PS Student Experience Toolkit

Equity Focused User Research +
Solutions Persona Development Project

May 13, 2022

substantial
An Insights, Design + Development Studio

BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation

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Field Guide: How to Use the Toolkit

Toolkit Materials

- Student Journey Map

- Ecosystem Map

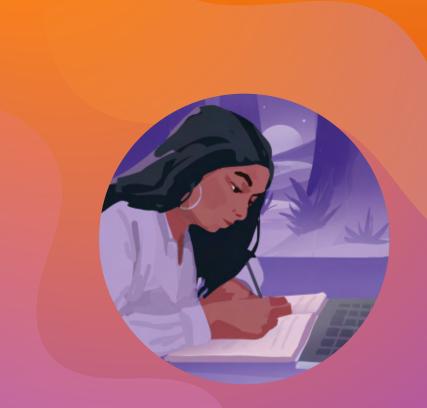- Ecosystem Worksheets

- Persona Cards

Toolkit Purpose

This toolkit provides education professionals with a means to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of Postsecondary Black, LatinX, and Indigenous students, and students experiencing poverty. This understanding is meant to further aid in the creation of solutions that support Postsecondary students.

Toolkit Context

In this toolkit are an aggregate ecosystem and journey map of the college experience, a dynamic means to build personas, and a mapping tool to identify student's existing support networks.
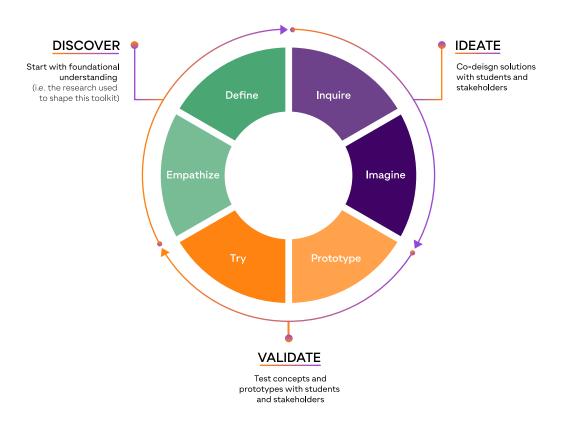
Student experiences, support networks, and journeys are not fixed. For example, student context can change over time — they may transfer to a different institution with a different college ecosystem, their needs may evolve over their educational journey, and their higher ed approach may change with different courses or different terms across their Postsecondary experience.

This toolkit was created to incorporate this understanding of student experience by enabling the creation of multiple, intersectional student personas and ecosystems. Consider what is most relevant to your institution, student population, and context when using these tools.

Use Cases
for the Tools

How you approach using this toolkit may change based on the context in which you will be using the student personas and/or ecosystem worksheets.

DISCOVER

Start with foundational understanding (i.e. the research used to shape this toolkit)

IDEATE

Co-deisgn solutions with students and stakeholders

Define

Inquire

Empathize

Imagine

Try

Prototype

VALIDATE

Test concepts and prototypes with students and stakeholders

For Everyone

- As a tool to understand and empathize with student context, needs, and experiences within the institutional ecosystem.

- As activities to engage students in order to learn how they see themselves, their experiences, and their needs.

For Courseware Developers

- Understand student ecosystems for particular classes as part of designing courseware solutions.

- Create and use student personas to center student needs and context when conceptualizing and refining courseware ideas.

For Solution Networks

- Use tools to center student experiences when ideating, developing, and validating solutions.

- Use personas and ecosystem map to identify supports to leverage, opportunities to provide, and needs to meet as part of developing solutions.

For Institutions

- Use the ecosystem map to understand student support and educational support within their institution.

- Leverage persona toolkit to create representative student personas for their institution.

- Assess needs and opportunities within the institutional system.

Research Approach

The Substantial team developed this toolkit using an equity-centered design approach. The team partnered with cultural moderator who shared the same background as focus students and student liaisons to review research work and ensure an assets-based, student-centered approach.
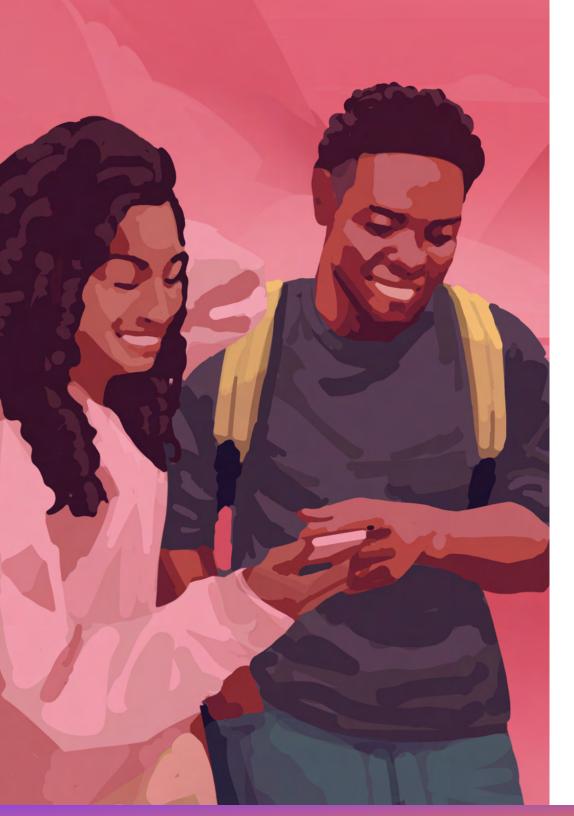
Substantial spoke to 23 Postsecondary students with varying backgrounds including types of institutions, enrollment status, year in school, degree type, and learning environments. Student participants were selected to include Black, Latinx, Indigenous, post-traditional, transfer, and dual language students, as well as student with additional learning needs and students experiencing poverty.

Substantial also spoke to 4 additional institutional participants who provided context from the perspective of administrators, instructors, and advisors.

Creating This Toolkit

After the interviews, Substantial reviewed 2500+ interview quotes to identify the themes and ideas which informed the creation of this toolkit. Substantial began to draft the Persona Toolkit, Ecosystem Map + Worksheet, and Student Journey map in collaboration with subject matter experts, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Postsecondary team, and other organizations. Substantial also partnered with student liaisons and brought back 14 student interviewees to review, iterate, and validate these materials.

Understanding Higher Ed Student Context

This work specifically sought to capture the increasingly diverse experiences of Postsecondary students which include:

- 25% of students are part-time[1]
- 20% of students are also parents[2]
- 43% of students are working full-time; 81% are working part-time[3]
- 25% of students are 25 and older[4]

1. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/csb
2. https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-19-522.pdf
3. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_ssa.pdf
4. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/

Before You Start
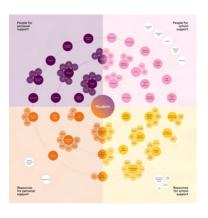
When using this toolkit it's important to first begin to understand the current student landscape. Before starting, review the provided aggregate ecosystem map and end-to-end student journey map. Then take some time to identify your goals and desired outcomes.

You can find all these materials at the end of this Field Guide.

Student Journey Map

Student interviews informed the mapping of key moments, needs, and feelings of the college journey. The journey map provides a bridge to understanding gaps and opportunity spaces to improve the student experience.

Ecosystem Map

This map was created as an aggregate of 23 student interviews and 4 student supporter interviews. It is intended to capture the overall ecosystem of support students could have rather than representing a single, specific student experience.

Identify Goals

What will you use this persona or ecosystem for? Clearly define why you are creating this artifact, what you hope to learn from it, and how you plan to use it proactively afterward.

Considerations

Collaborators + Context

Who needs to be a part of building these artifacts? Do you have the right people collaborating with you to accurately select persona attributes or ecosystem supporters?

Build on Evidence + Understanding

Base your selections on research with students, or ideally, partner with students to base your selections on real, current student experiences.

Acknowledge Expertise + Bias

Utilize field expertise to ground the conversation and the problem space being explored. Acknowledge the limitations and biases of your point of view.
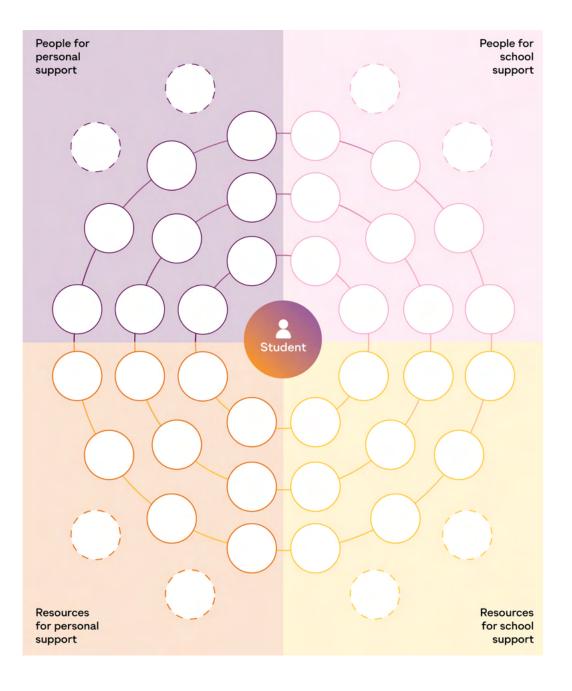
Ecosystem Worksheets

These worksheets can be used to create ecosystems that are able to evolve and change as a student's ecosystem does in real life. It is encouraged for you to repeat this process as many times as necessary to create different ecosystems for varying points in a student's life.

Guidelines for Using the Ecosystem Worksheets

- Ideally, worksheets would always be used **in partnership with students.** This ensures the people and resources for personal support are based on current student experiences.

