# Colorado State University-Pueblo WORKS
## The Academy & College to Work Concept

**About CSU-Pueblo: *Cultura. Gente. Comunidad.***
Colorado State University-Pueblo (CSU-Pueblo) is a Colorado based, state-funded, four-year, public university located in Pueblo, Colorado. CSU-Pueblo is an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) committed to providing  educational access to a primarily low-income, first-generation, minority population in a community that continues to transition from a 20th century production economy to a 21st century, global economy. Launched in 2018, CSU-Pueblo's #VISION2028 initiative was designed to reposition CSU-Pueblo in the higher education marketplace as a bold and innovative leader in developing and preparing students who have the ability to navigate work in a rapidly changing world and are motivated to make significant contributions at work, to their families, and communities where they live. Our vision will guide the campus toward a future that is inspirational, aspirational, and maps to the ever-increasing needs of our region by focusing on access and affordability, creating unique learning environments and experiences for our students, and becoming the preferred employer in Southern Colorado by continuously developing our people and creating an organizational culture that sustains the university.

**Our Vision**
To establish Colorado State University-Pueblo as the people's university of the Southwest United States by 2028.

**Our Mission**
CSU-Pueblo's success will be measured by the resilience, agility, and problem solving abilities of our diverse student population, and the ways in which our graduates are able to navigate work in a rapidly changing world.

**Our Values**
CSU-Pueblo is dedicated to interdisciplinary learning and entrepreneurship that elevate our people and our community, create educational opportunities, foster unique collaborations, and support inclusion, access, and affordability as a gateway to the world.

**8 Guiding Principles**
Develop People
Live Sustainably
Engage Place
Empower Students
Transform Learning
Cultivate Entrepreneurship
Build Knowledge
Impact Society

## Operationalizing CSU-Pueblo WORKS
## #VISION2028

In CSU-Pueblo's quest to become the "people's university of the Southwest… by 2028," we are redefining and reclaiming our rich history — as a community of work — in order to create a meaningful path forward for our students, our educators, our community, and our campus.

Our proposal to create a 10-year vision around a "College to Work" program begins with a series of initiatives and investments that will be supported by our system, external funding, comprehensive campaign, and by internally realigning our budget. Moreover, these initiatives will be embedded within university-wide assessment protocols and will serve to operationalize interdisciplinary-learning, entrepreneurialism, and research-based practice — inside and outside traditional classroom spaces.[1]

CSU-Pueblo seeks to serve our system, and our state, while simultaneously differentiating ourselves in a crowded higher education market place by creating an Academy concept that connects students to "just-in-time" learning and support services, as well as career coaching, that helps students continuously connect their education to their career goals increasing the relevance of their education. The Academy will facilitate the lifecycle of our students — no matter how, where, or when they begin their journey at CSU-Pueblo. The student lifecycle, including onboarding, developing, and transitioning, is central to "Phase 1: 2018-2023" of #VISION2028.
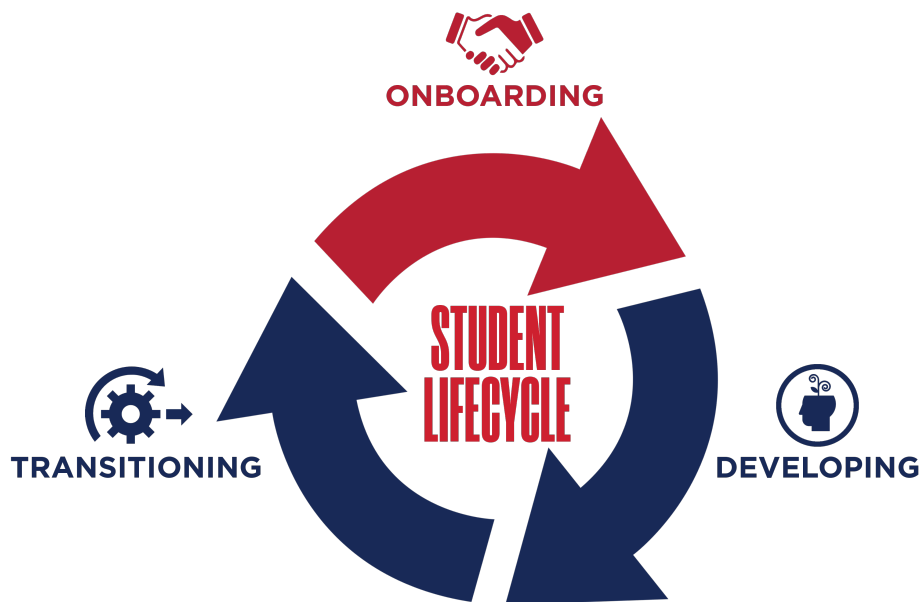


