Administrative Services, President's Cluster, and Student Success and Support Programs (SSSP), College Centers
Annual Program Planning Worksheet for 2026

Program: Academic Counseling   **Current Year:** 2025-2026

Last Year CPPR Completed: 2022-2023

Current Date: 3/10/2026   **Cluster:** Student Success and Support Programs

The Annual Program Planning Worksheet (APPW) is the process for:
- Reviewing, analyzing and assessing programs on an annual basis
- Documenting relevant program changes, trends, and plans for the upcoming year
- Identifying program needs, if any, that will become part of the program's Resource Plan (**download from this folder**) (Please review the **Resource Allocation Rubric** when preparing the resource plan)
- Highlighting specific program accomplishments and updates since last year's APPW

Please complete the following information. Please note that responses are not required for all elements of this document.

I.   General Program Update

Describe changes and improvements to the program, such as changes to the mission, purpose or direction. Indicate any changes that have been made to address equity gaps.

Program Changes

Academic Counseling has experienced significant change in recent years. In May 2025, the Dean retired and an interim Dean was appointed, who was subsequently hired permanently into the role in November 2025. The interim Division Chair started their permanent appointment on July 1, 2025. Two full-time counselors joined the team, strengthening support for North County and SLO campuses. The department also responded to growing student stress and anxiety by increasing proactive, data-driven outreach.

To improve sustainability, the department established a dedicated part-time counseling budget; beginning Spring 2026, funding will support two part-time counselors, enabling the department to better align permanent staffing with enrollment growth and student demand. Despite these transitions, the department is now more strategic and data-driven and well positioned to continue supporting students' timely completion of their educational goals.

Program Direction

Academic Counseling continues to build equity-centered, student-focused systems that provide early, intentional, and sustained support—helping students complete their goals on time while reducing equity gaps. This work is grounded in Guided Pathways, which aims to clarify student pathways, remove barriers, and ensure all students have a clear, supported roadmap to completion.

Over the past year, the department has expanded Program Mapper and automated Student Education Plan templates, supporting all students—especially disproportionately impacted, post-traditional, and undecided students—by providing a clear foundation for academic planning.

Academic Counseling continues to strengthen proactive, data-informed practices. The department established a formal data request process to ensure counselors have timely access to critical datasets that inform strategic outreach during newly established counselor-initiated contact time, a contractual change that supports more intentional and tailored engagement with students. For example, the department monitors educational goals, conducts targeted outreach, reviews repeat enrollment and no-show patterns, and partners across campus to address barriers in key gateway courses such as transfer-level math and English. One such example is Grad-Ready reporting, a collaboration with Admissions, Student Records and Registration, which verifies degree progress at the time of application, helping prevent delays and support on-time completion. The department is also actively reaching out to first-year students to ensure a student education plan is developed. Early and sustained counseling engagement remains a key equity strategy, with first-year students who meet with a counselor persisting at higher rates. Building on these proactive, data-informed efforts, the department has also implemented targeted process improvements to strengthen procedures and reduce administrative barriers for students.

In Fall 2025, the Counseling Department worked collaboratively with Admissions, Student Records and Registration to implement several equity-centered policy reforms aligned with updated Title 5 guidance. The excused withdrawal and drop process were revised to better support students experiencing crisis, reduce unnecessary withdrawals, and strengthen retention. Through shared governance, the academic renewal policy was updated to be more student-centered and consistent with statewide reforms that expand access, increase flexibility, and promote equitable application across California Community Colleges. Additionally, the College established an expedited mid-semester name change process to ensure timely affirmation of students' identities and foster a respectful, inclusive, and safe learning environment. Building on these equity-centered policy reforms, the department

has also strengthened internal coordination and strategic collaboration to better support student success.

To strengthen collaborative, mission-driven operations, the department established Areas of Study workgroups to coordinate with faculty, department chairs, and division leadership on program and curricular matters, while providing each area with a central point of contact. Additional workgroups focus on key priorities, including training and professional development, technology and tools, and workshop development. These groups build internal capacity through learning communities and shared best practices, enhance student-facing technology and resources, and develop workshops supporting SEP completion, transfer and career planning, and completion and reinstatement. This structure enables the department to work strategically, leverage team expertise, and advance student success through coordinated efforts.

Extending these coordinated efforts, transfer preparation remains embedded throughout the student journey. Academic Counseling supports transfer through services such as University Transfer Day, CSU Transfer Success Pathway outreach, UC and CSU application workshops, university representative engagement, application support, and ongoing progress monitoring to ensure completion of both degree and transfer requirements. Continued collaboration with academic departments and university partners, including California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), maintains alignment of program maps, curriculum, and transfer pathways. Recent outcomes reflect this work: in Fall 2025, Cuesta had 516 applicants to Cal Poly, with 296 admitted (57.4%) and 227 enrolled—its highest admission rate to date, compared to a 20.7% selection rate for transfer applicants overall.

