CSU Bakersfield is a comprehensive public university located in California’s southern San Joaquin Valley. As one of the 23 CSU campuses, which comprise the largest public university system in the world, CSU Bakersfield is committed to offering excellent undergraduate and graduate programs that advance the intellectual and personal development of its students in an underserved region of California. Among the CSU, CSU Bakersfield has some of the lowest retention and graduation rates, largely as a result of the poor academic preparation and low-income status of many of our students. At the same time, as mentioned elsewhere, CSU Bakersfield ranks number three in the nation for improving the socioeconomic status of its graduates. Collectively, the academic and student support programs seek to expand the intellectual and professional opportunities for students. The effectiveness of these programs is best demonstrated through the retention and graduation of students. This essay describes the current patterns of student success at CSU Bakersfield, and details activities underway to improve student success on campus.

5.1 DEFINING STUDENT SUCCESS (CFRs 1.2 and 2.10)

Student success is the existential purpose of CSU Bakersfield. Students join the academic community to advance their intellectual and professional lives, and to pursue their individual vision of success. CSU Bakersfield defines student success through both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Quantitatively, CSU Bakersfield’s definitions of students success are drawn from the larger CSU System. In 2016, the CSU launched Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI 2025). Under this initiative, the CSU system is projected to graduate an additional 500,000 students by 2025, positioning the CSU to meet its share of California’s projected future workforce needs. GI 2025 has been a helpful framework for CSU Bakersfield to organize and focus its efforts to improve several specific areas of student success, particularly retention and graduation rates.

The following reflect CSU Bakersfield’s current graduate rates (2016/2017), while the goals are shared by the entire CSU system:

1. Raise the 6-year graduation rate from 40% for first-time freshmen to 70%
2. Raise the 4-year graduation rate for first-time freshmen from 16.3% to 40%
3. Raise the 4-year graduation rate for transfer students from 69% to 85%
4. Raise the 2-year graduation rate for transfer students from 40% to 48%
5. Eliminate all demographic achievement gaps

To build on this foundation and to meet or exceed the targets, in October 2016 the Provost appointed a Graduation Initiative Task Force (GITF) [link: CSU Bakersfield GITF website], which includes faculty, staff and administrators representing all areas of the university. The GITF meets bi-weekly to examine and design strategies to clarify degree requirements, promote early intervention programs, reduce barriers to student progress, and aid students to successfully navigate their curriculum [link: CSUB GITF Meeting Minutes].

The GITF focuses on action programs to drive retention and graduation rates. Based on a review of data, existing policies, and feedback from all constituents, the GITF has emphasized programs that are designed to make comprehensive and holistic changes to broaden student access, impact student retention, and expedite student success. The GITF has also developed a conceptual flow-chart of the incoming freshman and transfer cohorts with designed intervention programs at crucial points in students’ progress toward the bachelor’s degree [GITF Tactical Flowchart doc. 1.2:03]. All of the intervention programs were developed and vetted by the GITF. Each intervention program has an assigned project owner, priority ranking and timeline associated with it. These interventions will be measurable and have direct impact on student graduation.

Importantly, the GITF does not simply focus upon empirical targets as measures of student success. The GITF also concentrates on qualitative enhancements that support students to achieve their goals. For example, a new interactive Map to Your Future website has also been developed [link: Map to your Future]. In a user-friendly format, this site provides nearly every undergraduate degree roadmap, which describes a clear path for an undergraduate to reach graduation in four years. Each roadmap displays a year-by-year path of the courses and milestones required by each undergraduate degree to graduate in four years.

One of the first touchstones for promoting student success is the new student success website [link: CSU Bakersfield Student Success Website]. The site is designed for our multiple stakeholders, including students, administrators and local community colleges. It provides a single location for all the data dashboards available around student success. Though parts of the site are password-protected, it contains additional information related to the campus’ Graduation Initiative Task Force (GITF). More details on GITF initiatives are provided below.
5.2 PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING STUDENT SUCCESS (CFRs 1.2, 2.10, 2.13 and 2.14)

CSU Bakersfield’s coordinated plans for student success are activated before students set foot on campus. The university has partnered with local high schools and community colleges to facilitate smooth transitions to CSU Bakersfield for first-time freshmen and transfer students. As admitted students consider enrolling at CSU Bakersfield, the message of student success is widely broadcasted.

The High School University Promise (HSUP) [doc. 2.10:11] is our first step toward promoting student success. It provides students entering the 9th grade within the Kern High School District (the largest independent high school district in California) with a certificate from CSU Bakersfield guaranteeing admission to the University as long as they meet the admission requirements and, most importantly, are college ready. The certificate is designed to raise college awareness, students’ educational aspirations, and foster a college-going culture in the region. It demonstrates CSU Bakersfield’s continued focus on improving academic preparation and college readiness for incoming students.

Before beginning their first academic term, students attend orientation to become familiar with the campus, and are assigned to an academic advisor who assists them in registering for classes. Some students, especially our Educational Opportunity Students, take courses in our Early Start and Summer Bridge programs over the summer, to prepare them for their first year. All incoming students and their families are invited to the New Student Convocation and Pinning Ceremony, a formal welcoming ceremony that includes recitations of pledges of commitment to academic success by faculty, staff, students and their families.

