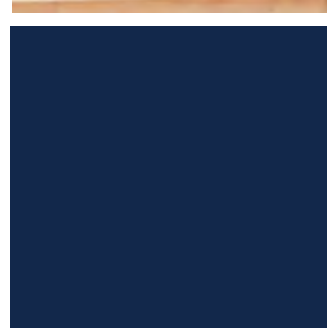
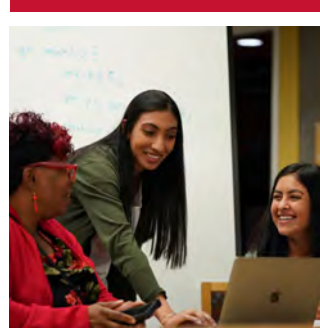
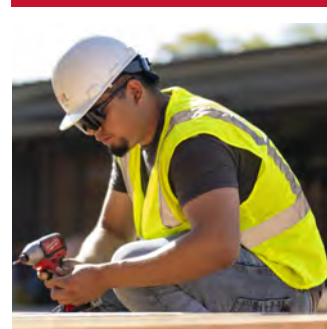
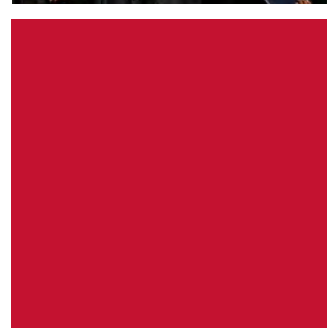
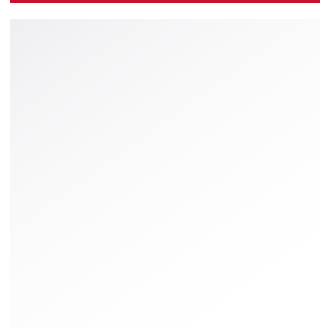


CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

Institutional Report for the WSCUC Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation

July 30, 2025 • Site Visit October 8-10, 2025



FLAGSHIP OF THE
**Central
Valley**





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Note:

- *Some exhibits contain multiple pages or excerpts from larger reports.*
- *All files are accessible through Fresno State's WSCUC Evidence Box folder.*

Section 1: Introduction – Institutional Context and Response to Previous Commission Actions

California State University, Fresno (Fresno State) is in California's fifth largest city, in a state with the fourth largest economy in the world. The Fresno State campus sits in the midst of the San Joaquin Valley, a valley rich in the traditions and representation of Native American peoples and cultures. We are grateful to be in the traditional homelands of the Yokuts and Mono peoples, whose diverse tribal communities share stewardship over this land. The region is critical to the Nation's food supply as about 25% of all the food comes from the valley. If we take out the grains from the Midwest, approximately 45% of all our nation's fruits and vegetables are grown in the Central Valley's fertile soil. Hence, the region is essential to the security of the United States of America. Yosemite, Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and Pinnacle National Parks are situated to the north, east, and west of Fresno.

Fresno State is the only public four-year institution in our service area (Fresno, Madera, Kings, and Tulare counties), a region with 1.8 million people—it's more populous than 12 U.S. states and geographically larger than nine U.S. states. Fresno State is the only public university within a 66 mile radius and it offers more undergraduate and graduate programs than any university in a 100 mile radius. Our campus is thus a focal point for the region, and the economic, cultural, and social futures of our community and the university are inextricably intertwined. The Spring/Summer 2023 issue of Fresno State Magazine posited the question of what our region would look like without Fresno State. If the university did not exist, the Central Valley would lose a highly significant source of talent, innovation, and economic activity. Our region has entrusted Fresno State with a mission to provide a transformative education for our students, conduct research to address regional and global challenges, and foster an ethos of community service through example. Our university is proud to engage in this mission and its students, faculty, staff, and administration work hard to achieve these goals. Our self-study focused on our theme, **Flagship of the Central Valley**, and analyzed the role of Fresno State as an institution that both uplifts the lives of its residents and reshapes every facet of the region through transformative education, research, service, and leadership.

Fresno State was founded in 1911 as the Fresno State Normal School, becoming a four-year degree granting institution in 1934, and joining the system that would become the California State University (CSU) in 1961. The campus began awarding master's degrees in 1949, and in 2005, became the first CSU to award doctorates. Fresno State is a comprehensive university, and in fall 2024, the university offered degrees in 74 undergraduate, 49 post baccalaureate, and three doctoral programs of study. The range of major offerings is diverse, giving students a wide variety of options for their field of study. These degree programs are housed in eight schools and colleges, along with the Division of Continuing and Global Education.

The university had 24,310 students enrolled in fall 2024, including 21,852 undergraduate students and 2,458 post-baccalaureate students. Fresno State had 1,503 faculty members, including 596 tenured/tenure track professors, all holding a doctoral or other terminal degree in their area of study. The student/faculty ratio was 19:1. The university also had 997 administrative and staff employees.



24,310

Fresno State students enrolled
in fall 2024

19:1

Student to faculty ratio



Fresno State's Vision

In 2023, the Fresno State community developed a new strategic plan to establish goals and strategies to guide the university over the next five years (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)). This process actively involved the participation of over 1,100 students, faculty, and staff. The vision of this plan is for Fresno State to be recognized as a model for advancing social, economic, and environmental progress regionally, nationally, and globally by providing an accessible, transformative education, conducting research on critical issues, and producing a generation of diverse leaders. We are proud to state that the strategic plan is both aspirational as well as measurable. The following goals are especially important elements of this vision and Fresno State works hard to achieve these objectives.



Providing Accessible, Transformative Education.

As the only public university in our service area, Fresno State has a responsibility to promote upward mobility in our region and this is one of our highest values. Seventy-nine percent of our students come from our four-county service area and 66% of our graduates are the first in their families to attend college. Our Bulldog Bound Program guarantees admission to high school graduates from 45 partnering school districts in our area (as of July 2025) if they meet the minimum CSU system requirements. Participants in Bulldog Bound receive support and relevant information (such as application assistance and financial aid estimates) throughout their high school years.

Fresno State's tuition and fees are among the lowest in the CSU system and 80% of our students receive financial aid. The university ranked twelfth in the west region in the Washington Monthly's net price rankings for affordability for students from low- and middle-income families.

The College Futures Foundation published an October 2024 report that analyzed data from 324 California institutions to determine how long it took students to recover their higher education costs after graduation ([Exhibit 1.1, College Futures Foundation Report](#)). For forty-eight of the forty-nine Fresno State majors studied, students recouped those costs in less than two years. The majors that were studied included not only STEM and business fields but also majors from across the campus such as Teacher Education, Criminology, Geography, Communication, and Sociology. In April 2025, the Carnegie Foundation classified Fresno State as an Opportunity College and University, with higher access and higher earnings for students when compared to similar populations in the area (online source: [Carnegie Foundation Classifications](#)).



Fresno State has consistently earned very high rankings in social mobility. For example, Fresno State ranked fourth nationally in social mobility in the Wall Street Journal/College Pulse 2024 rankings and 13th in the west in the Washington Monthly's 2024 "Best Bang for the Buck" ratings. Considering the funding that Fresno State receives, the university excels in its success to empower students who would generally not be accepted into other institutions. Fresno State prides itself in its inclusive acceptance rate, not in the number of students it rejects.

Embodying Full Inclusivity and Belongingness.

As noted in our strategic plan, Fresno State aspires to strengthen the sense of belonging and foster a culture that believes our differences are sources of strength. Fresno State has been designated as both a Hispanic-Serving Institution and an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution. The university is one of 39 colleges and universities to have earned the Seal of Excelencia, a national certification for institutions that intentionally serve Latino students (online source: [Fresno State Seal of Excelencia](#)). Fresno State has also received Insight into Diversity's Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award for the past ten years (online source: [HEED Excellence in Diversity Award 2024](#)).



A wide variety of programs and resources are available for Fresno State students to enhance a sense of belonging and promote student success. These include the Cross-Cultural and Gender Center, Veterans Resource Center, Off Campus Student Life (commuter students), Transfer Success Center, and Renaissance Scholars (for students who have experienced foster care). The College Assistance Migrant Program, Dream Success Center, Educational Opportunity Program (support for first generation and economically disadvantaged students), Office of Black Student Success, Services for Students with Disabilities, Wayfinders (neurodivergent students), Project Rebound (formerly incarcerated students), Native American Initiative, and Southeast Asian Student Success Center are examples of the supporting organizations that are available to our students. The Center for Essential Needs provides resources and support to assist students with basic needs. Resources include the Student Cupboard (free food and hygiene products), Clothing Closet, and Good Samaritan Grant program. All programming and events are open to all members of the university.

Over 1.4 M
hours of community
service, creating an
economic impact
of **over \$57 M**
in the region.



Providing Service and Leadership.

Service to the community and learning by serving are foundational to Fresno State and one of our core values is encouraging a culture of giving back to the region. The Jan and Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement coordinates the university's community engagement and service-learning efforts. Fresno State is a national leader in this regard, and it prides itself in being a fully engaged university with the surrounding communities. Over 1.4 million hours of service was provided by more than 21,000 members of the Fresno State community in 2023-24, creating an economic impact of over \$57 million in the region (online source: [Fresno State Service-Learning Statistics](#)). The university community has provided more than 13 million hours of service during the past ten years. Service is a central value in our new strategic plan, which calls for an increase in the number of community service hours and an increase in services provided to the community. Fresno State is also a leader in service-learning courses, with 198 courses offered in 2023-24 and over 4,000 students enrolled in these classes. Fresno State was one of the first colleges and universities to receive the Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification, which was renewed in 2015 (online source: [Carnegie Foundation Classifications](#)).

The university also plays an important part in the arts and athletics in the Central Valley. Fresno State students perform in concerts, theatre, dance, and art exhibitions on campus and in the community and alumni are active in the arts too. Faculty members not only provide excellent leadership for our students, but they are also highly regarded performers, directors, artists, poets, and authors themselves. Fresno State faculty have received Pulitzer Prizes (online source: [Pulitzer Prize](#)) and Guggenheim Fellowships (online source: [Guggenheim Fellowship Recipients](#)), and two have been selected U.S. Poets Laureate (online source: [U.S. Poets Laureate](#)).

The Central Valley does not have professional sports teams; hence Fresno State serves as a critical sports entity—we have eighteen Division I athletic teams, and the Bulldogs attract a significant following among its fans, known as the Red Wave. Fresno State leads in national rankings for football attendance for non-Power 5 schools (online source: [College Football Attendance Statistics](#)); averaging nearly 40,000 fans per game in 2023 (online source: [Fresno State Football Attendance](#)). This remarkable attendance was more than 15 Power 5 conference schools and was our highest attendance since 2001. On July 1, 2026, Fresno State will join the Pac-12 Conference. The Fresno State brand ranks #1 in the CSU system for gross royalties and is among the top 5 in California alongside USC, UCLA, Cal, and Stanford.¹

Fresno State averaged nearly
40,000 fans
per football game in 2023



The Fresno State Library plays an essential role in engagement and collaboration with Central Valley communities. Through unique collections, exhibitions and events that reflect and celebrate the diverse cultures and histories of the region, the library fosters a sense of community and inclusivity, making it a trusted space for historically marginalized communities.

The Fresno State community takes an active role in leadership in the Central Valley and preparing our students to be the next generation of leaders is an important part of our vision. Fresno State's commitment to leadership was recognized by the Carnegie Foundation, which included the university in their inaugural Leadership for Public Purpose classification (online source: [Carnegie Foundation Classifications](#)). This recognition is based on a commitment to campus-wide efforts to advance leadership in pursuit of public purpose.

Our alumni are leaders in every sector of the community, including agriculture, business, education, government, health care, and social justice. For example, six out of 10 of the most recent mayors of Fresno earned their degrees at Fresno State and 60% of school administrators in the region, including the current Fresno County Superintendent of Education, are alumni. Our mission and core values emphasize the importance of providing servant leadership, rather than simply exercising authority. Our goals are to teach our students about the importance of collaboration, problem-solving, ethics, and a commitment to social and community well-being.

Fresno State's curriculum seeks to develop both discipline-specific competencies and leadership skills. In the academic year 2022-23, 12% of our courses contained leadership in the title and these classes are available across the curriculum. We also have 12 degree programs and two certificate programs in leadership. They cover diverse fields, including agriculture, business, education, humanics (leadership for community benefit organizations), and public administration.

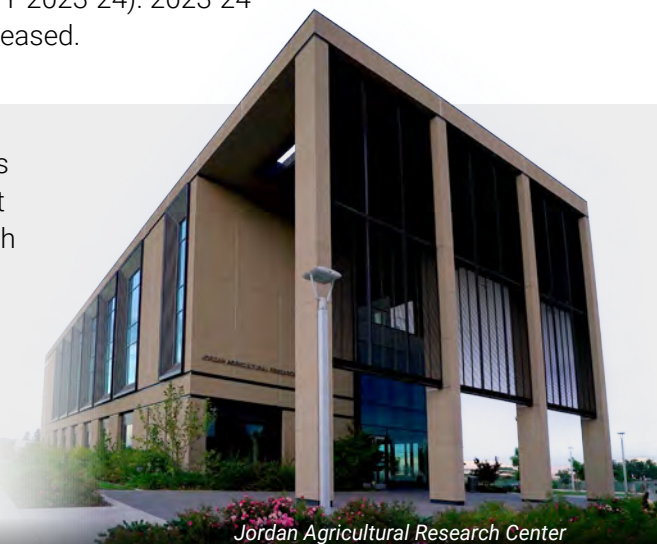
Maintaining Excellence in Teaching and Research.

In the early decades of Fresno State's history, the faculty was primarily focused on teaching. In the 1980s, the university began to transition from a faculty of teachers to one of teacher/scholars, with excellence in both teaching and research/creative activities required for retention, tenure, and promotion. Goal 3 of Fresno State's 2023-29 strategic plan is to cultivate regional progress by enhancing both instruction and research (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)).

1. Based on the 2022-23 publication from Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC). Fresno State ranks #4 among all of CLC's California client institutions. CLC is the largest Licensing Agency in the Collegiate Licensing Industry, representing over 90% of the market share with close to 800 Universities, Colleges and Athletic Conferences, including most of the universities in California with Division 1 Athletics.

Fresno State faculty members have an active record of research and creative activities. The Carnegie Foundation reclassified Fresno State as a Doctoral University (R3) in 2016, and as a Doctoral University High Research Activity (R2) in 2022. In February 2025, the university's R2 designation was renewed, now classified by Carnegie as High Spending and Doctorate Production (online source: [Carnegie Foundation Classifications](#)). Indeed, we have been intentional about increasing our grants and funding—every tenured faculty is supported and required to apply for a grant. We have seen a steady increase in the number of PIs (220 in FY 2018-19 up to 348 in FY 2021-22), and the total research award dollars has increased dramatically—from \$45M (FY 2018-19) to \$78M (FY 2023-24). 2023-24 was the sixth consecutive year that the total research award dollars increased.

Fresno State centers and institutes are housed in each of the university's colleges and many of these organizations conduct applied research that addresses regional needs. For example, the Jordan Agricultural Research Center conducts cutting edge research that is critical to maintaining the production of 25% of our nation's food—their main areas of research are in agricultural, food, and natural resources. Furthermore, Fresno State is a leader in water research. Through the California Water Institute, we focus on sustainable water resource management. The Central Valley Health Policy Institute focuses on the special health challenges of our region.



