



Opportunity and Challenge Profile

Search for the Executive Director of University Housing California State University, Chico Chico, California

California State University, Chico (Chico State) seeks a committed, resourceful, and collaborative leader for the position of the Executive Director of University Housing (Executive Director). Reporting to the Associate Vice President (AVP) for Student Support Programs within the Division of Student Affairs, the Executive Director will provide visionary leadership for undergraduate University Housing, Residential Life, Housing Facilities, and Campus Residential Dining, a unit generating approximately \$22 million in annual revenue.

Operating as part of the 23-campus California State University System, which educates the most ethnically, economically, and academically diverse student body in the nation, Chico State is a comprehensive and residential public university with the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation. The University enrolls over 15,000 students with more than 50 percent identifying as first-generation college students. Founded in 1887, Chico State is the second-oldest campus in the CSU system and is the anchor institution for Northern California. Situated on a beautiful 119-acre campus—designated as an arboretum—Chico State is located near the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains, approximately 90 minutes north of the state capitol, Sacramento, and a three-hour drive from the San Francisco Bay Area. Chico State provides students a small-college-town, residential campus experience and boasts a diverse student body, high-quality research experiences, exceptional faculty mentoring, and civic and global engagement opportunities for undergraduates and graduate students alike.

The incoming Executive Director will be joining the Chico State community at a pivotal time, as Dr. Isaac Brundage, the new Vice President for Student Affairs, joined the University on July 1. The Division of Student Affairs is now working on aligning their goals to those of the university's new strategic plan, and Housing will play an active role in those efforts. Housing staff are also ready to be inspired for the future after the COVID-19 pandemic and local natural disasters required the team to focus time and resources on solving immediate needs rather than planning for the unit's next chapter. They have also experienced multiple Executive Directors over the last decade and are ready for stability as well as instituting best practices to revitalize student interest in on-campus housing, which was at capacity before the pandemic, and in Fall 2022 the occupancy rate is expected to be 86%. The Executive Director will lead an engaged and strong Housing leadership team to strategize for the future and build a more robust residential experience that builds community, brings occupancy rates back to pre-COVID levels, tends to facilities and dining needs, bridges other university services and offices, and helps ensure an inclusive environment that is welcoming to Chico State's diverse student body.

The Executive Director will be expected to address the following opportunities and challenges:

- Create and execute on an inspiring and strategic vision for University Housing
- Foster an accessible, supportive, and inclusive residential environment for a diverse student body

- Provide strong operational leadership and a sound financial infrastructure
- Recruit, develop, and inspire the Housing team for the future

A list of the desired qualifications and characteristics of the Executive Director of University Housing can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was prepared by the search committee with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to provide background information and detail the key opportunities and challenges related to the position. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

About the California State University System

With 23 campuses, 485,000 students, and 56,000 faculty and staff, the CSU is a leader in high-quality, accessible, student-focused higher education, and trains the majority of California’s leaders and policymakers: approximately 1 in 10 employees in California is a CSU graduate and there are over 3.9 million alumni. The CSU has several student success initiatives that have been lauded nationally. Currently, the Graduation Initiative 2025 (GI 2025) is focused on efforts to help students succeed and progress toward graduation in a timely manner and to eliminate gaps in achievement for underrepresented minorities (URM) and Pell-eligible students. For more information on GI 2025 please see: <https://www.csuchico.edu/gradinitiative/index.shtml>.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the CSU has been a leader in providing guidance and assistance to those in need, including mental health resources, medical equipment, and the switch to virtual instruction. When moved to online instruction in March of 2020, the CSU took the lead in prioritizing the health and safety of its students, faculty, and staff, and members of the California community. To learn more about the California State University system, see www.calstate.edu.

About California State University, Chico

Chico State sits on land originally inhabited by the Mechoopda Maidu Indians. Chico State is a Hispanic-Serving Institution, and more than half of enrolled students are first generation in their families to attend college. About 77% of students receive financial aid, and Chico State is ranked in the top 8 percent nationally for return on investment by PayScale.com.