Unfortunately, many Kern County students are in need of remediation. CSU Bakersfield’s strong partnerships within the KHSD is evidenced by the participation of 75% of KHSD students in the Early Assessment Program (EAP) and related activities. We are seeing an increase in Expository Reading and Writing Course (ERWC) sections in all local high schools. As a result, the overall percentage of first year students needing developmental coursework has been declining steadily over the ten years, from 80% in 2007 to 54% in 2016. During this period, the percentage needing developmental coursework in English has also declined (from 18% in 2007 to 7% in 2016). However, the percentage needing developmental work in math has increased from 8% in to almost 23%. In addition, fewer students now need the lowest of the levels of remedial math and English, a promising and positive change (from 54% in 2007 to 23% in 2016), which may be due in part to changes in admissions standards as well as...
system-wide efforts in the CSU to influence college preparatory instruction in the high schools. Importantly, these early interventions improve incoming students’ chance of success.

For Kern County students who choose to study at CSU Bakersfield, the Early Start program [doc. 2.10:09] was originally established to address the need for high levels of remediation and better prepare incoming freshmen for college-level math and English. In prior years, CSU Bakersfield offered multiple simultaneous summer courses differentiated by student placement. Historically, English faculty and high school teachers collaboratively taught our Early Start English courses offering rigorous curriculum aligned to the Common Core Standards. In 2016, 41% of the students who participated in Early Start completed at least one level of remediation for English and 71% completed at least one level of remediation for math. Within one year, the total number of students needing remediation decreased, which impacted the number of Early Start participants and success rate in Summer 2017. In 2017, 42% of the students who participated in Early Start completed at least one level of remediation for English and 56% completed at least one level of remediation for math [doc. 2.10:09].

Moreover, Summer Bridge promotes student success by transitioning students from high school to college and allows our students to place into more advanced developmental Math and English. Summer Bridge is a two-week long residential program designed to give incoming Educational Opportunity Program students an experience that will advance them academically and prepare them for college [doc. 2.10:10]. The goals of Summer Bridge are to increase student knowledge of University expectations and college student success; familiarize students with campus policies, procedures, and offices; and create a staff-supported social network to increase student confidence, team-building skills, and a sense of purpose.

To further strengthen advising support for currently matriculated students, the CSU Bakersfield Academic Senate resolved to implement a midterm assessment program for all students in the semester calendar (The structure of academic advising is detailed in section 5.3.4.) The Academic Advising and Resource Center (AARC) conducted a successful pilot program with four faculty in the Fall 2016 and implemented the program campus wide in Spring 2017. The program allows students to receive targeted feedback from advisors on their progress in courses while connecting them to applicable campus resources. In Fall 2017, the response rate from professors reached 37%, with over 2,000 students receiving intervention, while our Spring 2018 response rate was 25% with 1,389 students receiving intervention [Midterm Assessment Evaluation doc. 1.2:11].
In response to the recent statewide focus on graduation rates in the CSU and UC, and specifically the Chancellor’s Office Graduation 2025 Initiative, CSU Bakersfield also joined its counterparts in the San Joaquin Valley and implemented a 15 to Finish campaign [Graduation Initiative 2025 doc. 1.2:04]. The campaign proactively promotes on-time graduation for all incoming students through guided pathways, academic roadmaps/plans and intrusive advising. An intensive marketing campaign was launched that includes brochures explaining the benefits of taking 15 units per term, or 30 per year, in order to graduate on time; 15 to Finish T-Shirts for all students who participate in the campaign; promotional items used in weekly giveaways and drawings once students sign their Commitment to Complete; and a public proclamation of their intent to complete their degree in four years [15 to Finish Materials doc. 2.10:12].

One of the largest and most comprehensive initiatives of the GITF has been the Block Scheduling pilot [link: Block Scheduling website]. Block Scheduling is the formal assignment of an incoming student’s first year schedule, rather than allowing the student to select their courses and times. Prior retention and graduation data indicated that incoming students consistently under-enrolled in academic units. In other words, incoming students do not enroll in enough units to graduate in 4 years. “The data indicate that first-time students who self-register will consistently under-enroll units in their first term schedules. By under-loading, students unknowingly increase their time-to-degree and increase the likelihood that they will not graduate (see sidebar). For the upcoming Fall semester 52% (n=721), will likely begin their careers behind schedule by enrolling in fewer than 15 units” [Block Scheduling Success Summary doc. 1.2:06]. As of this writing, the Block Scheduling pilot is in its second year with nearly 60% of incoming students being block scheduled. The results thus far have been promising. During 2017-18, an evaluation of the pilot was conducted and found that “Block scheduling is correlated with both taking more units and passing more units. The increase in mean units for both of these factors is found to be statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. BS students enrolled in (Units Taken) .655 more units than students outside of the block schedule. Though block scheduled students enrolled in more units, students in the block schedule passed 1.26 more units than students outside of the block schedule” [Block Schedule Pilot Evaluation doc. 1.2:10]. If the pilot is approved for full implementation, the campus would likely see dramatic increases in retention and graduation.

