Summary

Student Success at San Francisco State means holding our students to high expectations and offering them the support they need to reach them. As a campus with a social justice mission at our core, we maintain excellence and equity to be fundamental and interlinking values: we want to see our students graduate with degrees that represent learning experiences of the highest possible quality, inclusive of all of our students.

Toward these ends, our campus plan is structured around six strategies:

1. improved ***course availability and curriculum***;
2. coordinated, intrusive and strategic ***advising***;
3. broad accessibility and visibility of ***student success data***;
4. high-quality student experience in the ***first year of college*** for incoming freshmen;
5. effective, ***targeted support services*** to achieve educational equity (directed specifically at our first-generation, low-income and underrepresented students, with special attention to men of color);
6. short- and long-term planning for ***faculty hiring and development*** tied to curricular need and student success.

Rationale for Long-Term Plan

Our long-term campus plan aims to advance student learning and achievement, improve student retention and graduation rates, and eliminate any opportunity gaps affecting our first-generation, low-income, and traditionally underserved students. Institutional research has enabled us to identify the following key targets for our plan to improve student success:

<u>**Time to Degree**</u>. When asked "Will you have graduated in the time you expected?" 41% of respondents to the most recent Senior Exit Survey respond that they will not, an increase of five percentage points over the preceding year.[1] Of those students reporting a delay, 46% attribute it to an inability to enroll in required courses. When asked to identify "the one thing that, if changes were made, would have improved your overall SF State experience the most," 38% cited course availability; an additional 18% cited advising. A lack of available courses is compounded by a lack of quality advising, which could help students navigate the complicated course selection and enrollment process; together, these challenges contribute to student attrition and delay time to degree. By addressing both, we expect to reduce attrition, speed students' time to degree, and increase our four-year graduation rates significantly.

Unit Load. Currently students graduate from San Francisco State with an average of 135 units—which represents 15 units more than the 120 units required for the baccalaureate by Title V (the equivalent of taking an extra semester). In four years of surveys, 42% of students reported taking courses that were not needed for graduation because required courses were unavailable.[2] In addition, nearly half (49%) of surveyed students reported never seeing an advisor for help selecting and enrolling in courses, which further exacerbates the problem. We have also identified that in some cases the curriculum is a barrier to student progress to degree. By addressing course availability, inadequate advising and curricular redesign, we expect to significantly reduce graduates' average unit loads—along with the costly delays that they represent.

Probation. Although most students who leave SF State without degrees do so in good academic standing, students who fall under academic probation are particularly vulnerable to attrition. Our institutional research reveals that over 22% of FTF and 18% of new transfer students are placed on probation, most in their first term at San Francisco State. These students' outcomes are discouraging; of those students placed on probation, 72% leave without completing a degree. Particularly discouraging is the evidence of inequitable outcomes that probation manifests with students of color overrepresented (at 36% African American, 26% Latino/a, and 21% Asian American).[3] We need to help these students before they reach the crisis point of probation. We plan to do so by improving our ability to identify and reach out to students at earlier stages of academic difficulty in order to get them the advising and tutoring resources that they need; working with faculty and colleges, we will also promote course redesign and supplemental instruction in courses with high failure rates in order to improve student learning and achievement. Finally, the Academic Senate recently passed campus policies to help students recover from probation. Starting Fall 2017, students who retake classes can replace a failing grade with a passing grade without permanently affecting their grade point average. We also revised our campus probation policy to require students on probation to see an advisor before they can register for classes.

Retention in the Lower Division. Most of our students who leave without achieving degrees do so in the lower division, with 34% of our first-time freshmen leaving before starting junior year. Evidence suggests that lower-division attrition results from a variety of factors, including a lack of engagement at both the curricular and co-curricular levels.[4] Following a systematic and campus-wide analysis of the first year, we aim to address the causes of lower-division student attrition by improving the academic, social, and emotional experiences of our students across the university. Simply put, engaged students persist. When we challenge our students with high expectations—and offer them the individualized support they need to meet them—we see them succeed at the highest levels. We should ask for—and offer--nothing less.