Jordan Agricultural Research Center

While Fresno State has expanded research activity, teaching remains the most important responsibility of the faculty. To earn tenure and to be promoted to either associate or full professor, faculty members are required to maintain a record of strong peer and student ratings of instruction and continually increase their teaching skills ([Exhibits 1.2 and 1.3, Academic Policy Manual Sections 325 and 327](#)) and promotion to full professor requires evidence that the faculty member's teaching has matured over the course of their career ([Exhibit 1.3, Academic Policy Manual Section 327](#)). The Office of IDEAS provides high level professional development opportunities in many effective teaching practices, including affordable learning solutions, equity in the classroom, universal design for learning, and digital learning (including appropriate uses of artificial intelligence). Student ratings of instruction for Fresno State faculty have consistently been high, with a mean of 4.5 (5.0 scale) for overall teaching in each semester from fall 2022 to spring 2024. Ratings on instructional design, instructional delivery, and assessment have ranged from 4.4 to 4.6.² Fresno State faculty also need to demonstrate an active record of student advising. Between 2016 to 2024, one hundred thirty-five faculty members have been nominated for the Campus Advisors Network Outstanding Advisor Award.³



R2

Research University



2. Fresno State Student Ratings of Instruction, University Wide Report, Fall 2022 through Spring 2024. The student ratings instrument was developed by university faculty, providing for anonymous feedback. The instrument was specifically designed to identify only directly observable instructor behaviors and behaviors that have been demonstrated to produce learning.

3. Kathy Dunbar, Assistant Director, University Advising Center

Meeting Challenges

Budget Challenges.

Though the CSU has faced and still faces significant budgetary challenges, Fresno State has managed to balance the budget while maintaining our educational mission. In FY 2024-25, the CSU system experienced a gap of \$218 million between anticipated revenue and expenditures. Fresno State's share of this deficit was close to \$10 million. The university achieved a balanced budget in 2024-25, implementing a 5% budget reduction across all divisions. Each division developed their own plan for balancing their budget reduction while prioritizing essential services and minimizing the impact on student success.



For FY 2025-26, the Governor is proposing a \$143.8 million cut for the CSU system and Fresno State's share is anticipated to be \$7.2 million. Each cabinet member is analyzing strategic reductions of Management Personnel Plan (MPP) positions as a first step to further reduce the deficit. The university will also draw from its benefit and compensation one-time reserves to cover the shortfall for this coming year.

Benefits of Fee Increase for Students

- Paid internships
- Almost 50% of students receive Supplemental Instruction
- Peer tutoring
- Food and financial security resources

To ensure funding for important student success priorities, the university increased the annual Instructionally Related Activities fee by \$495 per student, effective in fall 2025. The allocations from this increase will be used to support programs that are linked to student success, such as paid internships, expanded supplemental instruction, peer tutoring, and food and financial security resources for students (online source: [Student Fee Increase Proposal Spring 2025](#)). Additionally, the fee will also support Athletics, which will free up current university support for Athletics and will allow the university to reallocate resources for the academic and student affairs budgets. The increase was instituted after a widespread campus consultation process and after the increase, the university remains in the lower half of total student fees for the CSU system for 2025-26 ([Exhibit 1.4, CSU System Student Fees](#)).

Enrollment Trends.

One concern has been declining higher education enrollment trends, exacerbated by decreased enrollment during the COVID pandemic. Nationally, undergraduate enrollment at the college level was 18.1 million in 2010, but the totals have decreased at a rate of approximately 1.5% per year.⁴ In addition to the impacts of the pandemic, demographic trends are expected to cause an "enrollment cliff," with the college age population in the U.S. declining over the next five to ten years, perhaps by as much as 15%.⁵ On our own campus, enrollment (headcount) had declined from 25,341 in fall 2020 to 23,832 in fall 2023.

Fresno State has taken an innovative, intentional, and proactive approach to building student enrollment. The Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (DOSAEEM) 2023-29 Strategic Plan (online source: [DOSAEEM](#)) prioritizes expanded recruitment and outreach, promoting Fresno State as the brand of choice in the Central Valley. The Bulldog Bound Program is an innovative approach to recruitment—it's a guaranteed admission to Fresno State through a contract that is signed by the student, parents, district and our university; it incorporates workshops on all the most important elements of college, including financial aid, tutoring, and student resources; the workshops are provided in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Punjabi. Bulldog Bound constructs a bridge of understanding to college, for both students and their parents.

4. College Transitions, "U.S. College Enrollment Decline – 2024 Facts and Figures," April 22, 2024, online source: <https://www.collegetransitions.com/blog/college-enrollment-decline/>

5. D. Bayman, "Colleges Were Already Bracing for an 'Enrollment Cliff.' Now There Might be a Second One." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 7, 2024.

The university took other steps to encourage and facilitate enrollment. When the government's new FAFSA form caused logistical hurdles in 2024, the Better FAFSA program was launched, providing students with more time to submit their documents. Fresno State also implemented the Tuition Advantage Program, providing additional funding to close financial gaps caused by FAFSA processing delays and ensure that students who meet eligibility criteria received enough aid to cover their tuition and campus fees. The Bulldog Connect Program was established, under which the advising center identifies students who have not registered for an upcoming semester and offers them proactive outreach, support, and guidance. The university also created a support team for "stop out" students who had left the university for more than one year without a degree.

The result of these efforts was a significant increase in student enrollment for fall 2024. The university had the second largest-ever cohort of new students, with 3,526 first-time freshmen and 2,840 transfer students. They were joined by 354 returning students and 175 international students. This represented a 5% increase compared to fall 2023.

Mishandling of Sexual Harassment Case.

During the latter part of the pandemic, Fresno State suffered through a deep emotional crisis –the previous president had become the chancellor of the CSU system and resigned after allegations of having mishandled a sexual harassment case involving one of his vice presidents. During this difficult time, Fresno State was ground zero for the issue, and trust across campus and in the community eroded dramatically. After much communication and planning, Fresno State is proud to lead in its response to Title IX, discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and other behaviors of concern, after having created the Office of Compliance and Civil Rights; this has furthered Fresno State's vision of transparency, accountability, and trust.

Future Challenges.

As the university looks to the future, there are several challenges to higher education as society continues to devalue a college degree, as well as the waning confidence in higher education to deliver on the promise of social mobility.⁶ Many no longer see the return on their investment in earning a college degree, which is decreasing college enrollment and moving students into earning industry badges or micro-credentials as less expensive alternatives.⁷ This, coupled with shifting demographics resulting in fewer prospective students in the K-16 pipeline, will contribute to declining enrollment.

Additional concerns faced by the California State University System stem from competition for resources from the two other systems of higher education within the state—the California Community Colleges (CCCs) and the University of California (UCs). Both receive considerably more state funding than the CSU and, by comparison, attending a CCC is most cost effective for students at \$46 per unit not including nominal fees (Fresno State's tuition for full-time resident students is \$3,225 in fall 2025). In addition, there are 32 CCCs with at least one bachelor's degree program and that number is expected to grow in the coming years.⁸ In an effort to increase enrollment, several UC universities are working closely with the CCC to streamline pathways, making it easier for students to transfer into a UC campus.

As Fresno State is pivotal to the economy and society of the region, we will continue to address these challenges through strategic enrollment management, ongoing legislative advocacy, and outreach to the community to ensure that the public understands the impact of Fresno State, and the degrees we offer to the region.

6. Courtney Brown, "We can't ignore a crisis of confidence in American higher education," Lumina Foundation, October 4, 2024, online source: <https://www.luminafoundation.org/news-and-views/crisis-of-confidence-in-u-s-higher-education-a-call-for-renewed-focus-and-reform/>

7. Hanna Aronovich, "5 things to know about implementing digital badges," April 26, 2022, online source: <https://www.credentialinginsights.org/Article/5-things-to-know-about-implementing-digital-badges-1>

8. Michael Burke, "California Community Colleges approves 6 new bachelor's degree programs, March 26, 2024, online source: <https://edsources.org/2024/california-community-colleges-approve-6-new-bachelors-degree-programs/708463>

Response to 2015 WSCUC Reaccreditation Report

WSCUC conducted a site visit on October 20-22, 2015, and issued a letter reaffirming Fresno State's reaccreditation for 10 years on March 2, 2016. The commission commended the university for its focus on its mission as a community-engaged university, dedicated to providing degree opportunities for all students, its open and inclusive planning process, improvement in graduation rates and closing the achievement gap for subgroups of non-traditional students, and sound financial management.

The commission identified four areas for further development: implementation of core competencies, development of a five-year business plan, setting deadlines for activities such as scheduling program reviews and assessments, and moving forward with the implementation of ePortfolios for assessment. WSCUC asked for an interim report to address three issues:

- Implementation of a five-year plan for the assessment of the five core competencies with evidence of outcomes
- Update on implementation of ePortfolios with results
- Development of a five-year business plan to accompany the strategic plan

The university submitted the interim report on schedule and participated in a virtual WSCUC Interim Report Committee (IRC) review on January 12, 2021. In the interim report, the university provided evidence of actions taken to address each of the three issues identified by WSCUC. No further reports were requested by the commission after this meeting.

Core Competency Assessment.

Fresno State created a plan to assess the five WSCUC core competencies on a rotating basis. The College Assessment Coordinators Team is responsible for conducting each assessment. This team includes one faculty member from each college (with a course release for serving in this role), the Library Assessment Coordinator, and the University Director of Assessment. Two coordinators serve as co-chairs each year and they recruit a committee of faculty members from diverse disciplines to conduct the assessment.

Depending on the competency being assessed, the committee collects a representative sample of student coursework, administers a test, or (in the case of oral communication) observes student classroom speeches. They then apply a rubric to evaluate the student work and issue a report at the end of the evaluation. At the time the Interim Report was written, the university had assessed oral communication and quantitative reasoning. The core competencies continue to be assessed on a rotating basis, with written communication assessed in academic-year 2024-25. Consequently, the reports inform changes that ensure a continuous reassessment of student success.

General Education e-portfolios.

The university developed a policy for the assessment of General Education student learning outcomes ([Exhibit 1.5, Academic Policy Manual Section 215](#)). An e-portfolio for each student was created in our learning management system (originally Blackboard, and the university changed to Canvas in summer 2019). The university established a General Education Assessment Subcommittee, including faculty members from diverse academic disciplines. The assessment subcommittee established rubrics for evaluating each GE student learning outcome. A schedule was established to assess each of these learning outcomes on a rotating basis over a five-year period and the schedule was changed to six years when Area F was added to General Education.

In each academic year, the university director of assessment selects a random sample of student work from the e-portfolios in the GE area(s) that are being assessed. Faculty members on the assessment subcommittee (working in teams of two) apply the rubrics to evaluate the student work. The results are reported to the director of assessment, who drafts a report and shares it with the university community.

There has been a significant change to the e-portfolio submission policy since the Interim Report was submitted. Rather than requiring students to submit designated assignments to their ePortfolio, the university contracted with Canvas to develop an LTI (Learning Tools Interoperability) which ensures that when a student submits the designated GE ePortfolio assignment to their professor, it is automatically duplicated and seamlessly added to the students' ePortfolio. This system created less work and consternation for students and for advisors who had to help students negotiate their ePortfolios.

Development of a Five-Year Business Plan.

As a publicly funded non-profit university in the CSU system, institutional support is primarily from two sources: state appropriations, and student tuition/fees. Currently, just under 60% of campus funding is from appropriations. While baseline support from the state remains relatively stable, the CSU general funding allocation is subject to the volatility of state tax revenues and competing state priorities. Beginning in FY 2022-23, the CSU system entered a budget compact with the State of California. While this does not guarantee a base funding level, it articulates a commitment for a 5% per year base budget increase for the duration of the five-year compact. On the other hand, student tuition and fees are primarily set at the system level by the Board of Trustees. For the first time in 13 years, the trustees recently approved a five-year 6% per year increase in tuition fees beginning in AY 2024-25. Collectively, these changes provide some predictability in anticipated funding levels to support longer-term budget planning.

In the Interim Report, Fresno State noted that there was extensive discussion about the feasibility of five-year budget planning. At the end of the process, the consensus was that Fresno State would continue to develop a business plan and budget on a year-to-year basis while projecting the likely budget out for a two-to-three-year period. While the state compact and annual tuition raises have narrowed uncertainties in budget allocation, and the newly passed student fee increase will alleviate the pressure Fresno State has faced to support student services and athletics, it is still not possible to determine the exact budget each year for five years with the accuracy needed to create a complete five-year business plan. With Bulldog Bound, we are confident that our enrollment will be strong in the coming years, especially given the success we have already seen with recent enrollment numbers. The Interim Report demonstrated confidence that the budget is relatively stable and there are no concerns about the fiscal viability of the university, and that one of the commission's commendations was for "sound financial management."

The Interim Report also noted that the university had placed increased emphasis on aligning each year's budget with the strategic plan. The report discussed each priority in the strategic plan and explained how the budget was aligned with those priorities. In the development of our current strategic plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)), estimated budgets were developed alongside strategies to be implemented to achieve the goals. For each strategy, a funding source was identified (general operating, foundation, grant, development etc.), and this was used to develop the timeline for implementation. Many units have developed and launched their own strategic plans that align with the institutional strategic plan. Thus, institutional budget planning is linked to strategic plan goals and milestones, and campus units are aligning their operational budgets to support campus outcomes.

Introduction of our Theme: *Flagship of the Central Valley*

In fall 2023, Fresno State launched a new five-year strategic plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)). The development of our theme is based on the broad stakeholder feedback collected over a full year in the development of our new strategic plan. During AY 2022-23, the campus conducted a series of listening sessions and gathered input from over 1,100 faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members.

The new plan focuses on five strategic goals:

1. Enhance Personal Well Being and Professional Fulfillment;
2. Bridge Campus and Community;
3. Cultivate Regional Progress and Global Impact;
4. Modernize Facilities, Infrastructure, and Technology, and
5. Embody Full Inclusiveness and Belongingness.

Once the university was approved for Thematic Pathways for Reaffirmation (TPR) reaccreditation in spring 2023, a WSCUC planning committee was constituted, consisting of five key academic leaders. The group reviewed the strategic plan and identified two draft themes that align with both key WSCUC standards and strategic plan goals. In early fall 2023, a campus WSCUC executive committee and a WSCUC advisory committee were formed by the President. The executive committee gathered feedback on the proposed themes from eleven groups of stakeholders, including the President's Cabinet, Academic Senate Executive Committee, Associated Students, Inc. (Student Government), Academic Affairs Leadership Team, and the Division of Student Affairs. Based on this input, and in consultation with the President's Cabinet and WSCUC Advisory Committee, the WSCUC executive committee finalized the *"Flagship of the Central Valley"* theme.



The Flagship of the Central Valley theme explores the role of Fresno State as an institution that both uplifts the lives of all residents and reshapes every facet of our region through transformative education, research, service, and leadership. Our self-study explores this theme by analyzing how the university:

Transforms our students by:

- Improving their socioeconomic status through education; almost 70% are first-generation
- Deepening learning and professional skills through high impact practices and experiential learning
- Ensuring that their training leads to careers that are economically beneficial, professionally satisfying, and personally meaningful.

Transforms our region by:

- Graduating students ready to meet regional workforce needs; Fresno State graduates sustain the economy and society of the region
- Contributing to the investment and growth of our regional economy
- Mobilizing the campus's human and intellectual capacity to improve the region and its communities.

Our theme was developed in parallel to our new campus strategic plan and it is aligned with our mission, vision, and core values. As higher education grapples nationwide with societal concerns over the value of college education, this work will explore how our campus promotes social, economic, and environmental progress, and its findings will provide an example for other regional-serving public universities in aligning their work to maximize the public good.

Section 2: Essays on Fresno State's Theme, *Flagship of the Central Valley*

Fresno State's theme, *Flagship of the Central Valley*, was broken down into two subthemes.

The first, **Nurturing our Next Generation of Leaders**, focused on the university's impact on students and the second, **Cultivating Service, Research, and Leadership**, focused on the university's impact on the Central Valley.