Today, Chico State is a comprehensive university serving not only the Northern California region, but also the state, the nation, and the world through instruction, research, and public service. The University helps today’s students develop into tomorrow’s successful citizens. Its unique combination of scholarly pursuits, civic engagement, and a strong connection to the local community has earned it national and international accolades. Chico State has been rated a top-10 regional public university in the West by *U.S. News & World Report* since 1998, when the rankings began, and earned the highest possible score on the U.S. Department of Education’s College Scoreboard. In its 2022 [Best Colleges Rankings](#), US News & World Report recognized Chico State on a half-dozen lists—including a trio of regional top 25 placements: Social Mobility, Best Colleges for Veterans, and Top Public Schools. Chico State’s national and regional recognitions for providing a high-quality, high-value education are prolific—and in a diverse array of categories. Within the last year, College Consensus [ranked the University](#) No. 2 in its “[Best Online Colleges and Universities](#)” and No. 8 in the “[Best Public Colleges and Universities](#)” lists—both national honors. The [Institute for International Education](#) ranked Chico State’s [Study Abroad and Exchange](#) program at No. 7 nationally for master’s institutions with students participating in programs a year or longer. And the

University placed in the top 15 in a pair of [Washington Monthly's 2021 College Guide and Rankings](#) lists—
“[Best Bang for the Buck Rankings: West](#)” and “[Master's University Rankings](#).”

The University comprises seven colleges and five schools including the College of Agriculture; the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (which includes the School of Social Work); the College of Business; the College of Communication and Education (including the Schools of Education and Communication); the College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management; the College of Humanities and Fine Arts (including the School of the Arts); and the College of Natural Sciences (including the School of Nursing). The University also has 22 specialized centers, including the Center for Regenerative Agriculture and Resilient Systems, Agribusiness Institute, and the California Pavement Preservation Center. Chico State's faculty are dedicated scholars and teachers. From preparing teachers to protecting watersheds, promoting economic development to supporting archaeological research, faculty have enabled the University to be a positive force in the communities it serves. The student-to-faculty ratio is approximately 23 to 1, and the average undergraduate class size is 30.

In 2019, the University finalized its 2019–24 Strategic Plan: “[The Time is Now](#).” This plan is Chico State's first step in their journey toward distinction, where students earn a premier education through leading-edge instruction, service, and scholarship. This plan underscores three priorities: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Civic and Global Engagement; and Resilient and Sustainable Systems. More information about the strategic plan can be found at the following link:
https://www.csuchico.edu/pres/_assets/documents/stategic-plan-2019-2024.pdf

As an HSI but also as a Predominately White Institution (PWI), Chico State is committed to continuously working with Latino populations and increasing the number of students who not only attend the University but also graduate from Chico State. To do so, [The Office of Latinx Equity and Success](#) is working toward achieving the [Seal of Excelencia](#), which is a national certification that aims to accelerate Latino student success in higher education. Chico State also aspires to diversify its faculty and staff to ensure historically underserved students identify with their support systems and understand their differing needs, but also to reflect the changing demographics of the workforce, especially in California. A search is currently underway for a new Chief Diversity Officer, who will report directly to the President and will help institutionalize equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts across the university.

Students are drawn to Chico State for its close-knit community and its intimate, student focused environment. In 2021, Chico State students were from 43 nations, 30 states, and 1 U.S. territory. The majority (97.8%) came from California: 27% from Chico State's service area; 10% from the Sacramento area; 22% from the San Francisco Bay Area; 21% from the Los Angeles area; and 17% from the rest of California. The remaining 2% are out-of-state or international students. Approximately 52% of first-year students are the first in their families to attend college. Chico State became a Hispanic-Serving Institution in 2015 and now reports over 36% of students are Latinx. View additional [student diversity demographics](#). Chico State prides itself as being a social mobility vehicle for first-generation students and lessening the student debt burden for all graduates. Chico state has ranked 5th in the nation and 1st in California for the lowest student loan debt.¹

Six years into the Graduation Initiative 2025, Chico State is making progress toward its 2025 goal. For first-year freshman, the University graduation rate is 33.1% for those graduating in 4 years, edging closer to a 2025 goal of 41%. The 6-year graduation rate for first-year freshmen is at 65.4% with a 2025 goal of 74%.