- If it is not possible to partner with students, supporter selects can be based off of **secondary research** on current student experiences.
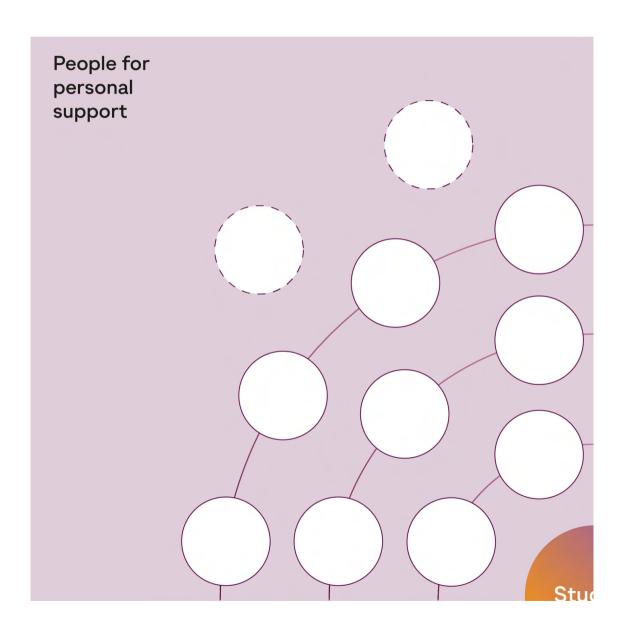
What Shapes a Student's Ecosystem(s)?

The supporters that students identify as part of their ecosystem create a unique experience for each student. Two students could be at the same Postsecondary institution and have entirely different sets of supporters. Some areas of focus are:

- **Perception of available support:** while some supporters may technically be available to students, they may not know about it, or may not feel it's useful to engage with them

- **Changes over time:** supporters or the importance they play may fluctuate

- **Goals:** students may utilize supporters differently in order to achieve a set of goals

People for personal support

Stu

- A printed copy of the **Ecosystem Worksheets**
- A writing tool

Instructions

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3
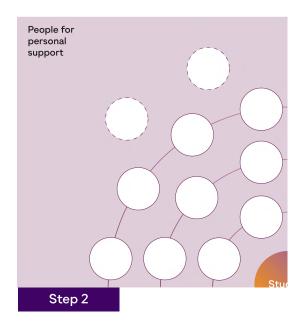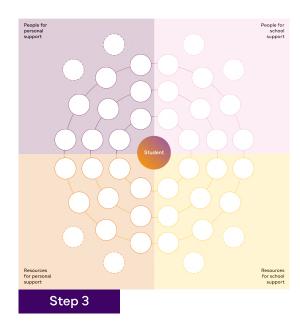
Center the student

Consider the student at the center. What does their support network look like? Who is most important? What people most directly impact students with their support or lack of support?

Fill in supporters

Write in supporters for each of the four quadrants. The circles closest to the student should be those who most shape a student's experience with their support. Direct supporters are represented by the solid outline and indirect supporters are represented by the dotted outline.

View the whole map

Piece the four quadrants together as shown here to view the full ecosystem.
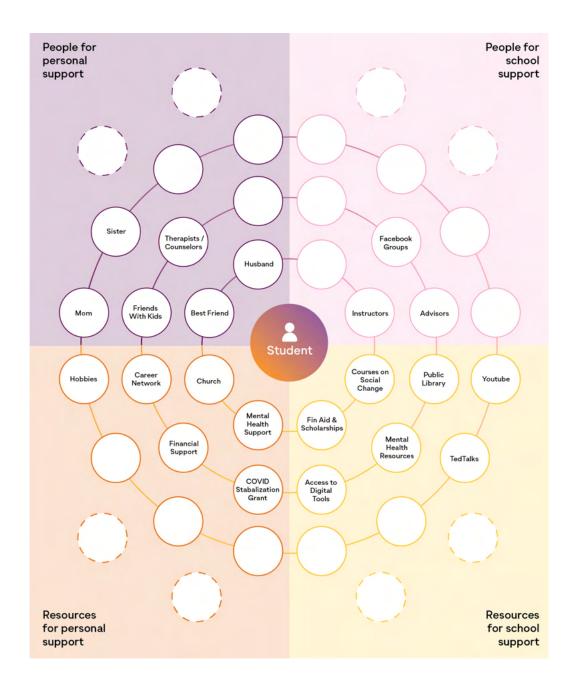
Example Ecosystem A

This ecosystem was developed by a student in a co-creation session. When asked why these supporters were picked, this student mentioned the key support of her partner in her ability to go back to school, the aid her church provides for mental health resources, and how important her woman instructors are to her at her all women's college.
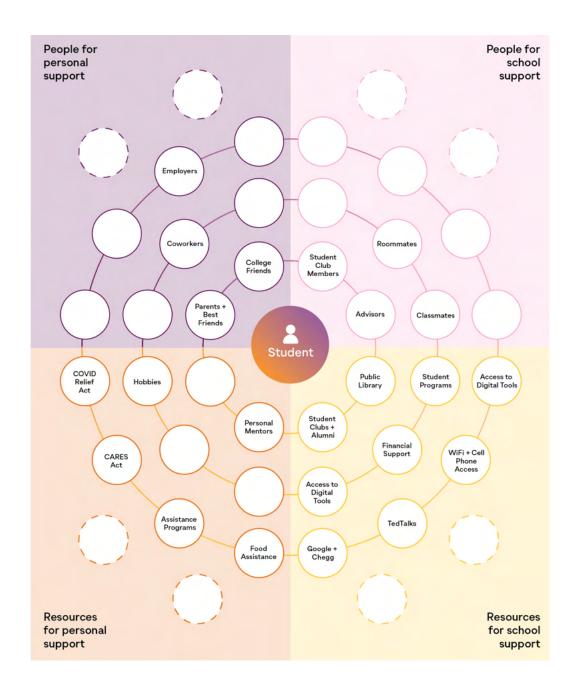
Example Ecosystem B

This ecosystem was developed by a student in a co-creation session. When asked who could benefit from using this tool they said, "I can see [advisors] using this, because this can help them lay out potential support systems for the students enrolling in college."

People for personal support

People for school support

Employers

Coworkers

College Friends

Parents + Best Friends

Student Club Members

Roommates

Advisors

Classmates

Student

COVID Relief Act

Hobbies

Personal Mentors

Student Clubs + Alumni

Public Library

Student Programs

Access to Digital Tools

CARES Act

Financial Support

WiFi + Cell Phone Access

Access to Digital Tools

Assistance Programs

Food Assistance

Google + Chegg

TedTalks

Resources for personal support

Resources for school support

Persona Cards

These cards can be used to create dynamic and flexible personas. It is encouraged for you to repeat this process as many times as necessary to create different personas.

Guidelines for Using the Persona Cards

- Ideally, this tool would always be used in **partnership with students.** This will ensure selections are based on real and current student experiences.

- If it is not possible to partner with students, you can base your selections on **existing research or data** on current student experiences.

- The **starter personas** in this field guide can be used in circumstances when there is a lack of students and secondary research, but a method to center the student experience is still necessary.

Typical User Personas
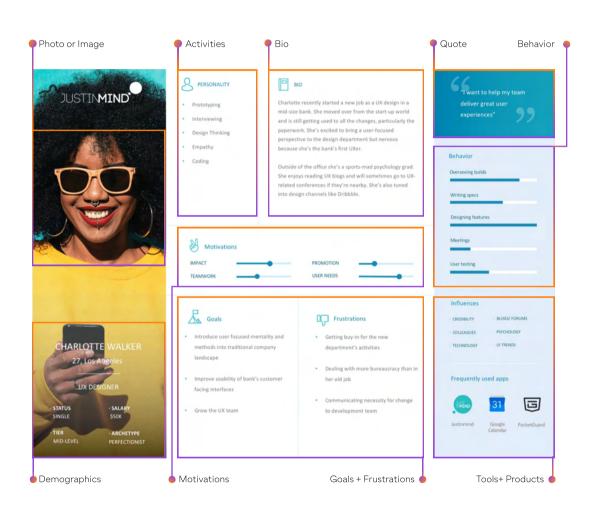
Typical user personas are conceptual representations created based on amalgamating user attributes. They are useful when designing specific services or products where user attributes can be correlated with goals and needs.

Persona Definition:
1. https://xd.adobe.com/ideas/process/user-research/putting-personas-to-work-in-ux-design/
2. https://uxplanet.org/user-persona-templates-that-will-make-your-life-easier-baee74ba5fc4
3. https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/personas-why-and-how-you-should-use-them

Image Credit:
1. https://www.justinmind.com/blog/user-persona-templates/

Photo or Image   Activities   Bio   Quote   Behavior

Demographics   Motivations   Goals + Frustrations   Tools+ Products

Limitations to Typical User Personas

Typical user personas capture characteristics including the goals and needs of users based on their demographics. This form of personas can lead to further stereotyping marginalized communities. Most significantly, a typical user persona misses the opportunity to illustrate the greater complexity of systems impacting the student.