Professional Development and Learning

To best serve students, and increase persistence and degree completion rates, particularly for disproportionately impacted (DI) student groups identified in the Student Equity Plan (SEP), the Dean of SSSP, Division Chair, and counselors participated in the following professional development and learning activities.

The Dean of SSSP, Division Chair, and counselors participated in the following committees and task forces:

1. Accreditation Steering
2. College Council
3. Curriculum
4. Online Education
5. Technology and Web
6. Enrollment Management

7. Employee Wellness
8. Equity and Student Success
9. Academic Senate
10. Scholarship
11. Foundation
12. Library and Information Technology Advisory Board
13. Student Equity Plan Taskforce
14. District Calendar
15. Addiction Treatment Studies Advisory Board
16. Agricultural Business Advisory Board
17. Nursing and Allied Health Selection

Below are key counseling activities supporting student success and advancing institutional goals, with a focus on reducing equity gaps:

Professional Development & Conferences:

- JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) Academy on Curriculum and Teaching
- CIAC Annual Conference
- 2025 CSU Community College Counselor Conference
- 3C2A Annual Convention
- UC ETS (Ensuring Transfer Success)
- UCSB Counselor In-Service
- Stanford University Transfer Admission Webinar
- CCC Counselor Conference
- UC Transfer Webinar Series
- UCLA Counselors Conference
- Cal Poly Transfer Admissions Sessions
- USC Transfer Counselors Webinar
- Statewide Regional Representative Transfer Center Directors Annual Training
- National Conflict Resolution Center Conference
- Flex Session: One More Question: Communicating for Understanding
- Sexual Harassment Prevention for Non-Managers
- Mandated Reporter: Child Abuse and Neglect
- FERPA: Confidentiality of Records
- Safety Data Sheets
- Mental Health First Aid
- Trauma Informed Care
- University of California Transfer Admissions Program (TAP)
- Cal State Apply Training

- Common Application Training
- PSE Financial Literacy
- California Virtual Campus (CVC.edu) Training
- Assist.Org & Articulation Training
- Program Mapper / Pathways Training
- Degree Works Training
- Equal Employment Opportunity Training
- Supporting Neurodivergent Student Success
- North County Data Roundtable
- Email and Messaging Safety
- Sexual Violence Awareness for Employees
- Cybersecurity Overview
- MESA Director and Counselor Summit
- MESA Transfer Prep Workshop
- MESA Transfer Scholar Celebration

Collaboration, Presentations & Workshops:

- College Success (CSS 225) classroom orientations introducing Rising Scholar expectations, academic planning, and college resources
- Collaboration with academic divisions and department chairs to develop and sustain predictable Rising Scholars degree pathways at CMC through coordinated scheduling, multi-year course rotations, and support of new and existing programs
- Ongoing collaboration with faculty, department chairs, and division leadership to support pathways across all areas of study through regular meetings focused on program development, coordinated course planning, and identifying student and support needs
- Student Athlete Eligibility and Enrollment Workshops (team/sport specific)
- Cuesta College Transfer & Career Fairs
- Library and Information Technology Advisory Board
- Agriculture Advisory Committee
- Ongoing collaboration with Nursing, Allied Health, and Addiction Treatment Studies to support program alignment and coordination
- Delivery of targeted student workshops, including Pre-Nursing information sessions and Psychiatric Technician registration support
- Partnership with Ohio University to expand online BS/BA articulation agreements and streamline transfer pathways
- Counselors, including MESA embedded counselors, participated in community-building events, program orientations, and activities that helped students

strengthen academic skills, explore opportunities, and prepare for scholarships, internships, and transfer
- Additional program-specific workshops included: academic skills development (time management and STEM study strategies), career and experiential learning (STEM internship strategies), financial and transfer preparation (scholarship preparation), and program onboarding and engagement

Inreach & Outreach:

- Fast Track/Stay on Track, Cougar Welcome Days, and Welcome Week
- Edúcate – Sí Se Puede
- Promise Day and Promise Steps Workshops
- ACE Academy campus tour and Q&A focused on college pathways, enrichment, and transfer
- Bi-annual Juvenile Hall Outreach conducted each fall and spring, focusing on career and major exploration, academic planning, and introducing college pathways and Rising Scholar opportunities.
- Rising Scholar registration events (fall, spring, summer) supporting new, transfer, and continuing students with registration, transcripts, student success and support programs, and academic planning
- Outreach to local High Schools including Promise presentations, transfer presentations and workshops, area of study presentations and workshops, Parent and Senior Nights, San Luis Obispo County Office of Education SELPA mock interviews and parent orientations, and registration events with San Luis Obispo, Morro Bay, and Arroyo Grande, Shandon, Nipomo, Lopez, Coast Union, Atascadero, Pacific Beach High Schools
- Cuesta College Annual Counselors Summit
- Pre-Nursing and Psychiatric Technician Workshops
- Referrals from Instructional Faculty

II.   Data Analysis and Program-Specific Measurements

Programs are often impacted by institutional or other organizational change. Please review program-relevant institutional data sources, such as institutional enrollment trends, which along with some other relevant program data, is available on the **SLOCCCD Institutional Research website**. Other organizational or departmental measurements may provide useful information for planning in your program; please describe those measurements and the data below.