**Figure 1.** "The Student Lifecycle." The Academy concept embraces the idea of a student lifecycle, including onboarding, developing, and transitioning. This model for student engagement at CSU-Pueblo closely mirrors the experiences of our employees. The CSU-Pueblo Academy works to create learning and support systems that differentiate onboarding pathways for students based on individual experiences, readiness, and fiscal realities. CSU-Pueblo will develop students through reimagined General Education courses, robust internships, and integrated workplace opportunities. Our commitment to transitioning will include the creation of new, industry and student degree completion-based certificate and graduate programming — and the ways in which CSU-Pueblo networks all students into professional experiences and post-graduation experiences.

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[1] *The Case for College Work Programs*, https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2016/10/04/how-college-work-programs-benefit-both-student-and-institution-essay

At the core of CSU-Pueblo WORKS is a radical shift in campus and community culture. We are rethinking job descriptions, redefining processes for efficiencies, supporting policies and procedures for fiscal accountability, embedding professional development, adopting — campus-wide — a comprehensive learning model, and collaborating to create an infrastructure that can support and nourish educational innovation— a vital element for the future of higher education and to CSU-Pueblo. Because we believe the student lifecycle (onboarding, developing, and transitioning) mirrors the experiences of our employees, we anticipate using the Academy concept as a way to enhance a university culture of work that supports continuous learning, innovation, and accountability, and that elevates CSU-Pueblo as the preferred employer in Southern Colorado.

## Problem Statement: Declining Enrollments & Changing Landscape of Higher Education

The challenges and opportunities related to Colorado's growing achievement gap between Hispanic and other student demographics result in an urgency that is reflected in CSU-Pueblo's 5-year enrollment, retention, completion, and placement trends. Moreover, our need to build capacity for serving student and employer expectations has been consistently supported by data that suggest university curricula, the 4-year degree, and university workforce development have not kept pace with workforce needs.

The challenges facing higher education are so pervasive in fact, global non-profits such as *Strada Institute for the Future of Work*, in partnership with the labor market analytics group *EMSI*, released a comprehensive report that predicts the future of work and charges higher education leadership with systematically reorganizing the very structure of formal education so that we may empower students who can adapt and succeed as their professional lives evolve.[2] Other groups, including the Lumina Foundation and The Gates Foundation, have invested in legislative lobbying, shared their international expertise, and committed seemingly unlimited resources to problem-solving the ways in which education can answer the call of industry, manufacturing, healthcare, emerging technologies, and so many other professional partners.[3]

*The Chronicle of Higher Education* released a report that called for educators to understand the nature of modern employment as a way to better craft wraparound services for students who would soon face an uncertain job market where the expected work ethic and soft skills were not skills taught in disciplinarily-focused degree programs.[4] For almost a decade, workforce development offices have set off alarms that declining enrollments have forced universities across the country to heed. No doubt, numerous colleges and universities have responded to these "alarms" by launching new academic programs, positioning new leadership, and even unveiling more aggressive marketing campaigns. Our #VISION2028 research, including comprehensive work with partners,[5] SWOT analyses, surveys, and working sessions with employee, student, and community leaders has confirmed what the *Chronicle* and *Inside Higher Education* reporting have claimed for years: disciplinary education and