Six SF State Strategies for Student Success

San Francisco State's campus-wide Student Success and Graduation Initiative has identified the following strategies to improve student achievement, persistence, and graduation:

1. Course Availability and Curriculum
In senior exit surveys, students consistently report "course availability" as one of the top two barriers to their timely graduation; indeed, a diagnostic report reveals that 46% of the university's undergraduate courses are filled at or above 96% capacity, corroborating students' complaint that many courses that are required for graduation are inaccessible to them.[5]

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

These plans require the following resources:
1. A tool to predict and analyze student course demand (Ad Astra Platinum Analytics; *purchased with 2015-16 Student Success and Completion Initiative (SSCI) funds, which is a permanent allocation; additional funding sought to expand user training to department chairs and associate deans*)
2. Funding for additional sections of high-demand courses, which will require hiring additional faculty (to be determined)
3. Support for programs to undertake curriculum revision (*some efforts funded until 2017 with grants from Teagle and Keck Foundations as well as SSCI funds, additional funds are need*)
4. Funds to support the expanded Center for Educational Equity and Learning programs and services to assist with and complement faculty efforts to review and revise course pedagogies to better align with student success and graduation outcomes.

2. Advising
The second-most identified barrier to timely graduation, according to the same senior exit surveys, is inadequate advising.[6] In response, Academic Affairs conducted an operational review of advising in 2015-16, which utilized student surveys, focus groups, and analysis by external consultants. The final report

concluded that advising at San Francisco State is understaffed, uncoordinated, and unwelcoming or inaccessible to students; the report then offered cogent recommendations for building an integrated, strategic campus-wide advising system.[7]

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

The short-term plan monies allowed us to hire the equivalent of 10 FTE Graduation Specialists. They are already making a difference. The Graduation Specialists have reached out to students who should be graduating soon given their number of units earned. Just since January 2017, they've sent 5,966 emails, made 2,307 phone calls and met with 584 students as part of our high unit project. Prior to their advising appointment, 39% of students said they strongly agreed that they knew the university requirements to graduate. After the appointment, 97% of students strongly agreed or agreed. As noted below, we would like to make the Graduation Specialists permanent positions.

Additionally, the three temporary Student Affairs and Enrollment Management staff we were able to hire with short-term funds have been integral to processing graduation applications more quickly so that students have adequate time to take any courses that they additionally need, but may not have realized that they needed. With permanent funding, we hope to keep these important staff members.

These plans necessitate the following resources:

1. Hiring a minimum of 27 new advisors across the campus, including 6 advisors jointly appointed in each college and the Undergraduate Advising Center, who can be trained in e-advising and student success data management; 5 advisors to serve in the six colleges as retention specialists, focused on lower-division students (with one in each of the four largest colleges and one shared between the two smaller colleges); 10 advisors to serve as graduation specialists, focused on upper-division students (with two each in our four largest colleges and one in each of our two smaller colleges); 2 new advisors serving full-time in the Undergraduate Advising Center to

focus on undeclared students and students changing majors, and 4 new career counselors serving in Career Services in the Dean of Students Office. (*5 of the 27 have been hired with SSCI funds*)

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

3. Student Success Data

Our plan to develop a more strategic advising system necessitates a responsive, accessible platform that makes student success data available to departments, colleges, and the central administration in order to monitor and address student degree progress. While the CSU Dashboards have been helpful in several ways, at the campus level, we need a technology solution that will enable more effective data analytics and predictive analytics to inform strategic decision making. Ideally, data will be captured in "real time" and longitudinally in the following ways:

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

This plan requires the following resources:

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

4. The First Year of College

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

1. Academic and social engagement: our campus NSSE results reveal disappointing levels of engagement among students overall, especially in the first two years of college, which we hope to address by scaling up our high-impact practices and advancing a high-quality student experience across the curriculum and co-curriculum; this will necessarily involve concerted efforts by both faculty and staff across the campus.
2. Poor fit with major: many of our students declare a major prematurely, without adequate guidance about appropriate majors that would align with

their goals and skills, contributing further to low engagement, underperformance, and attrition. Improving our lower-division curriculum, advising for undeclared students and career counseling will address this need;

3. Sense of belonging: with a campus that is extremely diverse, we will provide more purposeful, accessible and frequent opportunities for students to engage in meaningful ways around issues of inclusion, intersections of identity and social justice, as well as global community citizenship and service-based learning, which the research has shown can be powerful conduits for student connection, while also helping to improve the campus climate; goal is that students' interests and values are supported and affirmed

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

5. Health and wellness barriers: The most prevalent health-related factors that SF State students report as negatively impacting their academic performance include: stress (31.4%), anxiety (20.8%), sleep difficulties (20.1%), and depression (15.7%).[8] We have also found that our students, as many in CSU, struggle with food and housing insecurities. Faculty and staff across campus report that students' mental health is affecting their learning, and that improved counseling resources are needed to meet students' needs.