Another element in CSU Bakersfield’s efforts to support student success is the California Promise Program [link: California Promise website], an initiative available to both first-year students who want to complete baccalaureate degrees in four years as well as transfer students who have completed an Associate Degree for Transfer from any California Community College and plan to complete their bachelor’s degree in that major within two years. The California Promise Program is part of a system-wide effort
in the CSU to increase graduation rates while eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps. Under the California Promise Program, students who commit to enter either the four-year or two-year pledge are given priority registration and a dedicated pledge advisor to support on-time degree completion. Students continuing in the program must meet with their advisors as prescribed, develop a degree completion plan, maintain good academic standing each semester, and complete 30 semester units within each academic year, including summer and winter sessions. In Fall 2016 semester, 36 CSU Bakersfield students signed the pledge. The following 2017-2018 academic year, 83 additional students joined the program. There are currently 116 California Promise Pledge students at CSU Bakersfield.

5.3. RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES (CFRS 1.2, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13, and 2.14)

Graduating more students within the four- and six-year timeframe is a major goal for the university. The Graduation Initiative Taskforce is examining and designing strategies to clarify degree requirements, reduce barriers to student progression, and aid students to successfully navigate their curriculum [Graduation Rate Detail doc. 1.2:13].

CSU Bakersfield’s four-year graduation rate has been gradually and steadily improving over the past five years, reaching a campus high of 18.5% in 2016 (Fall 2012 cohort). However, last year it dropped to 16.3% (Fall 2013 cohort). The first-year retention rates, an early indicator of eventual graduation rates, have also been steadily improving, a strong indication that the campus’ graduation rates are also likely to improve. The first-year retention rate for the Fall 2016 cohort is 76.4% [doc. CSU Bakersfield Factbook p. 11. 1.2:14]

First-year retention rates at CSU Bakersfield tend to be similar across Underrepresented minority (URM) and non-URM students. The differences between the student groups emerge in the four-year graduation rates. However, these differences diminish in six-year graduation rates. CSU Bakersfield is one of the few CSUs to have closed the achievement gap between underrepresented minority students and majority students. The four- and six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time freshman seeking a bachelor’s degree tend to fluctuate slightly from year to year. The four-year graduation rate ranged from 12.9% to 18.5%. In four of the last five years, the four-year graduation rate increased, while the six-year graduation rates ranged from 38.4% to 42.7%.

Similarly, the one-year retention rate for transfers has been generally trending upwards since fall 2010. In fall 2016, the 1-year retention rate for transfers was 83.0% [CSU Bakersfield Retention Rate Detail doc. 1.2:13]. The two- and four-year graduation rate for transfers have been in upward trend for the last five years. The two-year graduation
rate for transfers are now in the lower to mid-40s. The six-year rates are in the upper 60s [Graduation Rate Detail: Transfers doc. 1.2:16].

The Graduation Rate Dashboard (GRD) is another useful tool to estimate student success, especially given the student population that CSU Bakersfield serves. The GRD accounts for all students who earn an undergraduate degree from CSU Bakersfield without regard to their matriculation status (i.e. first time, transfer, full time or part time). The data enables institutions to identify enrollment, retention and graduation patterns and problems across all undergraduate student categories.

The two most significant GRD measures are the Unit Redemption Rate (URR) and the Absolute Graduation Rate (AGR). The URR is the proportion of units created by an institution that are eventually ‘redeemed’ for a degree. The AGR is the proportion of students entering an institution who eventually graduate from that institution. Unlike the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which only tracks cohort-based, first-time, full-time students, the Absolute Graduation Rate includes all students at the institution. The primary observations related to CSU Bakersfield GRD data [CSU Bakersfield GRD Data xls. 1.2:15] are the following. First, CSU Bakersfield’s unduplicated headcount has grown steadily from 7,852 in 2009-10 to 11,418 in 2016-17. Importantly, a sizable portion of that growth has occurred in the last three academic years (through 2016-17), when the unduplicated headcount rose roughly 25%. Second, the URR for CSU Bakersfield has also grown from 76% to 82%, over the same three-year period. Third, as one might expect, the institution’s Absolute Graduation Rate has also increased over the same three-year period, from 51% to 58%, which is significantly above the IPEDS cohort-based graduation rate.

Finally, the two and three-year graduation rates for graduate student cohorts have shown steady progress. The two-year graduation rate for the Fall 2014 cohort has exceeded 55%. The three-year rates have been roughly 70% [Grad Student Graduation Rate Detail 1.2:17].

5.3.1 FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE (CFR 1.2 and 2.13)

As detailed in section 5.2, CSU Bakersfield’s commitment to student success begins before students set foot on campus, through efforts to assist them in making the transition from high school, and community college, to the University. Once they are admitted, students must be well-informed about academic and campus life, and one of the best means of informing them is the New Student Orientation [link: CSU Bakersfield Orientation website]. CSU Bakersfield orientations have changed dramatically in the last three years. Student Affairs staff, Athletics representatives, the campus pep band, and
interactive games for the participants have become integral components of the new, more energized orientation sessions. Comprehensive workshops help newly admitted students transition – both academically and socially – to CSU Bakersfield. All new undergraduate students are required to attend before registering for classes. The workshops are designed to introduce students to the services, activities, and programs provided by the University to support their education, to introduce them to the academic programs and policies, and to assist them with academic program planning and course selection.