A. **Data Summary:**

Describe data collection tool(s) used.

The data shown below were drawn from institutional reporting systems and summarize counseling contacts and student persistence rates from 2021-2022 to 2024-2025. In addition to summarizing counseling contacts and growth over time, the data shows first-year persistence rates for students who met with a counselor and for the college overall in the same academic years, allowing for a direct comparison of outcomes and trends related to counseling engagement.

Counseling Services Contact Data					
Location/ Modality	*2021-2022*	*2022-2023*	*2023-2024*	*2024-2025*	*Change Analysis from 2023/24-2024/25*
District-Wide	2694	3510	4392	4907	N=+515, +11.7%
SLO	1376	1482	2052	3314	N=+1,262, +61.5%
North County	229	249	361	755	N=+394, +52.2%
South County	3	3	6	21	N=+15, +250%
Distance Ed	2051	1633	2125	3651	N=+1,526, +71.8%
First Year Persistence: Counseling					
Academic Year	*College-Wide Persistence Rate*		*Counseling Persistence Rate*		*Percentage Point Difference*
2024-2025	58.3%		67.8%		+9.5%
2023-2024	61.3%		72.9%		+11.6%
2022-2023	65.8%		69.9%		+4.1%
2021-2022	66.3%		68.0%		+1.7%

B. **Data Interpretation:**

Describe results from previous improvement efforts to the program based on institutional or departmental changes.

Student utilization of counseling services increased significantly in 2024–25, with district-wide growth of 11.7% (+515 students) compared to 2023–24, driven by especially strong gains at SLO (+61.5%), North County (+52.2%), and Distance Education (+71.8%), indicating substantially expanded reach and access to counseling services across modalities and campuses.

Over the course of the years measured, students who engaged in counseling consistently persisted at higher rates than the college-wide average. The persistence advantage ranges from +1.7 to +11.6 percentage points, with the largest differences occurring in the two most recent years. In 2024–2025, counseled students persisted at a rate 9.5 percentage points higher than the college-wide average (67.8% vs. 58.3%), underscoring the continued and meaningful role of counseling services in supporting first-year student retention amid broader institutional persistence declines.

These data show a consistent positive association between engagement with counseling services and first-year student persistence. While this does not prove causation, the pattern strongly suggests that counseling is positively associated with persistence and is helping to mitigate broader enrollment and retention challenges.

Identify areas, if any, that may need improvement for program quality and growth.

Although the number of students served has increased, it remains below total enrollment. In 2024–2025, average enrollment was nearly 8,700 students (excluding dual enrollment and CMC), meaning we reached a little over half of the student population. While strategic planning will better leverage existing resources, additional human capital is needed to expand counseling operations, which are strongly correlated with student success.

Recommend any changes and updates to program based on the analysis above. For elements that require funding, complete the Resource Plan Worksheet (download from this folder) and review the Resource Allocation Rubric.

Additional counselors are needed to close the current service gap. General Counseling includes 13 full-time and 2 part-time counselors. The department collaborates with categorical programs to expand support, with 2 full-time counselors embedded in DSPS and EOPS/CARE & CalWORKs respectively, and 2 part-time counselors embedded in EOPS/CARE & CalWORKs and MESA respectively. In total, this represents 15 full-time and 4 part-time counselors. With reduced and release time considered—this represents approximately 15 full-time equivalents. Excluding dual enrollment and high school enrichment, more than 9,100 students enrolled in Fall, a 2 percent increase from Fall 2024. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommends a 1:370 counselor-to-student ratio; the college currently operates at approximately 1:607.

To support the Student Equity Plan and reduce achievement gaps, a key strategy is embedding counselor support within equity-focused areas, such as the Affinity Programs Center, to strengthen belonging and improve retention, transfer, and completion while maximizing existing resources.

The department aims to continue increasing full-time counselor support through the Faculty Prioritization Process in Fall 2026, with the goal of aligning our counselor-student ratio more closely with the ASCCC recommendations. With the average of over 9,000 students over the past three fall semesters, we would need a total of 24 full time counselors to reach the recommended ratio.

III. Annual Program Outcomes (ASOS and SSOS), Assessment and Improvements

Your program has established either Administrative Service Outcomes or Student Service Outcomes. Those outcomes are assessed and tracked in the Course or Program Assessment Summary. Review CPAS documents for ASO or SSO assessment results for program outcomes.

A. Current Program Outcomes:

In prior reporting cycles, Academic Counseling Student Service Outcomes were not established. In the last APPW, the department set broad goals to:

1. Increase UC applications
2. Increase degrees/certificates among disproportionately impacted students; and
3. Reduce the number of Promise students placed on probation or dismissal.

