

MARIA CEJA, Ed. D



PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Strategic and results-driven higher education leader with over 15 years of progressive experience in enrollment management, admissions, and student services. Proven track record in overseeing large-scale operations, implementing technology solutions, and fostering cross-departmental collaboration to enhance student success. Expertise in managing multi-million-dollar budgets, leading diverse teams, and ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations. Committed to driving continuous improvement and aligning enrollment strategies with institutional goals.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Strategic Enrollment Management • Cross-Functional Leadership & Collaboration • Policy Development & Compliance • Operational & Fiscal Oversight • Equity-Driven Student Services

EDUCATION

Doctorate in Educational Leadership

California State University, Sacramento

Master of Arts in Mexican American Studies

San José State University

Bachelor of Arts in Human Communication

California State University, Monterey Bay

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Dean of Student Affairs – Enrollment Services

Hartnell College, Salinas, CA | October 2019 – February 2025

- Directed operations for Admissions & Records, Financial Aid, Veterans Services, and International Programs across four campus locations, enhancing integrated service delivery.
- Led a cross-functional team to implement student-centered enrollment strategies, contributing to annual enrollment growth and improved retention outcomes.
- Oversaw a \$2.5M operational budget and managed the disbursement of \$14M+ in financial aid annually, ensuring alignment with federal, state, and institutional regulations.
- Championed equity-driven student success initiatives that increased access for underserved and nontraditional student populations.

- Served as primary compliance officer for Title IV, the Higher Education Act, and veteran benefits, ensuring successful audits and zero findings annually.
- Spearheaded the redesign of admissions and registration workflows, improving process efficiency and decreasing student processing time by 30%.
- Collaborated with IT and institutional research teams to implement SIS and portal enhancements, streamlining reporting and improving the student experience.
- Authored and submitted annual apportionment and apprenticeship reports (CCFS-320 & 321) in compliance with CCCCO data requirements.
- Member of the enrollment planning and policy committees including Enrollment Management, Academic Standards, and College Redesign, aligning strategic goals with operational execution.
- Developed and assessed KPIs for enrollment performance, using Colleague SIS, Cognos, and FlexIt analytics to support continuous improvement.
- Initiated campus-wide campaigns in collaboration with marketing and student services to increase application completion and yield rates.
- Led cross-departmental crisis response teams to ensure service continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic, transitioning enrollment services to fully remote formats within weeks.
- Designed and facilitated staff training programs focused on compliance, customer service, and culturally competent practices.

Associate Director of Admissions and Recruitment

California State University, Monterey Bay | June 2013 – September 2019

- Managed the full recruitment cycle and admissions processing for freshman, transfer, and international students, increasing overall enrollment five consecutive years.
- Developed and implemented strategic recruitment plans aligned with university-wide enrollment targets, resulting in improved yield across all student segments.
- Directed the campus tour and outreach program, increasing campus visits to over 17,000 guests annually.
- Led CRM (Hobsons Connect) communications strategy to increase student engagement and conversion from prospect to enrolled status.
- Partnered with academic departments and student support programs (EOP, CAMP, Student Housing) to ensure a seamless onboarding and advising process for incoming students.
- Managed a \$150K recruitment budget and developed multilingual marketing materials to enhance outreach to underrepresented communities.
- Led large-scale recruitment events such as Open Houses, CSU Counselor Conferences, and Admitted Student Receptions, with attendance up to 3,000.

Admissions Counselor

California State University, Monterey Bay | July 2008 – May 2013

- Evaluated undergraduate applications for freshman and transfer students, including IGETC, TAG, and ADT pathways.

- Designed and led bilingual workshops and presentations on the admissions process, financial aid, and campus resources for students and families.
- Increased regional enrollment by 15% annually by developing territory-specific recruitment plans and fostering relationships with school counselors.
- Created targeted outreach campaigns for Spanish-speaking families and organized Día de los Padres events, expanding from one to four per year.
- Developed and led training for bilingual campus tour guides, ensuring culturally responsive and linguistically accessible experiences for Spanish-speaking visitors.
- Translated admissions materials to expand access for Latinx families.

TECHNICAL & SYSTEMS EXPERTISE

PeopleSoft Campus Solutions (CMS), Ellucian Colleague, CCCApply, Cognos, Hobsons Connect, WebAdMIT, Hyperion, Assist.org, Singularity (OnBase), FlexIT, Google Suite, Microsoft Office Suite, MacOS, Windows

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Member, American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)
 Member, Association of California Community College Administrators (ACCCA)
 Member, CSU Monterey Bay Alumni Board (2012–2017)
 President, CSU Monterey Bay Alumni (2015–2016)