Nurturing Our Next Generation of Leaders

Fresno State's first subtheme, Nurturing our Next Generation of Leaders, considered how the university serves as a flagship for the region by providing a transformative education for our students. As indicated in our TPR proposal, we decided to research three significant contributions by Fresno State to our students and to the region: the university's impact as an engine of social mobility, the availability and effect of high impact practices for our students, and the career satisfaction of our graduates, eighty percent of whom remain in the region after graduation. Each of these aligns with Fresno State's strategic plan and WSCUC Criteria for Review (CFR) and each of these is fundamental to the economic and social future of the region.



Social Mobility (CFR 1.1, 1.2, 2.10, 2.11, 2.13, 2.14, 4.1, and 4.2)

Rationale for this Element of Our Self Study. As a flagship university, it is imperative for Fresno State to provide educational opportunities that uplift the socioeconomic status of our students and serve as a driver of social mobility. An important element of Fresno State's Strategic Plan vision is to advance social progress in the region and Goal 1A of the plan calls for the university to encourage youth of all backgrounds to see themselves as college bound and provide an accessible education to all (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)).

For purposes of this analysis, Fresno State adopted the following definition of social mobility that recognizes that social mobility comprises more than just an increase in income:

"Upward social mobility, the type of social mobility referenced in college rankings, describes the improvement of an individual's socioeconomic status. ... Furthermore, 'social mobility' is not simply an increase in annual income. It also includes greater opportunities in society that would otherwise be unattainable, such as more prestigious jobs, wider professional networks, and better access to health care."⁹

Fresno State's TPR proposal called for the university to analyze disaggregated social mobility metrics to determine whether there are equity gaps and if gaps are found, to formulate strategies to address these gaps and assess the effectiveness of these strategies. To do this, the working group considered five metrics: recruitment, affordability, retention, graduation, and post-graduation outcomes.

9. Janessa Thropay, "What is Social Mobility Anyway," *The California State University System*, February 6, 2024.

Social Mobility Data.

This narrative will provide deeper insights into how Fresno State is driving social mobility in our region by championing a culture of participation and success in higher education. This is accomplished by our proactive recruitment of students and promoting their success through a commitment to affordability, retention, and graduation. Understanding these metrics is crucial because they represent the clearest indicators of a student’s journey toward success. When students are retained and graduate in a timely manner, it signals that the institution’s support mechanisms, such as financial aid, learning resources, and student training and engagement opportunities, are effective. We will also present data on post-graduation outcomes.

Recruitment.

As the flagship institution of higher education in the Central Valley, and an engine of social mobility, Fresno State’s first step must be to ensure that all students in the region and their families are aware that there is a viable pathway to a college degree. Students and families also need to know that our university values having them as part of our student body and will offer programs and services that will enable them to earn a Fresno State degree when they arrive on campus.

Bulldog Bound (introduced in Section 1 of this report) is a guaranteed admissions program, ensuring that high school students from partnering school districts who meet the California State University requirements are guaranteed a spot at Fresno State after graduation (online source: [Bulldog Bound Program](#)). This program was launched in fall 2023 and as of July 2025, 45 school districts from Fresno, Madera, Kings, and Tulare counties are partners in this collaboration. Fresno State supports students and families with admissions preparation starting in ninth grade.

These are the Top 5 Benefits of the program for students:

- Early exposure to college readiness and application support.
- Ambassador support in navigating academic and financial resources.
- Opportunities for college visits and campus tours.
- Access to exclusive scholarship opportunities.
- Enhanced readiness for the transition to postsecondary education through Bulldog Bound LaunchPad.



Over 15,000
Students enrolled

104 High Schools participating

45 Partnering school districts

(As of Spring/Summer 2025)

In fall 2024, over 8,900 students from more than 40 partner school districts were enrolled in Bulldog Bound, with 104 high schools participating. For the fall 2024 admission cycle, 1,817 Bulldog Bound students applied for admission, 1,768 were admitted, and 815 enrolled. Hispanic students constituted 72% of the enrolling students from the program, compared with 61% of enrollees for the university overall. As of spring 2025, 15,000 students enrolled in the program across 45 partnering high schools. For the 2024-25 academic year, we saw a 99.4% year-over-year increase in students who accepted admission, reflecting the growing interest and awareness of the Bulldog Bound program’s offerings. Currently, in fall 2025, 3,618 students have applied through Bulldog Bound, and 2,661 students have been admitted.

The outlook for fall 2026 is for increasing applications. Based on current trends, we anticipate a 15% increase in applications to 4,410. This reflects the growing awareness and success of the program. For fall 2026, 3,346 students participated in the junior pre-qualification process.

In summer 2025, Fresno State partnered with the Fresno Unified School District to inaugurate **LaunchPad: A Bulldog Bound Freshman Success Camp**. 200 Fresno Unified students who are entering freshman in Fall 2025 participated in a wrap-around week-long camp that introduced them to the most impactful student services at Fresno State.

Activities for LaunchPad participants ([Exhibit 2.1, LaunchPad Activities](#)) include engagement with Associated Students, Inc. and student clubs, mentorship, 1:1 academic advising, and team bonding activities. Participants will also be block enrolled in 13 units, including the 1-unit University 1 course.

Expected LaunchPad outcomes include improved academic skills and readiness, social networking, engagement with support services, and increased self-confidence.

A plan for assessing the success of LaunchPad is also in place ([Exhibit 2.2, LaunchPad Assessment](#)). The academic performance, retention rates, and services utilization of LaunchPad participants will be compared with a control group of incoming freshmen. Surveys of LaunchPad participants will also be conducted.



Affordability.

One of the primary drivers of social mobility at Fresno State is its affordability. Education costs are a significant barrier to many students, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Fresno State ensures affordability by keeping tuition and fees low, even relative to other CSU campuses ([Exhibit 1.4, CSU Campus Tuition and Fees](#)). The university offers multiple pathways for financial aid, informs students about available aid, and helps them navigate the financial aid system. The cumulative effect of these efforts is significant because 80% of students receive some form of financial aid and 65% receive enough aid to cover all tuition and fees. The university also has an



80%

of Fresno State students
receive financial aid

Affordable Learning Solutions Program to reduce the cost of textbooks and in AY 2023-24 alone, the total savings were over \$7 million with an average of \$78 per student (ALS Activity Report to the CSU Chancellor's Office). Between AY 2019-20 and AY 2023-24, over \$29.3 million has been saved through the program.

The university recognizes that students may need additional support to pay for basic needs that are not covered by financial aid. Fresno State provides a range of additional financial support to help students remain in school and succeed. A few examples of support will be presented here:

- **The Amendola Family Student Cupboard** is a free food pantry for Fresno State students. Between Fall 2021 and Spring 2024, there were 152,777 visits serving over 11,000 unique students. Visits by members of historically underrepresented groups constitute 76.4% of all visits and ([Exhibit 2.3, Amendola Family Student Cupboard Visits](#)) 67.6% of Fresno State students are members of these groups. The student cupboard will be highly enhanced as a result of the recent student fee increase.
- **Emergency Housing** is available when a student is unhoused, at risk of being unhoused, or in an unsafe environment. In academic year 2023-24, 352 students received \$509,390 in housing assistance (Dr. Bernadette Muscat, December 10, 2024 email). The recent student fee increase provides additional funding for essential needs such as housing.
- **The Student Health and Counseling Center** provides access to low-cost health and wellness services, including 7,999 primary care visits, 3,897 prescriptions filled, and 5,258 counseling visits in academic year 2023-24 ([Exhibit 2.4, Student Health and Counseling Center Statistics](#)).
- **Good Samaritan Grants** are provided for students experiencing unanticipated financial roadblocks. The grants may be used for essential needs including housing, bills, medical expenses, and non-cosmetic vehicle repairs. Between Fall 2021 and Spring 2024, students received \$631,547 in grants. Disaggregated data for Spring 2024 indicates that first generation students received 79.2% of grant funds and continuing generation students received 4.8%. The first-generation status of the remaining students was unknown ([Exhibit 2.5, Good Samaritan Grant Statistics](#)).

The California State University system is recognized as a national leader in providing an affordable, high-quality education (online source: [CSU System Tuition](#)). And Fresno State ranks very high among CSU universities on affordability metrics while in school and after graduation. For the 2024-25 academic year ([Exhibit 2.6, CSU Campus Cost of Attendance](#)), Fresno State’s undergraduate cost of attendance was \$23,962 for students living with their parents (ranking ninth in the CSU system) and \$25,028 for students living on campus (ranking first in the CSU system). Fresno State also performs well relative to other CSUs on student debt metrics and work hours required to cover costs, as reported in table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Fresno State Affordability Rankings in the CSU System

Metric	Fresno State Data	CSU Rank
Average debt for BA graduate	\$16,100	3 (tie)
Share of BA graduates with any debt	33%	2
Weekly work hours to cover net prices	15	3

Source: Cal State Student Association and Institute for College Access and Success, “CSU at all Costs: The Inequitable Burdens of Affording a College Degree,” September 2023.

As a result of the low cost of attendance, Fresno State students can recoup the cost of college attendance quickly post-graduation. According to a College Futures Foundation Study of 324 California institutions, Fresno State was one of nine institutions that enroll over 50% low- and moderate-income students where the average time for students to recoup college costs is less than one year after graduation ([Exhibit 1.1, College Futures Foundation Report, p. 9](#)). These results applied to students regardless of their major. Specifically, students in 30 of 49 majors recovered costs in less than one year and students from another 18 majors recovered costs in less than two years.

Retention.

Retention rates are another important indicator of a university’s role in supporting student success. Fresno State has implemented several programs to improve retention rates including the University Advising Center’s Stop-Out Prevention Program and the Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation (CARE) team; both aim to re-engage students who are at-risk of stopping out. Through the Bulldog Connect Program, the advising center identifies students who have not registered for an upcoming semester and offers them proactive outreach, support, and guidance. Students who have stopped out are provided with support to enable them to re-enroll. For the fall 2023 through spring 2024 semesters, 3,579 students who had stopped out were contacted and 1,009 re-enrolled. For students who had not registered for the next semester, 7,958 were contacted and 3,955 enrolled. The CARE team was successful in retaining 91% of the 276 students referred to them in 2024-25 and 89% of the 254 students referred in 2023-24.

Additionally, Academic Success Coaching (ASC) has proven to be effective in helping students on academic probation. Data shows that students who utilized ASC services had significantly higher retention rates (55.5%) compared to students who did not utilize this service (6.5%). The greatest impact was found among students who identify as female, first generation, African American, Asian American, and Hispanic ([Exhibit 2.7, Learning Center Annual Report, 2023-24](#)).

The ten-year overall retention rate (the percentage of students who, after starting a degree program at a particular institution, have graduated or are still enrolled a decade later) for first-time full-time (FTFT) students averaged around 80% over the past five years. For first generation students, the retention rate was 81.6% exceeding the national average of 80.9% (NCES, 2024). Pell students also experienced a similar retention rate as the national average (79%). Overall, 79.6% students with one or more underrepresented identities were retained at the same rate as the national average. Tables 2.2 and 2.3 provide recent retention data for Fresno State.

Table 2.2 First-Year Retention Rates

	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023
All Students	88.4%	81.4%	81.5%	82.8%	85.2%
First Generation	87.6%	79.8%	79.7%	81.0%	85.4%
Continuing Generation	90.3%	85.9%	86.7%	88.6%	89.3%

Table 2.3 Second-Year Retention Rates

	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
All Students	74.5%	74.0%	65.8%	66.3%	69.7%
First Generation	72.8%	71.8%	63.2%	63%	77.6%
Continuing Generation	79.8%	80%	72.2%	75.6%	67.3%

The university also has a Liberal Arts degree completion program. Nicknamed “Reconnect,” the program is ideal for working adults or those who otherwise would not return to Fresno State or their prior CSU campus to complete a traditional degree program. The program offers significant flexibility to satisfy degree requirements within a one to two-year program. Regardless of their previously declared major, participants earn a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts upon graduation.

Graduation Rates.

Fresno State has made significant strides in improving graduation rates, particularly among first-generation students (tables 2.4 and 2.5). In recent years, the six-year graduation rate for first-generation students has steadily increased, from 51% (2012 cohort) to 53.6% (2018 cohort). Similarly, continuing-generation students have seen consistent improvement in their six-year graduation rates, from 61.4% (2012) to 66.5% (2018). For all students, graduation rates increased from 54% to 57%. This is significantly higher than the national Hispanic Serving Institution average of 43% ([Hispanic Serving Institutions PDF](#)). Fresno State made similar progress with four-year graduation rates, with first-generation rates improving from 15.3% (2014 cohort) to 24.5% (2020 cohort) and continuing generation rates improving from 29.9% (2014) to 36.3% (2020).

Table 2.4. Six-Year Graduation Rates

	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020
All students	54.0	56.3	57.5	56.6	56.2	54.8	57.0
First generation	51.0	52.5	53.5	54.3	54.1	52.1	53.6
Continuing generation	61.4	66.0	68.4	64.3	63.0	62.9	66.5
Unknown	68.3	57.8	64.2	55.7	53.4	53.0	51.4

Table 2.5. Four-Year Graduation Rates

	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020
All students	19.3	17.8	21.4	24.7	27.8	30.0	27.9
First generation	15.3	14.5	18.4	21.3	24.9	26.6	24.5
Continuing generation	29.9	28.0	30.6	34.6	36.0	38.0	36.3
Unknown	25.9	23.7	18.6	24.7	23.6	29.2	30.4

Source: Fresno State Office of Institutional Effectiveness

The university's focus on providing clear pathways to graduation has been key to this success. The Fresno State Learning Center supports students in high-enrollment, low-success courses, helping them to improve their grades and pass challenging classes. For example, the mean grades of high DFW (students receiving grades of "D," "F," or withdrawing from the course) courses that were partnered with Supplemental Instruction decreased from 36.8% before the partnership to 17.5%. Equity gaps are also lower when students participate in Supplemental Instruction with mean course passing rate gaps for first-generation students at 3.1% for SI users, as compared to 6.9% for non-users. Similar improvements were found for Pell-eligible students and historically underrepresented groups ([Exhibit 2.7, Learning Center Annual Report, 2023-24](#)). With the fee increase in fall 2025, almost 50% of Fresno State students will have access to this resource.

Additionally, student success programs like the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) offer specialized support to first-generation and historically underserved students. Fresno State is also constructing a new on-campus affordable student housing project, which will include apartments for students with children. These programs have positive impacts on first-term retention, persistence, and graduation rates ([Exhibit 2.8, EOP and CAMP data](#)).

Fresno State is also addressing the equity gaps in graduation rates, particularly between first generation and continuing-generation students. By focusing on mentorship, leadership opportunities, and academic resources, the university aims to close these gaps and provide more equitable opportunities for all students.

Post-Graduation Outcomes.

One important measure of social mobility is how well graduates fare in the workforce. Fresno State tracked its alumni through the Embark First Destination Survey ([Exhibit 2.9, Embark First Destination Survey](#)), which collected data on employment and salary outcomes for graduates six months after graduation. The survey results for the 2022-23 cohort show that 61.2% of graduates (n = 966) reported an earning potential that was higher than that of the household where they were raised, while 15.3% responded no (n = 241). First-generation graduates reported increases in their earning potential at a 70.4% rate (n = 746), while 10.2% reported no (n = 108).

Embark Survey data showed that Fresno State graduates also contribute significantly to the regional economy, with 95% of alumni remaining in California and 83% residing in the Central Valley. On average, employed graduates from the 2022-2023 cohort earned \$60,592, with a median salary of \$55,000. Graduate alumni reported higher salaries, averaging \$80,480 with a median of \$70,000.