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[2] Download the report, "Human+Skills for the Future of Work": https://www.economicmodeling.com/robot-ready-reports/

[3] Read Lumina's Strategic Plan, 2017-2020: https://www.luminafoundation.org/resources/lumina-foundation-strategic-plan-for-2017-to-2020

[4] Access the report: https://www.chronicle.com/specialreport/The-Future-of-Work/108

[5] #VISION2028 partners have included and Ken Smith from Strategic Partnerships; Hord Coplan Macht; Entangled Solutions; the CSU Office of Engagement (including CSU Online and the Office of Community and Economic Development); Brett Anderson and Henry Sobanet at the CSU System Office, and members of the CSU Board of Governors

traditional majors are inconsistently preparing graduates with the soft skills that make them appealing candidates for the work of the future.[6]
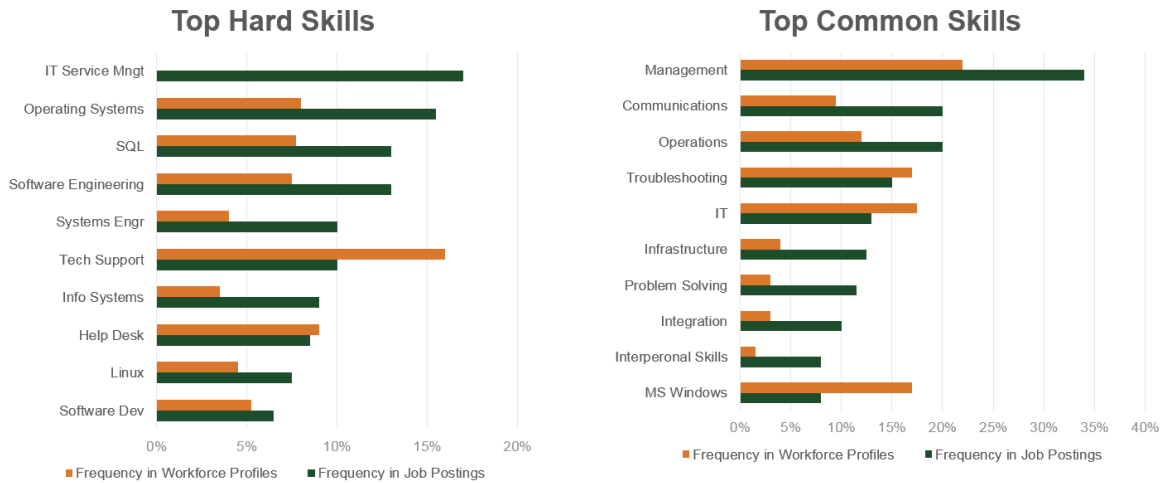


**Figure 2.** This example of the "hard" and "soft" skills "gap" and their frequency in workplace profiles and job postings from 2018 focuses on the areas of computer and mathematical occupations

Figure 2 showcases the conflict: the work ahead is often unknown and disconnected from the traditional work of academe.[7] To that end, CSU-Pueblo has continued to grow our strategic leveraging of system assets and have sought the expertise of CSU experts and offices to provide resources, research and data analysis, and access to validated processes we can engage as a way to determine a path for program expansion, closure, or development — based on "student degree completion trends" and "occupational projections" across our market, as outlined in Figure 3.[8]
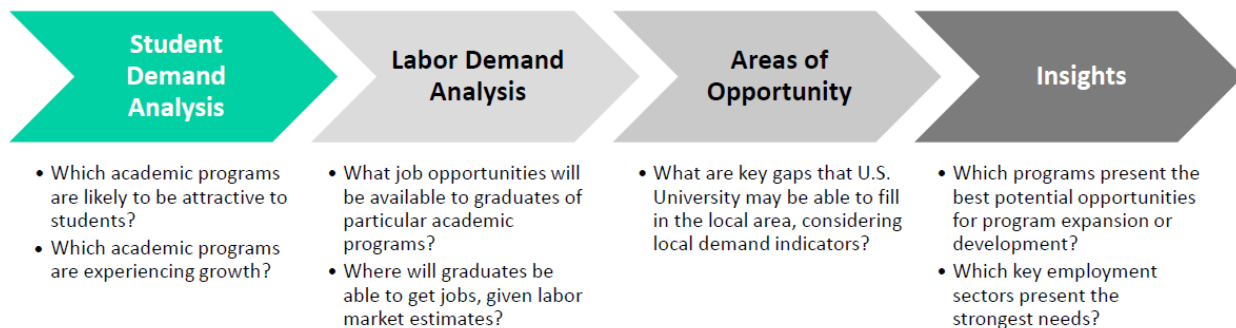


