

# STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EQUITABLE STUDENT SUCCESS 2020–2024

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Strategic Planning Services Provided By:

The Weiss Group 



## INTRODUCTION

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*Cal State East Bay welcomes and supports a diverse student body with academically rich, culturally relevant learning experiences which prepare students to apply their education to meaningful lifework, and to be socially responsible contributors to society. Through its educational programs and activities, the university strives to meet the educational needs and to contribute to the vitality of the East Bay, the state, the nation, and global communities.*

—Mission, Cal State East Bay

### **Collaborating to Advance Our Mission**

Cal State East Bay’s “Strategic Plan for Equitable Student Success” is the result of two university divisions – Academic Affairs and Student Affairs – partnering to seamlessly support the lifelong academic and professional journeys of our students.

This initiative is an expansion of the university’s 2017 Strategic Enrollment Plan and builds on those efforts to create a scalable, student-centered ecosystem that meets the needs of our highly diverse student population.

2020 has been a year of unprecedented change and challenge. COVID-19 and our ongoing national confrontation with institutionalized racism have influenced every aspect of our thinking. The following Strategic Plan is stronger and more meaningful as a result. It reflects the true, long-term needs of our students and outlines how we will create effective pathways that support their transition to Cal State East Bay, between academic milestones, and toward a satisfying career.

Our Strategic Plan is:

- **Inclusive** – By incorporating the perspectives of diverse stakeholder groups, we’ve strived to reflect the needs of *all* our students.
- **Comprehensive** – Our students and graduates face academic, financial, social, and professional challenges. To help ensure their success we need to take a holistic approach that addresses these needs.
- **Actionable** – Our Goals are supported by ambitious but realistic metrics that establish a benchmark for how we’ll measure our success.

This document represents the collective work of Academic Affairs’ and Student Affairs’ leadership, faculty and staff, and Cal State East Bay’s students. This open, collaborative approach reflects our commitment to developing a Strategic Plan that is owned by both divisions and positions Cal State East Bay and each student it serves for a bright, dynamic future.

## METHODOLOGY AND TIMELINE

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Cal State East Bay's Strategic Plan for Equitable Student Success was developed through an iterative process that included feedback and participation from our leadership, faculty, staff, and students. Input from these stakeholders was solicited through full-group strategy sessions, committee meetings, and focus groups. Their feedback informs every aspect of this Strategic Plan, helping to ensure that it is inclusive, diverse, and reflects the mission of our university.

Initiated by Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Edward Inch and Vice President of Student Affairs Suzanne Espinoza, and facilitated by The Weiss Group, the strategic planning effort began in fall 2019. The process was launched with a group of approximately 50 campus leaders during an initial strategic planning session in February 2020. Ongoing work on the Plan was overseen by a Steering Committee comprised of leadership from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. The Steering Committee met through June 2020 to set priorities, evaluate strategies, and guide the Plan's development.

A Vision Statement was crafted to guide the overall Plan and the development of its four Goals. These Goals were brought to life by Goal Groups composed of subject matter experts who established Indicators, Strategies, and Action Plans for each Goal.

In-person and remote focus groups were conducted to provide students with an opportunity to discuss their experiences at Cal State East Bay and brainstorm ways the university could improve recruitment, academic advising, support services, and communication.

The strategic planning process was paused in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We regrouped, re-evaluated our Goals and intended outcomes, and determined that, now more than ever, this initiative was essential for supporting our students. Our planning effort resumed successfully with a modified timeline in a virtual format and the project was completed in summer 2020.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING LEADERSHIP

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Thank you to the Cal State East Bay leaders – across many levels and departments – who contributed to the Strategic Plan for Equitable Student Success, including:

- Edward Inch, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs (Co-Chair)
- Suzanne Espinoza, Vice President, Student Affairs (Co-Chair)
- Kimberly Baker-Flowers, University Diversity Officer, University Diversity Office
- Diana Bargas, Director, Student Outreach (Goal Lead)
- Martin Castillo, Associate Vice President, Campus Life (Goal Lead)
- Linda Dobb, Associate Provost, Faculty and Student Affairs (Goal Lead)
- Michael Lee, Chair, Academic Senate
- Carmen Ortiz, Executive Director, Admissions and Outreach (Goal Lead)
- Jason Smith, Vice Chair, Academic Senate
- Andrea Wilson, Associate Vice President, Student Support Services and Equity Programs (Goal Lead)
- Denise Johnson, Executive Assistant to the Provost, Academic Affairs
- Kimberly Lopez, Office Coordinator, Office of the Provost, Vice President of Academic Affairs
- Aurora Luna, Executive Assistant, Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs

Without the commitment and passion of these individuals – despite extraordinary circumstances – this Plan would not be possible.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

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The Strategic Plan for Equitable Student Success is designed to be clear, distinct, and actionable. The core of the Plan is composed of the following elements:

**Vision:** Where we are going - the desired end-state the Plan will achieve

**Goals:** What our priorities are

**Indicators and Outcomes:** How we know we've been successful

**Strategies:** How we will achieve our Goals

**Action Plan:** Specific year-one tactics that support our identified Strategies

## VISION FOR EQUITABLE STUDENT SUCCESS

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We envision a comprehensive, integrated approach to recruiting, enrolling, advising, and engaging our students throughout their journey as lifelong learners.

***This Vision demonstrates our commitment to:***

- Establishing an inclusive, student-centric culture
- Instilling in our students a sense of belonging as members of our community
- Delivering educational experiences that help our students develop critical thinking; strengthen communication; support equitable, socially just, and sustainable actions; and demonstrate expertise in their chosen discipline
- Creating high-quality, dynamic academic programs that are inviting to all learners
- Supporting our students' needs to pursue their passions and achieve their academic and professional goals
- Developing activities that provide highly impactful learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom that foster community, engagement, and growth

## GOALS

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Our Goals are our strategic priorities. They align with our Vision and establish what we will achieve. These Goals are tied to measurable outcomes and determine how we will invest our time, energy, and resources.

### Goal 1 | Recruitment

Develop and implement a strategic approach to outreach and recruitment that addresses regional, statewide, domestic, and international populations; grows enrollments; and establishes positive relationships that translate to each stage of the student experience.

### Goal 2 | Persistence and Retention

Develop and implement systemic, scalable, and sustainable strategies that empower student success, increase our persistence rate, remove barriers to degree completion, and eliminate equity gaps in student achievement.

### Goal 3 | Academic Programs and Services

Develop academic programs that culminate in certifications and degrees, to advance our mission, prepare students for long-term career success, and address regional, state, and global workforce needs.

### Goal 4 | Student Development and Engagement

Help students achieve their academic goals, cultivate resilience, develop a sense of belonging, and accelerate their social, emotional, and leadership development by providing programs and services throughout the Divisions of Academic and Student Affairs to “meet students where they are.”

## RECRUITMENT

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Develop and implement a strategic approach to outreach and recruitment that addresses regional, statewide, domestic, and international populations; grows enrollments; and establishes positive relationships that translate to each stage of the student experience.

### INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES

1. Generate 60,000 leads by October 1, 2020 and increase leads by 10,000 each subsequent year
2. Generate 26,000 applications by November 30, 2020 and increase applications by 3,000 each subsequent year
3. Increase Statement of Intent to Register (SIRs) by 12% each year
4. Register 1,432 first-time freshmen and 2,242 transfer students for fall 2020, and increase enrollment among each group by 10% each subsequent year
5. Achieve maximum enrollment target of 18,000 full-time equivalent students

### STRATEGIES

1. Conduct regular qualitative and quantitative research to better understand the needs and decision-making process of prospective students
2. Evaluate our recruitment territory to identify and target areas that produce the highest yield and explore growth opportunities to build new markets
3. Create a customer relationship management (CRM) tool to track leads, assess level of interest, and cultivate a positive and seamless admission and enrollment experience
4. Map our recruitment process and identify areas that can be improved and streamlined to ensure a welcoming prospective student experience
5. Develop outreach plans that establish strong communication and collaboration with high school and community college counselors



## PERSISTENCE AND RETENTION

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Develop and implement systemic, scalable, and sustainable strategies that empower student success, increase our persistence rate, remove barriers to degree completion, and eliminate equity gaps in student achievement.

### INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES

1. Reduce the equity gap (URM and PELL eligible) annually over the next 4 years to achieve an overall goal of 0 by 2025
2. Retain 2% more freshmen each year (overall goal: 86% retention by 2025)
3. Graduate 5% more students annually to achieve an annual average of 5,000 by 2025

### STRATEGIES

1. Ensure equitable access to technological resources and course materials needed to succeed at Cal State East Bay
2. Develop an integrated communication plan that increases student awareness and utilization of student support services, including mental health and wellness
3. Increase student knowledge of the financial aid and advising processes so they better understand their options, opportunities, and obligations and can make informed decisions about their future
4. Create a pathway and communication plan that ensures all students have knowledge of and easy access to university services (coordinated effort between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs)
5. Develop targeted outreach and support services (such as tutoring and mentoring) to improve the retention and graduation of PELL eligible students
6. Participate in a student-centric, persona-based, and seamless communications effort that is supported by a university-wide data strategy
7. Fully implement the “CA Promise” program for two- and four-year students
8. Apply an equity-based approach to curriculum development
9. Create a centralized ‘virtual’ resource center for students

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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Develop academic programs that culminate in certifications and degrees, to advance our mission, prepare students for long-term career success, and address regional, state, and global workforce needs.

### INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES

1. Achieve a 75% completion rate for all degree-seeking students within 8 years of starting, by 2025
2. At least 75% of graduates are paying down their loan principal by 2025
3. Median earnings of graduates exceed the median earnings of high school graduates by at least 35% by 2025
4. 25% of certificate and credential students report advancement in their career, as measured by an Outcomes Survey conducted 6 months after program completion

### STRATEGIES

1. Incorporate experiential, “high-impact” learning (internships, service learning, student faculty research, global study, etc.) into each student’s degree roadmap
2. Provide faculty development and support to enhance faculty diversity and strengthen culturally competent instructional capabilities
3. Implement career preparation programs that provide students with professional skills needed to succeed in the job market (professional network development, alumni mentorship, professional engagement, etc.), including a financial literacy program/hub to support student and alumni decision-making
4. Implement a student-focused advising program to proactively guide students toward completion of their academic pathways
5. Focus academic communication materials and resources toward helping students assess their skills and interests to inform major and career selection (coordinated effort between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs)
6. Partner with the Alumni Association to develop and offer continuous training and learning opportunities for alumni to upskill, reskill, and refresh their career paths
7. Identify barriers to degree completion and address them
8. Develop a systematic approach to developing individualized success plans for each transfer student that encompass academic assistance and personalized guidance and support

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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9. Develop metric-driven accountability for departments and allocate resources based on successful achievement of goals
10. Identify key student populations with “equity gaps” and develop targeted, inclusive learning programs to close gaps
11. In consultation with regional businesses and chambers of commerce, develop short-term programs to meet the needs of adult learners who are improving their skill set or preparing for a new field of work

## STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

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Help students achieve their academic goals, cultivate resilience, develop a sense of belonging, and accelerate their social, emotional, and leadership development by providing programs and services throughout the Divisions of Academic and Student Affairs to “meet students where they are.”

### INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES

1. Increase our students’ perceived “sense of belonging” at Cal State East Bay incrementally, as measured by various campus climate assessments, by 2025
2. Ensure that at least 75% of students participate in a university-recognized, high-impact practice or activity that promotes skill building, career orientation, and/or growth mindset by their final academic term
3. Increase the number and frequency of individual student contacts with faculty, staff, and/or programs and services by 25% by fall 2025
4. Close the equity gap by increasing the retention rate for first-year students from underserved communities by 5% annually over the next 5 years
5. Increase the retention rate of first-year students who are on academic probation after their first term by 50% by fall 2025

### STRATEGIES

1. Expand efforts to successfully transition first-year students into a higher education setting through their first academic term
2. Build a summer transition program for all newly enrolled students
3. Offer targeted on-boarding programs and services for underserved cohorts (URM, Pell eligible)
4. Develop programs that teach students how to transfer strengths, skills, and capabilities they’ve built through life experiences to an academic environment
5. Expand wrap-around programs and services for all students on academic probation after their first term, including specific training for advisors and others on how to support first-year students on academic probation through their second term
6. Increase the number of first- and second-year students involved in a student club or organization
7. Further develop certificate programs (such as leadership, sustainability, etc.)
8. Expand First-Job-on-Campus program beyond work study

## STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

*Continued*

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9. Further develop welcome activities for incoming students each term (phone calls, celebration activities, welcome receptions)
10. Increase efforts to showcase campus resources in an intuitive, engaging manner to help students retain the information
11. Develop programs, services, and resources that help students address critical health and wellness issues, such as mental health, substance abuse, exercise, and sexual assault prevention
12. Develop a plan to ensure all basic student needs, such as food and housing, are addressed
13. Identify key student populations with lower “sense of belonging” scores on campus climate assessments and develop plan for addressing each area
14. Strengthen our support of African American, Latino, Asian Pacific Islander, Native American and undocumented students to promote engagement and academic success