¹ <https://lendedu.com/blog/student-loan-debt-by-school-by-state/>

For transfer students, Chico State's 4-year graduation goal is 86% by 2025 and currently at 80.6% and the 2-year transfer student rate is 43.7%, surpassing the goal of 43% for 2025. The equity gap between the URM and non-URM students remains a challenge that the University is committed to effectively address with additional resources and strategies.

About University Housing

University Housing is responsible for the day-to-day operations and administration of all programmatic, financial, personnel, information technology, constituent outreach, student life, and facility operations within Chico State's residence halls. It has [eight residence halls](#) and a capacity of 2,230 students. There is not a live-on requirement at Chico State, and housing near campus has competitive pricing and options.

Their mission is to amplify and support the comprehensive institutional goals of the University by providing safe, secure, clean, and reasonably priced residential environments conducive to the academic and personal development of the University Housing community by:

- Providing services, programs, and activities which encourage students to develop themselves intellectually, emotionally, socially, physically, and vocationally;
- Selecting and training professional and paraprofessional staff committed to developing residential communities which emphasize student development principles;
- Identifying and addressing evolving student needs via professional advisory staff working directly with university faculty and staff, residential life staff, the Residence Hall Association, and Resident Advisor Advisory Council (RAAC).

University Housing also provides [themed communities](#) for students interested in developing strong relationships with those who share similar educational, career, and/or personal interests. Theme Communities include:

- Center for Agricultural Leadership (CAL)
- Wild About Business
- First-Generation
- Honors
- Global Experience
- Lavender Living (LGBTQ+)
- Health and Human Services

The main residential dining facility is the Sutter Residential Dining Center. Within Sutter Dining Hall are four "all you care to eat" stations that are operated by an outside vendor. Residential Dining includes a team of managers and chefs who work closely with the University farm, local produce companies and vendors to be a sustainable, healthy, and fresh dining option for Chico State students living on-campus. Residential Dining employs around 175 part-time student employees. Meal plans are required for those who live on campus, though there are multiple options for flexibility.

There are ongoing discussions about much-needed facilities renovations and prospects of a new residential building. Whitney Hall is currently in need of major renovations and maintenance. Assessments recommending whether to proceed with demolition and build a new residence hall, as well as plans on how to finance this project, will be made in coordination with the Vice President for Student Affairs, university leadership, the facilities management team, and other key campus partners within the next few years. The Executive Director will help determine how to house those students when that Hall goes off-line for either maintenance or demolition. More about University Housing can be found [here](#).

Role of the Executive Director of University Housing

The Executive Director is a core member of the AVP for Student Support Program's management team and provides leadership and vision to the programs provided by University Housing. The Executive Director is directly responsible for all aspects of the daily and strategic operations of the department: Residential Life, Housing Facilities, and Campus Residential Dining, which includes community life, housing administration, operating and capital budget management, occupancy management, marketing, assessment, facilities management, staff recruitment and retention, as well as emergency and crisis management. The Executive Director will lead efforts around student programming and staff hiring, retention, and empowerment through a proficient lens centered around diversity, equity, and inclusion. They will also use data and assessment to evaluate and develop departmental activities to institute best practices and advance equity for the achievement of divisional and institutional priorities and growth. The Executive Director will be a leader and advocate for a living learning environment and will foster residential environments that facilitate positive and proactive outcomes with regard to learning, commitment, civility, honesty, diversity, and human potential.