This section reports on progress toward those goals and the 2025–2026 Counseling Strategic Goals, which were established in Fall 2025 and are aligned with the SSSP divisional goals, the Educational Master Plan (EMP) and Vision 2030 framework.

Increasing UC Applications

Cuesta College's Institutional Research team maintains a Transfer Volume dashboard that provides a general view of the transfers and trends. The report offers a high-level look at transfer volume, destinations, and patterns. The latest year available for the measurement of transfer volume is 2021-22. In alignment with the department's goal of increasing UC applications, UC transfers rose 8% from the prior year, while overall transfer volume increased 4%. The California Community College's Chancellor's Office provides a more current snapshot of transfer data. When comparing the most current years accessible (2022-23 and 2023-24), there is an observable decline. The decline is driven primarily by reduced out of state transfers, though in state-private saw a greater proportional decrease. Overall, transfer patterns remain similar, but with lower volume year over year. The UC Information Center, however, provides a more real-time look at outcome data relative to this goal.

Year	Applied	Admitted	Enrolled
2023-24	220	163	85
2024-25	245	188	98

UC Information Center: Admissions by Source School

UC transfer outcomes show modest improvement from 2023-24 to 2024-25. Applications increased from 220 to 245, with admits rising from 163 to 188 and enrolled students increasing from 85 to 98. The admission rate improved slightly (74.1% to 76.7%), and the overall share of applicants who ultimately enrolled also increased (38.6% to 40.0%). However, yield remained unchanged at 52.1%, indicating that while more students were admitted and enrolled overall, the proportion of admitted students who chose to enroll did not change. UC Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) participation also rose significantly; for example, UC Santa Barbara TAG submissions increased by 68% in Fall 2025 compared to the preceding term.

Degrees & Certificates Awarded Among Disproportionately Impacted Students

Since 2020, Cuesta College has made progress in increasing degrees and certificates among disproportionately impacted students. However, gains have fluctuated year by year. Recent declines can be attributed to broader curricular, regulatory, and policy changes affecting the California Community Colleges system and are not isolated to disproportionately impacted students. Notably, transfer-aligned degrees increased, suggesting continued strengthening of transfer pathways.

Student Success: Promise Students

Promise student outcomes improved from 2023-24 to 2024-25. Successful course completion for Promise students increased from 71.64% to 74.25% (+2.6 percentage points), and the performance gap narrowed from -5.05 to -2.90 points, indicating meaningful progress in both overall success and equity for Promise students year over year.

2025-26 Student Services Outcomes, SSSP Strategic Goals & Educational Master Plan Metrics

Goal 1: Strengthen Student Outcomes		
Objective	Proposed Activity/Action	Result
1.1 Case Management *Expand case	The department will ensure that it fully implements the case management	**This action is in progress.** This proposed action is underway via

management to increase institutional student engagement strategies by enhancing student support programs.	framework for Promise students, which will include proactive monitoring of academic standing, initiation of mid-semester retention check-ins/letters, and end of term completion/academic standing update.	intentional efforts like Cougar Track: Equity in Motion, which includes proactive monitoring of academic standing, mid-semester retention check-ins, and end-of-term completion and standing updates for Promise students.
	The department will fully and consistently leverage ConexED referrals to connect students to resources and supports.	**This action is in progress.** This proposed action is underway. Training on the referral matrix, case management, and strategic CRM layers has been completed, and ConexED referral use has increased 71% division-wide from 2024–25 to 2025–26 to date.
	The department will identify a Completion Counselor, launch the Strategies for Academic Success Canvas Module, and initiate the Cougar Track: Equity in Motion (Pilot) case management strategy in fall 2025.	**This action has been completed.** Matt Fox has been designated as the Completion Counselor to support strategic CRM layers; the Academic Success Canvas module was launched; and the CTEIM pilot was implemented and integrated into the case management framework in spring 2026.
1.3 Equitable Access *Strengthen equitable access by reducing barriers for targeted student populations.*	The department will support the FAST (Focus, Accelerate, Succeed, Transfer) Way Program with assigned Career, Orientation and Transfer counselors.	**This action has been completed.** Nolberto Marroquin and Glenda Moscoso supported the implementation of the FAST Way Program in 2025-26.
	The department will implement the Cougar Track: Equity in Motion (Pilot) case management strategy, which will support disproportionately impacted student groups, as identified in the 25-28 SEP.	**This action has been completed.** The CTEIM pilot was implemented and integrated into the case management framework in spring 2026. The pilot resulted in a 19% re-enrollment rate for cohort students.
	The department will partner with Admissions and Records to revise processes, informed by counselor feedback, to improve student	**This action has been completed.** The department worked with Admissions, Student Records and Registration to streamline key processes, informed by counselor feedback, to reduce barriers and improve the student experience