Regular SI student users earned a

96.77%

mean course passing rate, compared to non-SI students at 77.37%

Almost 50%

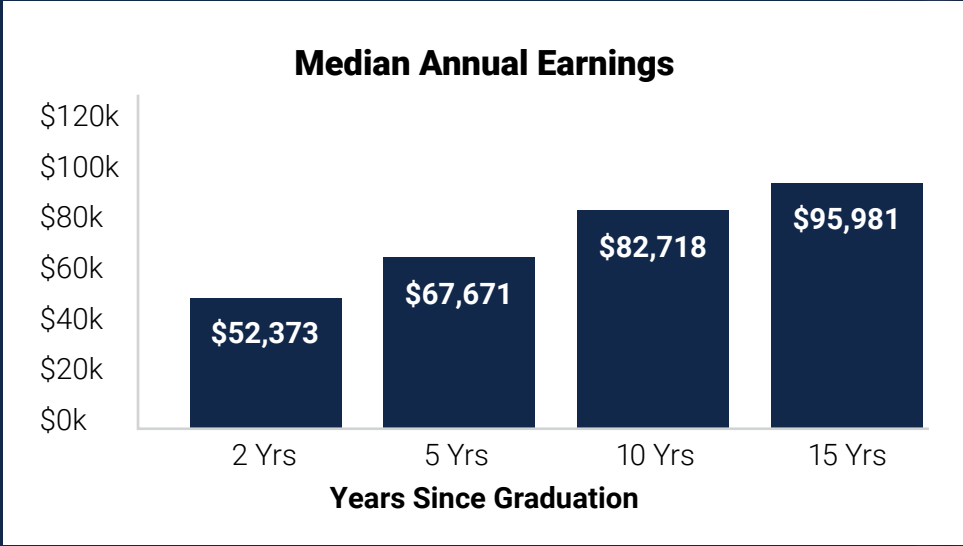
of all students will have access to SI starting fall 2025



The Embark Survey data indicated that first-generation students and continuing generation students earned similar salaries, with an average of \$60,562 and a median of \$55,000 for first-generation graduates, while continuing generation students had an average salary of \$59,613 and a median of \$56,080. First generation students who earned graduate degrees also earned similar salaries, with an average of \$80,868 and a median of \$70,000 for first-generation students and an average of \$77,540 and median of \$71,000 for continuing generation students. These data indicate that pursuing further education helps level the playing field.

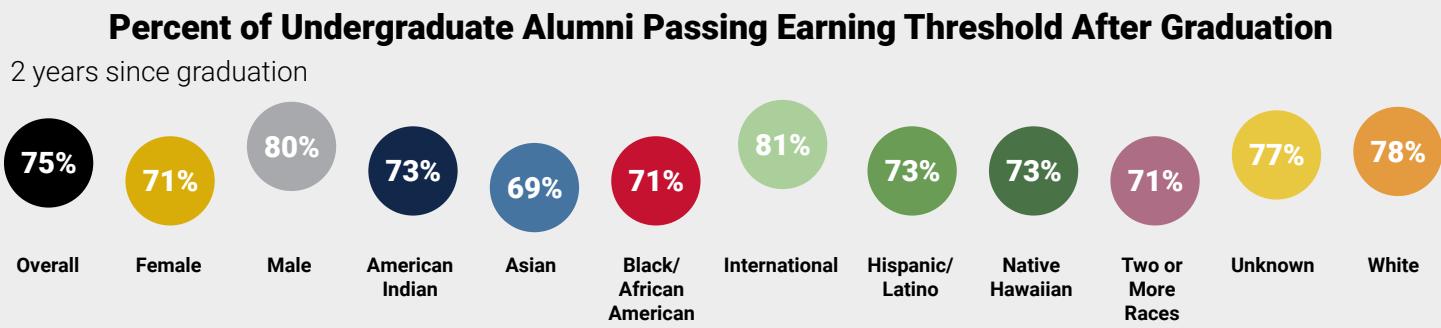
In partnership with the National Student Clearinghouse, the CSU system now has employment data through the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For Fresno State graduates, the median earnings show steady progression post-graduation.

Table 2.6. Median Annual Earnings for Fresno State Graduates



The data also shows that there is a parity of earnings based on ethnicity. The chart below shows the percentage of undergraduates who earn above the median earning for California with a high school diploma. Overall, 75% of alumni exceed the median within two years of graduating.

Table 2.7. Alumni Passing Earnings Threshold by Ethnicity



Conclusion and Recommendations for Next Steps.

Serving as an engine of social mobility for the Central Valley is one of the university's most important goals as a flagship institution. The working group analyzed five important dimensions of social mobility, recruitment, affordability, retention, graduation, and post-graduation outcomes, with a focus on equity in social mobility. This section of the self-study provided data to show that Fresno State's initiatives are promoting equitable outcomes in each of these areas.

Even though data indicate that Fresno State has made significant progress as an engine of social mobility in the Central Valley, continuous improvement is a vital goal. There is evidence that several university initiatives, such as Academic Success Coaching and Supplemental Instruction, are reducing equity gaps at the university. These initiatives will be greatly enhanced beginning in fall 2025, as the university has committed additional resources to enable these initiatives to serve more students. Beginning in fall 2025, an additional \$495,000 from the Instructionally Related Activities (IRA) fee increase will be provided to the Learning Center, expanding ASC, SI, and tutoring. This funding will support an additional 4,152 students, reaching nearly 50% of the student body. Additional funding for the Amendola Student Cupboard (\$445,000) and Center for Essential Needs (\$395,000) will double the current capacity of each of these programs.

Intentional Investing in Student Success

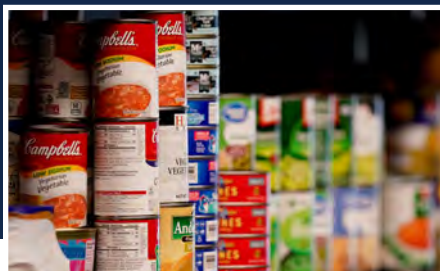
\$495,000

Supplemental Instruction



\$445,000

Amendola Student Cupboard



\$395,000

Center for Essential Needs



Additionally, while the economic outcomes for Fresno State graduates are generally positive, there is room for improvement in certain areas, particularly in connecting students with employers. In the Embark Survey, only 52.5% of graduates reported that the university helped them connect with employers, highlighting a need for enhanced career services. When students seek career advice, most find it valuable, with 83.7% of graduates reporting that the career advice they received has been helpful. Therefore, it is necessary to take steps to ensure that students seek career counseling. Based on surveys of graduates which found that they received more career information and advice from faculty and staff than their college career center, the Career Center launched the Career Champions program. This initiative will equip faculty, staff, and student leaders with tools to support students' career development.

The IRA student fee increase will also provide \$1,800,000 to the Career Development Center to fund 850 paid internships, enabling students who could not afford to take an unpaid internship to earn income and benefit from a connection with nonprofit organizations or small businesses.

The strategic plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)) provides a mechanism for continuing to evaluate progress on social mobility metrics and take action to improve these measures and reduce equity gaps. Goal 1A calls for expanding programs such as supplemental instruction and first year experience to ensure vulnerable populations are connected to academic support and fundamental needs assistance. It also calls for enhancing career planning and career advising. The President's Cabinet holds an annual meeting to review strategic plan progress and address any barriers or logistical issues that were encountered.

High Impact Practices and Experiential Learning (CFR 1.2, 2.13, 4.1, 4.2, and 4.5)

Rationale for this Element of Our Self-Study.

As a flagship university, high impact practices (HIPs) and experiential learning (EL) opportunities constitute core means by which the university can achieve the transformative educational experiences underscored in our theme, **Flagship of the Central Valley**. Many of these programs offer students valuable experience working with regional employers or providing service in the area. Other programs enhance the quality of students’ educational experiences, better preparing them for careers and service in the Central Valley. The university Strategic Plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)) includes the goal that all students will participate in at least one high-impact practice before graduation (Goal 3A, Strategy 1).

Fresno State’s TPR proposal called for the university to inventory the high impact practices that are available at Fresno State and to formulate a strategy for increasing participation in high impact practices in alignment with the strategic plan goal. The proposal also called for analyzing survey data from recent graduates regarding their participation in and experience with high impact practices at the university.

Fresno State offers a wide range of HIPs, embedded in courses across campus that foster critical skills like communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and cross-cultural competence. These HIPs deepen engagement, understanding, and application of academic content while promoting personal and professional development. For the self-study, we identified six types of HIPs/EL opportunities that the university currently offers consistently: Service Learning, Internships, First Year Experience, Study Abroad, Capstone Courses, and Supplemental Instruction. These practices and experiences all contribute to student academic success, belongingness, career readiness, and the development of higher problem-solving skills.¹⁰

High Impact Practices (HIP) and Experiential Learning (EL) Data.

The following tables present participation in HIPs/EL. Table 2.8 presents the total number of participants in four major HIP/EL activities: service-learning, internships, supplemental instruction, and capstone courses for the fall 2021 through spring 2023 semesters. The data for these four activities are available from the Fresno State Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The data for First Year Experience and Study Abroad were collected from different sources and will be presented separately.

Table 2.8 HIP Participants, F2021-Sp2023

HIP	Participants
Capstone Courses	5641
Internships	3346
Service-Learning	7026
Supplemental Instruction	18,232

Source: Fresno State Office of Institutional Effectiveness, fall 2021-spring 2023 participation



10. Kuh, G. D., O'Donnell, K., & Schneider, C. G. (2017). HIPs at Ten. *Change: the Magazine of Higher Learning*, 49(5), 8-16

The next three tables present total participation in the above HIP/EL activities from fall 2021- spring 2023, disaggregated by gender, first-generation status, and historically underrepresented group status.

Table 2.9. HIP Participants by Gender

Male	Female	Non-binary
14,279	19,256	12
42.6% (39.9%)	57.4% (60.0%)	0.03% (0.1%)

Source: Fresno State Office of Institutional Effectiveness, fall 2021-spring 2023 participation

Table 2.10. HIP Participants by Historically Underrepresented Group Status

Historically Underrepresented Group Members	White and Asian Students
19,580	16,819
53.8% (67.6%)	46.2% (32.4%)

Source: Fresno State Office of Institutional Effectiveness, fall 2021-spring 2023 participation

Table 2.11. HIP Event Participation by First Generation Status

First Generation Students	Continuing Generation Students
21,330	15,089
58.6% (66.6%)	41.4% (33.4%)

Source: Fresno State Office of Institutional Effectiveness, fall 2021-spring 2023 participation

We are currently working on increasing our tracking efforts to also include the positive impact of FYE and Study Abroad on our students. However, student enrollment data indicate that approximately 700 students benefit from FYEs in the Craig School of Business (CSB 50), the Lyles College of Engineering (Foundations for Success), the Jordan College of Agriculture (Building Opportunities Through Networks of Discovery or BOND), and the College of Science and Mathematics (BOND). In terms of Study Abroad—prior to the pandemic, over 700 students participated in this HIP each year. For example, the College of Arts and Humanities offers a London program taught by college faculty where students experience the music, theatre, and museums of the city. Study abroad numbers are rebounding, from having only 26 students studying in universities around the world (in AY 2021-22), we had 380 students in AY 2022-23 (Fresno State Division of Continuing and Global Education).



Data from the 2024 NSSE survey provide comparative statistics on HIP participation ([Exhibit 2.10, NSSE Report on High Impact Practices](#)). The survey asked students whether they had participated in six practices: service-learning, learning communities, research, internship or field experience, study abroad, or a culminating senior experience. Most Fresno State students (85%) reported participation in at least one of these practices, compared to 83% for other California State University campuses. The Strategic Plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)) sets a goal of all students participating in at least one HIP or EL experience (Goal 3A, Outcome 1A).

In terms of the effectiveness of Fresno State HIPs, including supplemental instruction, service-learning, and first-year experience:

- **Supplemental Instruction (SI).** Students who regularly attended supplemental instruction earned a 96.8% mean course passing rate, compared to 77.4% for non-users. Regular SI attenders also had a mean final course grade of 3.23 compared to 2.39 for non-users. Furthermore, SI reduced equity gaps. For first-generation students there was a 3.1% gap for users, compared to 6.9% for non-users. For Pell Grant-eligible students. The gap was 5.9% for users and 9.3% for non-users. And for historically underrepresented groups, there was a gap of 8.5% for users and 8.7% for non-users ([Exhibit 2.7, Learning Center Annual Report, 2023-24](#)).
- **Service-Learning.** A study of over 31,000 Fresno State students found that service-learning participation had a significantly positive association with graduation within six years for first-time freshmen and a significantly positive association with graduation for new transfer students. Furthermore, participation in multiple service-learning courses was associated with an even higher likelihood of degree attainment.¹¹
- **First Year Experience.** The BOND (Building Opportunities through Networks of Discovery) Program is a first-year learning community in the College of Science and Mathematics. Student cohorts take common GE courses and collaborate on team-based research focusing on socio-environmental issues. Over a six-year period, students in the BOND program had consistently higher science retention compared to non-BOND students ([Exhibit 2.11, BOND Program Retention, slide 15](#)).
- **Maxine McDonald Residential Scholars Program.** This program is open to all and offers students academic support, community engagement, and mentorship. This program is designed to help individuals deepen their understanding and appreciation of Black/African American culture through coursework and co-curricular activities that aim to empower and encourage their pursuits of prospective majors and future career opportunities.
- **Survey results from Fresno State graduates also provide evidence of the impact of High Impact Practices.** The 2018-19 and 2019-20 Outcomes Surveys asked recent graduates whether internships, service-learning, field experiences, clinical experiences, and study abroad (with an internship or practicum component) had been helpful in preparing them for their career. The results are compiled in table 2.12.

Table 2.12 Impact of High Impact Practices for Career Preparation

High Impact Practice	Very Helpful or Helpful	Very Unhelpful or Unhelpful
Internships	89.1% (n = 1010)	3.1% (n = 35)
Service-learning	74.0% (n = 713)	6.2% (n = 60)
Field experience	89.4% (n = 614)	2.0% (n = 14)
Clinical experience	94.7% (n = 232)	0.4% (n =1)
Study abroad (with internship or practicum component)	73.3% (n = 137)	3.7% (n =7)

11. Yue, H. & Hart, S.M. (2017). *Service-Learning and Graduation: Evidence from Event History Analysis*. "Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning 23(2), 24-41.

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Conclusion and Recommendations for Next Steps.

The data for student participation in HIPs indicated that a substantial number of Fresno State students had participated in one or more of these activities in AYs 2021-22 and 2022-23. It is noteworthy to state that this happened in spite of the pandemic. There is also evidence that specific high impact practices at Fresno State, including supplemental instruction, service-learning, and first-year experience, have positive outcomes with respect to equity gaps, retention, and graduation. Survey data for Fresno State graduates also indicates that a large number of students believe that their participation in high impact practices was helpful in career preparation.

NSSE survey data for 2024 also found that 85% of Fresno State students had participated in the high impact practices being surveyed, compared to 83% for the entire CSU system.

However, participation rates were lower for historically underrepresented groups and first-generation students, indicating that more work is needed to encourage participation by these groups. The Strategic Plan sets a goal of 100% participation in at least one HIP or EL experience. initiatives such as a \$5 million Mellon Foundation Grant for humanities internships and the newly created interdisciplinary internship course which provides academic credit for students in programs where no internship is available in the curriculum will reduce barriers to participation.