Persona Risks:
1. https://medium.com/microsoft-design/kill-your-personas-1c332d4908cc
2. https://medium.com/typecode/the-problem-with-personas-b6734a08d37a
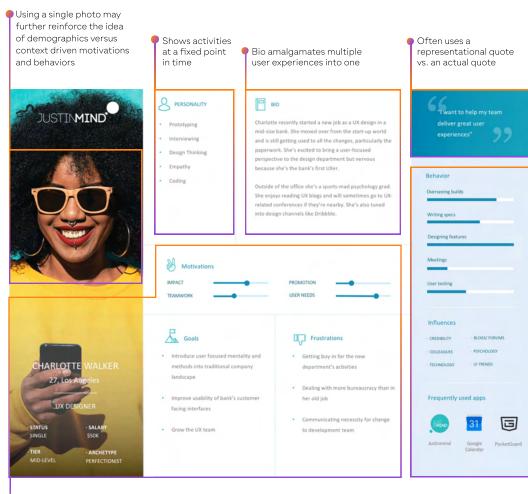
New Approaches to Personas:
1. https://www.uxbooth.com/articles/persona-spectrums-building-for-inclusion-and-accessibility/
2. https://uxtools.co/blog/fixing-user-personas/

Image Credit:
1. https://www.justinmind.com/blog/user-persona-templates/

Using a single photo may further reinforce the idea of demographics versus context driven motivations and behaviors

Shows activities at a fixed point in time

Bio amalgamates multiple user experiences into one

Often uses a representational quote vs. an actual quote
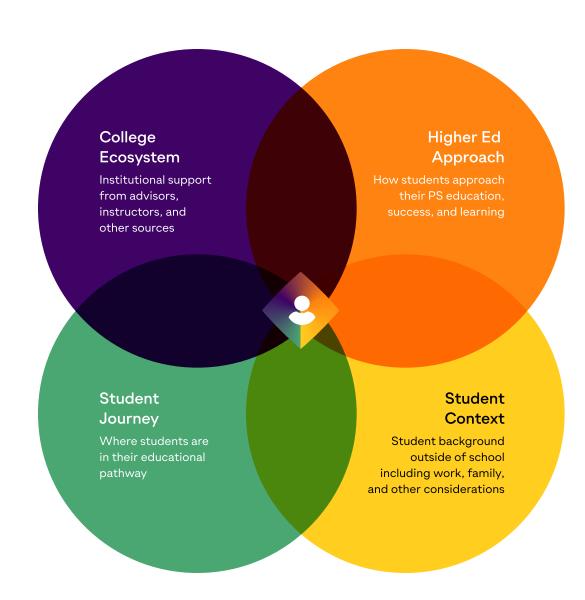
Ties demographics to goals and motivations, which may not account for differing motivations and goals within the same demographic.

May not account for how systems change behavior and influences

What Shapes the Student Experience

Students' identities and their lived experiences uniquely contribute to their Postsecondary education. What they have experienced suggests a pattern of feelings connected to a larger institutional context. Four areas of focus are:

- Systemic influence — the key members of the **student's ecosystem**
- Daily life — an understanding of a **student's context**
- Changes over time — phases in the **college journey**
- Mindset — a student's **higher education approach**

College Ecosystem

Institutional support from advisors, instructors, and other sources

Higher Ed Approach

How students approach their PS education, success, and learning

Student Journey

Where students are in their educational pathway

Student Context

Student background outside of school including work, family, and other considerations
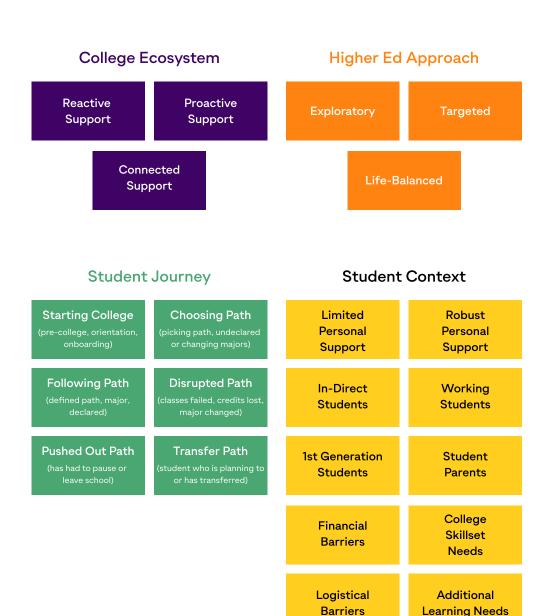
Understanding the Persona Attribute Cards

Each focus area has specific attributes students said they felt or experienced. This tool breaks down the attributes into cards to dynamically represent varied experiences to eliminate the practice of stereotyping.

Disaggregating attributes is key for:

- Understanding that student experiences are not fixed and may change over time or present themselves in different contexts
- Capturing the impact of institutional systems and key changes over time
- Focusing on behaviors, goals, and needs rather than stereotyping demographics

College Ecosystem

Reactive Support

Proactive Support

Connected Support

Higher Ed Approach

Exploratory

Targeted

Life-Balanced

Student Journey

Starting College
(pre-college, orientation, onboarding)

Choosing Path
(picking path, undeclared or changing majors)

Following Path
(defined path, major, declared)

Disrupted Path
(classes failed, credits lost, major changed)

Pushed Out Path
(has had to pause or leave school)

Transfer Path
(student who is planning to or has transferred)

Student Context

Limited Personal Support

Robust Personal Support

In-Direct Students

Working Students

1st Generation Students

Student Parents

Financial Barriers

College Skillset Needs

Logistical Barriers

Additional Learning Needs

Instructions

Type of Card

Description

Card information

Reference

Working Students

Students who are balancing school with work.

NEEDS

- **Flexibility:** offer online classes, multiple class times, and options for assignment due dates and exams.
- **Advising:** help students select class schedules while balancing graduation requirements, class load, and work needs.
- **Support:** extend hours and access for advising, office hours, and other support services.

43% of full-time and 81% of part-time students are employed.
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_ssa.pdf

ADDITIONAL STUDENT CONTEXT CARD

NEEDS

Type of Card

Description

Card information

Related Student Quote

*Quotes anonymize student names and use race/ethnicity descriptors based on how students self-described

COLLEGE / COURSE ECOSYSTEM

Reactive Support

Limited support from advisors, instructors, and others unless students reaches out. Other support programs are limited.

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Minimal or infrequent advising.
- Minimal instructor interaction or personalized feedback.
- Limited student resources and/or support services.
- Limited identity-based student groups and support.

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

- Help ensure **regular support** from advisors.
- Build in **regular interaction + feedback** from instructors.
- Provide resources and services **for the needs and contexts** of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and students experiencing poverty.
- Intentionally foster and parter with identity-based student groups to **promote cultural inclusion.**

They answered very little questions because they're only open from a certain time to a certain time. And sometimes they're not really available. I feel like the email time should be faster. But it wasn't really that helpful for more complicated questions. Cause they always referred me to somebody else.

"Michaela" | Latinx / Asian | 1st yr | Public 4yr

Step 1

Choose a representative portrait

- **Choose** a portrait to represent a student or group of students.
- **Add** your own image or illustration.
- **Create** a profile with a name, relative age, major, and interests in order to humanize the student archetype.

Step 2

Choose Student Context cards

- **Review and choose** any student context cards to best represent a common intersection of experiences from the student archetype.
- **Fill out** additional student context card if needed.

See Appendix for references used in addition to primary research to create these cards.

Step 3

Choose an Ecosystem card

- **Review** the three types of support a student may experience.
- **Consider** framing the student's experience in relation to a course or their general college level.
- **Choose** an ecosystem card to best represent the student's archetype.

Step 4

Choose a Student Journey card

- **Review** the student journey cards to visualize critical paths the student archetype is experiencing.

- **Consider** that in some cases, students may be experiencing two cards at the same time — such as 'Following Path' and 'Transfer.'

- **Choose** a card or cards to frame the path the student archetype is experiencing.

Step 5

Choose a Higher Education Approach card

- **Review** the Higher Ed Approach cards to learn about the mindsets a student has to approach their courses and general college experience.

- **Consider** a student's mindset may change over time as they go through different stages in their journey.

- **Choose** a card to frame the mindset the student archetype is taking.

Step 6

Review cards and identify whether additional personas are needed

- **Review** all the persona cards you have selected.

- **Document** this persona in a format that is shareable to others if needed (photograph, screenshot, write down, etc.).

Evaluate if additional personas are needed for your context. If so, restart with Step 1.
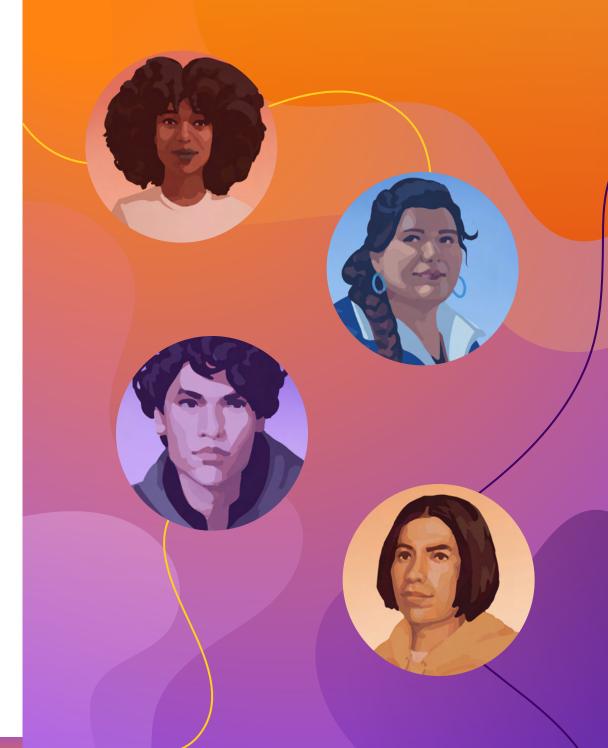
Starter Personas

There are 4 starter personas created based on attribute themes from Substantial's research and co-creation with students. These are starting points to understand 4 potential types of students, but should be reviewed to decide if any attribute cards should be changed based on your institution or student demographics.

For example, the student journey card changes over time for students. The college or course ecosystem cards change when students transfer institutions or change courses. Student's life circumstances may change which could impact their higher ed approach.

Starter Persona A

First generation student who is still choosing their path

Name _____

Interest _____

Major _____   Age

COLLEGE / COURSE ECOSYSTEM

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❝ They answered very little questions because they're only open from a certain time to a certain time. And sometimes they're not really available. I feel like the email time should be faster. But it wasn't really that helpful for more complicated questions. Cause they always referred me to somebody else.

"Michaella" | Latinx / Asian | 1st yr | Public 4yr

STUDENT JOURNEY

Choosing Path

Students who are unsure of their pathway, have not declared a major, or are considering changing their major.

STUDENT GOALS

Explore personal interests with classes and instructors to gain understanding about class/major options with the input from loved ones and advisors.