**Figure 3.** This model suggests a way to assess opportunities to expand or add academic programs based on student degree completion trends and comparing that to labor demand analyses.

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[6] https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2019/01/17/survey-employers-want-soft-skills-graduates

[7] Data provided courtesy of Tom Johnson, Associate Director for Community and Economic Development, CSU Office of Engagement (4 January 2019)

[8] Figure 3, from Hanover Research, "Market Opportunity Scan, 2018"

Complicating this new reality of work is the changing college-going student demographic. Long gone is the day when university revenues might be driven primarily by first-time, full-time freshmen who paid out of pocket. Increasing numbers of first-generation and Pell-eligible students are turning to college as a way to change their lives and the lives of their families; however, the shifting burden of cost means a renewed focus to the return on investment for these students.[9] Similarly, adult learners are seeking additional certifications and advanced degrees, as shifting demands of work create an ongoing need to refine or redeploy or upskill previous knowledge. In other words, as the "life-cycle" of the modern worker changes, so must the university's ability to serve them. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, from 1978-2012, the number of jobs people held in a lifetime remained steady at 10-15, but the number of times that people changed fields — careers — increased significantly.[10]

Indeed, while regional comprehensives may feel the impact of workforce development more keenly, the 4-year degree is increasingly a higher education "myth," as even traditional college graduates take much longer than 4 years to complete an undergraduate degree. In fact, data from *The National Center for Education Statistics* calculate that 59% of all first-time, full-time freshmen graduating from US public institutions will require 6 years to graduate.[11] Additionally, stop-out and drop-out students, lifelong learners, and adults are returning to campuses in larger numbers each year.[12]

These challenges also create opportunities for CSU-Pueblo to build cultural competencies in our employees, add to our supervisory bench strength, and create new job descriptions, new avenues for accountability, streamlined process and procedures — all leading to more meaningful development of our people. Certainly, CSU-Pueblo's growing need for core infrastructure has repeatedly required an institutional and system wide response; moving forward, we are focused on managing priorities and ensuring a significant return on any investment of resources. Given our current fiscal challenges, leadership is aggressively rethinking the ways in which the university can fulfill and revitalize an educational commitment to engage place and impact society. Furthermore, we understand that we must ruthlessly interrogate our own processes and historic systems as we plan the future of CSU-Pueblo *and* work to serve students today… and tomorrow.

### Solution: The Future of Work — Onboarding, Developing, and Transitioning

CSU-Pueblo WORKS is a bold and inspirational approach for the university and establishes a single, transformational pathway forward. Our goal, to become the "people's university of the Southwest United States by 2028," is not a simple aspiration. We know that, in order to succeed, we must teach differently. We must learn differently. We must engage our students and our community differently. CSU-Pueblo WORKS will consider classroom learning and workplace learning — as well as leadership, cultural, and entrepreneurial learning — as elements of a complex learning model that will demand as much from our employees and our community employers as it does our students.