	experience and reduce barriers to student success.	including the excused withdrawal, drop, and name change processes.
1.4 Data-driven Innovation *Strengthen equitable access by reducing barriers for targeted student populations.*	The department will streamline reason codes and align them with Vision-Aligned Reporting categories to track services and assess effectiveness.	**This action has been completed.** The department developed a matrix aligning transfer and counseling reporting categories, streamlining and simplifying reason codes to reduce duplication, improve tracking of services, and enhance reporting effectiveness.
	The department will track and analyze contact data regularly to assess program reach and impact.	**This action is in progress.** The department regularly runs contact reports and analyzes contact data to assess program reach and impact, with findings shared in meetings.
	The department will implement retention, persistence and student success analyses (APPW & Cougar Track: Equity in Motion Pilot).	**This action has been completed.** As shown in the data visualizations, the department continues to monitor retention, persistence, and student success, and will assess CTEIM cohorts as the program expands.
	The department will partner with Institutional Research (IR) to disaggregate data for disproportionately impacted student groups, as identified in the 25-28 SEP, to develop and implement interventions.	**This action has been completed.** The department continues to partner with IR on disaggregated data requests to better serve disproportionately impacted students. Recent requests include identifying first-year students unsuccessful in transfer-level math or English for targeted re-enrollment outreach, conducting a race-conscious longitudinal analysis of dual enrollment outcomes, and ongoing CTEIM analyses such as completion cohort re-enrollment rates.
	The department will partner with IR to facilitate longitudinal analyses of Cougar Track: Equity in Motion (Pilot) participants—focusing on timely completion and minimizing excess units.	**This action has been completed.** As the program expands, the department will conduct timely completion and student success analyses and is already partnering with IR on ongoing CTEIM metrics, including completion cohort re-enrollment rates.

1.5 Student-Centered Scheduling *Implement student-centered approaches to scheduling in order to increase the institution's efficiency rate.*	The department will streamline meeting duration based on data trends to improve efficiency and counselor accessibility.	**This action has been completed.** The department streamlined meeting structure by shifting to 30- and 60-minute appointments based on data trends, scheduling patterns, and actual session times. Webpage guidance helps students choose appropriately based on topic complexity, allowing multiple needs to be addressed in one session while simplifying scheduling and reporting for counseling staff.
	Create data-informed counselor schedules aligned with peak student demand, incorporating counselor input in an advisory role.	**This action has been completed.** The department developed a new, data-informed scheduling tool using historical and current utilization data, peak demand patterns, and student feedback, with counselor input guiding the process. Schedules will be assessed bi-annually to ensure student needs are met.
Goal 2: Refine and Expand Educational Pathways		
2.4 Partnerships *Leverage partnerships to advance the diverse and evolving needs of our students.*	The department will assign career counselors to implement proactive outreach during counselor-initiated contact time in collaboration with Career Services.	**This action is in progress.** The department has established career counselor specializations and will expand proactive outreach by increasing the number of counselors serving in this role in collaboration with Career Services.
	Expand transfer-focused partnerships with four-year institutions.	**This action is in progress.** The department is expanding transfer partnerships through transfer workshops, college representative visits, expanded partnership and articulation agreements with online BA/BS programs, and a Transfer Day fair, while also developing a student-led transfer peer mentorship club and expanding TAG agreements.
	Leverage data and local career research to expand strategic internships and increase the number of	**This action is in progress.** The department is strengthening data-informed practices in partnership with Career Services, leveraging enhanced data tools (FDS survey/Handshake

	graduates earning a living wage in partnership with Career Services.	integration) and collaborating with BW Research and the Grants Office to identify regional workforce needs, barriers, and opportunities and map student pathways across four priority industry clusters.
Goal 3: Foster a Culture that Values Individuals, Innovation, Effectiveness and Efficiency		
3.2 Communication Strategies *Utilize proven communication strategies to promote campus-wide understanding and awareness.*	The department will facilitate listening sessions to identify priority areas, develop a corresponding action plan, and regularly communicate progress to stakeholders.	**This action has been completed.** The Dean held listening sessions and created a transparent tracker to guide action planning and monitor progress on departmental priority projects. The tracker is reviewed regularly and is accessible to all stakeholders.
	The department will establish weekly counseling meetings with agendas informed by input from team members to encourage collaboration and transparency.	**This action has been completed.** The department established weekly counseling meetings with agendas informed by counselor feedback to promote collaboration and transparency.
	The Dean will establish bi-weekly office hours dedicated to the counseling department to improve accessibility to the team.	**This action has been completed.** The Dean established counseling-dedicated office hours twice per week to improve accessibility and support for the team.
3.3 Collaborative Spaces *Create collaborative opportunities and spaces to promote an open climate.*	To support student progress and learning, the department will partner with IT to develop Argos reports on academic standing, second repeats, and the latest CSEP updates by counseling to inform proactive interventions.	**This action has been completed.** The department partnered with IT to develop a custom Argos report for CTEIM analyzing academic standing, repeats, and SEP activity to support proactive interventions, and is building a first-year SEP report to ensure all students receive counselor-engaged education planning beyond template creation.
	The department will host ongoing departmental overviews (e.g., guest speakers) and articulation updates (AO) to support accurate, up to date advising on academic programs and transfer opportunities.	**This action has been completed.** The department has embedded articulation updates into weekly counselor agendas and has hosted program overviews from Nursing and Ethnic Studies, along with transfer-focused updates from Cal Poly, to support accurate advising. The