To increase student participation in high impact practices and experiential learning, the working group provided the following recommendations:

- **Embed HIPs/EL experiences into the required curriculum.** Integrating HIPs within general education or major courses ensures equitable participation, as it removes reliance on students to seek out these experiences independently.
- **Ensure faculty use HIPs/EL and do so efficaciously.** Training faculty to implement HIPs and EL experiences equitably and develop inclusive pedagogy ensures that these practices meet the needs of all students, enhancing their effectiveness. During the winter 2025 intersession, the university launched a training program to redesign a capstone course into a HIP capstone course.
- **Promote HIPs/EL opportunities through advising and faculty consultation.** Many students, especially first-generation or historically underrepresented groups, are unaware of HIPs or their benefits. Proactive faculty and advisor guidance, with clear information about the benefits and effectiveness of HIPs/EL, is essential to increase participation.
- **Reduce time and financial barriers for students.** Offering financial support, priority enrollment incentives, or embedding HIPs within required coursework reduce barriers for students with work or family obligations. Without these supports, underserved students face difficulties balancing competing responsibilities with HIP participation.
- **Institutionalize and scale HIPs/EL opportunities across the university.** Requiring students to engage in multiple HIPs—at least once early and at least once later in their academic journey—ensures that all students benefit from these experiences. Research shows that multiple HIPs are associated with higher retention and better academic outcomes.
- **Continue to pursue research into how best to implement, scale, and promote HIPs/EL opportunities to the campus community.**



Career Satisfaction (CFR 1.2, 2.11, 2.14, and 4.5)

Rationale for this Element of the Self-Study.

As a flagship university, Fresno State plays an important role in providing graduates with the skills to work and serve in the Central Valley. Eighty percent of Fresno State graduates remain in the region, where they make important contributions to the economy and to their communities. Our alumni are more likely to continue to make their homes in our region if they are satisfied with their careers. We recognize the importance of career satisfaction for our graduates as evidenced by its prominence as one of the elements of our strategic plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#), Goal One A, Strategy 4).

Fresno State's TPR proposal stated that the university would analyze first career destination survey data to determine whether graduates are achieving career satisfaction by looking at multiple elements of satisfaction. The proposal also called for the working group to consider plans for expanding alumni career satisfaction research.

For this area of study, the Career Satisfaction Working Group analyzed available alumni survey data related to career satisfaction. The data provided insights into our graduates' primary motivation for earning their degree and their perceptions of the utility of their degree in achieving their career goals.

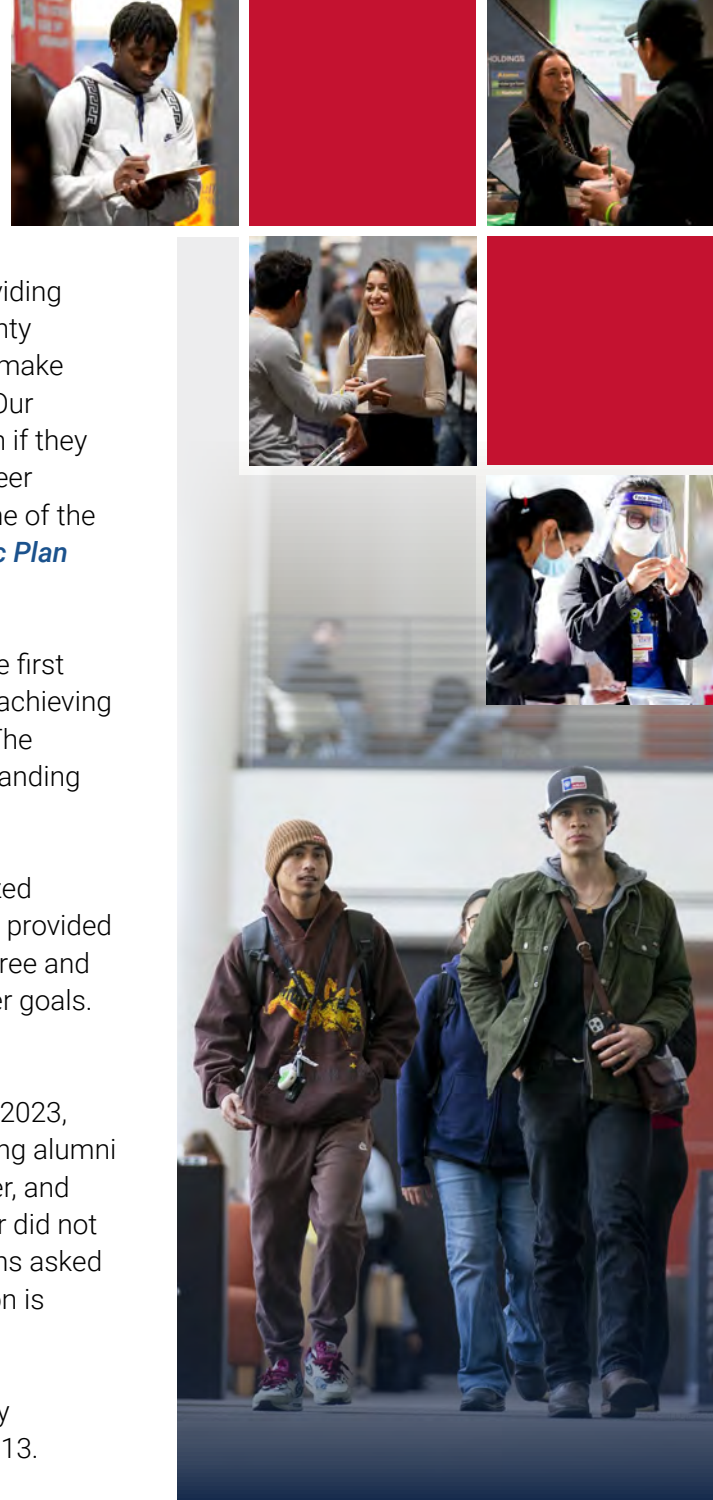
Career Satisfaction Data.

Fresno State contracted for four alumni surveys between 2018 and 2023, with 4,495 total respondents. The surveys considered topics including alumni motivation for earning a degree, satisfaction with their current career, and relevance of their career to their program of study. The same vendor did not conduct the surveys, so there were some differences in the questions asked in each survey. The number of respondents answering each question is included in tables 2.13 to 2.18.

Each survey asked alumni how satisfied they were with their primary graduation occupation. The following results are reported in table 2.13.

Table 2.13. Alumni Satisfaction with Primary Graduation Occupation

	Baccalaureate Graduates (n = 3649)	Post Baccalaureate Graduates (n = 846)
Very or somewhat satisfied	2796 (76.7%)	682 (80.6%)
Somewhat or very dissatisfied	316 (8.7%)	43 (5.1%)



Disaggregated career satisfaction data was also available from the Embark First Destination Survey for 2022-23 graduates. The results are presented below, considering first generation (table 2.14), gender (table 2.15), and historically underrepresented group status (table 2.16).

Table 2.14. Alumni Satisfaction with Primary Post Graduation Occupation by First Generation Status

Response	First Generation	Not First Generation
Agree or Strongly Agree	808 (76.3%)	334 (77.1%)
Neither Agree nor Disagree	171 (16.1%)	78 (18.0%)
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	80 (7.6%)	21 (4.8%)

Table 2.15. Alumni Satisfaction with Primary Post Graduation Occupation by Gender

Response	Women	Men	Non-Binary
Agree or Strongly Agree	731(76.0%)	397(77.5%)	13 (86.7%)
Neither Agree nor Disagree	165(17.2%)	81(15.8%)	1 (6.7%)
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	66 (6.9%)	34 (6.6%)	1 (6.7%)

Table 2.16. Alumni Satisfaction with Primary Post Graduation Occupation by Historically Underrepresented Group Status

Response	Historically Underrepresented Groups	Not Historically Underrepresented Groups
Agree or Strongly Agree	951 (76%)	362 (77.6%)
Neither Agree nor Disagree	214 (17.1%)	75 (15.9%)
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	87 (6.9%)	31 (6.6%)


The 2018-19 and 2019-20 surveys asked alumni about their primary motivation for finishing the degree that they recently completed. This data provides evidence of criteria that graduates consider important when assessing their careers. The primary responses are noted in table 2.17.

Table 2.17. Primary Motivation for Finishing Their Recently Completed Degree

Primary Motivation	Baccalaureate Graduates (n = 3757)	Post Baccalaureate Graduates (n= 509)
Employment Opportunities	40.1%	40.9%
Impact on Society	18.2%	16.2%
Personal Enrichment	15.7%	16.8%
Income Potential	10.8%	11.5%
Job Satisfaction	10.6%	10.3%

These surveys also asked alumni how helpful their degrees were in allowing them to achieve each of these motivating factors (see table 2.18).

Table 2.18. Helpfulness of Degrees for Each Primary Motivating Factor

	Baccalaureate Graduates (n = 2490)		Post Baccalaureate Graduates (n = 532)	
	Helpful/Very Helpful	Unhelpful/Very Unhelpful	Helpful/Very Helpful	Unhelpful/Very Unhelpful
Employment Opportunities	62.1%	8.9%	73.4%	3.5%
Impact on Society	64.4%	6.5%	75.6%	5.3%
Personal Enrichment	75.7%	8.7%	86.9%	4.9%
Income Potential	61.2%	8.7%	71.3%	4.3%
Job Satisfaction	61.9%	7.7%	70.9%	6.8%

The existing survey data on our graduates' career satisfaction provided several significant insights. First, when alumni were directly asked if they were satisfied with their primary graduate occupation, a substantial majority of students (76.7% baccalaureate graduates and 80.6% post-baccalaureate) indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied. The available disaggregated data indicated that there are not significant equity gaps in the career satisfaction of graduates, based on first generation status, gender, or historically underrepresented group membership.

The data also indicates that graduates have diverse motives for completing their degree, including having an impact on society and personal enrichment. Graduates wanted a degree that led to employment opportunities, but for most, income potential was not the most important goal.

When graduates were asked how helpful their degrees were in achieving each of the five post-graduation objectives, the responses were positive. For bachelor's degree graduates, the percentage answering helpful or very helpful ranged from 61.2% (income potential) to 75.7% (personal enrichment). For master's degree graduates, the percentage answering helpful or very helpful ranged from 70.9% (job satisfaction) to 86.9% (personal enrichment). One of Fresno State's core values is encouraging a culture of giving back to our region and this is an important element of our flagship theme. Consequently, it is encouraging that 65.6% of undergraduate alumni and 75.6% of graduate alumni indicated that their degree is helpful or very helpful in having an impact on society. Still, there is more work to be done to increase these numbers.

65.6%
of undergraduate
alumni and

75.6%
of graduate alumni
indicated that their
degree is **helpful or
very helpful** in having
an impact on society



Conclusion and Recommendations for Next Steps.

Survey data for alumni in their first year after graduation indicated that a high percentage are satisfied with their careers. Significant majorities also found that their degrees were helpful in achieving diverse career objectives. The working group recommended additional questions for future surveys, strategies for increasing survey participation, and conducting surveys of alumni at additional points in time post-graduation (as most available survey data studied graduates in their first year after graduating).

Additional Questions for Future Surveys.

The Career Satisfaction working group discussed questions that will be helpful to include with future surveys. The working group reached a consensus that the inclusion of additional survey questions would be helpful to get a more complete picture of our graduates' career satisfaction and how the university can strengthen alumni career satisfaction. A more complete breakdown of the questions is included in [*Exhibit 2.12, Alumni Survey: Additional Questions*](#).

Increasing Survey Participants and Expanding the Time Frame for Surveys.

The Career Satisfaction Working Group considered several ideas for increasing participation in future surveys and surveying students and graduates at different stages of their career paths. They focused on the following topics: surveying students about career planning when they are mid-degree, surveying alumni five- and ten-years post-graduation, adopting measures to encourage survey participation, informing students how their survey responses are used to make institutional improvements, inventorying other sites on campus (e.g. departments, colleges) where career satisfaction data are being collected, and selecting a coordinator (current employee or new position) to collate and curate all university career satisfaction data.

Cultivating Service, Leadership, And Research

Fresno State's second subtheme, Cultivating Service, Leadership, and Research, focuses on how the university serves as a flagship for the region by having a significant impact on the broader community. As indicated in our TPR proposal, we researched three significant ways that the university positively impacts the community: the university's role as a driver of economic growth, the ability of Fresno State to produce graduates who satisfy regional workforce needs, and the impact of Fresno State's research and service on the community. Each of these subthemes aligns with Fresno State's strategic plan and WSCUC Criteria for Review (CFR).



Economic Impact in the Region (CFR 1.1, 4.1, and 4.8)

Rationale for Inclusion in the Self-Study.

As the flagship four-year institution in the Central Valley, Fresno State is a critical component of the region's economy. Fresno State's Strategic Plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)) sets a goal for measuring and increasing the social and economic impact of the university's engagement efforts (Goal 2, outcome 7). The plan further establishes a goal of becoming an institutional leader in higher education for measuring and communicating the social and economic impact of the university's efforts to the community (Goal 2, strategy 3). WSCUC Standard 1 also indicates that institutions should have a clear sense of their contributions to society and the public good.

Fresno State's TPR proposal called for analyzing the economic impact of the university on the region. This section of our self-study analyzed four different types of directly measurable economic contributions. They included immediate impacts (jobs, income, sales and taxes created directly and indirectly by university operations), enhanced earnings impact, returns to California taxpayers, and social benefits. Because pro-social benefits of education (e.g. better health, consistent voting, volunteerism) can defy accurate measurement in dollar terms, this report treats them qualitatively rather than quantitatively.

Economic Impact Study Data. This section begins with a rigorous analysis of the economic and fiscal impacts of Fresno State in the region. It then describes several programs that illustrate how our campus contributes to these outcomes.

Summary of Economic Impact.

Fresno State strengthens the San Joaquin Valley regional economy by producing short- and long-term benefits. These benefits come from the economic contributions of both our graduates and university employees. In the short term, university activity generates a multiplier effect that significantly contributes to the vitality of the San Joaquin Valley economy. Dollars injected into the regional economy by the University and its students generate sales and income for local firms and residents, as well as tax revenue for local and state governments, which subsequently lead to further spending and income in an economic ripple effect. This way, the University supports many businesses and families even if they are not directly connected to it. In the long run, the University represents an investment to develop the human capital of the Central Valley—a region that is critical to our nation's food security. The return to this investment materializes as technological advances and knowledge creation, productivity and enhanced earnings of an educated workforce, as well as an improvement in the general quality of life.

Fresno State conducted an economic impact study to measure the average impact of the university during two FYs – 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 ([Exhibit 2.13, Fresno State Economic Impact Study](#)). The work builds upon prior work conducted by the same researcher in 2017 and 2006. The primary goal of these studies is to estimate the short run impact of the university on the regional economy of the San Joaquin Valley.

The overall economic impact of Fresno State on the region amounts to \$954.0 million in terms of output (business sales). This reflects a 33% increase compared to 2013-15 and an 88% increase relative to 2004-5. The aggregated expenses supported 10,931 part-time and full-time jobs and created \$391.0 million in labor income for individuals in the San Joaquin Valley. The number of jobs supported are 10% and 65% higher than the corresponding numbers in 2013-15 and 2004-5, respectively.