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[9] According to "The Future of Jobs: Employment, Skills, and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution," from *Work Economic Forum* 2016, job losses from 2015-2020 will total 7.1 million, of which 2/3rds are concentrated in routine white-collar office jobs. Accessible online at: http://www.academia.edu/31540537/The_Future_of_Jobs_Employment_Skills_and_Workforce_Strategy_for_the_Fourth_Industrial_Revolution

[10] https://www.bls.gov/nls/nlsfaqs.htm#anch41

[11] https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=40

[12] From "Stackable Degrees Gaining Prominence as Entry Points to Grad School," from www.EducationDive.com

The Academy concept will integrate an adaptive learning model and allow us to differentiate onboarding methodologies based on student readiness, financial resources, work ethic, and socio-emotional preparation. Developing will include the academic and cultural programming that allows our students to succeed in and out of the classroom in ways that allow them to begin to apply foundational knowledge to professional situations, better preparing them for work of the future. Our plan for transitioning will allow us to challenge students to integrate foundational and workplace knowledge in situations that closely mirror professional settings, circumstances, and decision-making. Our ultimate goal is to create wraparound support systems within a new financial aid model; create a revamped General Education program; design capstone and internship opportunities that involve our campus and region in the work-life of our students.[13]

We propose the following 10 strategic initiatives to be implemented over the next five years.

## The Initiatives: Onboarding, Developing, & Transitioning
## Phase 1: 2018-2023

### Overview
Our initiatives map to the student lifecycle model illustrated in Figure 3. Student onboarding occurs when we provide students with a coach, an individualized pathway, and connect them to a set of support and academic systems to ensure their success. Developing occurs through a learning process that includes foundations (classroom learning), applications (workplace learning), and integrations (leadership, cultural agility, and entrepreneurship learning.) Transitioning occurs when we develop students with a set of profession-based essentials as well as mentor, socialize, and connect then to industry experts and professional associations easing the transition from university to professional life.

### ONBOARDING

Initiative 1: New Financial Aid Model
> College for Work[14] credit program that invites all students to work on our campus in progressively responsible positions.
>
> Prior Learning Assessment[15] will offer adult learners with progressively expanded work-life experiences an opportunity to accelerate their degree attainment by offering a portfolio assessment of demonstrable prior knowledge and skill(s) development.

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[13] For an example of integrated wraparound services, see: https://www.collegetransition.org/student-supporters/promising-practices/wrap-around-services/

[14] For more information on the "Work College" model for increased access and affordability, visit: https://www.workcolleges.org/

[15] According to data collected by ACENET and CAEL, Prior Learning Assessment helps "motivate adult learners to return, persist, and complete postsecondary credentials." Read more at: https://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Adult-Learners-Guide-to-PLA.aspx and https://www.cael.org/higher-education/prior-learning-assessment-services

Initiative 2: New Advising Model
    Individualized Pathways for Every Student with "Life Coach"[16]

    Single, On-Campus Processing Point for Student Support Systems[17]

    Single Entry Point on Campus

Initiative 3: Additional High School Tracks Centers
    Early successes with establishing advising and mini-admissions centers in two local high schools suggest that expansion of these services into other regional locations will increase our impact — and improve our work — toward access for all students. These centers offer college-preparation and application guidance and support for students and their families, serve as information hubs, and create new access points for largely undeserved student populations.

Initiative 4: Athletic Infrastructure and Support Systems
    Today, CSU-Pueblo is home to more than 525 student athletes or almost 15% of our total enrollment. Crucial infrastructure investments will allow this number to grow, positively impacting both enrollment and retention.

Initiative 5: Enhanced CSU-Pueblo at Colorado Springs
    Colorado Springs continues to grow at rates that outpace Pueblo and other areas of southern Colorado. The proximity to military installations and bases (which function as both feeder facilities and as future employers for graduates) and an important, underutilized feeder community college, Pikes Peak Community College, provides a perfect opportunity to build new articulation agreements and to develop new programming that honors student interest and industry and workforce trends. This location, only 40 minutes from our Pueblo campus, has continued to be an area of programmatic and enrollment growth for CSU-Pueblo.

Initiative 6: Downtown Pueblo Presence
    One of our key primary drivers, or leading indicators, is access. CSU-Pueblo exists in a overcrowded higher education marketplace, with fewer than 14% holding a bachelors degree and ore than 24% with some college and no degree.[18] In the same way that our high school track centers have brought college to new student populations — especially those whose desire to attend college may not be reflected in their test scores, GPA, or placement exams — so do many of our adult citizens need easy access to information, support systems, and a general introduction to the work-life possibilities a college degree might offer. The "presence" is one we anticipate will grow — as new opportunities and partnership with local industries and businesses expands as we invest in and develop our #VISION2028 initiatives.