As students begin their studies at CSU Bakersfield, one of the first touchstones is the First-Year Experience Course. The two-unit, year-long course provides students with an engaged, supportive environment where they can make vital connections with a cohort of fellow students, their instructor, and key members of the campus community who can help ensure their success [link: CSU Bakersfield FYE website]. Students in the course are introduced to the themes and skills necessary for academic success, including key study skills, and can begin planning for the future.

5.3.2 TRANSFER STUDENT EXPERIENCE (CFR 2.13 and 2.14)

CSU Bakersfield’s recent enrollment growth includes an increase in transfer students, primarily from our 5 feeder community colleges: Bakersfield, Taft, Cerro Coso, Porterville, and Antelope Valley. Sharing responsibility for the success of transfer students, these partner campuses provide dedicated transfer student advising centers where CSU Bakersfield Transfer Specialists provide onsite advising services to their students. CSU Bakersfield staff also provide additional support in the admission application process and host financial aid workshops to ensure a smooth transition to the University. One significant outcome of these community college partnerships is an increase in transfer students’ interest in Science Technology, Math and Engineering (STEM) fields and better prepared STEM majors for transfer to CSU Bakersfield. Staff provide prospective and current STEM majors with personalized admission information, academic counseling in General Education, and STEM major degree requirements.

A set of programs to further assist transfer students in making the transition from community college to the University are in development. One example is the Community College Kern Promise [link: Kern Promise website]. CSU Bakersfield and Bakersfield College (BC) have entered into a Kern Promise that signals the strong partnership with BC to collaboratively ensure a smooth transition from the community college, student success and timely graduation at CSU Bakersfield. CSU Bakersfield and BC staff collaborative in providing CSU Bakersfield Onsite Admission Days twice a
semester. BC and CSU Bakersfield have also worked closely with the Kern High School District to align the transition from high school to college in math and English.

Enrollment growth has been, and will continue to be, impacted by the Associate Degree for Transfers (ADTs) [link: Associate Degree for Transfer website]. A California Community College student who has earned the Associates in Arts degree for Transfer (AA-T) or the Associate in Science degree for Transfer (AS-T) is granted priority admission to the CSU into a similar baccalaureate degree program with a guarantee of junior standing, as long as the student meets all prescribed admission requirements. Once admitted, the student is required to complete only 60 additional prescribed units to qualify for the baccalaureate degree. Because CSU Bakersfield is one of only four non-impacted CSU campuses, many of these qualified students are being redirected to our campus. CSU Bakersfield was recently recognized by The Campaign for College Opportunity as a “2017 Champion for Higher Education” for excelling at enrolling and graduating Associate Degree for Transfer earners. CSU Bakersfield is one of four California State University and nine California Community Colleges campuses to receive the honor. The Campaign for College Opportunity recognized CSU Bakersfield for demonstrating the highest percentage growth in Associate Degrees for Transfer enrollment. CSU Bakersfield enrolled 236 Associate Degrees for Transfer in 2016/17, an increase of 808% (210 additional ADT earners) from the previous year. In Fall 2016, CSU Bakersfield had 1,014 transfer students enrolled.

To facilitate the transfer of community college students, CSU Bakersfield has also worked with BC in developing a new Kern Promise FINISH IN 4 transfer initiative, inaugurated on May 8, 2018, to provide clear and direct baccalaureate completion transfer pathways for students from BC who want to graduate from CSU Bakersfield. The Finish in 4 program guarantees students will complete their transfer degree in the first two years at Bakersfield College and their baccalaureate degree in the following two years at CSU Bakersfield. An unprecedented partnership between higher education institutions, the project focuses on benefits to students and ultimately the community by boosting college transfers and increasing 4-year college completion. With just 22% of Kern County residents 25 years of age and older holding an Associate’s Degree or higher, compared with California’s average of 39%, this initiative is an excellent way to decrease time to completion, close attainment gaps, increase baccalaureate completion rates in Kern County, and aid in student success. Transfer Specialists have been hired to guide and advise students who wish to complete the program. Program participants are guaranteed priority registration and are tracked to monitor their success.

5.3.3 MASTER’S AND ED.D. STUDENTS (CFR 2.13)
Postbaccalaureate education is both central and crucial to CSU Bakersfield’s mission. In fact, CSU Bakersfield is nationally recognized as a top provider of Master’s degrees for Hispanics [link: CSU Bakersfield Hispanic Outlook article] and is ranked by Washington Monthly in the top 10 for Master’s degree programs because of its “contribution to the public good in three broad categories: social mobility (recruiting and graduating low-income students), research, and service.” [link: CSUB Moves Into Top 10…].

CSU Bakersfield currently offers 15 Master’s programs and one Doctoral Degree in Education. There are no growth and expansion plans at this time. Overall, the graduation rate of students in master’s programs is very high, although few students graduate within two years, and fewer than half graduate within three years.