		department also planned and implemented a collaborative retreat with a focus on team building and integrated counselors into SSSP divisional meetings.
3.4 I.D.E.A.A. Integration *Integrate the principles of I.D.E.A.A. in campus training, communications, processes, and policies.*	The department will offer training in IDEAA with a specific focus on best practices in counseling and advising.	**This action is in progress.** Some IDEAA-focused training will be addressed through SSSP divisional meetings, and the department will also work to integrate best practices in counseling and advising throughout the term.

These Student Service Outcomes (SSOs) will be reassessed and adjusted annually based on outcomes to ensure sustained growth. Additionally, these SSOs will be mapped to the institution's Educational Master Plan and Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) strategic goals annually.

As of February 2026, the department has met 68% of SSOs in the current year. The department remains on track to achieve or surpass all goals in the future 2025-26 reporting year.

B. **Describe your program assessment:**

Academic Counseling annually evaluates progress toward measurable objectives in its Student Service Outcomes (SSOs) and SSSP strategic goals, which are aligned with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Vision 2030 and the college's Educational Master Plan. Progress toward these goals is outlined above, and the department is responsible for all required compliance reporting, including fiscal, MIS, VAR and other state reports.

To ensure transparency and accountability, the department holds biweekly check-ins with the Dean and Division Chair and weekly department meetings to review progress toward goals. Annual strategic planning retreats and monthly divisional meetings support ongoing assessment and identify areas for improvement.

Both quantitative and qualitative data are regularly analyzed to identify gaps, ensure consistency, and drive continuous improvement. Compliance and evaluation processes are formative and focused on using data to inform strategic solutions and strengthen outcomes.

C. **Describe any results from improvement efforts arising from ASO or SSO assessment in the last year:**

As outlined in the Current Program Outcomes section, Academic Counseling previously had no established Student Service Outcomes. During this cycle, the department developed 2025–26 strategic goals aligned with SSSP divisional goals, the Educational Master Plan, and the Vision 2030 framework. In collaboration with all areas under the Dean's oversight, the department is building comprehensive systems and frameworks to consistently categorize, track, and analyze data, shifting from a compliance-based to a formative evaluation approach.

To support implementation of the SSSP Case Management Model, Cuesta Connect was adopted as the central platform for documenting referrals and contacts. This work included the development of MIS and Vision Aligned Reporting (VAR) reason code crosswalks to ensure efficient, consistent and accurate quantitative reporting. As of Spring 2026, all departmental contacts are tracked in Cuesta Connect and are in compliance with MIS and VAR reporting expectations. Despite this progress, three persistent student challenges remain: completion, units to completion, and transfer.

In the area of completion, the department has strengthened case management through the CTEIM framework, expanded proactive Area of Study (AoS) counselor outreach, and advanced early-alert capabilities using custom reports to identify and intervene with at-potential students sooner.

To address time and units to completion, the department focused on developing and maintaining clear Program Mapper timelines, establishing counselors as AoS liaisons with discipline faculty, and strengthening Curriculum Committee advocacy. In the future, the department will use CTEIM regression analyses to better understand and shorten time to degree.

To address transfer barriers, the department will leverage Student Equity Plan data and qualitative inquiry (surveys, focus groups, near-completer studies) to better understand challenges from students' perspectives. The department also supported the formation of a Transfer Peer Mentorship Club.

D. Recommend changes and updates to program based on assessment of program outcomes. For elements that require funding, complete the Resource Plan Worksheet (**download from this folder**) and review the **Resource Allocation Rubric.**

Based on assessment of program outcomes, the department recommends expanding embedded counselor support within equity-focused areas, such as the Affinity Programs

Center, to strengthen belonging and improve retention, transfer, and completion in alignment with the Student Equity Plan.

Additionally, the department will continue to pursue increased full-time counselor staffing through the Fall 2026 Faculty Prioritization Process to better align the counselor-student ratio with ASCCC recommendations.

IV. Anticipated Service Challenges/Changes

Provide a brief description of challenges or changes anticipated in the next year and any needs that have emerged consequently.

Suggested Elements:

A. Regulatory changes

Several regulatory and policy changes in the California Community Colleges system continue to shape the work of Academic Counseling. AB 1705 requires placement into transfer-level math and English with appropriate supports, increasing the need for informed course sequencing and proactive monitoring of student progress. Implementation of Common Course Numbering (AB 1111) and Cal-GETC (AB 928) is reshaping education planning and requires ongoing updates to Program Mapper, Student Education Plans, and program and degree templates. Expanded Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) requirements are also accelerating completion pathways and must be fully integrated into counseling and degree planning. These initiatives, along with broader system priorities tied to Vision 2030 and Student Equity metrics, reinforce the need for data-informed, equity-centered advising, proactive case management, and targeted support for disproportionately impacted and at-potential students.