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[16] *How Success Coaching Can Solve Higher Education's Retention Crisis* https://www.helixeducation.com/resources/uncategorized/the-missing-link-how-success-coaching-can-solve-higher-educations-retention-crisis/

[17] *One Stop: How One Institution Transitioned to a High-Performing Student Services Model* https://www.academicimpressions.com/blog/one-stop-high-performing-student-services-model/

[18] From data provided to CSU-Pueblo by the Pueblo County Economic Development Office, from ESRI (2018)

## DEVELOPING

Initiative 7: Adult and Occupational Education Program[19]

Initiative 8: General Education and Capstone Curricular Redevelopment[20]

Initiative 9 : Professional Learning Spaces

> We are dedicated to reimagining and repurposing existing spaces in order to offer students, educators, and community partners space in which they may work together and collaborate on meaningful projects. Programming around General Education and Capstone courses will support these new, professional learning "studios," and will mimic workplace experiences for students throughout their academic journey at CSU-Pueblo.

## TRANSITIONING

Initiative 10: CSU-Pueblo Professional

> CSU-Pueblo Professional will include a robust menu of certificate and graduate programs to appeal to adult learners and others seeking to redeploy, upskill, advance, or change current career paths. This will be an enrollment driver for CSU-Pueblo and will allow us to rethink the undergraduate to graduate degree path, build new programming that considers trends in student degree completion and analyze labor and workforce needs in order to seize opportunities for service to new groups of students. We see this programming as a natural next step in our undergraduate focus (Initiative 7) for adult and occupational education. Dedicated programming in this area will also enhance our work at CSU-Pueblo at Colorado Springs.

### #VISION2028 & University Performance

Figure 4 (below) illustrates the relationships between the strategic initiatives and our leading and lagging indicators. Working from left to right, our lagging indicators, which we refer to as our widely important goals (WIGS), include our performance metrics. We have annual goals that map to enrollment, retention, completion, and placement; these indicators reflect our anticipated results. CSU-Pueblo has a number of leading indicators that reflect our guiding principles and produce results. Our leading indicators, often discussed on campus as "primary drivers" for our work, cluster around access and affordability, experiences, environments, and people. Each strategic initiative supports, and was shaped by, these core leading indicators. These strategic initiatives were validated against the university's 8 guiding principles: engage place, impact society, transform learning, empower students, live sustainably, cultivate

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[19] According to Dr. Amy Smith, Senior Director for CSU Online, "There are 6 degree motivators for adult learnings, 3 of these are career goals: 1) career change; 2) desire to stay in current role, but upskill to stay relevant; 3) move roles but stay in their field. The other 3 are linked to pay and competence in career: 1) desire for a pay increase; 2) desire to be more competent and want a pay increase; 3) desire to have impact in their field + more competent + pay increase" (22 January 2019). According to data received by EMSI 2018, 22% of Pueblo County residents have "some college" but no degree. The median household income in Pueblo County is $36,000, which leads us to believe that are market-size and opportunities to drive new enrollments around adult education is vast.

[20] *How We Could Radically Rethink the Core Curriculum in Higher Education* http://mediashift.org/2018/01/radically-rethink-gen-ed-requirements/

entrepreneurship, build knowledge, and develop people — providing us a strategic plan to positively impact university performance.