Located in one of the most economically depressed parts of California, CSU Bakersfield provides graduate programs that are critical to the economy of Kern County. The low level of education attainment in the region is a factor in growing graduate programs and increasing enrollment, but the University is committed to increasing participation in graduation education. In hundreds of academic fields, degrees and postbaccalaureate coursework enable students to progress further in fields of interest and employment, to become licensed or qualified in a variety of applied areas. These programs enable students to advance, to gain higher salaries, and have a stronger impact on all sectors of society. Graduate students in the sciences, engineering, technology, and agriculture have formed the critical and important technological leadership and mid-level technological workforce in the region.

5.3.4 UNDERGRADUATE RETENTION AND COMPLETION INITIATIVES (CFR 1.2 and 2.13)

First established by the California legislature in 1969, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at CSU Bakersfield ensures educational equity by admitting regular and special admits who come from educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. EOP Admissions maintain the expanding EOP application pool, admitting first-time freshmen and transfer students who meet the statewide criteria [link: CSU Bakersfield EoP Program page]. EOP’s Summer Bridge program transitions our incoming freshmen from high school to college by providing an academically rigorous residential experience. EOP’s Guardian Scholars Program focuses on our students who come to CSU Bakersfield from foster youth out-of-home placement, guardianship, and group homes to ensure their success by providing access to safe and stable housing, independent living workshops, and educational counseling.

EOP processed a record number of online and paper applications in 2017. In all, 2,682 unduplicated applications were submitted, processed, and linked, generating multiple
correspondences during the year. For Fall 2018, EOP had already processed applications for 7,400 students in the first months of 2018.

The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at California State University, Bakersfield is a federally funded program designed to meet the needs of students with migrant or seasonal farm working backgrounds [link: CSU Bakersfield CAMP program]. CAMP offers eligible students pre-college transition and first-year support services to help develop the skills necessary to succeed in college. In 2017, All 75 CAMP students attended a 2-week summer course and were provided with supplemental instruction during Early Start courses. Throughout the academic year, students receive personal, academic and career counseling, and meet with the CAMP Academic Advisor a minimum of four visits per term. Additionally, students enrolled in the Fall course GST 1210 Career Development, are referred to Math and English tutoring and other subjects after reviewing students’ academic progress reports. In 2016, over 85% of the students continued to their next year, which is higher than the overall CSU Bakersfield 1-year retention rate of approximately 75%. In 2010-11, CSU Bakersfield’ CAMP program was nationally ranked in the top 10. [link: CSUB’s CAMP Ranks Among Top 10]

The CSU Bakersfield Guardian Scholars Program supports current and former foster youth who are college bound by providing access, maintaining a support network that promotes student academic success, and connecting students with their potential to become successful and productive world citizens. In 2015-16, 31 Guardian Scholars Students enrolled and in 2016-17, 36 enrolled, with 23 returning and 13 new students. In 2015-16, 4 of 8 non-returning Guradian Scholars graduated.

Academic advising is a critical and contributing factor in student retention, progress toward degree, and degree completion. Working with the academic advisors and Associate Deans, the mandatory advising process was modified in Fall 2017 and now requires students to meet with their academic advisor (faculty and/or staff) at key milestones. For example, students are required to meet with their advisor upon completing a set number of units to ensure they are staying on track to graduate in a timely manner. A hold is also placed on students who have earned 120+ units to reduce the number of super seniors. Students who have completed 90 units are required to develop a graduation plan with their academic advisor.

Working in collaboration with Department Chairs and Academic Advisors, academic roadmaps for most undergraduate degree programs have been created. Based on recommendations from the academic advisors, a proposal has been developed to modify the mandatory advising hold process. The proposed process will place holds on students at key milestones in order to ensure they are progressing towards degree in a
timely manner. This is a change from the current process that uses class standing and time on campus to assign mandatory advising holds.

The Provost’s Campus Conversation on Advising began during the Spring 2018 semester [link: Campus Advising Conversation site]. Three questionnaires were distributed to students, faculty and advisors. The university also engaged Education Advisory Board Consulting Services to assess the advising structure at the university. A taskforce has been established to develop an Advising and Faculty Mentoring Model. Through this new model we hope to establish a more consistent operating protocol for academic advising and define clear roles and responsibilities for advising staff and faculty mentors that is operationally decentralized, yet centrally coordinated across the schools.

As mentioned above, CSU Bakersfield is piloting a block-scheduling initiative for a subset of the incoming Fall 2017 freshman class. The target population included students who were undeclared, students enrolled in a major from the School of Arts & Humanities, and students enrolled in the Bachelors of Science in Business Administration program. Approximately 450 students were provided with a schedule that had their courses planned out for a year based on the respective major roadmaps. In year 2 and 3, the goal is to expand the pilot to ensure that every incoming first time freshmen is provided with a first-year schedule.

Student Housing and Residence Life also play an important role in retention and graduation. Convenience, affordability, and structure that supports learning (with a focus on student success, retention, procedures and policies) creates an atmosphere that enhances the professional and personal growth of all students who reside in university housing. Examples of our collaborative focus on providing residents with opportunities to develop both personally and professionally include the following workshops for residents: Passport Challenge; How to Be an Ally; Student Staff Diversity Training; Student Staff Current Trends in Drugs and Higher Education; Blood, Sweat and Tears: Welcome to Nursing School; Weekly Yoga Hour; Yes, No, Maybe So – Sexual Consent; Financial Literacy; and Resume and Cover Letter Writing.

