

**Project Abstracts
for Fiscal Year 2021
Promoting Postbaccalaureate
Opportunities for Hispanic
Americans (PPOHA) Program**

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Purpose: *Fresno State will create “Finish in Five” programs in nine science, engineering, and agriculture disciplines.* Finish in Five programs offer blended Bachelor’s–Master’s programs (known as “4 + 1” programs) to allow students to ‘finish in five’ both degrees. The “4 + 1” pathways reduce time-to degree and accumulated debt, enabling students to enter more swiftly into high demand and well-paid careers. This provides a strong incentive for Hispanic and/or low-income students to pursue graduate degrees.

Overview: Fresno State is the largest higher education institution between Los Angeles and Sacramento. We are home to approximately 25% more Hispanic students than the combined numbers of the other two smaller CSU campuses in California’s San Joaquin Valley (CSU, Stanislaus and CSU, Bakersfield). The university also enrolls over double the number of graduate students than the other two campuses combined. The university has made enormous strides in improving Hispanic student enrollment and graduation in master’s programs overall. Hispanics now constitute a clear plurality in enrollment. Hispanics no longer lag in either time to-degree and or cumulative GPA. One area remains a challenge: Hispanic student enrollment lags in the STEAM disciplines, which are STEM, plus Agriculture (a major industry in the San Joaquin Valley). Finish in Five takes up this challenge.

Main Project Components:

Finish in Five provides wraparound supports to enable Hispanic students to earn a blended Bachelor’s–Master’s degree in five years. To create streamlined 4 + 1 pathways to graduate degrees, the university’s planning team made more efficient use of existing resources, for example new policies from the Chancellor’s Office allowing double counting of existing GE courses toward both the GE requirement and the major degrees. Students ‘finishing in five’ benefits the State of California as well as the students. Finish in Five frees up available seats in five years: the STEAM programs can accommodate more students with the same number of current seats in the classroom. The program provides an annual “Teaching Effectiveness Workshop” delivered by experts to boost graduate faculty effectiveness with Hispanic students. Graduate faculty will implement the wraparound supports, such as Affinity Research Teams (a model designed for inclusivity), high impact Summer Research Experiences, internships, and cohort activities such as weekly discipline-specific meetings and monthly interdisciplinary seminars to build

professional identity. Partnerships with four community colleges will broaden the transfer pipeline into the Finish in Five programs.

Major Five-Year Project Objectives:

1. To increase enrollment of Hispanic students in master's degree programs in STEAM disciplines by 40% during the five-year grant period (average 8% increase each year over 2018-2019 baseline) and to sustain improved enrollment rate after the grant period with no additional federal cost.
2. To increase overall enrollment in master's degree programs in STEAM disciplines by 25% during the five-year grant period (average 5% increase each year over 2018-2019 baseline) and to sustain improved enrollment rate after the grant period with no additional federal cost.
3. To increase 40%, over the five-year grant period, the number of master's degrees awarded to Hispanic students in STEAM disciplines (average 8% increase each year over 2018-2019 baseline) and to sustain improved attainment rate after the grant period with no additional federal cost.
4. To increase 25%, over the five-year grant period, the overall number of master's degrees awarded in STEAM disciplines (5% increase each year over 2018-2019 baseline) and to sustain improved attainment rate after the grant period with no additional federal cost.

P031M210044

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY, TX

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is a Hispanic Serving Institution located in geographically isolated far west Texas and serves 1,200 miles of the Texas-Mexico border including a large portion of the Chihuahuan Desert and Big Bend region. This is an area rich in natural resources and the university is known internationally for research activities in animal sciences, plant life and geology, and cultural studies. The 19-county region is also characterized by high poverty and low population density (60,000 square miles averaging two people per square mile). In addition, because of issues on the border, there are tremendous political and economic challenges.

SRSU fully commits to implementation of ***Advancing Graduate Programs en la Frontera***, a PPOHA project designed to (1) expand postbaccalaureate educational opportunities for, and improve the academic attainment of, Hispanic students; and (2) expand the postbaccalaureate academic offerings. Our student demographics—over 45% of graduate students are Hispanic—include 69% low income and 44% first generation. 78% of our students receive financial aid. These characteristics highlight the need in our area. The project design and services reflect our experience of over 100 years of providing higher education to the citizens in the surrounding communities.

SRSU underwent a comprehensive strategic planning process to identify graduate programs in need of developing or restructuring to better meet the needs of our students and to increase their employability throughout our region. Evidence-based strategies, including those in the WWC Practice Guide for Postsecondary Technology will be deployed to meet the two primary goals: Goal 1) Increase Disadvantaged Student Access to Graduate Programs and Goal 2) Improve Support Services for Graduate Students to Facilitate Degree Completion. Outcomes to be achieved include: 1) By September 30, 2024, retention of graduate students will increase from baseline of 57% to 63%; 2) By September 30, 2024, 90% of faculty teaching online courses will participate in professional development activities; 3) By September 30, 2024, a new Sports Administration concentration will be launched and fully operational; 4) By September 30, 2022, the SRSU ED Counseling program will be adjusted to meet CACREP accreditation; 5) By September 30, 2024, a new Master of Science – Animal Science degree program will be launched and

fully operational; 6) By September 30, 2024, a new Master of Communication, Strategic Communications concentration will be launched and fully operational.

The budget requested (**\$2,557,780**) reflects reasonable and justified expenses to achieve these objectives. The personnel category is the largest (39.4%) and includes a project director, associate/activity director, faculty support coordinator/data tracking specialist, student retention and thesis coordinator, and funding for faculty stipends as well as graduate and teaching assistants. A small travel budget (4%) is included as well as research equipment (11.4%) and supplies (5%). Contractual (8%) includes external evaluation. Fellowships (18%) are critical for our low-income population.

A partnership is in place with Sam Houston State University (CPP1), an institution within the Texas State University System, named by Education Trust as one of the top ten performing institutions in the country for Latino students (out of 613 institutions surveyed). The partnership will bring the latest training for effective online course delivery to our faculty, which is critically important for remote areas such as ours. CPP2-Financial Literacy strategies are based on the US Financial Literacy and Education Commission's (FLEC) report "Best Practices for Financial Literacy and Education at Institutions of Higher Education" published in 2019.