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

To enhance our capacities to improve student engagement, new personnel resources needed include but are not limited to: (1) student organization advisers who will coach, mentor and develop student leaders and future leaders; (2) experienced student activities and events professionals who know how to involve students actively in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of comprehensive student programs, both small and large scale; and (3) health, including mental health, and recreation professionals to improve student wellbeing, decrease stress and increase active learning capacities (4) a first-year faculty director to collaborate with the FYE director being hired in Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and (5) faculty resources to teach first-year seminars and meta-major courses. Work should be

planned and delivered to purposefully close the student engagement gaps identified in our own NSSE survey results, particularly with lower-division/first year students. Implemented effectively, these programs can produce higher than predicted graduation rates.[9]

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

Foundation of Excellence committees are starting to share their recommendations, which include the need for a FYE Faculty Director, more advisors, an organizational structure around supporting first year students, increased coordinated programming for first-year students, and the consideration of first year seminar courses. Once we have a strategic plan for the first year for students at SF State, we will need funds to implement the plan.

We have also secured Keck Foundation funding to create a meta-major pilot in health-related fields in order to retain students by helping them consider majors outside of our highly impacted programs such as Nursing and Kinesiology. The funds have allowed us to redesign essential pre-requisite courses to increase student success. Permanent resources will enable us to scale this pilot and continue its coordinated approach.

This plan necessitates the following resources:
1. Foundations of Excellence contract (*funded with SSCI allocation, shared across AA and SAEM*)
2. Supplemental funds for meals, campus events, campus retreat
3. FYE program manager (*to be hired by SAEM with SSCI funds*)
4. FYE Faculty Director
5. Additional health, including mental health, and recreation professionals
6. Faculty resources to teach first year seminars and meta-major courses

5. Targeted Support Services
We are committed to eliminating any and all opportunity gaps, which represent our greatest barriers to educational equity and to our achievement of the social justice mission that stands at our university's core.

Because first generation and/or low income students are often underserved, campuses that enroll a significant number of such students must invest in high-quality, responsive programs that promote and sustain students' academic and social integration and achievement. We know that targeted support works: our long-

running Metro College Success Program, which enrolls first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students in learning communities with integrated tutoring and academic support, achieves five-year graduation rates of nearly double the university's average. We are addressing our opportunity gaps by expanding Metro academies in the colleges, while also expanding our targeted support services to reach more students outside Metro.

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

Another grant-funded campus program, SF Build, aims to reduce stereotype threat and improve student performance. Its researchers and practitioners have designed an intervention and studied the positive results,—especially among students of color. The Student Success and Graduation Initiative Committee (SSGI) has reviewed that research and now seek to implement the intervention for all new students. (We anticipate little cost to doing this.)

This plan necessitates the following resources:
1. Expansion of Metro academies across the campus (*currently partially funded through the Governor's Innovation Award but in need of permanent funding to support additional faculty, staff, advisors, and peer mentors*)
2. Expansion of tutoring, particularly in writing and math (*currently funded through SSCI; additional support sought*)
3. Expansion of supplemental instruction aligned with high failure-rate courses (*currently funded through grants but in need of permanent funding*)
4. Expansion of the newly established Office of Human Relations *(currently funded in part through SSCI; additional funding is needed to sustain programming expenses and additional educators/support staff)*

6. Faculty Hiring and Development

In order for SF State to accomplish any of our SSGI goals, we need to have faculty in adequate numbers and with optimal training. We know that faculty play a key role in student retention. As faculty members work with students inside and outside the classroom, they make an important difference in students' academic and social engagement and their experience of belonging and connection.

As a campus, we intend to implement a hiring strategy that will deliver the curriculum and and meet student needs in highly-enrolled major programs. An intentional hiring plan will reduce bottlenecks and reduce students' time to degree. Increasing course availability—one of our primary goals in this student success plan--is not possible without additional faculty.

As well as hiring more faculty, we seek to support our faculty's engagement in their roles as teachers and mentors through professional development for tenure-track faculty as well as lecturers. Each of the six colleges at SF State created its own college student success plan through the collaborative efforts of faculty, staff, administrators, and students. A common theme across a wide range of disciplines was the need for faculty development. This theme recognizes the central role that faculty play by delivering high-quality education through the use of active classroom techniques, engagement in diverse classrooms with difficult dialogues, implementation of supplemental instruction, and tireless efforts to deliver a pedagogy consistent with the mission of social justice.