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships supports the Graduation 2025 Initiative in several ways. For example, students who are not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) may petition for academic probation status, which includes an Academic Plan. Students who are approved must meet with an academic advisor to create an academic plan, which outlines the necessary steps to re-attain SAP status, including Unit Pace and GPA, while still receiving financial aid. This program helps hundreds of students each year make progress to graduation. At least 55% of students meet their plan each term and continue towards graduation, and 10% of students who
graduate each term were on academic probation at one time. A Student Support Grant is also being developed to assist students with great financial challenges. To qualify, students must have exhausted financial aid resources, applied to graduate, be in their last term, and have financial need.

Financial literacy is important not only to help students make the most of their financial aid opportunities, but also to develop strong personal finance habits. We partner with iGrad, an online financial literacy resource, available to every CSU Bakersfield student. We participate in Financial Literacy Awareness Month, hosting numerous FAFSA and scholarship workshops to the campus during the priority FAFSA application period. Students who have sound personal finance habits and make the most of their financial aid opportunities are more likely to persist to graduation.

CSU Bakersfield targets on-time, high-need students in the award packaging process for limited, gift aid. However, we have recently updated our packaging process to strategically award students who are matriculated or have accepted their admission. We have found that this philosophy of administering limited funds is effective and provides our neediest committed students with the funds they need at a crucial stage and helps them persist towards graduation.

5.4. LEARNING AND PERSONAL GROWTH OF STUDENT-ATHLETES (CFR. 2.13)

To support the academic success of our student-athletes, CSU Bakersfield provides designated services tailored to the individual student-athlete. These services are housed in the Kegley Center for Student Success [link: Kegley Center website]. Academic Advisors are assigned to specific teams to guide them through graduation. Athletics Advisors work with campus and faculty advisors to provide students with a four-year graduation plan. In addition, student-athletes receive tutorial assistance and mentors to work with throughout each term. Academic workshops are also provided on issues such as time management, test taking skills and writing skills. All workshops are also offered to students outside of athletics.

As a result, CSU Bakersfield achieved our highest Graduation Success Rate (GSR) of 75% for student-athletes in the 2016-17 academic year. This represents an increase from 60% to 75% since 2013. As a result of grant-supported programs, our student-athletes earned a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) for the sixth consecutive academic term. Our Academic Progress Rate (APR) scores also have increased with volleyball and sand volleyball receiving public recognition by the NCAA. Seven of our teams achieved a 1000 Single-Year APR and thirteen teams earned a 950 or higher
Multi-Year APR. This represents a departmental APR score increase from 939 to 972 in four years.

5.4.1 INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING (CFR 2.13)

In 2016-17, approximately 40% of CSU Bakersfield (3710 students) went to a tutoring center at least once. In the same year, subject area centers on campus under (social science, arts & humanities, math, science, computer science & engineering, business, developmental math), saw a 29.4% increase in visits from last year 2015/2016. In 2016/17, visits (including all centers and study hall) increased nearly 33%, from 34,422 to 45,750 [link: CSU Bakersfield Tutoring Center website].

One of our most popular tutoring centers is the Writing Resource Center (WRC), whose goal is to help students become better writers by asking questions and engaging students in conversation to help them reflect on how to improve their own work. The WRC assists students with any writing assignment at any stage of the writing process for any discipline as well as resumes, cover letters, and other technical writing and provides a place for students to come and study or work on their assignments [link: CSU Bakersfield Writing Resource Center website]. With increased outreach to other departments, the Writing Resource Center has truly become a multi-disciplinary nexus for writing across all disciplines. In 2016-17, due to advocacy and referrals from professors in departments other than English, visits from non-English course comprised nearly 70% of our visits. In 2016-17, about 22% the student population visited the WRC.

Another form of support for student learning is Supplemental Instruction (SI), an academic support program that targets traditionally difficult, key gateway, and bottleneck courses, which a large number of students receive a grade of C-, D, F, or W. SI focuses on student retention and facilitating learning, which is accomplished in SI through the identification of the difficult course, placement of an SI Leader, and regularly scheduled peer-facilitated SI study group sessions. The goal of SI is to create independent learners, and the SI leader is the link between the actual class and SI session, where course readings, content, and material are brought together with effective learning strategies in a collaborative learning environment [link: CSU Bakersfield Supplemental Instruction website].

The Student Success Counselor (SSC, hired on October 9, 2017, has met 1-1 with nearly 100 students for mental health related symptoms (depression, anxiety, etc.), academic related issues (test anxiety, procrastination, lack of motivation, poor grades). The SCC provides individual and group counseling and emotional support and skill development to students on academic probation and in academic jeopardy, in coordination with the School Professional Academic advisors and Faculty Academic
Advisors. The SSC reaches out to students directly to engage and introduce these students with the Counseling Center and other necessary services, including outreach to underrepresented students/minorities, particularly but not limited to African American students and other students of color, to assist in closing the achievement gap and reduce academic barriers. The SSC also assists at-risk students with developing academic and emotional coping strategies, navigating important and complex university systems, interacting with faculty, and utilizing support services.

