



**SOUTHWEST ASIAN
AND NORTH AFRICAN
STUDENT RESOURCE CENTER**

SACRAMENTO STATE | DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
Student Success and Academic Excellence (SSAE)

SWANA Center

Annual Impact Report

Academic Year 2025-2026

Center	SWANA Center
Director	Dr. Marwa Al Khamees
Departments Included	SWANA Center
Reporting Period	Academic Year 2025-2026

Executive Summary

508+ unique students reached	1,085 Center check-ins	101 advising students	19 programs delivered	3.28 mean GPA, Center visitors
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AY 2025-2026 was the SWANA Center's first full year with dedicated, full-time staff. The Center delivered 19 programs across three domains tied to its three priorities: expanding campus awareness, strengthening educational and professional pathways, and advancing holistic wellness and success. It also established the first baseline of engagement, demographic, and programming data the Center has ever had.

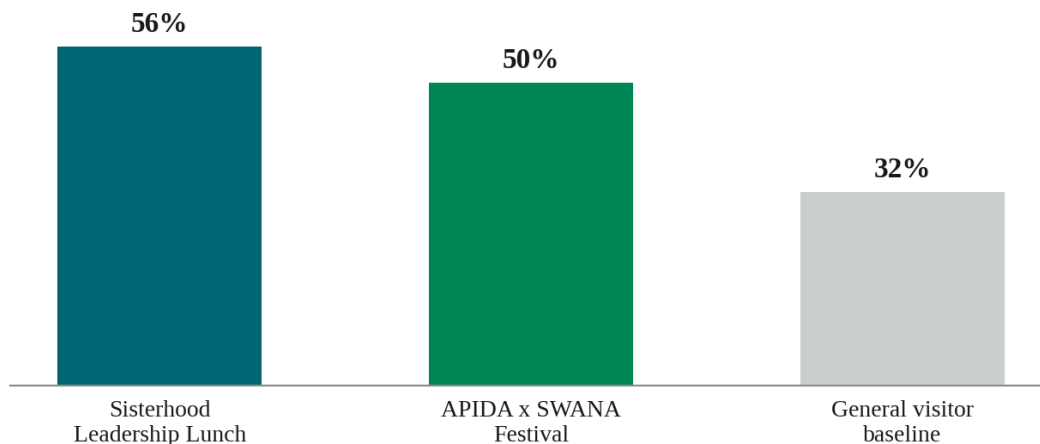
What the year produced

- 508 unique students reached across events and Center visits, with 288 students generating 1,085 check-ins.
- Integrated student services launched, including academic advising and Peer Wellness Advocates. Advising served 101 unique students across 105 completed appointments.

- External partnerships grew well past the year's target of five, including the Center's first multi-year commitment with Ahlan Events to co-coordinate SWANA Week in AY 2026-2027.
- Community funding and in-kind support secured for SWANA Week from Islamic Relief, the Al-Qazzaz Endowment, the Sharif Family, Morrar Law Offices, Qisa Cafe, Sana'a Cafe, and Ahlan Events.
- Programming spanned all class standings and eight colleges, with the deepest participation in Engineering and Computer Science and in Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies.

What the data shows

- Large cultural events function as recruitment. Sisterhood Leadership Lunch attendees returned at a 56% repeat rate and APIDA Festival attendees at 50%, against a 32% baseline.
- Advising reaches a higher-need population than general foot traffic. Advising students averaged a 2.89 GPA against 3.28 for drop-in visitors.
- First-year students are the thinnest segment at five percent of visitors, and they visit least often when they do come. Early outreach is the Center's highest-leverage opportunity.
- Students turn out strongly for cultural programming and less for academic and wellness programming, which shapes how both are designed going forward.



Repeat visit rate by point of entry. Students who attended a major cultural event returned at roughly double the rate of the general visitor pool.

Where the Center is heading

- Outreach and visibility, including a SWANA Student Ambassador Program aimed directly at the first-year gap.
- Consistent, unified assessment across every program type so reporting keeps pace with programming.
- A multi-year funding strategy built on foundation grants, community donor cultivation, and formal event sponsorship.

