



We at San Francisco State University are tasked with the enormous responsibility of educating working Californians. 45% of our students are Pell Grant recipients and 32% are the first in their family to go to college. We are [#8 in the nation for social mobility](#) and we also have one of [the best film schools in the nation](#). Our alumni have won over 100 Grammys, Emmys, Oscars, Tonys, and Pulitzers combined. Gators have also occupied the [C-suite at more than eight BioPharma companies in the Bay Area](#). Each day we convince a student to come back to class, we are one step closer to another graduate who will embark on positive change for their families and our larger community.

We already know that a college degree will bring more earnings over a lifetime, less reliance on public assistance, and better mental health. Still, we are seeing lower enrollments over the past 13 years, the sharpest decrease occurring after the pandemic. This past Fall we were just above 22,000 students, a staggering 27% percent decline from our high of 30,000 students in fall of 2012. The work of re-sizing has been difficult.

An accelerated population decline in our region has fueled this decrease in enrollment. As much as we might think recruiting more students will solve our problem, in fact, retention will more powerfully impact our revenue and more importantly our students' lives. If we improved our retention by just 2% we would generate more than \$2 million in revenue from tuition alone. For a major with 1000 students that means, giving extra care to just twenty students who might appear to be having difficulty. For those degree programs with 100 students or less, which is, in fact, more typical for our majors, it means guiding just one or two students who may need extra assistance. Both faculty and staff contribute in this endeavor, by giving an extension on a paper, processing a late admit, or simply smiling at a student who might be sitting by themselves in the quad. Moreover, do we not owe it to the students we admit to take them across the finish line to graduation? While the enrollment decline is daunting, the small actions that we can take now are less so. I urge all of you to keep a close eye on your retention rates to see where you could make a contribution in one student's life. Go to [ir.sfsu.edu](http://ir.sfsu.edu) and use [EAB Navigate](#) to track the success of your students in your department.

We as an institution are continuing to fulfill our primary purpose, even in the midst of re-sizing. Our four-year graduation rate for first-time freshman hit an all-time high at 29% as compared to seven years ago when it was 22%. Our two-year graduation rate for transfers also jumped to 50% from 37% nine years ago. We should be proud of these achievements, though we still need to make progress in increasing our six-year graduation rate and decreasing our equity gap.

Additionally, 42% of our tenure stream faculty are now BIPOC and 52% are women. This is remarkable, in the midst of a [national professoriate](#) that is 26% BIPOC and 48% women. It is because of your commitment to our core values that we have reached these milestones, while much of the world appears to be on fire around us.

As a community, I have been inspired by the collective spirit as we tackle the difficult tasks ahead of us. I have witnessed large departments such as Psychology take initiative to collaborate with smaller departments in course offerings. I have seen the library not fill a MPP position as they move into a leadership transition. College-specific technology support and advising have also been moved under one administrative office. The library in conjunction with our Health, Promotion and Wellness recently established a [family study room](#) for student parents. ORSP staff also has actively worked to improve morale by organizing a craft day. As much as we declare that we are plagued by silos, I have seen programs work across departments, act collectively, and advance the welfare of the larger university. For sure, this is the only way we will continue to manage the change ourselves.

As we approach graduation, hold on to the fact that together we are making an impact.



Amy Sueyoshi  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