Some key findings of the study include:

- **Impact of Capital and Operating Expenditures by the University and its Auxiliaries (without payroll).** The \$190.2 million directly spent by the university and its auxiliaries in capital and operating expenses (without including payroll) produced a total impact of \$311.4 million in terms of output (business sales). These expenditures by the university and its auxiliaries supported a total of 3,556 part-time and full-time jobs in the San Joaquin Valley and created \$133.6 million in labor income.
- **Impact of Payroll Paid by University and its Auxiliaries to Employees.** The \$134.6 million earned and spent by employees of the University and its auxiliaries produced a total impact of \$122.6 million in terms of output (business sales). The total effect in terms of labor income amounted to \$147.4 million. The expenditures by employees of the university and its auxiliaries supported a total of 5,344 part-time and full-time jobs in the San Joaquin Valley.
- **Impact of Expenditures by University Students.** The \$401.7 million spent by university students produced a total effect of \$519.9 million in terms of output (business sales). Student expenditures supported a total of 2,031 part-time and full-time jobs in the San Joaquin Valley and created \$109.9 million in labor income.
- **Most Impacted Industries.** The impact of university-related total spending on output (business sales) is seen primarily in the (1) retail trade, (2) health and social services, (3) finance and insurance services, and (4) real estate and rental sectors. These four industrial sectors account for more than 50% of the total output impact in the regional economy.
- **Contribution to Employment in the Region.** University and auxiliary related activities contribute to roughly 1.2% of the total employment in the regional economy of the San Joaquin Valley.
- **Fiscal Impact.** The total estimated annual tax revenue generated by university related activities for the State of California, as well as for the county governments of Fresno, Madera, Kings and Tulare Counties is greater than \$49 million.
- **Return on Investment to University Students.** A bank would need to pay an annual interest rate of 8.21% on a California State University, Fresno graduate's savings account over their working lifetime to equal the rate of return that they can anticipate from the higher earnings made possible by their California State University, Fresno degree.
- **The Return on Investment to California Taxpayers.** The annual rate of return (ROI) to the investments made by the State in educating students at California State University, Fresno equals 6.23%.

\$954 M

overall economic
impact of Fresno
State on the region



\$190.2 M

directly spent by the
university produced
an impact of

\$311.4 M

\$401.7 M

spent by university students
produced an impact of

\$519.9 M

University-related spending
impacts the regions

- **Retail trade**
- **Health and Social Services**
- **Finance and Insurance**
- **Real Estate and Rentals**

Over \$49 M

annual tax revenue
generated by the university
for the State of California

6.23%

annual rate of return made
by the State in educating
Fresno State students

Examples of Programs with Economic Impact.

Many programs across Fresno State have direct and indirect economic impacts on the San Joaquin Valley. Here, we highlight two types of programs that contribute to driving the outcomes summarized in the previous section.

The first category of programs focuses on entrepreneurship and innovation. Fresno State recognizes the importance of promoting innovation among students, faculty, and community members at large. This stimulates the generation and development of new ideas that can lead to productivity increases, job creation in the local economy, and improved living standards.

Established programs in this area include the Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (online source: [Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#)), the Water, Energy and Technology (WET) Center (online source: [WET Center](#)) and more recently, the Agriculture, Business, and Engineering (ABE) Academy (online source: [ABE Academy](#)). Here, we are focusing on the economic impact of these initiatives.

Established in 2007, the WET Center supports water, energy, and agricultural technology businesses by offering training, coaching, and networking opportunities and by empowering businesses that are working to reach a more sustainable future in water, energy, and ag-tech. It provides consulting services, an innovation hub testing and piloting services, as well as programs for startups and Fresno State students.¹² The center has worked with over 500 companies, including 50 startups, generating \$258M in public and private funding and leading to the generation of about 770 jobs. Almost half of c-suite positions at WET Center companies are filled by people of color.



Several upcoming initiatives will add to the university's economic impact. Fresno State's partnership with SEMI, a global semiconductor manufacturing association, and other regional entities will bring new business opportunities and jobs to the region. The partnership also plans to establish a high-tech regional business park in the Central Valley. The university is also an anchor partner in the Fresno-Merced Future of Food Innovation Initiative (F3), which will organize the region's assets into an ecosystem that unlocks a world class "Climate-Smart Agrifood Technology and Engineering Cluster" based on capabilities in digitalization and data science, mechatronics, equipment, and systems testing and integration for agrifood applications. Over a four-year period, F3 is projected to increase regional GDP from 2.1% to 3.0% annually; attract \$250M in private investment; and create/fill more than 10,000 quality jobs that pay 60% more than current, low skilled jobs.¹³

International students also make great economic and social contributions to the region. Fresno State sits at the heart of one of the most diverse communities in the United States, with residents who speak over 120 different languages. Our campus and community have strong cultural ties with many nations and regions of the world, including Mexico, Armenia, India, and Southeast Asia. Our regional diversity is reflected in both our faculty and student populations, with over 75 countries represented in our campus community. Our campus has long understood the enrichment that international students bring to campus. Cross-cultural exchange is facilitated by MOUs and student exchange partnerships with over 70 universities in over 30 countries worldwide, with additional academic institutions added each year. In Fall 2023, Fresno State enrolled 595 international students from about 30 different countries, the largest international enrollment since 2019. These students provide economic impacts as well as cultural ones. A study by the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA) reported that international students at Fresno State supported 198 jobs and contributed \$21.4M to the regional economy in 2022-23.

12. Online source: <https://www.wetcenter.org/acceleratecalifornia>

13. Central Valley Community Foundation, "The F3 (Farms Food Future) Initiative," 2025, online source: <https://centralvalleycf.org/community-impact/f3-fresno-merced-future-of-food>

Conclusion and Recommendations for Next Steps.

The university has taken the first steps to communicate the economic impact of Fresno State to the community by hosting a press conference to share the findings from the economic impact research conducted for our self-study. As a result, the study received coverage in several media outlets including the San Joaquin Valley Sun, the Business Journal, Channel 24/47, ABC 30, and GV Wire ([Exhibit 2.14, Media Coverage of Economic Impact Study](#)). The university should continue to hold events that generate coverage of the ways in which our faculty, staff, and students contribute to the public good. Additionally, the university should research opportunities for changes in procurement that can facilitate local vendors doing business with our campus, which enhances the link between the university and the community thereby contributing to the regional economy.

Impact of Research and Service (CFR 1.2, 2.8, 2.13, 2.14, 4.1, and 4.8).

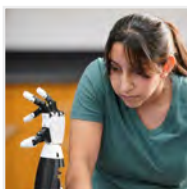
Rationale for this Element of the Self-Study.

As a flagship university, it is important for Fresno State to make a difference in our region by providing service to the community and sharing our research to address community needs. Both endeavors are central elements of the university's strategic plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)). A key component of the plan's mission is providing active service with diverse communities, with a goal to increase the number of community service hours provided by students, faculty, and staff (Goal 2, Outcome 1). The plan's vision includes serving as a model for social, economic, and environmental progress by conducting research on critical issues.

Fresno State's TPR proposal stated that the impact of scholarship and service will be evaluated by examining measures that quantify and describe how campus research and scholarship addresses and solves urgent regional challenges, and campus service meets the needs of community agencies and organizations. The following analysis will provide evidence for how the university has worked to achieve these outcomes.

Impact of Research and Service: Data.

Fresno State has continually demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing the challenges faced by California's Central Valley through a robust research and service-oriented approach. Over recent years, the university has seen substantial growth in its research activities, contributing significantly to the local community while also expanding its academic and societal impact beyond the region. This progress is reflected in record-breaking years for grants and contracts, signaling the growing success of Fresno State's research enterprise. The following summary highlights the key areas of Fresno State's research and service contributions, emphasizing their impact on the region's agricultural, healthcare, educational, and economic development. It will begin by summarizing the growth and mission of university research and then providing examples of impactful research in diverse regional sectors. The Impact of Research and Service Working Group also surveyed community partners and received fifty-four responses. Community partner feedback that relates to the examples will be included in the discussion and the full survey responses will be discussed later in this section.



Growth and Focus of Research at Fresno State.

Fresno State's research initiatives have seen remarkable growth over the past decade, with the university securing a total of \$78.3 million in grants and contracts in AY 2023-24. This figure represents a 10.8% increase from the previous year, marking the university's sixth consecutive record-breaking year in grants and contracts. This success is attributed to the collaborative efforts of faculty, students, and staff across various disciplines and departments, positioning Fresno State as a leading institution in research innovation.

The research funding supports a wide array of projects across the university's eight colleges and schools. This includes contributions from various sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, food safety, water management, and engineering, which are critical to the needs of the Central Valley. The funding provides opportunities for faculty development, hiring of staff, and student involvement, all of which contribute to the university's mission to foster innovation that serves both local and global communities.

Fresno State is home to nearly 50 research centers and institutes that focus on addressing key issues facing the Central Valley. The mission statements of Fresno State centers and institutes consistently focus on serving the Central Valley (online source: [Fresno State Centers and Institutes](#)). For example, the Central Valley Health Policy Institute's mission is to "improve equity in health and healthcare by developing the region's capacity for policy analysis and program development." The Fresno State Transportation Institute's goal is to "foster, support and integrate collaboration efforts in advanced multimodal transit projects between California State University, Fresno and Fresno County and its cities." The San Joaquin Valley Writing Project is "dedicated to improving the quality of writing instruction in grades K-college in Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Madera and Mariposa counties."



Fresno State's Impact on Agricultural Research.

Agriculture is a cornerstone of the Central Valley's economy, and Fresno State has made significant contributions to advancing agricultural practices through research. One of the university's key facilities, the Center for Irrigation Technology, has maintained one of the longest continuous irrigation pump testing services in the nation, making its data very valuable for farm management.

In addition, the Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology has contributed to research on saline and drought-resistant crops, helping to expand the range of plants that can be cultivated in the region under these conditions. The Institute for Food and Agriculture has also pioneered dairy industry programs, including the Pacific Coast Coalition, which promotes collaboration among universities and dairy businesses across several states, funding projects to improve sustainability and profitability in the dairy industry.

The Jordan Agricultural Research Center has made advances in precision agriculture, particularly in developing technologies to extract nutrients from brackish water, which is crucial for farming in water-scarce areas. The university's research in food safety has also contributed to California's food industry by developing pathogen detection tools and methods to improve the post-harvest handling of crops like cotton.



Healthcare and Housing Initiatives.

Fresno State is also making strides in addressing healthcare disparities in the Central Valley. The university introduced two mobile health units, funded by a \$4 million state grant, which provides healthcare services to rural and underserved communities in Fresno County. These units serve as mobile clinics, offering free health screenings and health education, and they have benefited nearly 18,000 patients since 2015.

The Central Valley Health Policy Institute has been a key partner in regional efforts to improve public health. The institute led the Preterm Birth Initiative, a county-wide project aimed at implementing research, policy, and programs to reduce the preterm birth rate among the most vulnerable populations in Fresno County. During the pandemic, the institute co-created the Fresno County Covid Equity Project, which sought to train and deploy community health workers into communities serving African American, refugee, immigrant, and disabled populations. The project model was adopted in other counties and was recognized by the White House in 2022 at the "Covid-19 Equity and What Works Showcase."

The CVHPI collaborated with Fresno Housing to study how its residents and clients viewed safety and potential investments towards neighborhood safety. Over 200 residents of all ages participated in surveys and focus groups. The findings helped guide Fresno Housing's strategic planning process. That plan, led by Fresno State sociology lecturer, Janine Nkosi, will guide the next several years of planning for the organization.

UCSF-Fresno, Community Health System, and Fresno State have collaborated on an academic research associate program involving students who aspire to a medical career and are interested in clinical research. UCSF highlighted the value of this program in their survey response, stating that “our collaboration with Fresno state has been extremely successful. It helps fulfill UCSF Mission of medical professionals teaching and, in turn, the participation of the students has advanced our research program in that we have completed many more studies than we would have been able to without their participation.”



Journalism Initiatives.

Fresno State’s Institute for Media and Public Trust studies media literacy and fake news, and develops strategies to restore trust in the media. The institute sponsors programs for the campus community and the public and also collaborates with other institutes on campus on topics such as water policy. The institute has received significant grant funding to support their work, including a \$201,000 grant to support its Journalists of Color training program and an \$86,000 grant to support a health journalist in the Central Valley.



Engineering Initiatives.

Fresno State signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SEMI (a global semiconductor manufacturing association), Silicon Farms, and local government entities to position Fresno as a hub for innovation in semiconductors. In their response to the working group survey, the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation noted that “during this past year alone, Fresno State has worked with our team to host tours and meetings at the university to help illuminate

Fresno County’s value proposition for investment. In addition, partnering with Fresno State has allowed our region to position itself for semiconductor investments, resulting in a strategic partnership with SEMI, the world’s foremost semiconductor trade association.” Based on this MOU, President Jiménez-Sandoval and Dean Ram Nunna will travel to India and Taiwan in Fall 2025 to sign MOUs with several universities and meet with industry partners specifically in the areas of AI in healthcare and agribusiness.

The university’s commitment to providing real-world experience to its students and simultaneously supporting the growth of local industries is exemplified in Fresno State-unique programs like the Geomatics Engineering Service, which enhances athletic events across the region with precise measurements. This program helps improve event flow and create a positive experience for athletes and spectators. Fresno State is one of a handful of universities that offers geomatics as a degree.



Transportation Initiatives.

One of the research areas that has changed how transportation engineering projects are conducted in the Central Valley is the creation of the Fresno State Transportation Institute (FSTI). FSTI is a state-funded research institute that actively promotes and participates in research tasks to improve mobility across the Central Valley. In the community partner survey, a representative from Cal Trans District 6 responded “the collaboration with Fresno State is seen as an investment,

as many Fresno State engineering students choose to decide to work for Caltrans or others within the transportation field. FSTI has also been doing impactful transportation research that has real-world application.”

An FSTI applied research project developed a robot to assist with traffic control at busy scholar intersections. The project, recently highlighted by the media, assists teachers and parents in controlling traffic with an artificial intelligence moving robot that works with multiple sensors and cameras to determine vehicles’ velocity and distance. Multiple trials have been conducted on the Fresno State campus and across education buildings in the Fresno County area.



Community Participation in Fresno State Events.

Fresno State Centers and Institutes provide extensive benefits to the Central Valley. In 2023-24, the university hosted over 300 events through its centers, and such were attended by almost 25,000 people. These events involve a wide spectrum of partners—education, industry, and entrepreneurs—and the programming includes training, education, collaboration, and research.

Evaluations from community partners attest to the benefits that these events provide. For example, teachers participating in the San Joaquin Valley Mathematics Project reported significant gains in skills and confidence as teacher leaders in mathematics. As an additional example, the Central California Child Welfare Training Academy participants rated their training courses at 3.49 (4.0 scale)



Service to the Community: A National Model for Engagement.

Community engagement has been at the heart of Fresno State's mission, and the university has a longstanding tradition of service-learning. In AY 2023-24, Fresno State contributed 1,439,065 hours, with 21,674 students, faculty, and staff actively engaging in the community. This effort included 198 service-learning courses across 33 departments, contributing to an economic impact of \$57.2 million in the region. During the past decade, Fresno State has contributed over 13 million hours of service with an economic impact of \$434 million.

Fresno State has been recognized as a leader in community service programming. In 2007, Fresno State was one of the first 76 colleges and universities to be awarded the Carnegie Foundation's "Community Engagement" Classification. This classification was renewed in 2015 and in spring 2025, the university applied for recertification ([*Exhibit 2.15, Carnegie Community Engagement Reclassification Application*](#)).

The university's Jan and Bud Richter Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning has been instrumental in coordinating these efforts, ensuring that students are prepared to make meaningful contributions to their communities. Key programs such as Every Neighborhood Partnership (ENP) Reads at Fresno State, College Corps, and the Richter Student Leaders Program have seen substantial growth, fostering stronger connections between the university and local organizations.