Departmental Successes and Accomplishments

Mission Alignment

- The Center serves Southwest Asian and North African students, a community spanning many national origins, languages, faiths, and immigration histories, and one that is routinely folded into other categories or left uncouncted in institutional data.
- The Center's work this year advanced its three priorities in alignment with the Division's mission to honor student belonging: expanding campus awareness of SWANA identity and Center services, strengthening educational and professional pathways through partnerships, and advancing holistic wellness and student success.
- The year's events and programming were organized under three domains to prioritize belonging, integrating student services, and student success: Cultural Programming, the Academic and Career Success Series, and the Wellness Series.

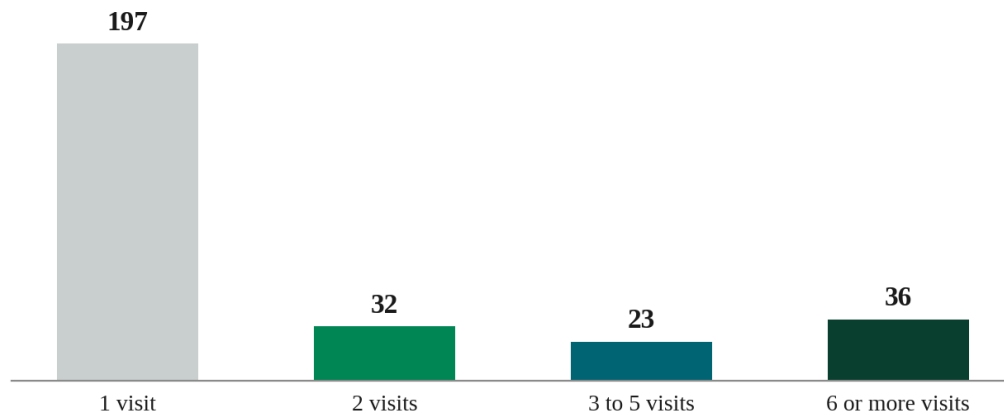
Programming at a Glance

Programming Domain	Center Priority Addressed	Programs
Cultural Programming	Expanding campus awareness	Fall Open House, SWANA Mixer, Sisterhood Leadership Lunch, Festival of Light and Togetherness, SWANA Week (five events), Flavors of SWANA, Judo Jam
Academic and Career Success Series	Strengthening educational and professional pathways	Scholarships Workshop, Power of Mentorship, Picture Your Future, Grad School 101, Finals Study Hall (both semesters)
Wellness Series	Advancing holistic wellness and success	Vision Boards, Flavors of SWANA, Judo Jam, SWANA Connections (weekly, February through April)

Key Achievements

Reach and participation

- 508+ unique students reached between events and recorded Center visits.
- 288 unique students generating 1,085 check-ins through EAB.
- 101 unique advising students across 105 completed appointments.
- 197 students (68% of visitors) came once; 32 came twice; 23 came three to five times; and 36 came to the Center over 6 times per year.



Visit frequency among the 288 students who checked in at the Center. A committed core drives return traffic while most visitors come once.

Advising

- 105 completed appointments; 101 unique students; 42 in fall, 63 in spring.
- Advising reached a higher-need population: a mean GPA of 2.89 for advising students versus 3.28 for all center visitors, with 24% of advising students below a 2.5.

New or Improved Services and Programs

Programming this year was more intentional, falling under one of three programming domains established to address the priorities for Student Affairs and SSAE to support student belonging, advance the integration of student services, and promote academic success.

Cultural Programming

- Fall Open House, SWANA Mixer, Sisterhood Leadership Lunch (with Women's Resource Center), Festival of Light and Togetherness (with the APIDA Center), SWANA Week (Kickoff Cultural Showcase, Mapping SWANA, Tatreez Workshop, Diwan Cafe, and the Amal and Action community reception), Flavors of SWANA, and Judo Jam.
- This domain produced the year's highest turnout. The two best-attended single events of the year were under this domain, and SWANA Week drove April to the highest monthly traffic the Center recorded.
- The Amal and Action reception extended the Center's reach past the student body into faculty and the broader community, which matters for the donor and partnership work described below.