To address these regulatory changes, Counseling collaborated with faculty to revise AP 4100 by adding required language to strengthen Credit for Prior Learning, streamline GE clearance for students who already hold baccalaureate degrees, and update graduation GPA calculation options. The Academic Renewal policy was also revised to increase flexibility and align with Title 5, improving student pathways to completion.

B. Internal and external organizational changes

In response to personnel changes, the needs of new and expanding programs, and other logistical considerations, the Vice Presidents of Instruction and Student Success and Support Programs implemented a departmental and divisional reorganization affecting this area, effective July 1, 2025.

Aligned with a focus on Title 5 compliance and holistic student support, the following programs were placed under the responsibility of the SLO Dean position:

- Academic Counseling
- Career and Transfer Services, including a new Associate Director of Career and Transfer Services to support alignment with Vision 2030 and the Student Equity and Achievement program, including oversight of Work Experience.
- Admissions, Student Records, and Registration
- Outreach and the International Student Program
- Financial Aid and Veteran Services
- Disability Student Programs & Services (DSPS)
- Student Health Services

This change was made strategically to foster stronger collaboration between the dean and the Counseling division chair and to address counselor feedback requesting increased administrative leadership, oversight, and support. Quarterly strategic planning sessions and monthly cross-department meetings have strengthened coordination, streamlined operations, and increased collaboration. These changes are designed to simplify the student experience and better support student success.

Academic Counseling will actively partner with these areas to redesign outreach, enrollment, and onboarding to improve the student experience. This strategic restructuring is expected to enhance service delivery and practitioner effectiveness.

C. Student and staff demographic changes

The department is advancing strategic goals aligned with the Educational Master Plan and Student Equity Plan by shifting from a culture of evidence focused on accountability to a culture of inquiry grounded in equity-minded practice. This includes disaggregating data by race/ethnicity, gender, first-generation status, and economic disadvantage to identify equity gaps and guide targeted interventions. Through this approach, Academic Counseling examines institutional factors influencing outcomes and partners with Institutional Research to analyze student success, timely completion of educational goals, and unit accumulation. These analyses inform curricular and programmatic improvements and help assess the impact of counseling on student success.

D. Community economic changes – workforce demands

In response to regional workforce and economic shifts, the department is strengthening data-informed practices in close partnership with Career Services. The merger of Career

and Transfer Services is expected to further align academic planning, transfer, and career advising with workforce pathways. Using enhanced data tools (FDS survey and Handshake integration) and collaborating with BW Research and the Grants Office, the college analyzed regional workforce needs, barriers, and opportunities, mapping student pathways across four priority industry clusters: Advanced & Precision Manufacturing; Energy, Environment & Water; Design, Building & Construction; and Healthcare & Allied Health. As the college expands work-based learning and bridge programs in these sectors, it will be important to strengthen transfer and university partnerships and prioritize growth in Allied Health and Aviation Maintenance Technician pathways.

At the same time, many students lack clarity about regional industries and employment opportunities. The department has an opportunity to work with campus and external partners to develop clear, Area of Study-aligned career pathways and lattices informed by employer and labor market data, while creating intentional internship and career on-ramps that strengthen the connection between education and employment and improve post-completion outcomes.

E. Role of technology for information, service delivery and data retrieval

Technology plays a critical role in service delivery and data retrieval. The department uses data-driven approaches, including custom Argos reports, to assess tiered interventions for at-potential and disproportionately impacted students as identified in the Student Equity Plan. This includes monitoring educational goals, conducting targeted outreach, reviewing repeat enrollment and no-show patterns, and partnering across campus to address barriers in gateway courses like transfer-level math and English. Academic Counseling continues to refine its use of ConexED for scheduling and service coordination, optimizing features to better support students. Ongoing analysis of contact data helps the department assess program scale, scope, and reach. The department also maintains and updates Program Mapper and CSEP templates annually. Further the department is actively operationalizing and scaling Credit for Prior Learning.

Looking ahead, the department anticipates leveraging Ad Astra to support data-informed scheduling and planning. Ad Astra uses predictive analytics to help optimize course offerings, reduce bottlenecks, align course availability with student demand, and support timely degree completion. Counselors expect to play an active role in analyzing data to inform curricular recommendations and guide their own scheduling to better meet student needs.

F. Providing service to multiple off-campus sites

The department continues to serve multiple locations, providing extensive services at the San Luis Obispo (SLO) and North County (NC) campuses. Full expansion of services at the South County site will require additional staffing and operational support. The department also provided services at off-campus locations like CMC.

