



State Footprint: California State University

Increasing Graduation Rates and Meeting Graduation Initiative 2025 Through Strategic Scheduling



Background

In 2016, the California State University (CSU) system launched Graduation Initiative 2025 to “increase graduation rates, eliminate equity gaps in degree completion, and meet California’s workforce needs.” A core element of this strategy centers on improving course capacity and meeting high student demand for core classes. To take advantage of the opportunity, CSU institutions partnered with Ad Astra to assist with improving course access and, ultimately, graduation rates. Redefining paths to graduation allowed CSU partners to identify bottlenecks and

allocate resources, which helped lead to immediate improvements in retention and graduation rates. Additionally, the California State University Office of the Chancellor recognized that students infrequently get the courses they need to progress in their academic journey and that investing in additional course sections can therefore remove barriers to student success. To help remove the barriers, Ad Astra has worked with 11 CSU institutions to support Graduation Initiative 2025 by helping to strategically add the courses that are most needed by students to graduate on time.

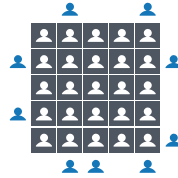


Initial Average CSU Partner Statistics



88%

Enrollment ratio
(recommended 85%)



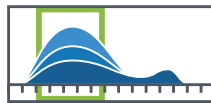
41%

Overloaded
course ratio
(recommended ≤10%)



24%

Underutilized
course ratio
(recommended ≤30%)



79%

Classroom utilization
primetime
(recommended ≤80%)



34%

Balanced
course ratio
(recommended ≥60%)



12%

Off grid waste
(recommended ≤5%)

KEY TERMS

Balanced Course Ratio

The percentage of unique courses offered that are balanced with student need, defined as having an enrollment ratio between 70% and 95%

Classroom Utilization Primetime

The percentage of hours in the primetime subset of a standard week (as defined by each institution's usage patterns) that a typical classroom is in use

Degree Velocity

The rate at which students complete their degree

Enrollment Ratio

Overall fill rate for course offerings at census date

Off Grid Waste

The percentage of capacity wasted by scheduling non-standard meeting patterns during primetime hours

Overloaded Course Ratio

The percentage of unique courses offered that are difficult for students to register for because they have a high enrollment ratio, defined as having an enrollment ratio of 95% or higher

Underutilized Course Ratio

The percentage of unique courses offered that are an inefficient use of faculty and classroom resources because they are under-enrolled, defined as having an enrollment ratio of less than 70%



Outcomes

By implementing strategies focused on Graduation Initiative 2025, CSU institutions added 4,300 new course sections to increase course capacity and improve degree velocity. Ad Astra's Higher Education Scheduling Index (HESI), a database for course scheduling that tracks 50 variables related to course

scheduling patterns and institutional activity, found CSU partners improved critical areas in the course schedule that led to significant impacts on individual campuses. CSU partners continue to leverage Ad Astra's services and solutions to achieve state and institution goals.



Examples



San Francisco State University (SFSU) became an Ad Astra partner in 2016 with the desire to develop a long-term enrollment plan that identifies program capacities, bottlenecks, and the necessary resources to anticipate and serve student demand. Data gathered over five terms indicated SFSU addressed 25-38 percent of Ad Astra's addition candidate recommendations, garnering close to 10,000 new enrollments. In addition to its enrollment plan, SFSU sought to implement a Course Availability Plan to increase six-year graduation rates by 15 percent by 2025. Since partnering, SFSU's overloaded course ratio is down 19.5 percent. Its average unit load is up over a four-year time span — particularly with new freshmen with a 6.6 percent increase. In doing this, its 4 year graduation rate has increased to 38 percent, their 5 year graduation rate has increased 8.6 percent, and their 6 year graduation rate has increased 2 percent.



Through better alignment of advising and course access, CSU Long Beach has already increased graduation to 33 percent from 16.7 percent in 2016 and continues to drive closer to their goal of 35 percent each term.



SACRAMENTO
STATE

With Ad Astra's recommendations and tools, Sacramento State strategically added courses to its schedule that led to an increase in the average number of credit hours taken by a student. From fall 2017 to fall 2019, they saw a 6.2 percent increase in first-year student credit hours, a 2.4 percent increase in sophomore student credit hours, and a 3.3 percent increase in junior student credit hours. In doing this, Sacramento State saw a 3.75 percent aggregate improvement in retention from 2016 to 2018, and their graduation rates increased 127 percent.

About Ad Astra

Ad Astra helps institutions graduate more students faster. Partnering with more than 500 colleges, universities, and systems nationwide, Ad Astra helps improve stewardship of instructional resources, streamline student access to courses, and accelerate student completions. Ad Astra's data-informed software and informative consulting services lead the industry in higher education scheduling software solutions.

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