Academic and Career Success Series

- Scholarships Workshop (with Esaktima and PRIDE), Power of Mentorship, Picture Your Future headshots and job-market readiness (with The Black Honors College), Grad School 101, and Finals Study Hall in both semesters.
- Turnout in this domain ran consistently lower than for cultural programming.

Wellness Series

- Vision Boards, Flavors of SWANA, Judo Jam, and SWANA Connections, a weekly Wednesday series running February through April.
- SWANA Connections provided the most sustained wellness touchpoint of the year, offering a consistent weekly space across the spring term.

Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Efforts

- For the SWANA Center, equity is not one program area among several. It is the reason the Center exists. SWANA students occupy a particular institutional invisibility: federal and state systems classify most of them as "white" and campus data rarely disaggregates them resulting in a population that is not counted cannot be planned for. The Center's foundational equity work this year was to make this community visible, and every program sits on top of that.
- Drawing 508 distinct students into a space built explicitly for them produced something the university did not previously have: evidence that SWANA students are here, are numerous, and are seeking community.
- Programming was built around what SWANA students carry, not a generic diversity framework. SWANA Connections and Vision Boards addressed stressors specific to this community: cultural and intergenerational grief, the weight of conflict in students' home regions, immigration-related strain, and religious discrimination. The Sisterhood Leadership Lunch carried an intra-community focus, recognizing that SWANA students are not monolithic and that women-identifying students face their own intersecting expectations.
- SWANA Week did equity work in public, placing SWANA history, art, and scholarship at the center of campus life for five days. This affirms students' right to occupy institutional space as their full selves while shifting the burden of cross-cultural understanding off individual students and onto a shared experience.
- Collaborations with the APIDA, WRC, PRIDE, Esaktima Centers and the Black Honors College reflect a coalition model in programming and outreach rather than a siloed approach, and the data supports the growth resulting from those collaborations: half of APIDA x SWANA Festival of Light and Togetherness attendees who engaged with the Center became repeat visitors.

Partnerships and Collaborations

Partner	Type	Collaboration
APIDA Center	Campus / CARC	Co-hosted the Festival of Light and Togetherness. Half of the festival's attendees who also used the Center became repeat visitors, against a 32% repeat rate for the general population.
Women's Resource Center	Campus / CARC	Co-hosted the Sisterhood Leadership Lunch.
PRIDE Center and Esaktima	Campus / CARC	Co-hosted the Scholarships Workshop.
The WELL, University Library, Black Honors College	Campus	Partners on the Wellness Series and the Academic and Career Success Series.
Ahlan Events	External / community	Collaborated on SWANA Week logistics and served as the Center's connector to other community organizations, vendors, and businesses. Committed to co-coordinating next year's Kickoff, the Center's first multi-year external partnership.
Qisa Cafe and Sana'a Cafe	External / community	Food and in-kind support that raised the cultural authenticity of events.

Partner	Type	Collaboration
Islamic Relief, Al-Qazzaz Endowment, Sharif Family, Morrar Law Offices	External / funder	Community funders for SWANA Week.

Assessment and Data Highlights

- Students who attended large cultural events are more likely to have increased engagement with the Center. Sisterhood Lunch attendees returned at a 56% repeat rate and APIDA Festival attendees at 50%, against a 32% baseline for the general visitor pool.
- Engagement and academic need point in opposite directions. Advising students averaged a 2.89 GPA versus 3.28 for regular visitors, yet engagement depth rises with GPA: students below 2.5 averaged 1.9 visits, those above 3.5 averaged 4.3. The students who most need the Center are reached through advising, not organic traffic, which means the Center has to initiate the outreach to students through campaigns and faculty partnerships.
- Visit concentration is high: the ten most frequent visitors account for 42% of all check-ins. A devoted group of students is a real asset, but it also means the Center's traffic numbers are carried by a small group, and sustainable growth depends on widening the reach to new students.