STUDENT NEEDS

- **Advising:** provide personalized advice that is contextual to their goals and helps track toward graduation.
- **Student Support:** connect to career mentors, networks, and resources.
- **Instructors:** help students explore interests, uncover options, and offer career path mentorship.

❝ I was originally graphic design, then I transitioned into digital information design. It was more art based, not computer-based. I kind of wanted a combination of the two. I'm getting into more web development, game development. It puts an art aspect into it, but it's computer-based which is kind of what I was looking for... I felt like just trying to find the right major would be the best option.
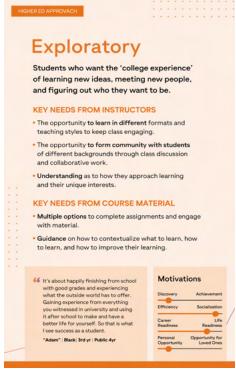
"Karan" | Black / African American| 3rd yr | Public 4yr

HIGHER ED APPROVACH

Exploratory

Students who want the 'college experience' of learning new ideas, meeting new people, and figuring out who they want to be.

KEY NEEDS FROM INSTRUCTORS

- The opportunity **to learn in different** formats and teaching styles to keep class engaging.
- The opportunity **to form community with students** of different backgrounds through class discussion and collaborative work.
- **Understanding** as to how they approach learning and their unique interests.

KEY NEEDS FROM COURSE MATERIAL

- **Multiple options** to complete assignments and engage with material.
- **Guidance** on how to contextualize what to learn, how to learn, and how to improve their learning.

❝ It's about happily finishing from school with good grades and experiencing what the outside world has to offer. Gaining experience from everything you witnessed in university and using it after school to make and have a better life for yourself. So that is what I see success as a student.

"Adam" | Black| 3rd yr | Public 4yr

Motivations

Discovery — Achievement
Efficiency — Socialization
Career Readiness — Life Readiness
Personal Opportunity — Opportunity for Loved Ones

STUDENT CONTEXT

College Skillset Needs

Students who are learning to navigate college and building foundational study skills.

NEEDS

- **Growth Mindset:** foster a growth mindset through institutional culture and in-class teaching methods.
- **College Confidence:** help students learn to navigate college and advocate for their needs.
- **Key Skills:** grow foundational skills in writing, public speaking, note taking, and studying (metacognition).

14% of students had below basic prose literacy and 22% below basic quantitative literacy.
air.org/sites/default/files/The-Literacy-of-Americas-College-Students-Jan-2006.pdf

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STUDENT CONTEXT

Limited Personal Support

Students who may not have a foundation of support for their college journey in their personal life.

NEEDS

- **Advisors + Instructors:** understand context to provide relationship-based support.
- **Mentorship:** help build a strong support network of peers, mentors, and other stakeholders.
- **Outreach:** develop programs for student's loved ones and supporters to bring them into the journey.

Approximately 25% of students interviewed for this project reported having limited personal support.

STUDENT CONTEXT

1st Generation Students

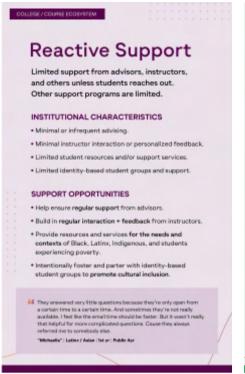Students who are the first in their family in college.

NEEDS

- **Bridge Program:** build foundational skills for college transition, institutional navigation, and peer connection.
- **Advising + Financial Aid:** connect to support programs (i.e. TRIO) and help apply and evaluate financial supports.
- **Connection:** give college and professional development mentorship and provide spaces for belonging.

42% of students graduating with a bachelors in 2016 were First Generation.
https://firstgen.naspa.org/files/dmfile/FactSheet-011.pdf

Starter Persona B

Student parent on a disrupted path

Name _____

Interest _____

Major _____   **Age**

Reactive Support

Limited support from advisors, instructors, and others unless students reaches out. Other support programs are limited.

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Minimal or infrequent advising.
- Minimal instructor interaction or personalized feedback.
- Limited student resources and/or support services.
- Limited identity-based student groups and support.

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

- Help ensure regular support from advisors.
- Build in regular interaction + feedback from instructors.
- Provide resources and services for the needs and contexts of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and students experiencing poverty.
- Intentionally foster and parter with identity-based student groups to promote cultural inclusion.

> " They answered very little questions because they're only open from a certain time to a certain time. And sometimes they're not really available. I feel like the email time should be faster. But it wasn't really that helpful for more complicated questions. Cause they always referred me to somebody else.
>
> **"Michaella"** | Latinx / Asian | 1st yr | Public 4yr

Disrupted Path

Students facing challenges like falling grades, lost credits, not getting into required classes, or other barriers to degree completion.

STUDENT GOALS

Receive empathetic and contextual advice from supporters, peers, and mentors to address barriers and identify options for next steps.

STUDENT NEEDS

- **Advising:** help track performance, understand issues, address barriers, or identify other options while considering timeline and financial aid requirements.
- **Student Support:** provide tutoring and resources.
- **Instructors:** curate instruction and provide personalized feedback to help student succeed.

> " I had to take these two classes that are kind of tough. Unfortunately, I didn't do well in one of those classes so I wasn't eligible for the econ major. So now I had to choose a new major. That's why I chose sociology because my coursework allowed me to be on a faster timeline. I'd already knocked out some of the prerequisites so I wouldn't have to take more additional classes.
>
> **"Samson"** | Black | 3rd yr | Public 4yr

Life-balanced

Students who need to contextualize education within broader life circumstances and situations.

KEY NEEDS FROM INSTRUCTORS

- Explanation of how content relates to their major/career goals, their community, and society.
- Space to share their unique perspective, life experience, and understanding with peers.
- Understanding of how their background and motivations have shaped their goals.

KEY NEEDS FROM COURSE MATERIAL

- **Greater flexibility** in engaging with content and in completing requirements to accommodate life needs.
- **Feedback** which considers the student's background and is tied directly to their motivations and goals.

> " It's not only me that is learning. It's my family. It's my kids. It's my husband...and that is a sense of empowerment to a certain degree. With my kids, I'll be able to contribute to their growth and their education. That's what really motivates me...I love using this quote— I tell my daughter, 'If I don't have the answer then we'll find it together.'
>
> **"Amanda"** | Indigenous / Latinx | 5th yr | Public 4yr

Motivations

Discovery —————— Achievement

Efficiency —————— Socialization

Career Readiness —————— Life Readiness

Personal Opportunity —————— Opportunity for Loved Ones

In-Direct Students

Students who are not entering college directly from High School, including GED students.

NEEDS

- **Advising:** follow up on class performance and experience to help overcome barriers (especially 1st year).
- **Class Placement:** use multiple measures for placement (classroom observation, structured practice, etc.).
- **Bridge Program:** build foundational skills for college transition, institutional navigation, and peer connection.

40% of undergraduates are nontraditional.
www.nces.ed.gov/images/Images/uploads/nsdn/PD3epub_/NABPA_Memo.pdf

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Financial Barriers

Students facing financial barriers, including housing and food insecurity, during their college journey.

NEEDS

- **Advising:** understand financial barriers to connect to support programs, services, and aid.
- **Support Services:** expand food + housing programs; help secure support (CARES Act, public benefits, etc.).
- **Campus Culture:** destigmatize use of public benefits through peer support and community inclusivity.

31% of undergraduates are low or very low income.
https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020460.pdf

Student Parents

Students who are balancing college with raising and caring for children.

NEEDS

- **Class Flexibility:** offer hybrid/remote classes, multiple class times, and flexible assignment and exam options.
- **Support Services:** connect to child care, financial support, and housing support; include part-time students.
- **Affinity Programs:** foster parent groups + mentorship.

22% of student are parents.
www.gao.gov/assets/gao-19-522.pdf

Working Students

Students who are balancing school with work.

NEEDS

- **Flexibility:** offer online classes, multiple class times, and options for assignment due dates and exams.
- **Advising:** help students select class schedules while balancing graduation requirements, class load, and work needs.
- **Support:** extend hours and access for advising, office hours, and other support services.

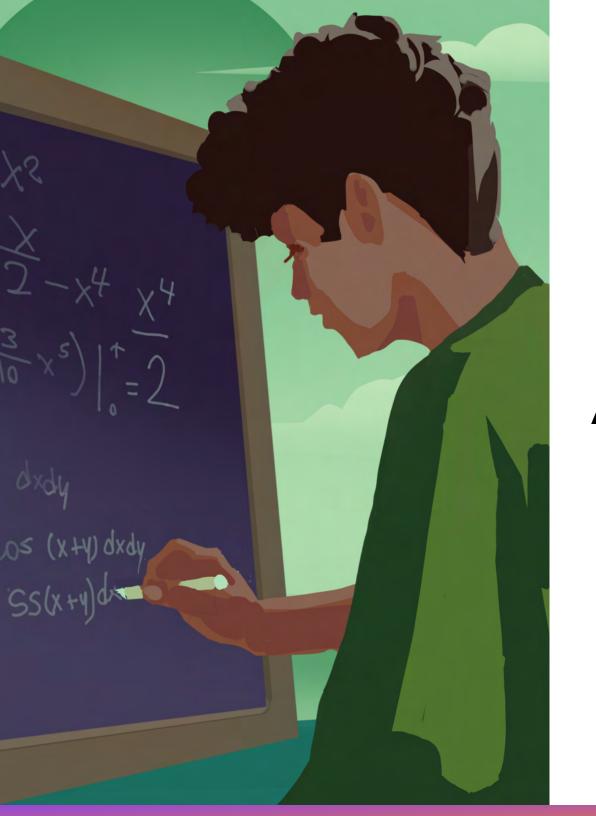40% of full-time and 81% of part-time students are employed.
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_ssa.pdf

Starter Persona C

Targeted and following path student

Name _____

Interest _____

Major _____   **Age**

COLLEGE / COURSE ECOSYSTEM

Proactive Support

Advisors and instructors proactively track progress and provide support. Support programs exist, but may not be connected.