CSU Bakersfield has also implemented Smart Planner. This PeopleSoft Academic Advising tool has been widely adapted by students, advisors, and university administrators and gives students a tool to own and understand their academic plan. Smart Planner automatically generates a personalized, multi-semester course sequence, based on each student’s major and progress; provides a user-friendly interface for students and advisors, including drag- and drop schedule adjustments; summarizes student progress in one or two, easy-to-understand pages; shows students the impact of their decisions, such as deferring math, taking summer classes, or changing majors; handles full-time, part-time, and transfer students equally well; tracks checkpoint courses that can help predict a student’s success in a major; and helps predict seat capacity based on actual future demand.

5.4.2 UNDERGRADUATE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH (CFR 2.13)

Student Union & Organizational Governance supports the growth and development of Recognized Student Organizations at CSU Bakersfield. Organizations in 15 different categories include academic, social, multicultural, religious, and political clubs. CSU Bakersfield Student Organizations provide rich opportunities for students to develop and utilize many of the skills and abilities learned in the classroom, along with valuable leadership, interpersonal, communication, conflict management, and organizational skills. In order to be officially recognized, student organizations must have a faculty or staff member who actively serves as the advisor. In most instances, the advisor becomes a mentor and an important resource to the student members.

To advance and celebrate leadership skill development at CSU Bakersfield, Student Union & Organizational Governance has developed the LEADER Program and the Student Leader Hall of Fame. The LEADER Program is a series of leadership skill development workshops that culminates in participants receiving leadership certification, which appears on a co-curricular transcript [link: CSU Bakersfield LEADER program website].
The Center for Career Education and Community Engagement (CECE) also plays an important role in the personal and professional growth of undergraduate students. CECE accomplishes this in many ways, including the successful inclusion of service learning in the curriculum of nearly 75 CSU Bakersfield courses each semester, positively affecting community partners with 23,682 hours of service [link: Center for Career Education website]. In addition to service learning, CECE is actively engaged in creating internships for CSU Bakersfield students in helping them secure internships and jobs.

CSU Bakersfield has been recognized nationally for its success in engaging with the community, most notably by the Carnegie Foundation, receiving the Carnegie Classification as Community Engaged in 2015 [link: Carnegie Community Engaged press release]. The success and effectiveness of these CECE initiatives have been supported by the CSU Chancellor’s Call to Service Grant Program. Funding provided each year by the CSU Chancellor has helped CECE maintain a high level of support to CSU Bakersfield students.

5.4.3 INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT GRADUATE LEARNING AND PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH (CFR 2.13)

The Graduate Student Center (GSC) supports Graduate Learning and Personal and Professional Growth through a variety of tactics. The GSC sponsors graduate Student / Faculty Collaborative Initiatives (SFCI). These Student/Faculty Collaborative Initiatives are student and faculty grants disbursed to assist our currently enrolled graduate students with their academic research. The graduate students work closely with faculty in three areas (Research and Scholarship, Community Engagement, and Teaching and Pedagogy). Most recently, the amount awarded has been $1,250.00 in 2017-18 [link: Collaborative Initiative Past Awards].

For a recent funded project on community gardens, a graduate student wrote, “In the face of increasing poverty and high food insecurity rates experienced by millions of individuals and families, communities around the nation are focusing their attention toward sustainable, self-reliant and growth promoting activities that can promote community participation and solve these problems. Building communities through community gardens is a creative project to engage the community.” With the help of a faculty mentor, the graduate student developed a needs assessment project, ultimately sharing the information “with all collaborating agencies: City of Bakersfield Solid Waste Division, Keep Bakersfield Beautiful, Bakersfield Police Department Neighborhood Watch, The Giving Tree Project Benefit Corporation, The Center On Race, Poverty and
the Environment, the Greenfield Family Resource Center, and the Greenfield Walking Group." [link: SFCI example].

The Graduate Student Center (GSC) provides our graduate students with opportunities to participate in professional development workshops. Workshops cover such topics as Financial Aid for Graduate Education, Literature Review Writing, Presentation and Interview Skills and Stress Management. Beyond the SFCI Grant the GSC also coordinates several other funding opportunities for graduate students including the Graduate Equity Fellowship, Sally Casanova Scholar Award and Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) [link: GSC Website].

5.5 STUDENT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (CFR 2.13)

The Student Health Service (SHS) and the CSU Bakersfield Counseling Center (CC) are focused on the physical and mental health and well-being of CSU Bakersfield students. The SHS is accredited every two years by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Healthcare. The Counseling Center is accredited by an independent mental health professional, under strict guidelines provided by the CSU Chancellor’s office.

In 2016-17 the SHS had a total of 10,341 patient visits. Six-thousand-fifty-six visits involved primary care, 749 were for check-ups and physical exams, 1,104 visits involved reproductive health care, 1,382 students received immunizations, 5,945 students were treated by a nurse, 3,546 lab tests were performed, 1,797 prescriptions were filled, and 2,961 athletic training sessions occurred.