Major Challenges and Opportunities for Growth

- Assessment capacity is the Center's clearest area for growth. With this being the first year of recorded engagement and EAB usage, next year will be an opportunity to measure the Center's impact against this year's established baseline and to provide more detailed analysis of the Center's impact on retention and persistence.
- The Center's physical location suppresses student engagement opportunities. Students who already know the Center are able to locate it but new students are unable to easily find and access the Center, which is shown in the higher rates of engagement from upper-class students compared to first and second year students.
- Space limits the scale of on-site programming and the number of students who can be served at once, and hosting events in other locations limits the possibility of Center programming that can draw students to the actual location of the Center.
- First-year students are the Center's thinnest engagement segment at five percent of visitors, and they also visit least often when they do come, which makes early outreach to incoming students a high-leverage opportunity for the Center.
- Students turn out strongly for high-energy, food-centered cultural events and less for academic and wellness programming.

Strategic Priorities and Future Goals

Center Goals, AY 2026-2027

The Center's work in the coming year is organized under three goals, each mapped to Division, campus, and system priorities.

Goal 1: Advance Enrollment, Outreach, and Cultural Engagement

By May 2027, the SWANA Center will connect SWANA students to campus from recruitment through graduation by participating in at least six recruitment, outreach, or enrollment activities, delivering at least two residence hall pop-ups for first-year students, and anchoring the year with SWANA Month and the SWANA Festival, increasing the number of engaged students by 20% over AY 2025-2026 baseline.

Engaged is defined as students recording two or more interactions with the Center across events, services, or center visits during the academic year, measured through event sign-in, QR capture, and appointment data.

Framework	Alignment
SSAE Priority	1: Advance Enrollment, Outreach, and Student Success; 4: Elevate Cultural Engagement and Signature Programming
Campus Imperative	3: Justice, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging
Student Affairs Theme	2: Enhanced Communication and Connection
CSU Forward	Economic Mobility Engine

Goal 2: Institutionalize Student Success and Wellness Partnerships

By June 2027, the SWANA Center will institutionalize Student Needs Assessment findings by formalizing at least three campus partnerships with Career Services, The WELL, and Academic Advising, each delivering a minimum of two scheduled student touchpoints per semester, and tracking student movement from cultural programming into academic, career, and wellness services.

Framework	Alignment
SSAE Priority	2: Institutionalize Student Needs Assessment Recommendations
Campus Imperative	1: Learning and Student Success; 6: Wellness and Safety
Student Affairs Theme	3: Defying Barriers to Excellence
CSU Forward	Economic Mobility Engine; Sustainable Affordability

Goal 3: Grow Revenue and Community Partnerships

By Summer 2027, the SWANA Center will expand its resource base by submitting at least three grant applications, formalizing at least five community and external partnerships that provide scholarships, sponsorships, vendor participation, or mentorship, and raising \$10,000 in new philanthropic support for SWANA student programming.

Framework	Alignment
SSAE Priority	3: Grow Revenue and Strategic Partnerships
Campus Imperative	4: Resource Development and Sustainability; 5: Dedicated Community Involvement
Student Affairs	Imperative Summary 4: Enhance donor relations and philanthropic outreach
CSU Forward	Maximize Statewide Impact

Supporting Short-Term Priorities (Next 1 to 2 Years)

- Outreach and positioning. Put the Center physically and visibly in front of students through orientations, class visits, tabling, and residence-hall presence, working toward the engagement growth target set in Goal 1.
- Launch a SWANA Student Ambassador Program. Train and deploy peer representatives across colleges and residence halls to reach incoming students directly. This is aimed at the first-year gap and at early retention and persistence, the population where the Center's numbers are weakest and to further the university goals in admissions and recruitment.
- Strengthen assessment capacity. Put in place a consistent, unified way to track participation across every program type, including recurring series, so the Center's reporting keeps pace with its programming.
- Grow services integration. Deepen the connection between advising, peer wellness advocates, career services, and other student services into a full integration, including pursuing a regular on-site counseling presence through partnership with The WELL.

Long-Term Vision (3 to 5 Years)

- Financial stability through grants and donations. Build a diversified base of foundation grants and cultivated community donors. The Center should plan around a hard reality surfaced this year: SWANA community donors are slow to fund a non-religious institution and extend support only after several years of demonstrated good will and community engagement. The relationships built this year are the first installment on funding that will not mature until years two and three.
- Institutional partnerships with academic colleges. Build formal pipelines with the colleges already over-represented in the Center's data, starting with Engineering and Computer Science and with Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies, to route students toward the Center and to tie academic support to where students are.
- Belonging as a retention strategy. Move from simply relying on attendance toward tracking the relationship between Center engagement and retention, GPA trajectory, and graduation.