Several community partners who participated in the working group's survey (see below) provided positive feedback about Fresno State's service initiatives:

- "We collaborate by increasing service-learning opportunities for students. These opportunities provide students with introductory experiences in the human services industry to prepare them as future practitioners. The experiences are invaluable since students can apply theoretical concepts in a realistic and hands-on environment. Service-learning opportunities provide critical support to support services that fight mental health challenges, food insecurity, and difficulties with system navigation (Poverello House)."
- "The partnership with Fresno State has allowed us to use over 80 students to help us run our after-school program, Saturday sports program, and literacy mentor program at 8 elementary schools in Fresno. ENP would not be able to provide programming for these elementary students without the partnership with Fresno State (Every Neighborhood Partnership)."
- "A professor and her students brought a truckload of beautiful cantaloupes to our facility. Her thoughtful gesture provided our clients with fresh, locally sourced produce and brought a smile to many families in need. We're incredibly thankful for the support from the Fresno State community (Catholic Charities – Diocese of Fresno)."

Collaborative Impact: A Survey of Community Partners.

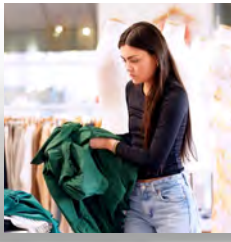
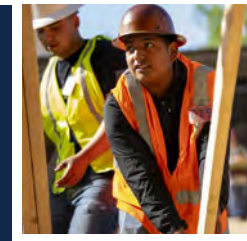


Fresno State has established itself as a key driver of regional development through strategic collaborations with local industries, businesses, and community partners. These partnerships help the university to apply faculty research to address regional needs and provide students with internship opportunities, professional experiences, and exposure to real-world challenges. This includes collaborations with businesses in sectors such as agriculture, technology, transportation, and healthcare.

The working group surveyed our community partners to obtain feedback about their collaborations with Fresno State. Fifty-four partners returned the surveys and the participants, survey questions, and responses can be found here ([Exhibit 2.16, Community Partner Survey](#)). The partners represented diverse sectors of the community, including non-profits, financial institutions, government, community organizations, educational institutions, real estate firms, and health care providers. Community partners reported a wide variety of collaborations with the university and representative examples of these efforts included:

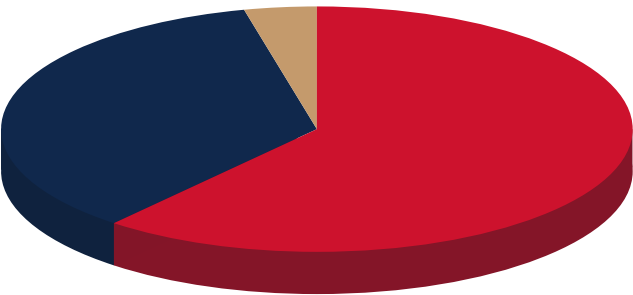
Community partners reported a wide variety of collaborations with the university and representative examples of these efforts included:

- Graduate students developed, and later updated, a business plan. Undergraduate students have helped with many projects focused primarily on developing community support and marketing efforts (Eco Village Project of Fresno).
- We turn to Fresno State as thought partners when engaging prospective businesses and investors interested in Fresno County, as well as when spearheading strategic initiatives where faculty can inform this work (Fresno County Economic Development Corporation).
- We have partnered in providing a BA program for incarcerated residents as well as a debate team (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Valley State Prison).
- We received ongoing training and technical assistance provided by the Central Valley Health Policy Institute. We have loved having social work interns most semesters, especially students who speak a Southeast Asian language as a first language (Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries).
- We partner with the Construction Management program and have taken part in industry events, interviews, and project reviews. We have hired multiple student interns (Granite Construction Company).
- We have collaborated in starting the first WTS (Women's Transportation Seminar) Central California Student Chapter, whose mission is to support women in the transportation industry to the benefit of the industry. We have partnered in highlighting the important work being done through the Fresno State Transportation Institute, including research and development projects, K-12 outreach, college scholarships, and partnering with the USDOT in placing student interns in local architectural and engineering firms (Women's Transportation Seminar, Central California).



Survey participants were asked to evaluate how impactful their collaboration with Fresno State was to their organization’s mission. The results of the survey are shown in table 2.19.

Table 2.19. Impact of collaboration on organization’s mission



■ Very impactful	33 (61.1%)
■ Meaningfully impactful	19 (35.2%)
■ Somewhat impactful	2 (3.7%)

Participants were also asked how satisfied their organization was with their collaboration with Fresno State and the results are presented in table 2.20.

Table 2.20. Organization’s satisfaction with collaboration



■ Very satisfied	34 (63.0%)
■ Satisfied	20 (37.0%)

Many participants provided positive qualitative comments about their collaboration with the university. Examples of this feedback included:

- The collaboration with the Women’s Entrepreneur Center has impact towards our mission by providing the business owners with resources and guidance as well as helping us provide lending resources to women owned businesses and to minorities and people of color (Access Plus Capital).
- Fresno State was very instrumental in helping our non-profit center create a cost of operations analysis. This analysis is crucial to implementing an annual budget for the center. The analysis will be used as we search out grants for the center (Cecil C. Hinton Community Center).
- Fresno State has been an anchor partner in the creation of an ag-tech innovation ecosystem (F3), which has helped secure \$110m in Federal and state funding across universities, community colleges, industry associations, and non-profit organizations. They provide input and feedback that helps us ensure we’re being responsive to the needs of Fresno County residents. They have also fostered trust with our local partners, and this has been HUGE in keeping partners actively engaged! (Central Valley Community Foundation).
- The collaboration with Fresno State has been very impactful in providing supports to families and children that otherwise might not have received any speech services due to long waitlist and limited speech services for the young pediatric population services but also allows caregivers to learn and develop their skills so that they can best support their child’s speech and language development at home. This has been an invaluable partnership because we are able to meet community needs so that vulnerable children receive timely support to enhance their development (Exceptional Parents Unlimited, Inc.)
- The conversation with the students, career development conversations, interview skills, market conditions review: engaging with the professors & students has helped bring talented individuals into the industry (Gilbane Building Company).

Participants also provided constructive suggestions for making collaboration even more effective. They also expressed appreciation when their suggestions were taken into consideration. These are representative comments:

- We could use more Fresno State students, more resources for collaboration
- Students could have more subject-matter skills, and more understanding of what our agency does
- Teams of volunteers should have a leader or a professor to supervise
- It is better to interact face-to-face than on Zoom
- A direct line of communication and notification of upcoming opportunities would be appreciated
- Allow Community Benefit Organizations to table at Dog Days
- Faculty need release time to work or partner with industry.



Conclusion and Recommendations for Next Steps.

The university's TPR proposal stated that our self-study would quantify and describe how campus research addresses and solves concrete and urgent regional challenges and how campus service meets the needs of community agencies and organizations. This section of the self-study has provided evidence to show how the university meets these objectives.

Fresno State's commitment to research and service has a profound and lasting impact on the Central Valley. Through its growth in research funding, community partnerships, and service initiatives, the university has positioned itself as a key player in advancing regional development, health, and social mobility. By addressing the unique challenges faced by the region, Fresno State has provided a transformational model of how universities can empower their students to apply their knowledge to drive positive change and contribute to the betterment of their surrounding communities, while making a global impact. This is accomplished by providing an accessible, affordable education, and having a faculty that values teaching, research, and service. Through regional partnerships with government, industry, and community organizations, university research and service enable students to gain valuable experience and meet community needs. Fresno State research creates knowledge that is being applied to address regional challenges and improve life in the Central Valley.

Fresno State's Strategic Plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)) calls for the university to become recognized as a model for advancing social, economic, and environmental progress and strengthening our community through education, research, and service. Moving forward, Fresno State will continue to build on its successes by fostering innovation, collaboration, and community engagement, ensuring that the Central Valley remains a thriving hub of opportunity and progress.

Fresno State Graduates in the Regional Workforce (CFR 1.7, 2.9, 2.11, 2.14, 4.1, and 4.8)

Rationale for this Element of the Self-Study.

Fresno State alumni play an essential role in the Central Valley Workforce. Employers in diverse fields such as agriculture, engineering, education, and health care look to the university to provide graduates who can fulfill their needs and about 80% of our alumni remain to work in the region after graduation. For example, 75% of Valley teachers hail from Fresno State—the university plays a major role in K-12 education, which determines the economic and social vitality of the valley. 4,000 nurses graduated from the bachelor of nursing program and 90% have stayed in the region, and many of the 1,500 criminology students who enroll each year serve as officers and victimology specialists in the Central Valley. 70% of Humanics program graduates work in the region for a variety of community benefit organizations.



80%
of Fresno State alumni
remain to work in the region
after graduating

Fresno State's Strategic Plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)) calls for the university to serve the needs of the Central Valley by expanding existing or developing new academic programs based on the new and emerging occupations and employment needs for the Fresno-Madera Combined Statistical Area (CSA). As a flagship university, Fresno State produces more college graduates who are likely to join our regional workforce than any other university,¹⁴ so it is imperative that our students be prepared to enter the workforce and succeed in their careers.

Fresno State's TPR proposal stated that the university would assess its success in meeting regional workforce needs and conduct meetings with employer focus groups representing different sectors and report our findings. We will also develop a plan to survey employers to obtain additional data for future analysis.

Graduates in the Regional Workforce: Data.

The data provided here will be employment projections in our region and the results of our focus groups with regional employers.

Employment Projections in Fresno SMSA.

There are significant opportunities for Fresno State graduates in many vital occupations in the region. The working group analyzed the number of students in each major who graduated in academic year 2023-24 and the projected annual demand for new employees in the university's immediate service area (Fresno, Madera, Kings, and Tulare counties) in each Standard Occupational Classification job category. The demand statistics are for jobs that require a bachelor's degree and do not require previous experience in the field. As a starting point, Fresno State graduated 5,156 students with a bachelor's degree in academic year 2023-24 and the projected number of available jobs in the four-county region was 7,921. Consequently, the university graduates enough students to fill about 65% of the available jobs for new college graduates.

The complete spreadsheet of graduates in each major and the number of available jobs in each field is in [Exhibit 2.17, Jobs in the Central Valley by Major](#). The majors of Fresno State graduates and the available jobs in each field are aligned based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Crosswalk. The crosswalk provides a more precise alignment between majors and careers in job fields where a specific degree is usually required for that job, for example, nursing, civil engineering, or secondary education. In other fields, the alignment is less precise because students from several majors may be a good fit for the job, for example, sales.

Table 2.21 provides statistics for some of the areas of greatest need for new employees in the four-county region, and the number of annual Fresno State graduates in each field for academic year 2023-24. The areas of greatest need were identified by Mary Willis, Executive Director of the Fresno State Career Development Center.

14 . A. Ellis, "Fresno Area's Newest College Grads Boast Nearly \$24 Billion in Earning Power," GV Wire, June 20, 2025.

Table 2.21 Regional Job Openings and Fresno State Graduates

Occupation	Annual Job Openings, 2020-2030	Fresno State Graduates in Relevant Field(s), 2023-24
Teaching K-12	2879	475
Registered Nurses	853	134
Accountants/Auditors	524	162
Human Resources Specialists	221	26
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	265	89
Computer Programming, Software Development	276	69
Engineering	461	229

Source: CIP250CCCrosswalk, Fresno-Kings-Madera-Tulare MSA.

The data indicates that Fresno State is providing a significant number of graduates in fields where there is a high demand for new hires. There are continued opportunities for growth in major-career alignment in fields such as teaching, nursing, and accountants. Given these gaps in available jobs and graduates in these areas, the university can explore majors that are outside of the traditional career pathway that can align with career opportunities. As another growth opportunity, the university will continue to explore ways in which majors can be better aligned to meet regional employment needs.



The data also indicates that there are majors where a degree is not primarily aligned with a specific career path. For example, Communication and Psychology majors may be qualified for a wide variety of career positions. To fulfill regional employment demand and to ensure that Fresno State graduates find employment in a career position in an area of interest, the university is taking steps to help students navigate to desirable first job opportunities.

Fresno State has recently begun several initiatives to support students in their career planning and job search strategies. Based on research showing that many college graduates say they received career advice from faculty or staff than from the career center,¹⁵ the university established a Faculty Director of Career Readiness position. This person works to build faculty and staff capacity to provide students with career advice and connect them with experiential learning opportunities in their field that will help them succeed in the workforce. The university also established a Career Champions Program to provide faculty and staff with tools to support student's career development. To this end, as of March 2025, 78 faculty, 87 staff, and 6 administrators are participating. A Digital Badging Program has also been established for students, providing them with learning modules to build career readiness skills.

15. Why Career Champions? Online source: <https://careercenter.fresnostate.edu/channels/career-champions/>

Focus Groups with Regional Employers.

Focus groups were conducted with regional employers in 2024-25. The focus groups were moderated by the Associate Dean of Social Sciences, Dr. Jennifer Randles, a working group member. Twenty-nine representatives participated in the focus groups, representing diverse fields including agriculture, manufacturing, engineering, education, nonprofit organizations, health care, and government. Summaries from each meeting are included in [Exhibit 2.18](#), and trends in the feedback will be reported here and inform our next steps and strategy in preparing students for the workforce.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Fresno State Graduates.

Fourteen participants provided examples of graduate's strengths. Representative comments included:

- All our companies want Fresno State graduates. Of my interns, Fresno State students usually do great, and they are still here. Even if their major is not social work, they are still well prepared.
- We hired six or seven engineering graduates from Fresno State in the past year. We give them the tools to succeed, and they do an amazing job.
- Fresno State graduates are eager and excited to be there.
- Many successful students who move up in our company have critical thinking skills and foundational oral and written communication skills. Our Fresno State students demonstrate this and build as they gain experience.

Five participants noted that they appreciate Fresno State graduates because they are good fits for the region. Here are some examples:

- We are more likely to retain Fresno State talent than people who were not born or raised here.
- We like Fresno State graduates because they are local, they know the area and they know agriculture.

Three participants expressed concerns, for example:

- Some graduates have a great heart; they are willing to learn. Others feel they are not being paid enough to put everything into the job.
- Some employees do not treat feedback as constructive criticism and as a learning opportunity. This is not specific to Fresno State graduates, it is probably generational.
- I train new people. In college, professors give them deadlines and tell them what to do. Now they are independent, and this can be a challenge.
- One employee struggled because they were trying to earn a credential and teach at the same time.

Core Competencies and Soft Skills.

Participants were also asked which core competencies were most important in their field. Eight employers noted at the outset that all five were important. Three of the competencies were highlighted the most: oral communication (10), critical thinking (9), and written communication (8).

Oral communication skills that were emphasized included strong skills in meetings, presentation skills, an ability to speak well with clients, co-workers and the general public, professional use of language, and being responsible and professional in high stress situations.

For critical thinking, the ability to solve problems was a common response.

Participants also wanted employees who know how to identify an issue and when to reach out to colleagues, whether the issue is positive or negative, and an ability to analyze data. Employees should be able to look at a problem and solve it without step-by-step instruction.

For written communication, an ability to communicate professionally in emails is considered important. Employees also need to be proficient when writing reports, these are critical in some fields, for example, law enforcement. Another participant stated that grammar and spelling are especially important, mistakes just cannot happen.

Participants mentioned other soft skills that were highly valued. These talents included an ability to work effectively on a team, take the initiative, be flexible and willing to take on different roles, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Next Steps.

The data indicates that Fresno State is producing a substantial number of graduates who are helping to meet regional employment needs. The university is also revising curriculum and student support to ensure that graduates are current in their fields. However, there are areas of need where the university could provide additional graduates.

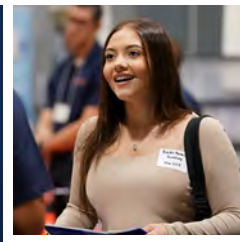
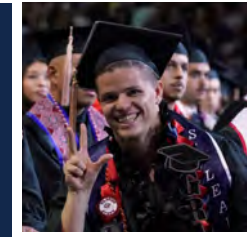
The employer focus groups provided helpful information about the performance of Fresno graduates because they know the region and they are more likely to stay and build a career here. Fresno State graduates often bring energy and enthusiasm to their jobs and as they gain experience, they thrive in their careers. However, some graduates are less prepared to function effectively in the workplace, especially with respect to treating constructive criticism as a learning opportunity; this aspect could be generational, and we are exploring ways to better prepare our graduates to meet this challenge. The focus groups for self-study emphasized soft skills and core competencies. Employers especially value critical thinking and problem solving, oral communication, and written communication.

