Cal State LA — Eliminating Equity Gaps

1) **Recognize the critical importance that advisors and other staff play in promoting the success of underserved students; and 2) Monitor participation data for various programs and services designed to improve student success.**

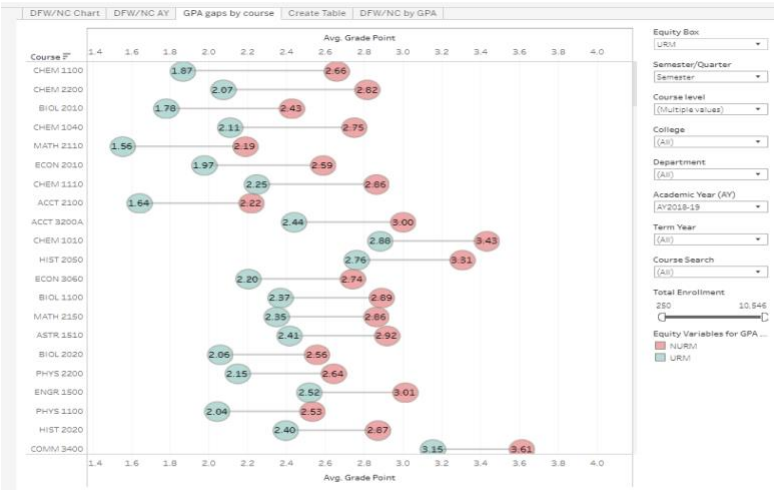
- **Proactive advising** has proven to decrease time to degree and reduce equity gaps. We have invested in a coordinated advising infrastructure by hiring Directors of Student Success and Advising in each college and increasing the number of advisors across campus. At the same time, we have invested in e-advising tools (EAB and degree planner) as well as enrollment and advising technology. These tools help advisors reach more students and target those in the "murky middle" who have satisfactory GPAs but may be going off track. Our advising centers run a number of proactive advising campaigns to reach out to students who repeat courses, who are not making degree progress, who need to enroll in major-prerequisite courses, or who show other signs of struggle in their current path.

- Every first- and second-year student will be assigned a dedicated advisor beginning in 2020-21. Advisors will be trained on **strategic caseload management** practices so that the students who would benefit most from more frequent advising interactions will receive it. This approach addresses our continued challenge in improving the retention and graduation rates of first-time freshmen, and especially men of color.

- One important component of our proactive advising strategy has been our **Early Alert** system, which we implemented in all first-year Quantitative Reasoning courses. In 2019-20, instructors completed 8,297 surveys; 2,901 unique students were flagged, and 1,287 students were flagged for a referral to support. In addition, 71.7% of students of concern met with an advisor; 42% met with learning assistance. Of the students flagged with an appointment, 91.5% returned for spring. EAB indicates that these alerts helped us retain an additional 20 students. The Early Alert System is a critical component of our quantitative reasoning redesign, which has shown to eliminate our Pell gap and reduce our equity gap.

- To foster persistence and targeted interventions for those students that have not reenrolled, a new **dashboard** tool details re-enrollment rates for student populations; the dashboard includes filters to disaggregate students by major/college, gender, and ethnicity. Advisors utilized these, in combination with EAB, to implement re-enrollment campaigns.

- To address completion rates in lower-division courses, we created **new dashboard tools** that enable colleges and departments to identify courses where equity gaps are taking root in students' critical first years.



Using these tools, colleges identify courses for participation in a **Critical Course Redesign** project. Departments review course equity gap data to understand why gaps persist and to identify steps to close gaps, including instructor training and development. Departments commit to ensuring that all sections of the course are taught using a common syllabus with shared assignments and consult with the Center for Effective Teaching and Learning (CETL) on syllabus design to ensure transparency, accessibility, and inclusivity. In addition to all students receiving announcements from the Center for Academic Success (CAS) throughout the semester, students taking these courses for a repeat attempt are contacted by phone in week two and scheduled for a tutoring appointment whenever possible. As availability permits, embedded tutoring is provided for all faculty who request a tutoring presence in the classroom.

Sample data from 2019-2020 has shown improved course completion rates for URM and non-URM students; however, significant gaps continue in these courses and require further attention. We will be implementing the Early Alert system for these courses in 2020-21 in hopes that we will be able to show improvement in this area.