## LINKING INITIATIVES TO UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE



**STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

New Financial Aid Model

Athletics

Track Centers

New Advising Model

CSU-Pueblo at Colorado Springs

Adult Learning Program

General Education and Capstone Curricular Redesign

Professional Learning Spaces

Downtown Presence

CSU-Pueblo Professional

**LEADING INDICATORS**

ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY

EXPERIENCES

ENVIRONMENTS

PEOPLE

**LAGGING INDICATORS**
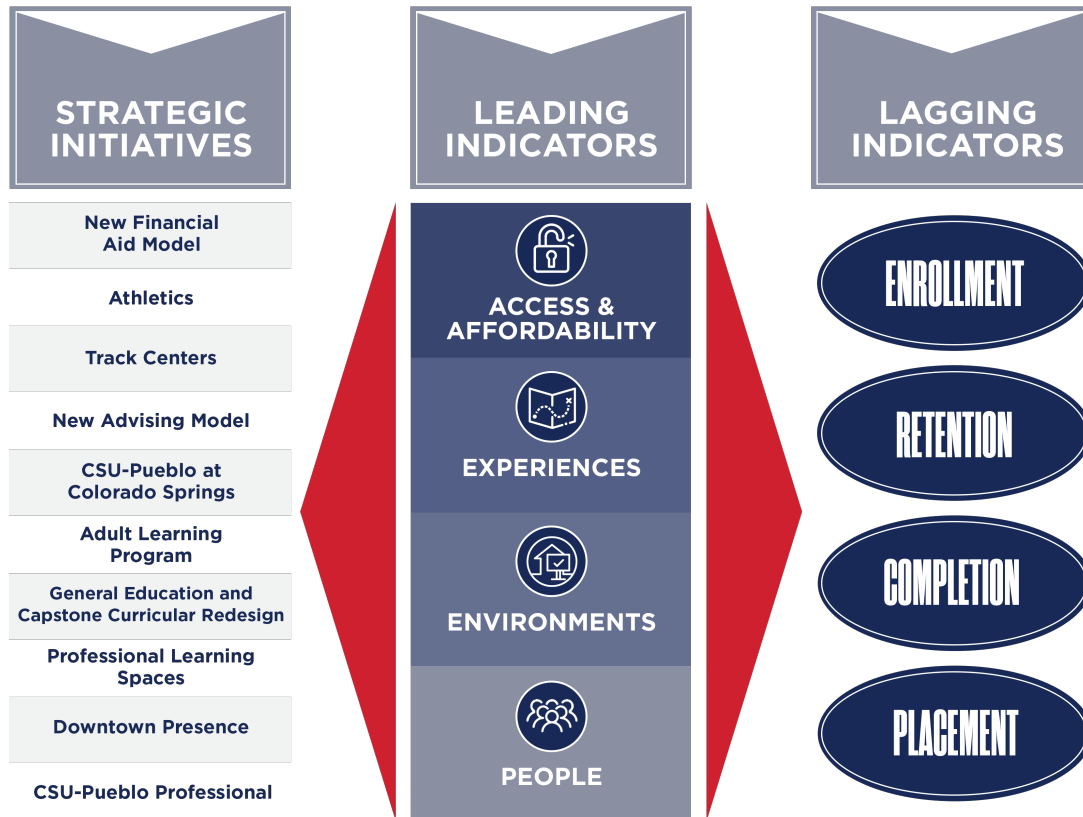
ENROLLMENT

RETENTION

COMPLETION

PLACEMENT

**Figure 4.** Our Wildly Important Goal (WIG) is singularly focused on improving University Performance around our enrollment, retention, completion, and placement.

## NEXT STEPS

During spring 2019, CSU-Pueblo leadership will develop a pro forma for the initiatives. Under the direction of the President's Cabinet and University Leadership Team (33 senior leaders), CSU-Pueblo will develop objectives and an action plan for the strategic management of available resources and core infrastructure needs (finance, Human Resources, and information technology, among others) that will efficiently support the new vision, mission, and values and remain consistent to the guiding principles that will allow us to achieve our vision. Ongoing organizational innovation will be necessary in order to free up the resources important for achieving the strategic initiatives of Phase1 of the #VISION2028 proposal. Overall, the current strategic planning for CSU-Pueblo and the specific initiatives and actions for CSU-Pueblo WORKS suggest the need to move forward on a number of fronts as we move toward a June 2019 CSU System Board of Governors retreat, at which time, we will bring forward detailed *pro forma* for each initiative.