For Fresno State's next steps, two approaches for obtaining employer feedback will be continued. First, employer focus groups will be continued, with at least three held during each academic year. The participants in the self-study stated that they appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback, and they provided many useful insights about the Fresno State graduates they had hired. The focus group format allows for participants to provide in-depth responses to questions and to build on the responses of other participants.

Second, in collaboration with the Director of the Career Development Center and Office of Institutional Effectiveness, surveys will be designed and sent to a diverse group of regional employers. The surveys of our community partners administered by the Impact of Research and Service Working Group for this self-study resulted in significant feedback. Surveys are likely to enable employers who may not have time to attend a focus group to offer their ideas.

The scope of questions for future focus groups and surveys will be expanded. In particular, employers will also be asked about how Fresno State graduates are performing with respect to the specific skills that are required for success in their field of employment. It will be valuable to include this information along with thoughts about the career readiness of our graduates and their effectiveness at using soft skills that are important in the workplace.

The information gained from these discussions will be shared with the Career Readiness Center, the Career Champions program, the Academic Senate, as well as other members of the university community so that it can be incorporated into Fresno State career readiness initiatives.



Section 3: Reflections – Synthesis of Insights as a Result of the Reaffirmation Process

Fresno State was honored to be selected for the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation process. The university selected our theme, ***Flagship of the Central Valley***, to explore the role of Fresno State as an institution that both uplifts the lives of its residents and reshapes every facet of our Central Valley region through transformative education, research, service, and leadership. Our self-study explored this theme by analyzing how the university makes a significant difference in the lives of our students and provides major contributions to the regional community.

There was great enthusiasm on our campus for conducting the self-study. Seventy-five members of the faculty, staff, and administration served on the working groups that analyzed each of our sub-themes. The reaccreditation Advisory Committee included members of the faculty, staff, administration, community, and alumni. Additional members of the campus community were quick to provide input where it was needed to complete our self-study and the Compliance with WSCUC Standards and Federal Requirements Worksheet. Section 3 will provide an analysis of how the self-study provided evidence to support the ***Flagship of the Central Valley*** theme and indicated areas of opportunity for continuous improvement.

Summary of Findings from the Self-Study

As a result of the self-study, substantial evidence has been collected to show how Fresno State serves as the ***Flagship of the Central Valley***. Three working groups analyzed how Fresno State is creating a transformative experience for students and three groups focused on how the university is impacting our region.

Nurturing our Next Generation of Leaders.

The first area of our self-study focused on the impact of the university on our students, analyzing social mobility, high-impact practices, and career satisfaction.

Social Mobility.

Fresno State has consistently ranked high in national ratings for social mobility and our self-study provided new insights about how Fresno State is a national leader in this regard. Fresno State responded to the low enrollment numbers we saw after the pandemic with an innovative program that harnesses the strengths of the most important entities in a student's decision to attend college—the district, parents, and the student. Indeed, Bulldog Bound is a program that stands out for empowering both students and parents with the basics for college, from financial aid workshops to tutoring and the rest of the services provided. The workshops are provided in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Punjabi—thus ensuring a broad number of students and parents who are empowered with knowledge of what's required to enroll and succeed at Fresno State.

The Bulldog Bound program reaches out and supports high school students and their families across the region, resulting in over 2,500 admissions for fall 2025 alone. The university ranks high among CSU universities for affordability and multiple programs on campus support the needs of our most vulnerable students. Programs such as Academic Success Coaching and Supplemental Instruction help students succeed in their classes and data in the self-study indicate that these programs significantly reduce equity gaps. Survey data in the self-study indicated that nearly seven times as many first-generation graduates reported increases in their earning potential compared to the household where they were raised (70.4%) as reported no increase (10.2). And Fresno State was one of nine institutions in California that enroll over 50% low- and moderate-income students where students recoup college costs within one year of graduation on average.

High Impact Practices.

The self-study focused on six practices that have been linked to student success in academic research, capstone courses, service learning, internships, supplemental instruction, study abroad, and first-year experience. The self-study also included research showing the benefits of three of these practices at Fresno State—supplemental instruction, first-year experience, and service-learning. Significant numbers of Fresno State students have participated in one or more high impact practices according to NSSE survey data (85%, compared to 83% at other CSU campuses) and an analysis based on enrollments in high impact courses at Fresno State during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years.

Career Satisfaction.

Alumni surveys of career satisfaction between 2018 and 2023 received 4,495 responses. The data indicated that 76.7% of baccalaureate graduates and 80.6% of post baccalaureate graduates were very or somewhat satisfied with their primary post-graduation occupation, while 8.7% and 5.1% respectively were very or somewhat dissatisfied.

Disaggregated data in the Embark Survey for 2022-23 graduates indicated that there were not equity gaps in the responses. Survey results also showed that students had diverse primary motives for completing their degree including employment opportunities, impact on society, and personal enrichment.

Cultivating Service, Research, and Leadership.

Three working groups analyzed how the university transforms the region by investing and contributing to economic growth, sharing research and service, and providing graduates for the regional workforce.

Economic Impact.

For the self-study, the working group researched the average economic impact of the university during FY 2021-22 and 2022-23. The study concluded that Fresno State had an overall impact of \$954 million in terms of output, supporting 10,931 jobs in the region. University related activities generated \$49 million in tax revenue and the annual return on investment made by the state in educating Fresno State students was 6.23%. The university also makes significant contributions to the regional economy by sharing its research and expertise through programs such as the Water, Energy, and Technology Center and the Lyles Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Impact of Research and Service.

Fresno State service and research both play an important role in the life of the Central Valley. The working group provided evidence of the significant impact multiple programs have in supporting regional needs in areas such as agriculture, health care, housing, engineering, and transportation. In AY 2023-24, Fresno State contributed over 1.4 million hours of service to the region, with an economic impact of \$57.2 million. And for the past 15 years, the university has contributed over 1 million hours annually to the success of the region's economy and society. The working group surveyed fifty-four regional partners and 61% stated that the collaboration was very impactful and 35% stated that it was meaningfully impactful. Comments from the partners provided examples of many ways that Fresno State service, research, and expertise have a significant role in helping their organization achieve its mission.

Fresno State Graduates in the Regional Workforce.

An assessment of job openings for college graduates, with no experience required, and Fresno State graduates in majors aligned with each career area indicated that Fresno State graduates can fill a significant number of regional needs. In fields such as nursing, teaching, and accounting, there are opportunities for the university to explore how majors can be more aligned with regional needs. Focus groups conducted with twenty-nine regional employers found that many employers appreciate hiring Fresno State graduates, who understand the region and are more likely to build a career in the area. Oral communication, critical thinking, and written communication skills are important to employers regardless of the field in which they work.

Support from Regional Employers and Partners.

One of the most satisfying elements of the self-study process was the support we received from our regional partners and employers. Eighty-three representatives of these institutions generously gave their time to participate in focus groups and respond to surveys. They provided gratifying feedback about what was working well in our partnerships and offered constructive suggestions for making our collaboration even more successful. Beyond the feedback they provided, it was evident that these community members really supported Fresno State and appreciated being asked to contribute to our self-study. Our community partners are an important resource, and the university will continue to rely on their input and benefit from their insights in the future.

Opportunities for Improvement

High Impact Practices.

The working group found that the participation rate is lower for historically underrepresented groups (53.8% compared to 67.6% of the student body) and first-generation students (58.6% compared to 66.6% of the student body) relative to other students. The working group provided several recommendations for increasing participation and closing equity gaps and these align with the university's strategic plan goal that all students will participate in at least one HIP. Several of these recommendations, such as proactive advising and faculty consultation, could be implemented with existing resources. It is also noteworthy that the College of Arts and Humanities recently received a \$5 million Mellon Foundation Grant to establish paid internship programs for humanities majors, reducing the financial barriers to internship participation.

Post-graduation employment.

Several opportunities to help our graduates find optimal career positions and fulfill hiring needs of regional employers emerged from the self-study. One area is to expand students' use of the University Career Development Center. One survey found that only 52.5% of graduates reported that the university helped them connect with employers. However, the Career Development Center provides multiple opportunities to meet with employers, including job fairs. And 80%+ of students in the above survey who used career services had a favorable opinion. Our task moving forward is to promote the benefits of the Career Development Center with all of our students.

The self-study provided data that there is significant demand for college graduates in diverse fields of the regional economy. Students should be made aware of these opportunities early in their college career so they can decide if one of these fields is a good match for their interests and skills. It is also important for students to learn how they may be qualified for careers even if their major is not the traditional gateway to these opportunities, such as an engineering graduate becoming a high school math or science teacher.



The employer focus groups provided additional insights for greater alignment between the university and student preparation for the regional workforce. Two areas for the university to emphasize are helping students with interview preparation and understanding what employers are looking for in an interview. Another area is to understand workplace culture, which can be very different from students' college experiences. For example, graduates should have realistic expectations about salaries in each field and how they can best advance in their careers. It is also important to understand how to respond to constructive feedback and use it as a learning opportunity for career growth. One focus group supported the idea of an "Employment 101" course to help students be well prepared to thrive in their jobs.

The Fresno State Strategic Plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)) aligns well with these employment objectives. For example, Goal 1A calls for enhancing career planning strategies of our students to further career readiness and satisfaction rates and Goal 3A calls for expanding programs based on regional employment needs and equipping students to meet the demands of the job market. The self-study also identified several initiatives that are already underway to help match students with optimal careers and succeed in their chosen field. The Career Champions Program provides faculty, staff, and student leaders with tools to support student career development. The university has piloted a Career Readiness Digital Badging Program, which awards badges to students who complete career readiness skills modules, and 187 students participated. The program is being expanded to include eight career competencies.

Opportunities for Impactful Storytelling.

The self-study has provided substantial data to support Fresno State's role as the **Flagship of the Central Valley**. For our self-study to have its desired impact, it is imperative that we share what we have learned with the community. Many community members know Fresno State because they are alumni or parents, they attend football games or concerts on campus, or they benefit from the university's service or research. Indeed, Fresno State enjoys a prominent place in the Central Valley—being one of the most trusted and recognized institutions. However, while Fresno State enjoys an impressive level of recognition, the public may be less aware of the broader and transformational impact of the university on the region. And it is imperative to tell this story to the public. Hence Fresno State just consolidated its storytelling impact into one single webpage with [Fresno State Today](#). This webpage will be instrumental in informing the Central Valley and the world about the truly deep impact Fresno State has on the region. Fresno State today will be instrumental in keeping the public well informed about the transformational work our university is doing for our students and for the region.



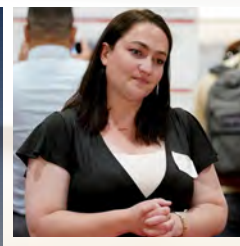
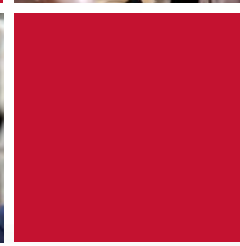
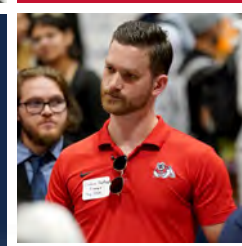
How Our Momentum Will be Sustained

The successful programs and initiatives identified in the self-study and the ideas for improvement will be sustained because they have a broad level of support on campus. The self-study is not calling for new, unfamiliar initiatives that could face resistance. Instead, each element of the self-study aligns with the Fresno State Strategic Plan (online source: [Fresno State Strategic Plan 2023-29](#)). This plan was adopted after broad stakeholder feedback, with 1,100 responses from faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members. Fresno State has been implementing the strategic plan for two years and there is a process in place for measuring accomplishments under the plan and continuing to move forward with plan objectives. Furthermore, the triennial evaluation of President Jiménez-Sandoval is based on the measurable success of the Strategic Plan, thus ensuring its essential importance and relevance to the campus and region. As part of our implementation plan, we appointed individuals in leadership positions to be responsible for tracking progress on specific strategies necessary to achieve our goals. Each year, we publish an update that includes highlights of the past year and areas of focus for the upcoming year on our Strategic Plan webpage (online source: [Strategic Plan Updates](#)).

The self-study identified high impact practices as an area where the university has work to do to ensure that the strategic plan's goal that every student will participate in at least one HIP before graduation. Fresno State hosts a High Impact Practices Symposium each semester where students share their research. About 250 students deliver oral or poster presentations in a typical symposium and these students are mentored by over 200 faculty members. In an era of decreased public funding, it is also noteworthy that the College of Arts and Humanities was able to secure a \$5 million private grant to support paid internships for students.

There has also been significant support for career readiness initiatives for our students. There are 218 career champions across the Fresno State campus, including 78 faculty, 87 staff, and 6 administrators. A Faculty Director of Career Readiness position has been established, with a stipend for the director funded by a grant from Enterprise Mobility. The director will collaborate with the Career Development Center to address the employment-related goals in the strategic plan.

University Marketing and Communications also has a robust strategy for informing members of the campus community and the public about Fresno State's accomplishments. A weekly digital campus newsletter and a monthly community newsletter includes feature stories that highlight the achievements and stories of students, staff, and faculty, along with honors and recognition earned by the university. Fresno State Magazine provides feature stories and class notes twice a year and Fresno State Stories provides digital narratives to showcase the university. Furthermore, the newly designed Fresno State Today webpage will intentionally present the impressive impact of Fresno State in the region and world.



Final Thoughts on the TPR Process

Fresno State appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Thematic Pathway for Reaffirmation process, which was exceedingly rewarding and simultaneously challenging. This process allowed the university to focus on a theme, **Flagship of the Central Valley**, that reflected Fresno State's unique role and unique responsibility as the only public university in our four-county region—one that deeply impacts and elevates every facet of Central Valley life, including the economy. Our region looks to Fresno State as leaders to educate the next generation, to conduct research that gives insight into the challenges that our communities face, and to give back through service. We take our role as a flagship institution very seriously, as well as our role in cultivating the next generation of leaders who will, in turn, transform our society in profoundly positive ways.

Fresno State's story is filled with an incredible amount of pride in the achievements of our students and the impact the university has on the region. Our self-study provided significant evidence to show how the university has an important impact on every facet of our region through transformative education, research, service, and leadership. It was especially gratifying to review the results of surveys of our graduates and to receive such appreciative feedback from our community partners and the employers of the region, who are big supporters of the university and pleased to offer feedback about how we might enhance our contributions to the region.

The self-study also indicated opportunities for continuous improvement, particularly in terms of ensuring that all Fresno State students participate in at least one high-impact practice before graduation and have the support they need to be prepared for a successful career after graduation. Fresno State looks forward to taking these next steps for our students and to sharing the university's successes with the Central Valley region.

While the self-study required a great amount of work, it was very gratifying to see the campus come together to share data and examples that allowed us to tell our story. Faculty, staff, students, and administrators readily volunteered to serve on six different working groups, which enabled us to take an extended look at several key components of our flagship theme. When additional information was required, members of the campus community were quick to share data and reports. And our regional partners and employers generously shared their time to contribute to our work. The Central Valley has entrusted Fresno State with a mission to provide a transformative education for our students, conduct research to address regional challenges, and foster an ethos of community service through example. Our university recognizes the importance of this mission, and this self-study has provided new insights into the next steps we will take to serve as the **Flagship of the Central Valley**.