Sample Critical Course Pass Rates by URM-Non-URM status

Course	Group	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
ACCT 2100	Non-URM	73%	77%	83%
	URM	62%	65%	72%
BIOL 2010	Non-URM	53%	68%	79%
	URM	41%	60%	65%
CHEM 1100	Non-URM	81%	72%	80%
	URM	64%	51%	63%
CS 2011	Non-URM	87%	73%	83%
	URM	76%	62%	72%
ECON 3060	Non-URM	84%	80%	85%
	URM	76%	65%	71%
ME 2010	Non-URM	69%	72%	91%
	URM	47%	56%	71%

- We have implemented mandatory advising for all first-year students. This year, we are developing an Academic Success Certificate to be integrated into our required Introduction to Higher Education course. The certificate will focus on topics critical to first-gen students from minoritized communities, including study skills, time management, and how to access campus resources.

3) Implement initiatives aimed at ensuring an inclusive campus climate.

- As part of the Wise Project, we tailored intervention videos during FTF introductory courses. To cultivate social belongingness the student narratives drew on unique sociocultural backgrounds and addressed common transition obstacles.

- Implemented co-curricular experiences that are targeted to address equity gaps and graduation rates such as the RISE mentoring program, Halisi living-learning theme housing, Erika J. Glazer Family Dreamers Resource Center support, Educational Opportunity Program outreach, Cross Cultural Centers programming, and Center for Student Involvement leadership opportunities to promote an engaging co-curricular experience for our diverse student population.

- Conducted assessment plans for each department and Men of Color Success Network focus groups and purchased software to begin tracking student demographic co-curricular participation trends.

- Expanded mental health outreach to include additional mental health first aid sessions for faculty, staff, student leaders, and families (English and Spanish-speaking sessions); increased after-hours support via ProtoCall; offered Let's Talk sessions in the Cross Cultural Centers and Housing and Residence Life; and expanded CAPS workshop topics.

- Provided bilingual family programs such as Family Welcome Day, Parent Academy sessions, family tours, and pantry-to-plate demonstrations for families.

- Expanded and collaborated to offer new leadership development, school spirit, wellness, and diversity-related programming.

- Continued and expanded various food and housing security initiatives such as the food pantry, emergency housing, CalFresh, meal donations, Beyond Basics workshops, and emergency grants. The Glazer Family Dreamers Resource Center offered a Dreamers Emergency Grant in 2019.

- Expanded "Democracy in Action (DIA)" university-wide educational forums that present diverse speakers to students and the broader campus community on topics related to social justice and educational equity; the Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (VP-EDI) offers approximately six DIA forums during each academic year which draw between 200-300 students to each panel presentation.

4) Conduct analyses of the impact of Executive Order 1110 on your campus.

At Cal State Los Angeles, our 2019 freshmen cohort is 77% Pell-eligible, 68% first-generation students, and 79% Latinx. The impact of EO 1110 has given students who may not have enrolled, either through eligibility or remediation, an opportunity to take GE Math. Our results show that GE Math completion rose from 49% in 2016 to 84% in 2019. We closed a 7-point gap in the proportion of freshmen's B4 completion between Pell and non-Pell students while reducing the URM gap by 10 percentage points to 6 percentage points.

% of FTF completing QR in 1st Year	Fall 2016 Cohort	Fall 2017 Cohort	Fall 2018 Cohort	Fall 2019 Cohort
GE Math Completion	49%	60%	77%	84%
URM/Non-URM	45%/61%	56%/72%	76%/84%	83%/89%
Female/Male	45%/54%	58%/62%	80%/74%	84%/83%
1st Gen/Non-1st Gen	46%/53%	58%/65%	77%/79%	83%/86%
Pell/Non-Pell	47%/54%	58%/67%	77%/77%	84%/83%

Although the QR/B4 completion rates during first year significantly increased and the equity gap was reduced, the course pass rates (C+ or higher grades) for URM are still lagging behind those of the other demographic groups, with URM males showing the lowest pass rates. We will be holding focus group discussions this summer with some of our male students of color to better understand their experiences in these classes.