Support the Center

The Center's growth depends on partnership. Three areas of support carry the most weight in the year ahead:

- Programming support. The Center's highest-turnout programming depends on catering, performers, and incentives. This is what the attendance data shows students respond to and what students indicated as a priority in the 25-26 Needs Assessment.

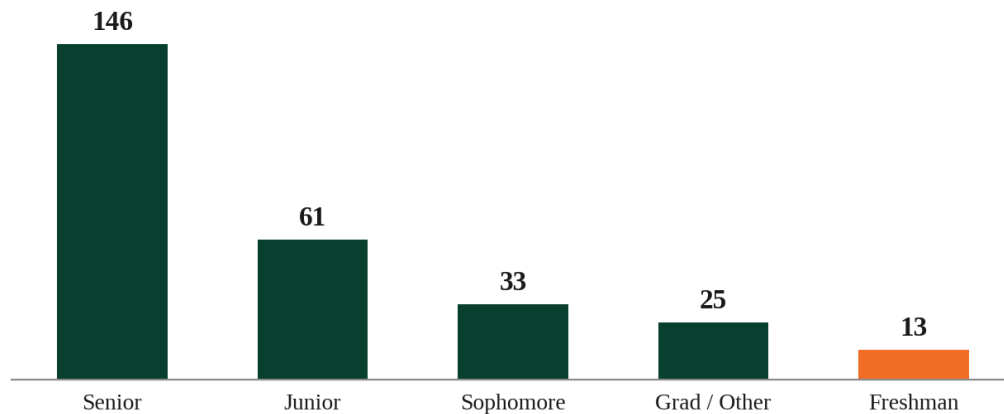
- Outreach capacity. Student-assistant hours to run the Ambassador Program and extend the Center's reach to incoming students.
- Space. A more visible and accessible location to overcome the discovery barrier the current location imposes and a larger space to accommodate the programming needs.

Community members, alumni, and organizations interested in sponsoring SWANA Week or partnering with the Center are invited to contact the SWANA Center directly.

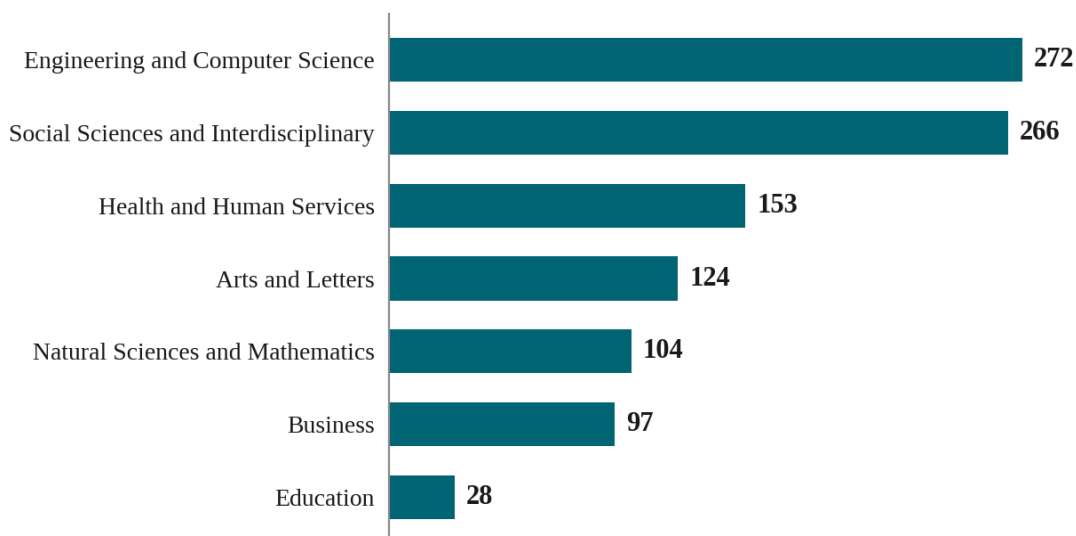
Assessment and Data-Driven Insights

Student Engagement and Success Metrics

- 508+ unique students; 288 through Center visits at 3.8 visits each on average; 101 advising students.
- GPA: 3.28 mean for drop-in visitors, 2.89 for advising students; 24% of advising students below 2.5.