G. Anticipated staffing changes/retirements

As part of the restructuring, the department addressed long-standing staffing concerns and strengthened capacity for more targeted, proactive outreach. To resolve the issue of the Transfer Center Department Assistant being overextended with Counseling duties, a dedicated Department Assistant now supports Counseling alongside the Counseling Assistant—the Counseling Assistant focuses on outreach and scheduling, while the Department Assistant streamlines operations. The Career and Transfer Services department also has its own dedicated Department Assistant. No additional staffing changes are anticipated following this restructuring.

V. Overall Budget Implications

Provide a brief description of the immediate budget request(s) made in your Resource Plan (**download from this folder**) (after having reviewed the **Resource Allocation Rubric)**. These elements will be reflected in the District planning and budget process.

Elements:

A. Personnel

University Transfer and Career Services Specialist ($85,198): This position will directly advance district and college priorities by strengthening transfer pathways and equitable student outcomes. It aligns with the Strategic Plan's goal to increase Associate Degree for Transfer completion and transfers to CSU/UC institutions, and supports the EMP's focus on streamlined academic pathways, student-centered support, and elimination of equity gaps in degree/transfer attainment. By providing dedicated support in transfer planning, applications, and coordination with postsecondary partners, this role will reduce barriers, enhance guided pathways implementation, and improve timely and equitable transfer success.

NCC Counseling Assistant ($74,737): This position at the North County Campus will provide dedicated frontline support for scheduling, referrals, and transfer engagement. This work is currently diffused across other areas. As enrollment increases, expanding this presence improves equitable access to guided pathways and transfer planning,

reduces service gaps, and directly advances Strategic Plan and Educational Master Plan goals to increase ADT completion, streamline student progression, and strengthen equitable transfer outcomes. By reducing logistical and informational barriers and enhancing coordinated support locally, this role will contribute to improved student persistence, ADT completion, and successful transfer outcomes.

Other faculty needs will be addressed through the faculty prioritization process or categorical funding requests. With enrollment exceeding 9,100 students and a counselor-to-student ratio of approximately 1:607, well above the ASCCC-recommended 1:370, additional counseling positions are critical to meeting Strategic Plan and Educational Master Plan goals. Expanded counseling capacity strengthens guided pathways implementation, improves equitable access to transfer and completion support, and increases persistence, ADT attainment, and timely degree completion as enrollment continues to grow. The department's ranked priorities are listed below:

- Outreach/Dual Enrollment Counselor (FT)
- Rising Scholars Counselor (FT)
- Career Counselor (PT)
- Affinity Programs Counselor (PT)

B. Equipment/furniture (other than technology)

N/A

C. Technology

N/A

D. Facilities

N/A

Signature Page

List the names and titles of managers, faculty, and classified staff who contributed to the annual planning and program review process.

Christopher Mutshnick, Dean, Student Success and Support Programs		*Christopher Mutshnick (Mar 9, 2026 14:03:04 PDT)*	03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date

Heidi Webber, Division Chair/FT Counseling Faculty		*Heidi Webber*	03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date

Student Success and Support Programs, College Centers and Administrative Services Programs: Managers completing this process must sign. All full-time director(s), managers, faculty and/or classified staff in the program must sign this form.

Christopher Mutshnick, Dean, Student Success and Support Programs		*Christopher Mutshnick (Mar 9, 2026 14:03:04 PDT)*	03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date

Heidi Webber, Division Chair/FT Counseling Faculty		*Heidi Webber*	03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date

Jenn Luepke, Counseling Assistant	*Jenn Luepke*		03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date

Andrea Devitt, FT Counseling Faculty	*Andrea Devitt (Mar 9, 2026 14:03:43 PDT)*		03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date

Nolberto Marroquin, FT Counseling Faculty	*Nolberto Marroquin*		03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date

Dina Hallmark, FT Counseling Faculty/AO	*Dina Hallmark*		03/10/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date

Glenda Moscoso, FT Counseling Faculty	*Glenda Moscoso (Mar 9, 2026 14:43:39 PDT)*		03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date

Karen Geida, FT Counseling Faculty	*Karen Geida*		03/10/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date

Katherine Gritton, FT Counseling Faculty	*Katherine Gritton*		03/10/2026

Name	Title	Signature	Date
Kate Porter, FT Counseling Faculty		*Kate Porter*	03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date
Lisa Wearda, FT Counseling Faculty		*Lisa Wearda*	03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date
Matthew Fox, FT Counseling Faculty		*Matthew Fox*	03/10/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date
Teri Sherman, FT Counseling Faculty		*Teri Sherman* Teri Sherman (Mar 10, 2026 10:27:36 PDT)	03/10/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date
Ali Yates, FT Counseling Faculty		*Ali Yates*	03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date
Antonia Tway, FT Counseling Faculty		*Antonia Tway*	03/09/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date
Karen Garza, PT Counseling Faculty		*Karen Garza*	03/10/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date
Summer Gish, PT Counseling Faculty		*SGish*	03/10/2026
Name	Title	Signature	Date

2026 APPW (Counseling)

Final Audit Report   2026-03-10

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