This Executive Director oversees approximately 60 full-time staff and 230 student employees, and an operating budget of \$24 million and \$15 million dollars in reserve accounts. Reporting to the Executive Director are the Associate Director of Administration and the Associate Director for Residential Life, who are currently serving as Interim Co-Executive Directors. Also, and Office Manager.

Key Opportunities and Challenges for the Executive Director of University Housing

The Executive Director will serve as a leader and advocate for Housing university-wide while also contributing to strategy within Student Affairs as a member of the leadership team. In doing so, the Executive Director will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Create and execute on an inspiring and strategic vision for University Housing

Housing staff are ready to be inspired for the future, which will allow the Executive Director creativity in the development and execution of a vision for Housing that will define them well into the unit's next chapter. This vision will be in alignment with the University's and Division's strategic goals to address the needs and aspirations of Chico State while also finding new ways to attract students at all levels. This will entail identify opportunities to institute best practices and further develop programming, such as living-learning communities and other community-building initiatives, to bridge student affairs units and engage students. They will find new ways to engage faculty and offices that support students, such health and wellness, counseling, affinity groups, the Chief Diversity Officer, and academic advising, in these efforts to eliminate achievement gaps and maximize recruitment, retention, support, and graduation of Chico State's diverse student body. The Executive Director will also ensure a safe and healthy environment for all students through promoting inclusion efforts and shifting the culture of conduct to a restorative justice model.

As there are many facilities needs that need attention in the next few years, a large task for the Executive Director will be to help develop a vision and plan specifically focused on improving the student residential experience through a combination of renovation projects and possibly a new construction project. To be successful, the Executive Director will need to work closely with Facilities leadership and the Vice President for Student Affairs to provide the data needed for informed decision making.

Ultimately, the Executive Director will be responsible for the short- and long-term planning needed to attract and meet student market demand, tend to deferred maintenance and facilities needs, ensure a financial model that can adequately fund projects, and that will help Chico State achieve University-wide initiatives related to student success and providing a sense of belonging for all students.

Foster an accessible, supportive, and inclusive residential environment for a diverse student body

As a Hispanic-Serving Institution in a rural college town, Chico State is working towards becoming a more equitable, inclusive, and welcoming place for all students to be successful, and Housing plays a vital role as the first interaction for many students arriving on campus. The Executive Director must bring the awareness of differing student needs and a critical consciousness of inequities to ensure an environment that is conducive to their success, growth, and development. This includes breaking down systemic barriers to success, such as evaluating the differing cost structures as it relates to different housing and dining options for affordability, while also building the support structures necessary for success. The Executive Director will work with many campus partners, including other Student Affairs staff and the Chief Diversity Officer's office, to ensure to appropriate support infrastructure. The Executive Director will also promote a culture of restorative justice and being a learning environment for all.

Provide strong operational leadership and a sound financial infrastructure

While University Housing has been financially stable due to various revenue streams, the unit is ready to invest in its future with possible new capital projects, facilities renovations for aging buildings, professional development opportunities, and enhanced student programming efforts, and the Executive Director will need to ensure the resources necessary by thoughtfully managing finances and operations. This will include determining the appropriate cost structures for housing and dining, and ensuring affordability to compete with local housing and boost the occupancy rate. The Executive Director will also evaluate current vendor partnerships for Residential Dining to find opportunities for increased efficiencies and revenue, and best respond to students' changing dining needs.

The Executive Director will work closely with the Associate Directors, Student Affairs leadership, and with Facilities Management and Services to assess financial and operational needs and priorities, especially for capital and renovation plans, and work together on financing those projects. To be successful, the Executive Director will need an operational mindset rooted in data and assessment to determine strategy and effectively advocate for resources when necessary. They will also need to seek other creative means and partnerships to generate revenue from housing and dining. In doing so, they will ensure that Housing is poised for continued financial stability and sustainability in the years ahead.