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Proactive and regular advising support.
- Regular built-in interactions + feedback from instructors.
- Available student resources and/or support services.
- Established identity-based student groups and support.

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

- Train advisors and instructors to build student relationships, personalize their support, and connect to additional support resources and services.
- Make it easy to find, connect, and leverage resources and services.
- Partner with identity-based student groups to foster student leadership and integrate with college supports.

> They're always calling me and emailing... It makes a big difference having that support and that motivation. It also keeps you going. Like, I'm almost done or someone will call and check... Sometimes it kind of makes my week go better. [My advisor] actually cares if I pass or not.
>
> "Quincey" | Black | 2nd yr | Private 4yr, for profit

STUDENT JOURNEY

Transfering

Students in the process of transferring schools and working to adjust to their new learning environment.

STUDENT GOALS

Gain an understanding of what to do, how to prepare, and who to meet to get set up for success in adjusting to a new college environment and culture.

STUDENT NEEDS

- **College Supporters:** foster intentional connection with peers, staff, and faculty to help with transition and potential feelings of loss from leaving previous school.
- **Advising + Student Support:** streamline credit transfer, solve logistical issues, and connect to services.
- **Community Connection:** provide places of belonging to connect with others of similar identities, needs, or goals.

> I did eat up a lot of my financial aid before I even got into a traditional education setting. So my associates is general because I had to transfer my credits across states to complete my associates. When I transferred everything I would have to start over completely, because the programs were incompatible, or just go for the general [degree].
>
> "Juliette" | Indigenous / White | 3rd yr | Public 4yr

STUDENT JOURNEY

Following Path

Students with declared majors who are focused on tracking towards class and degree completion.

STUDENT GOALS

Complete classes and track towards graduation, find career mentorship, and connect with peers on a similar path to learn and get advice.

STUDENT NEEDS

- **Advising:** help students select classes, remove barriers, track towards graduation, and get career support.
- **Student Support:** provide career advising, connection to professional mentors, and access to career opportunities.
- **Instructors:** mentor students to learn, gain expertise, and prepare for life after graduation.

> I'm pre-med. I'm taking all of the science classes this semester and I have goals of becoming a PA or going for my MD. That's really just going through the grind. I have a job right now that I've been having for three years as a unit secretary where I work on the nurses floor. I've been working throughout the pandemic, helping everybody and becoming like a liaison. That's what I'm passionate about.
>
> "Michaella" | Latinx / Asian | 1st yr | Public 4yr

HIGHER ED APPROACH

Targeted

Students who have clear goals in mind regarding their degree and future career opportunities and success.

KEY NEEDS FROM INSTRUCTORS

- **Clearly set expectations** of course content, how it relates to career/major, and assessment criteria.
- **Curation of most important content** with step-by-step guidance and practice to ensure learning.
- **Understanding** of their unique goals and geared learning towards what is most relevant.

KEY NEEDS FROM COURSE MATERIAL

- **Clear outlines of content** that indicate what to focus on and why so students can effectively prioritize.
- **Quick feedback and analytics** in order to quickly identify areas for further study.

> I define student success as getting work done, putting words on paper or on the screen, and submitting on time... Success to me is just getting it done no matter what it takes... Being able to talk about what each class is achieving and how it's getting me closer to what I want to be doing is helpful
>
> "Danielle" | Latinx | 2nd yr | Private 4yr

Motivations

Discovery   Achievement

Efficiency   Socialization

Career   Life
Readiness   Readiness

Personal   Opportunity for
Opportunity   Loved Ones

STUDENT CONTEXT

Working Students

Students who are balancing school with work.

NEEDS

- **Flexibility:** offer online classes, multiple class times, and options for assignment due dates and exams.
- **Advising:** help students select class schedules while balancing graduation requirements, class load, and work needs.
- **Support:** extend hours and access for advising, office hours, and other support services.

43% of full-time and 81% of part-time students are employed.
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_ssa.pdf

STUDENT CONTEXT

Additional Learning Needs

Students seeking support for learning or physical disabilities during college.

NEEDS

- **Accessibility Support:** centralize resources for accommodation, support, advocacy, and navigation.
- **Faculty + Staff:** provide training, tools, and strategies to best support student accessibility.
- **Courseware:** ensure content and tech are accessible.

20% of undergraduates reported having a disability.
https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=60

STUDENT CONTEXT

Robust Personal Support

Students with a foundation of support from friends, family, or community for their college journey.

NEEDS

- **Engagement:** provide opportunities to integrate supporters into their experience, such as family weekends and regular newsletters.
- **Advisors + Instructors:** understand context to provide relationship-based support.

Approximately 50% of students interviewed for this project reported having robust personal support.

Starter Persona D

Pushed out student

Name _____

Interest _____

Major _____   **Age**

Reactive Support

Limited support from advisors, instructors, and others unless students reaches out. Other support programs are limited.

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

• Minimal or infrequent advising.

• Minimal instructor interaction or personalized feedback.

• Limited student resources and/or support services.

• Limited identity-based student groups and support.

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

• Help ensure **regular support** from advisors.

• Build in **regular interaction + feedback** from instructors.

• Provide resources and services **for the needs and contexts** of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and students experiencing poverty.

• Intentionally foster and parter with identity-based student groups to **promote cultural inclusion**.

66 They answered very little questions because they're only open from a certain time to a certain time. And sometimes they're not really available. I feel like the email time should be faster. But it wasn't really that helpful for more complicated questions. Cause they always referred me to somebody else.

"Michaella" | Latinx / Asian | 1st yr | Public 4yr

Pushed Out Path

Students facing challenges which result in leaving college, but who want to return.

STUDENT GOALS

Build a support network of people and resources to return to school and become reacquainted with school systems, processes, and tools.

STUDENT NEEDS

• **Support Services:** provide holistic support to address root cause issues and barriers (finances, mental health, housing, etc.).

• **Advising:** build trust to understand context and provide targeted, specific support.

• **Instructor:** provide flexibility and understanding as student transitions back into college and classes.

66 I was working at the time to finish paying off my car. I was having a hard time trying to do both. Also the fact that some of the classes had to be paid out of pocket. That contributed towards having a lot of difficulties trying to pay for college and pay for my car. Now that I paid for my car, it is more flexible going back to school, but I felt sad because I had to postpone something that I really wanted to do.

"Anthony" | Hispanic / Latinx | Pushed Out | Public 2yr

Life-balanced

Students who need to contextualize education within broader life circumstances and situations.

KEY NEEDS FROM INSTRUCTORS

• Explanation of **how content relates** to their major/career goals, their community, and society.

• Space to **share their unique perspective**, life experience, and understanding with peers.

• **Understanding** of how their background and motivations have shaped their goals.

KEY NEEDS FROM COURSE MATERIAL

• **Greater flexibility** in engaging with content and in completing requirements to accommodate life needs.

• **Feedback** which considers the student's background and is tied directly to their motivations and goals.

66 It's not only me that is learning. It's my family. It's my kids. It's my husband...and that is a sense of empowerment to a certain degree. With my kids, I'll be able to contribute to their growth and their education. That's what really motivates me...I love using this quote— I tell my daughter, 'If I don't have the answer then we'll find it together.'

"Amanda" | Indigenous / Latinx | 5th yr | Public 4yr

Motivations

Discovery	Achievement
Efficiency	Socialization
Career Readiness	Life Readiness
Personal Opportunity	Opportunity for Loved Ones

Financial Barriers

Students facing financial barriers, including housing and food insecurity, during their college journey.

NEEDS

• **Advising:** understand financial barriers to connect to support programs, services, and aid.

• **Support Services:** expand food + housing programs; help secure support (CARES Act, public benefits, etc.).

• **Campus Culture:** destigmatize use of public benefits through peer support and community inclusivity.

31% of undergraduates are low or very low income.
https://nces.ed.gov/pubs/pubs2020/2020460.pdf

Working Students

Students who are balancing school with work.

NEEDS

• **Flexibility:** offer online classes, multiple class times, and options for assignment due dates and exams.

• **Advising:** help students select class schedules while balancing graduation requirements, class load, and work needs.

• **Support:** extend hours and access for advising, office hours, and other support services.

43% of full-time and 81% of part-time students are employed.
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Acknowledgments

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Acknowledgments

Materials

Student Journey Map
Starting College

College Registration

+ CAUTIOUSLY HOPEFUL
to start college and considering what could happen next

− UNSURE
how to evaluate their decision and register with limited support while on a timeline

Key Moments
Prospective students review admissions material* with the input of their loved ones and complete registration.

Key Student Needs
· Decision making resources to help walk students through considerations (financial aid, part or full time status, etc.)

· Streamlined registration and explanation of processes

Pre-College (Summer)

+ INFORMED
of next steps and what to expect when starting college

− ALONE, BUT MANAGING
to prepare on their own and unsure of what to do next

Key Moments
Students begin preparing for their first term by gathering advice from supporters, reviewing provided information, or attending bridge programs/summer advising (if colleges provide it).

Key Student Needs
· Guidance to help students transition into college, foster foundational skills, and begin to connect to support services

· Connection to peers and college community to begin forming foundations of support

Orientation

+ PREPARED
to navigate college while building a sense of belonging and a college support system

− UNPREPARED
due to limited onboarding and awareness of resources and student services

Key Moments
When onboarding to the college experience, students seek to fit in, meet peers, and access resources. Students are seeking to get acquainted with the college community, rules, expectations, and available resources.

Key Student Needs
· Foster intentional connection with peers, faculty, and staff

· Provide places of belonging to connect with others of similar identities, needs, or goals

· Ensure students have tools like a study place, laptops, WiFi, etc.

*Admissions process does not apply to all colleges
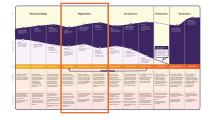
Student Journey Map
Registration

⊕ Positive Student Experience

⊖ Negative Student Experience

Pathway Choice

Key Moments
Students begin to identify their interests, goals, and considerations for the upcoming term and understand how potential classes, pathway options, or majors can help them achieve these goals.