Currently we have three new campus- and college-level initiatives that target faculty professional development. Based on the assessment of these programs, our long term Campus Success Plan will expand on those elements of these programs that demonstrate to have an effect on student engagement and retention.

A group of six faculty members is working across colleges to investigate the effectiveness of applying social justice pedagogy, with a special grounding in stereotype threat reduction, to three sections of undergraduate Introduction to Research and Statistics courses in three different departments, compared to sections of the same course without a social justice pedagogy intervention. We selected this course because the math/quantitative reasoning components of the class are susceptible to stereotypes about women and historically under-served students lacking skills in this area. We are measuring sense of belonging in the course and the major, vulnerability to stereotypes, and course grades as outcomes.

In the College of Health and Social Sciences, the Dean is implementing a year-long Faculty Learning Community for the recently hired probationary faculty. The focus of the FLC is on social justice pedagogy. The goals are to provide new faculty with knowledge, self-awareness and skills to teach on a diverse campus and in a diverse classroom environment. Many of our newly hired faculty and lectures will not have had this experience. The FLC includes a range of pedagogy trainings, opportunities for course development, and faculty mentoring. In the program, through professional and personal development, faculty expand their roles as teachers, scholars, mentors, and advisers to have a positive effect on student learning, retention, and student success.

The university has launched a new Center for Equity and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CEETL) that will uphold and scale out this commitment to engaged pedagogy in service to a social justice mission. CEETL aims to coordinate efforts

across the campus to assess pedagogy needs, develop programming, provide faculty mentoring, offer training in academic technologies to tenure track faculty and lecturers. The Student Success and Graduation Initiative Committee has identified lecturer turnover as a problem for retention. Beginning with CEETL but continuing throughout the colleges, we will improve support and inclusion for lecturers, in keeping with the important roles they play in educating our students and upholding our institutional values.

This plan necessitates the following resources:
1. funds to hire tenure track faculty
2. funds for CEETL (a) to expand the number of tenure track and lecturer faculty fellows; (b) to offer lecturer stipends for professional development projects during the summer
3. Programming in CEETL through hands-on workshops and faculty learning communities to support faculty development across the career span.

This long-term plan to improve student outcomes by addressing course availability, advising, student success data, the first year of college, student support, and faculty hiring and development will mobilize faculty, staff, administrators, and others who care about San Francisco State and its students. We have already made considerable investments as a campus; by directing future funding toward these identified areas of need, we expect to achieve dramatic improvements in our retention and graduation rates.

[1] Academic Institutional Research, <u>SF State Senior Exit Survey</u> (San Francisco State: February 5, 2016), 3

[2] Academic Institutional Research, <u>Summary of Highlights from Surveys and Studies, 2009-14</u> (San Francisco State University, 2015), 7. http://air.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/Summary%20of%20AIR%20Survey%20and%20Study%20Highlights%202009-2014.pdf

[3] <u>Summary of Highlights from Surveys and Studies, 2009-14</u>, 4.

[4] According to the most campus recent NSSE report, SF State students experience significantly lower levels of engagement than their peers at other campuses within comparative CSU, Carnegie Class, and NSSE 2013 and 14 campuses, particularly on measures of "Campus Environment," including both "Quality of Interactions" and "Supportive Environment." National Survey of Student Engagement, <u>Engagement Indicators: San Francisco State University</u> (NSSE 2014), 3. http://air.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/NSSE14%20Engagement%20Indicators%20%28SF%20State%29.pdf

[5] Academic Institutional Research, <u>SF State Senior Exit Survey</u> (San Francisco State: February 5, 2016), 3 http://air.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/Senior%20Exit%20Survey%2008.21.2015-01.25.2016.pdf

[6] <u>SF State Senior Exit Survey</u>, 5.

[7] SF State Operational Review of Advising.

CSU Advising Comparisons

	SF State	Long Beach	Pomona	SDSU	SJSU
University Advising Center	7 (plus 3 vacant)	11	0	22	13
Other Professional Advisors	9.5	19	19	10	19
Total	**16.5**	**28**	**19**	**32**	**32**
Enrollment	30,256	31,000	22,384	33,230	32,773
Advisors to Student Ratio	1:1834	1:1100	1:1250	1:1038	1:1024

[8] American College Health Association. <u>American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment II: San Francisco State University Executive Summary Spring 2016</u>. Hanover, MD: American College Health Association; 2016.

[9] George D. Kuh, Jillian Kinzie, John H. Schuh, Elizabeth J. Whitt, et al. (2010). <u>Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter</u>. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.