Recruit, develop, and inspire the Housing team for the future

The Executive Director will be inheriting a talented and dedicated team eager for evolution and innovation. They will have the opportunity to creatively recruit and develop the team to further cultivate a healthy, safe, and inclusive living environment where all students want to be and thrive. A national hiring shortage in Housing after the pandemic will require a creative approach to recruitment and retention; the Executive Director will develop creative strategies to attract diverse talent and promote a culture where staff want to stay and innovate. To do this, the Executive Director will encourage collaboration, professional support and mentorship, and equity, while rewarding generosity, as patience will be needed as the team is rebuilt by filling vacancies. Training will also be encouraged to ensure best practices in the

student experience and that staff and students are champions of university-wide equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts. The Executive Director will leverage the expertise of staff, encourage new ideas, and engage in thoughtful conversations with staff and students for strategy on an ongoing basis to ensure they feel valued, respected, and supported.

Qualifications and Characteristics

The University seeks a student-centered, collaborative, and innovative Executive Director of University Housing who can demonstrate or has the following skills or experiences:

- A Bachelor's Degree; Master's Degree preferred;
- Five years of experience in a mid- to senior-level student housing and/or residential life administration position is required;
- A record of effective supervisory and budget management experience;
- Excellent interpersonal and leadership skills;
- Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, including capital investment and financial planning;
- Confidence and experience navigating complex organizations;
- Proven ability to build collaborative relationships with a broad array of campus stakeholders;
- Demonstrated commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives;
- Familiarity with facilities master planning and renovation/construction projects;
- Excellent analytical and organizational abilities; attention to detail;
- Understanding of student development and student leadership development.

About the Chico Community

Chico is a vibrant community of approximately 102,000 people with easy access to Lassen Volcanic National Park, Napa Valley, San Francisco, Northern Oregon, and Lake Tahoe areas. Home to Bidwell Park, one of the largest municipal parks in the nation, Chico offers a high quality of life, affordable housing when compared to other California communities, strong commitments to sustainability, and access to numerous outdoor recreational opportunities and a thriving arts, music, and events scene. Enloe Medical Center ranks in the top 8 percent of hospitals in California by *U.S. News & Review* and top 15 percent in the nation for outstanding patient experience by Healthgrades. The Chico Unified School District and the Butte Glenn Community College District have excellent schools and innovative programs and a long history of collaboration with Chico State. Over the years, Chico has garnered recognition among the "Best Places in America" by *Forbes* magazine, the "Best Places to Retire" by *U.S. News & World Report*. Its dedication to the environment has landed it acknowledgement as the "Best Green Places to Live" by *Country Home Magazine*, and active lifestyle heralded by *TIME* magazine's "Top 10 Cities in the Nation Where People Exercise the Most," *Outdoor's* "Best Towns," and *Bicycle's* "America's Best Bike Town."

Although primarily known as an agricultural area, Chico and the northern Sacramento Valley also have a robust, organized, and growing tech sector, including software and mobile application development, e-commerce, clean technologies, renewable energy, and advanced manufacturing. The city strives to maintain its strong sense of community, while simultaneously establishing itself as a dynamic regional center for business, education, recreation, and culture.

For more information, see <https://www.explorebuttecounty.com/>.

*Executive Director of University Housing
California State University, Chico*

Furthermore, the campus acknowledges and is mindful that Chico State stands on lands that were originally occupied by the first people of the area, the Mechoopda, and we recognize their distinctive spiritual relationship with this land, the flora, the fauna, and the waters that run through campus. We are humbled that our campus resides upon sacred lands that since time immemorial have sustained the Mechoopda people and continue to do so today.

Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Resumes and cover letters must be submitted through the Chico State job site using the following link: <https://www.csuchico.edu/employment.shtml>. Inquiries and nominations should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/search-detail/8607>. For best consideration, applications should be submitted by October 17, though the search will be opened until filled. Electronic submission of materials is required.

ISAACSON, MILLER
imsearch.com

Lindsay Gold, Rafa Escobedo, and Diana Inguito
Isaacson, Miller
1000 Sansome Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94111
Phone: 415.655.4900

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