⊕ **CONFIDENT**
to choose a pathway with a supportive advisor

⊖ **CONFUSED**
by the lack of advising support and overwhelmed with the need to navigate the education experience on their own

Key Student Needs
· Access to advisors, mentors, and resources

· Guidance on how to best work with advisors and leverage resources

· For undeclared students, support in finding classes to explore interests while tracking towards graduation

Major/Class Selection

Key Moments
Students evaluate options for their classes, schedule, and/or major and make a choice with the input of supporters. Cost, family obligations, and work schedules are all considerations.

⊕ **OPTIMISTIC + CONFIDENT**
with their decision while looking forward to starting classes

⊖ **WORRIED**
by the lack of information and questioning their decisions

Key Student Needs
· Guidance in making holistic decisions around classes/ major based on their specific context

· Alternative and multiple measures for general ed class placements

Class Registration

Key Moments
Students submit their class registration and shift to preparing for the term to start. If the student is not able to easily register due to approvals or class size, they must seek out support or adjust their schedule.

⊕ **SUPPORTED**
with an easy and straightforward registration process

⊖ **FRUSTRATED**
by hurdles in the registration process due to paperwork and/or unresponsive advisors or registrar

Key Student Needs
· Streamlined approvals and registrations process

· When there is a block, connect with students to explain potential impacts and partner to identify alternative options

Student Journey Map
During Term

Starting Courses**

⊕ **READY**
to learn about the instructor and course objectives/expectations

⊖ **NERVOUS**
feeling apprehensive about the course due to materials, course value, or instructor

Key Moments
Students take a temperature check of their new classes by evaluating the instructor, class content, expectations, required tools or materials, and logistics. They decide to either stay or drop the class.

Key Student Needs
· Ensure instructors provide curriculum transparency, set appropriate expectations, and get students onboarded to digital tools

· Support students in making add/drop decisions and streamline processes

During Courses**

⊕ **INFORMED + IMMERSED**
with the flow of the course and steadily learning throughout

⊖ **CONCERNED**
due to barriers in or out of class which make day-to-day coursework challenging

Key Moments
Students begin to adjust to their schedule, build study habits, and build rapport with instructors and peers. They assess their own knowledge of the material and seek feedback in order to better gauge progress.

Key Student Needs
· Provide tools to help advisors and instructors monitor student performance, give feedback, and connect to relevant supports

· Build flexibility into classes, teaching, and systems to support students as they face barriers

Ending Courses**

⊕ **REFLECTIVE**
as they assess what has been learned and accomplished this term as they prepare for the next one

⊖ **STRESSED**
by the potential impact of a poor course outcome on graduation and financial costs

Key Moments
As students are working towards final assignments and exams, they want to ensure content expertise in order to do as well as possible in the class.

Key Student Needs
· Ensure instructors provide actionable feedback on students' final grades and a reason for how they arrived at that grade

· Guidance from advisors on how the final grade may impact their academic career and financial costs

**Student experiences vary from course-to-course and term-to-term

***Registration for next term begins after Courses End. Students then begin at the "Pathway Choice" step again

Student Journey Map
Pushed Out / Graduation

Pushed Out

PUSHED OUT OF CLASS, TERM, OR COLLEGE

FRUSTRATED + ASHAMED that circumstances have forced this change and worried they have let themselves or others down

Key Moments
Students will seek support to stay or return to college. However, without support to overcome systemic challenges, students may seek better support by transferring or leaving college entirely.

Key Student Needs
· Provide holistic support to address root cause issues

· Build trust to understand context and provide support

· Provide flexibility as student transitions back into college

Apply to Graduate

NERVOUS + EXCITED for a major life change even though they are prepared to graduate

Key Moments
To graduate, students seek to understand the steps and logistics needed in order to submit their application. They begin to shift their mindset towards post-graduation life focusing on career planning and financial responsibilities.

Key Student Needs
· Have a simple, clear process and make it easy for students to understand records status

· Provide professional development and job application support

Graduation

ACCOMPLISHED and feeling proud of what they've achieved while preparing for what comes next

Key Moments
Students celebrate their graduation with supporters and spend time connecting with their peers before graduation. They begin the process of job hunting or other post-graduation opportunities.

Key Student Needs
· Provide support and resources for students to transition into their next journey

· Acknowledge and celebrate this milestone with students

How to understand this map

This student ecosystem map is broken into four quadrants:

People for personal support

People for school support

Resources for personal support

Resources for school support

People are defined as an individual that knows students on a personal level. **Resources** are defined as groups/ teams/locations that students go to without having a single person they consistently connect with.
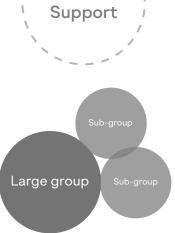
Distance from the support to the student at the center represent how directly students feel the influence or power of that supporter in their PS experience. Some people/resources are both personal and school support and sit in-between the two quadrants.

Circles that have a solid color represent people and resources that *directly support the student*. Students are more likely to be aware of their presence or lack thereof. These circles are placed on one of the three rings depending on how intensely the student feels their presence or lack of presence. The closer to the circle is placed to the student, the more intensely the student feels the person/resource's power over their experience.
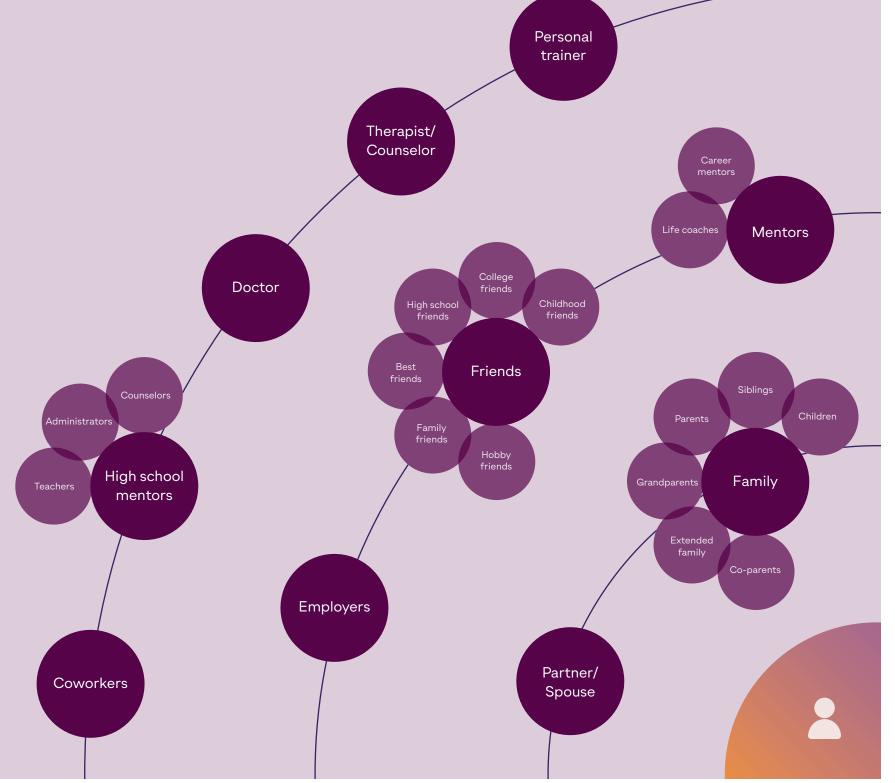
Circles with a dotted line around them represent people and resources that *indirectly support the student*. These people/resources usually work behind the scenes to support the student. These circles are placed in the space outside of the three rings.
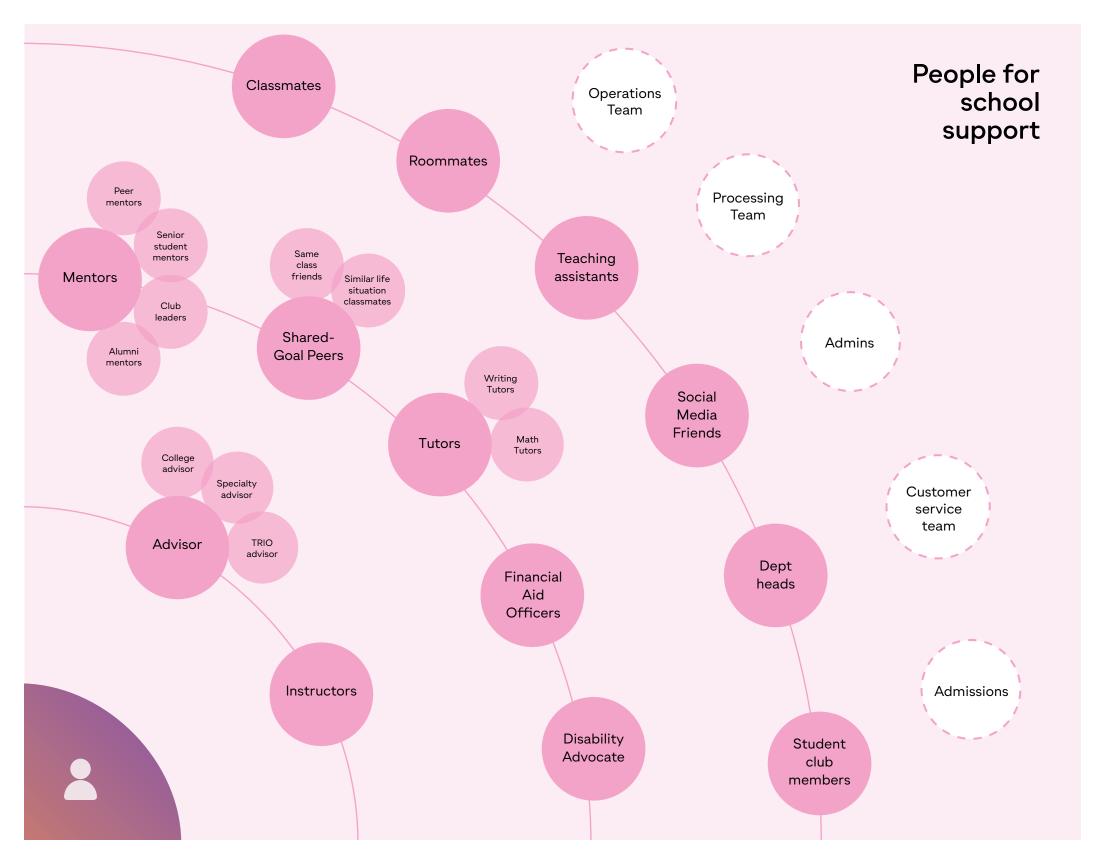
Some groups of people/resources have smaller, more specific people/resources that fall within the larger category. These sub-groups are added as small circles surrounding the larger group.

