen. The Degree Planner allows students to visualize their entire progress to degree, arranged both in semester-by-semester table format as well as in a pie chart of units accomplished towards the degree. Students can also move their developed plan directly into the Class Schedule Planner to begin the registration process, thus implementing all aspects of our e-advising tools as a cohesive system that aids students toward graduation.

We currently have over 65 campaigns for student success across the university. However, these campaigns are not sufficiently vetted for effectiveness nor are they prioritized based on 2025 goals. We need to institute a data 'guru team' at the Academic Affairs level to provide oversight and recommendations on student success markers as well as data driven decisions as to which university-wide advising outreach campaigns could be the most impactful for improving our 4-year graduation rates. This 'guru team' will also organize the campaigns into 'priority levels' – Level 1 for University priority, Level 2 for College priority, and Level 3 for Department priority. Each campaign will be strictly

## STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

documented for process, format, data to be collected, and data tools available for tracking progress. *Developing business processes around each campaign will allow us to institutionalize and streamline the workflow among the advising team.*

**Degree Planner Data:** Based on Degree Planner data, we can identify the number of students who could complete their respective majors within four years and 4.5 years. For example, in the College of Business Administration (CBA) there are 111 seniors who can graduate in four years, with their last term being Spring or Summer 2017, which is 2.6% of the university FTF cohort. In addition, there are 173 seniors (4% of cohort) who plan to graduate in Fall 2017, which will be 4.5 years. Clearly, CBA has an opportunity to double its 4-year graduation by developing strategies to encourage students on the 4.5-year pathway to complete their course work by Summer 2017. This strategy can extend to juniors in the college where there is more time to plan for a 4-year graduation.

In the 2016-17 academic year, we should organize an advising campaign to ensure all students on a 4-year plan remain on the plan and that there are no curricular hurdles preventing them from completing the plan. Furthermore, each college should carefully review all 4.5-year degree plans and develop strategies to convert at least 50% of the students to a 4-year plan. The conversion may include a number of key strategies, including permitting students into required courses, utilizing the Provost’s Graduation Incentive Award, or other college specific incentives.

For the University Total, there are 849 seniors (20% of cohort) on a 4-year plan and an additional 872 seniors (20.1% of cohort) on a 4.5-year plan totaling 40.1% of the entire cohort. In addition, there are 995 juniors on a 4-year plan and an additional 980 juniors on a 4.5-year plan, totaling 45.6% of the cohort. Hence, focusing our efforts on these segments of the cohort for the immediate future is essential for improving the 4-year graduation in 2016-17 and 2017-18.

**Table 3: Students on track to graduate in 4-years and 4.5-years based on Degree Planner data.**

College	Cohort	4-Year Plan			4.5 Year Plan		
		Graduating Term	Total	% of Cohort	Graduating Term	Total	% of Cohort
Business Administration	Senior	Spring & SU 2017	111	2.6%	Fall 2017	173	4.0%
	Junior	Spring & SU 2018	208	4.8%	Fall 2018	122	2.8%
Education	Senior	Spring & SU 2017	5	0.1%	Fall 2017	8	0.2%
	Junior	Spring & SU 2018	5	0.1%	Fall 2018	25	0.6%
Engineering	Senior	Spring & SU 2017	128	2.9%	Fall 2017	140	3.2%
	Junior	Spring & SU 2018	156	3.6%	Fall 2018	163	3.8%
Health and Human Services	Senior	Spring & SU 2017	196	4.5%	Fall 2017	213	4.9%
	Junior	Spring & SU 2018	222	5.1%	Fall 2018	224	5.2%
Liberal Arts	Senior	Spring & SU 2017	275	6.3%	Fall 2016	193	4.4%
	Junior	Spring & SU 2018	225	5.2%	Fall 2017	292	6.7%
Natural Sciences & Mathematics	Senior	Spring & SU 2017	46	1.1%	Fall 2017	63	1.5%
	Junior	Spring & SU 2018	91	2.1%	Fall 2018	88	2.0%
The Arts	Senior	Spring & SU 2017	88	2.0%	Fall 2017	82	1.9%
	Junior	Spring & SU 2018	88	2.0%	Fall 2018	66	1.5%
<b>UNIVERSITY TOTAL</b>	Seniors	Spring & SU2017	849	20%	Fall 2017	872	20.1%
	Juniors	Spring & SU2018	995	23%	Fall 2018	980	22.6%

## STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER

### Task Force 6: Research and Evaluation

**Data-Driven Decision Making:** To further improve graduation rates and reduce achievement gaps, the departments and colleges must take ownership of both data and solutions that drive this change. The next level of progress requires broad acceptance and solutions at the department level, which may be unique to each discipline. To foster this change in culture, CSULB is promoting a 3-year targeted initiative to engage faculty and staff in leading this change through the “Faculty & Staff Data Fellows Program” for student success. Our goal is to empower the Data Fellows to become experts on these data and, in turn, to cultivate broader understanding and application of available data regarding persistence, achievement gaps, and graduation rates. One faculty member, one staff member, and the associate dean from each college lead the effort for their respective college. All student-facing units, including Student Affairs, Undergraduate Studies, the University Center for Undergraduate Advising, Enrollment Services, and Institutional Research also have staff members participating. The Associate Deans of the colleges of Education and Natural Sciences and Mathematics serve as Project Directors, supported by staff in Academic Affairs.

While we have made modest investments in this area for the past year, we need to increase investment significantly to make inroads within each department, enhance capabilities with Institutional Research (IR), and support the data fellows program to serve the broader needs of the institution.