Meet Chico State’s Provost, Belle Wei
Eden Wylie

Belle Wei moved from Taiwan to the United States when she was 18 years old to pursue her education, and 40 years later, she finds herself with the prestigious title of provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Chico State.

This August will be her year anniversary as provost and vice president for Academic Affairs and she wants to continue making a positive impact on campus.

“I came down for the opportunity to impact young people, to educate young people, to give them the foundation of success for their life,” Wei said.

As provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, Wei is a high-ranking administrator whose responsibilities involve overseeing all the colleges, deans, classes, and academic programs at Chico State.

Wei’s academic achievements prior to coming to Chico State include a bachelor’s degree in biophysics at UC Berkeley, a master’s in engineering from Harvard University, and a PhD in electrical engineering and computer sciences from UC Berkeley.

“Twenty-six years after my PhD, I realized that I love teaching and learning and working with young people,” Wei said. “That’s why I chose the academia industry.”

Wei began her teaching career at San Jose State University. She started as assistant professor in electrical engineering, which turned into a full-time position. She then became chair of the Electrical Engineering Department, which led to her position as the Don Beall Dean of Engineering, which is the position she held the past 10 years prior to her arrival at Chico State.

“I just love the beautiful place and good people,” Wei said about Chico State. “There are many good, dedicated, and talented faculty and staff, and I just love working with them.”

Coming from the Bay Area, Wei’s background is from a more diverse environment than Chico.

Wei was able to learn firsthand from an array of racial groups and nationalities she was intermixed with when she lived in the Silicon Valley. They were her cultural resources, Wei said.

Wei works closely with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in hopes to further diversify Chico State’s campus.

“Once you understand and appreciate other people’s cultural backgrounds, then you can also connect with them more.” Wei said. “It’s one thing to learn from inside a textbook but it’s much more connecting and much more personalizing if you have someone you can interface with who comes from very different backgrounds.”

One goal that the University and Wei share is to try to make efforts to hire people from underrepresented populations. This would create a larger pool of applicants to chose from.

“We need to recruit more diverse faculties and have a more diverse student population,” Wei said. “Really contribute to this very vibrant and diverse learning community that will benefit all students.”

Wei is a huge proponent of hearing everyone's voices on campus. She conducts student forums and is involved with departments’ chairs to get involved in the future vision and direction of the University’s mission.

“For every decision, she really wants to hear multiple perspectives, multiple voices,” said Deborah Summers, associate dean of the College of Communication and Education. “That really furthers our work about diversifying our campus in every way possible.”

Not only is Wei heavily involved with student and academic affairs, but with fellow faculty as well.

“She is a very wise woman and she has a very clear vision that she is trying to guide us all to,” said Maggie Payne, interim dean of the College of Education and Communication.