Direct Support

Indirect Support

Sub-group

Large group

Sub-group

People for personal support

Personal trainer

Therapist/ Counselor

Doctor

Mentors
- Career mentors
- Life coaches

Friends
- College friends
- High school friends
- Childhood friends
- Best friends
- Family friends
- Hobby friends

High school mentors
- Counselors
- Administrators
- Teachers

Family
- Siblings
- Parents
- Children
- Grandparents
- Extended family
- Co-parents

Employers

Coworkers

Partner/ Spouse

People for school support

Classmates

Roommates

Operations Team

Processing Team

Peer mentors

Senior student mentors

Mentors

Club leaders

Alumni mentors

Same class friends

Similar life situation classmates

Shared-Goal Peers

Teaching assistants

Admins

Social Media Friends

Writing Tutors

Math Tutors

Tutors

Customer service team

College advisor

Specialty advisor

Advisor

TRIO advisor

Financial Aid Officers

Dept heads

Instructors

Disability Advocate

Admissions

Student club members

Resources for school support

Disability Accommodations

Student support centers
- First Gen Support
- Immigrant Support Services
- Cultural student centers
- Tech Support

Educational Programming
- Courses on Social Change
- Financial Literacy Program

Financial support
- Scholarships
- Gov't Financial Aid
- School loans
- External loans

Student Programs
- Mentorship Programs
- Orientation programs
- Transfer Student programs
- Bridge Programs

Industry Partnerships
- Alumni Network

TRIO program

Student Clubs
- Networking
- Career Resources
- Affinity Clubs
- Outside of career interests

Access to Digital Tools
- WiFi
- Mobile Phone
- Laptop

Found digital resources
- Facebook groups
- Google
- Chegg
- Wyzant
- Coursera
- YouTube
- TED Talks

Study Location

Institutional Feedback Loops
- Student Wellness Reports
- Instructor Evaluations
- Class Auditing

Resources for personal support

Community groups
- Online groups
- In person groups
- Religious Institutions

Mental health support

Jobs
- Career skills
- Networking

Financial support
- Community Scholarships
- CARES Team
- COVID Relief Act
- External loans

Assistance Programs
- Childcare assistance
- Transit assistance
- Housing assistance
- Food assistance
- CARES Act: Higher Ed Emergency Fund
- COVID Financial Aid Adjustments

Cultural community groups

Hobbies

Neighborhood

Access to Digital Tools

Study Location
- Public Library

How to use this worksheet

1 Print out the following four pages

2 Consider supporters for each of the four quadrants. These include primary supporters (solid line circles) and indirect supporters (dotted line circles).

3 Consider supporters for each of the four quadrants. These include primary

4 Piece the four quadrants together as shown here to get a full ecosystem

People for personal support

People for school support

Student

Resources for personal support

Resources for school support

People for Personal Support

Think about what people students may have for personal support and fill out the worksheet on the right side. Remember that the rings further from the student mean they are a more distant supporter to students versus closer.
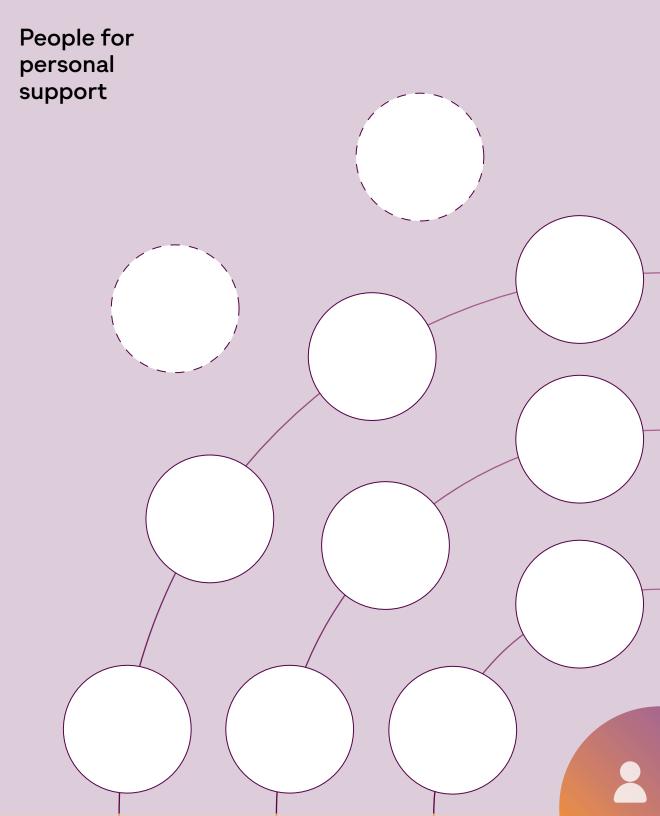
Examples of People for Personal Support
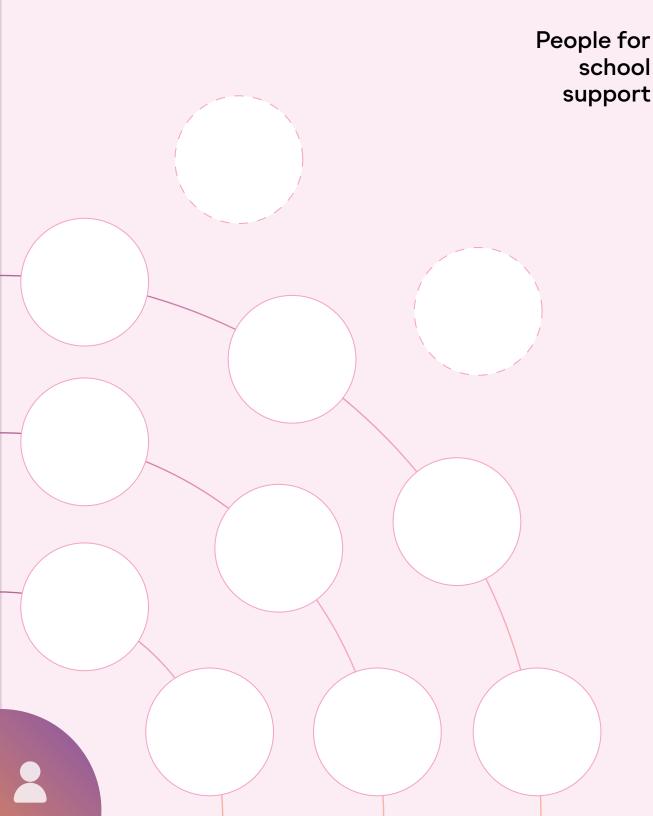
- **Partner / Spouse**
- **Family**
  Co-parents
  Extended family
  Parents
  Grandparents
  Siblings
  Children
- **Friends**
  Childhood friends
  College friends
  High school friends
  Best friends
  Family friends
  Hobby friends
- **Employers**
- **Personal trainer**
- **High school mentors**
  Administrators
  Teachers
  Counselors
- **Personal mentors**
  Life coaches
  Career mentors
- **Coworkers**
- **Doctors**
- **Therapists/Counselors**

Quadrant 2

People for School Support

Think about what people for school support students may have and fill out the worksheet on the right side. Remember that the rings further from the student mean they are a more distant supporter to students versus closer.

Examples of People for School Support

- **Roommates**
- **Teaching assistants**
- **Social media friends**
- **Department heads**
- **Student club members**
- **Financial aid officers**
- **Classmates**
- **Disability advocates**
- **Instructors**
- **Mentors**
  Peer mentors
  Alumni mentors
  Club leaders
  Senior student mentors

- **Advisors**
  TRIO advisor
  Scholarship advisors
  Career prep advisors
  Course selection advisors
- **Shared-goal peers**
  Same class peers
  Similar life situation classmates
- **Tutors**
  Math tutor
  Writing tutor
- **Operations team**
- **Processing team Admins**
- **Customer service team**
- **Admissions**

Resources for Personal Support

Think about what resources for personal support students may have and fill out the worksheet on the right side. Remember that the rings further from the student mean they are a more distant supporter to students versus closer.

Examples of Resources for School Support

- **Roommates**
- **Teaching assistants**
- **Social media friends**
- **Department heads**
- **Student club members**
- **Financial aid officers**
- **Classmates**
- **Disability advocates**
- **Instructors**
- **Mentors**
  Peer mentors
  Alumni mentors
  Club leaders
  Senior student mentors

- **Advisors**
  TRIO advisor
  Scholarship advisors
  Career prep advisors
  Course selection advisors
- **Shared-goal peers**
  Same class peers
  Similar life situation classmates
- **Tutors**
  Math tutor
  Writing tutor
- **Operations team**
- **Processing team**
- **Admins**
- **Customer service team**
- **Admissions**

Resources
for personal
support

Resources
for school
support

Resources for School Support

Think about what resources for school supports students may have and fill out the worksheet on the right side. Remember that the rings further from the student mean they are a more distant supporter to students versus closer.