Ethnicity by Gender	Fall 2018-19 B4 Pass Rates			Fall 2019-20 B4 Pass Rates		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
American Indian	100%	100%	100%	100%	NA	100%
Asian	87%	79%	82%	91%	85%	88%
Black	59%	58%	58%	69%	59%	65%
Hispanic	68%	60%	64%	75%	69%	72%
International	71%	61%	66%	75%	69%	72%
Pacific Islander	83%	50%	75%	100%	75%	83%
Two or more	64%	44%	55%	91%	62%	79%
Unknown	65%	62%	64%	84%	71%	79%
White	83%	69%	77%	89%	87%	88%
Grand Total	70%	62%	66%	77%	71%	74%

The following supports and changes are being implemented:

Student Support

- Mid-course check-in survey, administered by CETL on learning and cognition.
- Continuous improvement of coordinated or structured course delivery and content, so instructors can pace with students and improve learning outcomes.

- Early warning system allows instructors to notify Smart Start for Student Success at critical points early in the semester.
- Students who show signs of being off track are directed to Peer-Led Undergraduate Study (PLUS) sessions, which focus on course content and/or to academic coaches, who help them with time management, planning, goal-setting, organization, motivation, connecting to university resources, and study tips.

Faculty Support

- Faculty development emphasizes equity-minded teaching practices.
- Establish additional space for faculty learning community to discuss quality teaching, inclusive classrooms, and positive learning.

Curriculum Support

- Continuous improvement for curriculum design and implementation using redesign strategies to support inclusive changes that are student-centered, faculty-led, administratively supported, and policy enabled.

Data Support

- Develop a quantitative reasoning dashboard to track cohort progress, achievement gaps, and outreach for students who have not completed GE Math.

5) Encourage faculty to conduct analyses of degree requirements and course sequencing within majors to identify opportunities to better prepare students for courses that have high DFW rates.

- Tableau dashboards: Enable analysis of course-level equity gaps.
- Critical Course Redesign project: Departments will review course equity gap data to understand why gaps persist and to identify steps to close gaps, including instructor training and development. Departments work closely with the Center for Academic Success (CAS) to align course pacing and content with academic support interventions.
- Faculty-Led Curriculum Redesign program (funded by Teagle Foundation, College Futures Foundation, CSU): 15 departments participate in faculty-learning communities that support them to improve curricular integrity, facilitate transfer success, and improve equity gaps in retention and graduation.

6) Focus on providing needed financial support for students from historically underserved and low-income communities.

- Cal State LA students have a low loan default rate, which may indicate a good financial understanding about the consequences of debt. Financial aid advisors provide one-on-one counseling as well as several well-attended workshops on different types of available aid.
- Our data show that there is a strong correlation between non-retention and unmet need. We have established a strong system of support through our CARE team, and students work with the Dean of Students office and our case manager to address those needs.

- Financial aid liaisons work with academic advisors to help students understand how their financial aid is affected by progress toward degree, including total units by term and satisfactory academic progress.

7) Explore nuances in the ways in which ethnicity, gender, first-generation designation, academic preparation, and financial hardship intersect at campus and college levels to influence student success.

Although many of the aforementioned programs and initiatives are already specifically focused on these intersections, the introduction of data dashboards that we have described will be instrumental in enabling more nuanced analyses and campaigns in the future.

8) Maintain a focus on equity.

Center for Effective Teaching and Learning (CETL) Inclusive Teaching Program and Certificate: Faculty complete a series of seven online modules designed by faculty subject matter experts on topics such as engaging first-generation learners, managing difficult discussions, and implicit bias. "Equity-Minded Classroom" checklists enable faculty to evaluate their pedagogy for equity-promoting best practices.

TT faculty search process: Includes search committee training on effective outreach, and an interactive process for creating position announcements focusing on inclusive language and clear minimum and preferred qualifications. These efforts have led to CSU-leading diversity of hires.

Advising: Our advisement community has adopted equity as its driving priority for 2019-2020, 2020-21. We are developing Advisor Professional Development & Training sessions and resources focused on the following:

- Validating the experiences of our racially minoritized student and building on their prior knowledge and community assets;
- Developing a culturally responsive approach to advising;
- Developing anti-racist advising strategies: affirmation, support, and advocacy;
- Understanding the Cal State LA student demographic and equity gaps: how advisors can make sense of and use our institutional data to inform their work;
- Leveraging technology/e-advising tools to free time for advisors to build meaningful relationships with their students.

Our Advisor Forum & Institutes, which take place three times per year, focus on communicating and sharing equity-minded practices, timely advisor policies, and processes for removing barriers to degree completion.