Unique students by class standing. Freshmen are the Center's thinnest segment at five percent of visitors.



Total Center visits by college. Engagement spanned all eight colleges, concentrated in Engineering and Computer Science and in Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies.

Use of Assessment for Improvement

- The event-to-engagement correlation reframes cultural programming as a recruitment tool, not a one-day event expense. The Center should treat its highest-turnout events as the door to year-round engagement and build deliberate follow-up to engage first-timers.
- The cultural-versus-academic turnout gap presents an opportunity: wrap academic and wellness programming in the food, energy, and community elements that have moved attendance in previous events, and tie academic events to real deadlines, as Finals Study Hall already does successfully as students turn to this event during finals.
- The first-year gap drives the Ambassador Program and the entire short-term outreach strategy.

Data Needs

- A consistent use of EAB for tracking participation across all program types, including recurring series and off-site events. This year was a challenging first year of assessment that did not always utilize EAB for engagement tracking.
- Integration with university student-success systems wherever possible, so the Center can follow engagement through to retention and graduation outcomes.

Financial Overview

Source	Type	Supported
Division programming allocation	Institutional	\$10,000 base for the year's programming across all three domains
CAPIAA	Institutional grant	\$3,000 toward the Sisterhood Leadership Lunch
Islamic Relief, Al-Qazzaz Endowment, Sharif Family, Morrar Law Offices	Community gift	SWANA Week
Qisa Cafe, Sana'a Cafe, Ahlan Events	In-kind	Catering and logistics for signature programming

- Spending concentrated where it moved attendance: catering and food, performers and entertainment, outreach and marketing, and program supplies and incentives.

Financial challenges and sustainability

- The \$10,000 base cannot sustain the programming model the data shows students respond to. High-turnout events are resource-intensive, and the return on that spending is visible in the attendance figures.
- Community giving carries a trust curve. SWANA community donors are cautious about funding a non-religious institution and tend to give only after the Center has demonstrated sustained good will over several years. This year laid that groundwork; the financial return is a multi-year effort.
- Some prospective partners simply do not yet know the Center exists or understand its mission, which limits near-term sponsorship.

- The path forward is a multi-year donor-cultivation strategy, active grant applications among SWANA-serving and equity-focused foundations, and a formal sponsorship structure for SWANA Week and other signature events starting next year.

Recommendations

Key Takeaways

- SWANA students are engaged, academically active, and returning, and the students who need academic support most are precisely the ones the integrated academic advising is reaching.
- Outreach is the highest-leverage investment the Center can make. A large share of the SWANA student population still has not found the Center, the first-year segment most of all, and the Ambassador Program plus a deliberate visibility push is the right near-term answer.
- Flagship events are a recruitment strategy. Students who come to a major event return at roughly double the baseline rate. Funding those events is funding year-round engagement.
- Assessment capacity needs to grow with the Center. A consistent, unified tracking system is what will let the Center demonstrate its full impact and make evidence-based resource requests as it scales.
- The university should make more effort to count the SWANA students' data through consistent data disaggregation. The Center cannot fully advocate within the current parameters of the data that make it challenging to assess the needs of SWANA students.

Final Reflections

- In one year, built from the ground up with a new team, the SWANA Center went from a student run space to a measurable and growing student community.
- The data shows a strong committed core, programming that draws students in, and integrated services that are finding the students who need it most.
- This year held challenges for the students and staff as we have faced a difficult time in world events, with the rise of Islamophobic attacks that have impacted our students and the global conflicts in the middle east. While we wanted to focus on certain initiatives and outreach, many of our plans, especially during spring term, were pivoted to allow space and response to global events and meet our students' needs.
- The areas still to build, in assessment tooling, first-year reach, physical visibility, and funding, are the ordinary next steps for a center moving from launch to growth in the university, and each is built into next year's strategic plan.