The SHS engages in significant outreach to CSU Bakersfield students, including a Welcome Back to Campus tabling event, Breast Cancer Awareness, Great American Smoke Out, World AIDS day, Sexual Responsibility week, Safe Spring Break, and others. The SHS partners with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to recruit, train, and engage students in peer health educator training on various health topics important to college students. These peer educators provide workshops and consultations with other students on campus under the supervision of the SHS. CSU Bakersfield Athletics is also dedicated to providing student-athletes with the highest quality of healthcare to enhance their athletic performance and overall well-being. The sport environment is an important venue for establishing mental health promotion practices, destigmatizing mental health challenges, and normalizing care and identification of mental health disorders. CSU Bakersfield Athletics has implemented a Mental Health Program to educate coaches, staff and student-athletes about mental health while connecting the athletics department to other departments and organizations. This is designed to provide a safer environment and improve the student-athlete experience.
Food insecurity has been linked with higher risk for adverse effects across multiple life domains, including greater risk for lower academic performance and negative health outcomes. In 2013, results from a campus food insecurity survey conducted by Dr. Aaron Hegde, Associate Professor of Economics and Director of the Environmental Resource Program, and graduate student Evabelen Ventura, prompted efforts to establish a campus food pantry and to offer food distribution on campus in partnership with the USDA and Community Action Partnership of Kern (CAP-K). In 2015, CSU Chancellor Timothy White commissioned a system-wide study on the issue of homelessness and food insecurity among students on all 23 campuses. In November 2016, following a systemwide CSU Basic Needs Conference, CSU Bakersfield formed a Housing and Food Security Committee and registered as a USDA commodities food distribution site with CAP-K and began food distribution [link: CSU Bakersfield Food Pantry].

The CSU Bakersfield Edible Garden is currently underway and will create experiential STEM learning opportunities for students and faculty. With the motto, “Growing Student Success,” the 1.75 acre garden will help promote healthy food access and supplement STEM education in Bakersfield and the region by connecting CSU Bakersfield, K-14 students, and community members with super-local, healthy, fresh produce they can grow, research, harvest, cook, and eat in the garden. Internship opportunities will be available to students interested in pursuing a career in biology, agriculture, business, or related fields [link: CSU Bakersfield Edible Garden].

5.6 TRACKING POST-GRADUATION SUCCESS (CFR 1.2 and 2.13)

Tracking alumni outcomes is an important part of determining student success and the return on education investment and career preparation provided by CSU Bakersfield. Knowing where and how CSU Bakersfield graduates are employed can also assist in building career mentoring relationships and post-graduation opportunities with current students [link: Alumni Survey Results].

The overwhelming majority of our graduates stay in California, and most of them remain in Kern County and Bakersfield. Our Alumni Relations database shows local institutions such as State Farm Insurance, The Wonderful Company, Aera Energy, Dignity Health, Kern County city governments, the Kern Superintendent of Schools (KSOS), the Kern High School District (KHSD), and CSU Bakersfield employ most of our graduates. Kern County’s economy benefits greatly from the economic success of CSU Bakersfield alumni.

CSU Bakersfield has expanded outreach to enroll veterans and is committed to providing dedicated staff to ensure that our veterans receive the academic support
needed to succeed academically. From recruitment to degree completion, the Veterans Resource Center provides camaraderie, networking, and support to student veterans, with workshops on applying to the university; accessing military benefits; finding housing; academic advising; financial aid; career advising; referral to campus counseling and psychological services; referral to disability services; and providing a welcoming space for veterans to gather with other veterans.

Our International Student Recruitment efforts have also resulted in an increasing number of students selecting CSU Bakersfield to pursue their educational goals. The International Students and Programs (ISP) office offers many services to international students, such as assisting prospective students with admission requirements and providing tips on preparing for their consular interview. ISP facilitates and hosts a comprehensive international orientation for newly enrolled students and helps them maintain legal status while at the University. Assistance with enrollment, course selection, transfer course reviews, writing letters for government scholarship recipients is also offered. Workshops for optional practical training are also conducted so students know their options on working in the U.S. after they graduate. The CSU Bakersfield International Club and International Education Week offers additional activities for international students. Through ISP, strong relationships with community partners such as Bakersfield College, Homeland Security, Department of Motor Vehicles, and Social Security have been developed so that international students can easily obtain services from our community partners.

Study abroad participation among CSU Bakersfield students have varied in recent years. ISP staff and global ambassadors conduct classroom presentations, workshops, and tabling to market study abroad options and the benefits of studying abroad. Students participate in study abroad orientations as well as pre-departure orientation to meet one another and ask questions. The CSU Bakersfield Financial Aid Director also attends the workshop to answer financial aid questions. The University now offers short-term study abroad programs through the Center for Global Outreach. These semester-long programs offer students an excellent alternative if they are not ready to study abroad long-term. From 2013-2014 through 2017-18, the number of students studying abroad during the regular academic year has varied from five to sixteen, in nine countries. In summer 2018, 34 students are studying abroad.

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

In sum, CSU Bakersfield is committed to offering outstanding undergraduate and graduate programs that advance the intellectual and personal development of its students. As shown above, the campus has developed organization structures to
harness data to improve its retention and graduation rates. These structures also include academic and support communities seek to expand the intellectual and professional opportunities for students. In Essay 6, there will be additional detail relating to how quality is ensured at CSU Bakersfield.