Examples of Resources for School Support

- **Disability accommodations**
- **Financial Support**
  Scholarships
  Government financial aid
  External loans
  School loans
- **Access to digital tools**
  Wifi
  Mobile phone
  Laptop
- **TRIO Program**
- **Student programs**
  Mentorship programs
  Orientation programs
  Transfer student programs
  Bridge programs
- **Student support centers**
  First gen support
  Immigrant support services
  Cultural student centers
  Tech support
- **Instructor provided resources**
  i.e. Textbook, MyLabs, MindTap

- **Study Locations**
  College Library
  Lounges
  Labs
- **Found digital resources**
  i.e. Google, Wyzant, TED Talks, YouTube, Coursera, Facebook, Facebook Groups, Chegg, Wikipedia
- **Study Tools**
  i.e. Quizlet, Evernote
- **Student clubs**
  Outside of career interests
  Networking
  Career resources
  Affinity clubs
- **Industry partners**
  Alumni network
- **Educational Programming**
  Courses on social change
  Financial literacy programs
- **Institutional Feedback loops**
  Class auditing
  Instructor evaluation
  Student wellness reports

Reactive Support

Limited support from advisors, instructors, and others unless students reaches out. Other support programs are limited.

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Minimal or infrequent advising.

- Minimal instructor interaction or personalized feedback.

- Limited student resources and/or support services.

- Limited identity-based student groups and support.

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

- Help ensure **regular support** from advisors.

- Build in **regular interaction + feedback** from instructors.

- Provide resources and services **for the needs and contexts** of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and students experiencing poverty.

- Intentionally foster and parter with identity-based student groups to **promote cultural inclusion**.

> 66 They answered very little questions because they're only open from a certain time to a certain time. And sometimes they're not really available. I feel like the email time should be faster. But it wasn't really that helpful for more complicated questions. Cause they always referred me to somebody else.
>
> **"Michaella"** | **Latinx / Asian** | **1st yr** | **Public 4 yr**

Fold

Proactive Support

Advisors and instructors proactively track progress and provide support. Support programs exist, but may not be connected.

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Proactive and regular advising support.

- Regular built-in interactions + feedback from instructors.

- Available student resources and/or support services.

- Established identity-based student groups and support.

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

- Train advisors and instructors to build student relationships, **personalize their support**, and connect to additional support resources and services.

- **Make it easy** to find, connect, and leverage resources and services.

- **Partner with** identity-based student groups to foster student leadership and integrate with college supports.

> 66 They're always calling me and emailing...It makes a big difference having that support and that motivation. It also keeps you going. Like, I'm almost done or someone will call and check... Sometimes it kind of makes my week go better. [My advisor] actually cares if I pass or not.
>
> **"Quincey"** | **Black** | **2nd yr** | **Private 4 yr, for profit**

COLLEGE / COURSE ECOSYSTEM

Proactive Support

Fold

Connected Support

Connected Support

Advisors and instructors proactively support and help coordinate support across functions and resources.

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Relationship-based advising and instructor support where they connect students to additional resources.

- Integrated, holistic student resources and services.

- Integrated identity-based student group support.

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

- Understand **holistic student needs** and interactions to provide the right support at the right time.

- Establishing **data-based systems** to help track, identify, and address individual student needs.

- Help advisors, instructors, resources, services, and identity-based student supports **to work together** to provide holistic support.

> 66 Different programs reached out to me. The Native American cultural center which included the office of Indigenous success. Those two [groups] emailed me saying 'We have this program for upcoming freshman. Would you like to attend it?'
>
> **"Nancy"** | **Indigenous** | **3rd yr** | **Public 4 yr**

Fold

Starting College

Starting College

Admitted students who are preparing to start their college journey.

STUDENT GOALS

Adjusting to a new college culture and gathering information and advice to get set up for success.

STUDENT NEEDS

- **Admissions, Advising, and Student Support:** provide guidance to help students transition into college, foster foundational skills, and begin to connect to support services.

- **College Supporters:** foster intentional connection for students to meet a variety of peers, faculty, and staff.

- **Community Connection:** provide places of belonging to connect with others of similar identities, needs, or goals.

> " I went head first when I came in because I didn't know what to expect. College is very different from high school. Mainly what I've learned so far is that you are required to have some drive and determination and you are required to be responsible for your assignments.
>
> **"Amanda"** | **Indigenous / Latinx** | **5th yr** | **Public 4 yr**

Fold

Choosing Path

Students who are unsure of their pathway, have not declared a major, or are considering changing their major.

STUDENT GOALS

Explore personal interests with classes and instructors to gain understanding about class/major options with the input from loved ones and advisors.

STUDENT NEEDS

- **Advising:** provide personalized advice that is contextual to their goals and helps track toward graduation.

- **Student Support:** connect to career mentors, networks, and resources.

- **Instructors:** help students explore interests, uncover options, and offer career path mentorship.

> ❝ I was originally graphic design, then I transitioned into digital information design. It was more art based, not computer-based. I kind of wanted a combination of the two. I'm getting into more web development, game development. It puts an art aspect into it, but it's computer-based which is kind of what I was looking for... I felt like just trying to find the right major would be the best option.
>
> **"Karan"** | **Black / African American** | **3rd yr** | **Public 4 yr**

STUDENT JOURNEY

Choosing Path

Fold

Following Path

Students with declared majors who are focused on tracking towards class and degree completion.

STUDENT GOALS

Complete classes and track towards graduation, find career mentorship, and connect with peers on a similar path to learn and get advice.

STUDENT NEEDS

- **Advising:** help students select classes, remove barriers, track towards graduation, and get career support.

- **Student Support:** provide career advising, connection to professional mentors, and access to career opportunities.

- **Instructors:** mentor students to learn, gain expertise, and prepare for life after graduation.

> ❝ I'm pre-med. I'm taking all of the science classes this semester and I have goals of becoming a PA or going for my MD. That's really just going through the grind. I have a job right now that I've been having for three years as a unit secretary where I work on the nurses floor. I've been working throughout the pandemic, helping everybody and becoming like a liaison. That's what I'm passionate about.
>
> **"Michaella"** | **Latinx / Asian** | **1st yr** | **Public 4 yr**

Fold

Disrupted Path

Students facing challenges like falling grades, lost credits, not getting into required classes, or other barriers to degree completion.

STUDENT GOALS

Receive empathetic and contextual advice from supporters, peers, and mentors to address barriers and identify options for next steps.

STUDENT NEEDS

- **Advising:** help track performance, understand issues, address barriers, or identify other options while considering timeline and financial aid requirements.

- **Student Support:** provide tutoring and resources.

- **Instructors:** curate instruction and provide personalized feedback to help student succeed.

> " I had to take these two classes that are kind of tough. Unfortunately, I didn't do well in one of those classes so I wasn't eligible for the econ major. So now I had to choose a new major. That's why I chose sociology because my coursework allowed me to be on a faster timeline. I'd already knocked out some of the prerequisites so I wouldn't have to take more additional classes.
>
> **"Samson"** | **Black** | **3rd yr** | **Public 4 yr**

STUDENT JOURNEY

Disrupted Path

Fold

Transferring

Students in the process of transferring schools and working to adjust to their new learning environment.

STUDENT GOALS

Gain an understanding of what to do, how to prepare, and who to meet to get set up for success in adjusting to a new college environment and culture.

STUDENT NEEDS

- **College Supporters:** foster intentional connection with peers, staff, and faculty to help with transition and potential feelings of loss from leaving previous school.

- **Advising + Student Support:** streamline credit transfer, solve logistical issues, and connect to services.

- **Community Connection:** provide places of belonging to connect with others of similar identities, needs, or goals.

> " I did eat up a lot of my financial aid before I even got into a traditional education setting. So my associates is general because I had to transfer my credits across states to complete my associates...When I transferred everything I would have to start over completely, because the programs were incompatible, or just go for the general [degree].
>
> **"Juliette"** | **Indigenous / White** | **3rd yr** | **Public 4 yr**

STUDENT JOURNEY

Transferring

Pushed Out Path

Students facing challenges which result in leaving college, but who want to return.

STUDENT GOALS

Build a support network of people and resources to return to school and become reacquainted with school systems, processes, and tools.

STUDENT NEEDS

- **Support Services:** provide holistic support to address root cause issues and barriers (finances, mental health, housing, etc.).

- **Advising:** build trust to understand context and provide targeted, specific support.

- **Instructor:** provide flexibility and understanding as student transitions back into college and classes.

> " I was working at the time to finish paying off my car. I was having a hard time trying to do both. Also the fact that some of the classes had to be paid out of pocket. That contributed towards having a lot of difficulties trying to pay for college and pay for my car. Now that I paid for my car, it is more flexible going back to school, but I felt sad because I had to postpone something that I really wanted to do.

"Anthony" | Hispanic / Latinx | Pushed Out | Public 2 yr

STUDENT JOURNEY

Pushed Out Path

Fold

HIGHER ED APPROACH

Exploratory

Exploratory

Students who want the 'college experience' of learning new ideas, meeting new people, and figuring out who they want to be.

KEY NEEDS FROM INSTRUCTORS

- The opportunity **to learn in different** formats and teaching styles to keep class engaging.

- The opportunity **to form community with students** of different backgrounds through class discussion and collaborative work.

- **Understanding** as to how they approach learning and their unique interests.

KEY NEEDS FROM COURSE MATERIAL

- **Multiple options** to complete assignments and engage with material.

- **Guidance** on how to contextualize what to learn, how to learn, and how to improve their learning.

> 66 It's about happily finishing from school with good grades and experiencing what the outside world has to offer. Gaining experience from everything you witnessed in university and using it after school to make and have a better life for yourself. So that is what I see success as a student.
>
> **"Adam"** | **Black** | **3rd yr** | **Public 4 yr**

Motivations

Discovery	Achievement
Efficiency	Socialization
Career Readiness	Life Readiness
Personal Opportunity	Opportunity for Loved Ones

Fold

Targeted

Students who have clear goals in mind regarding their degree and future career opportunities and success.

KEY NEEDS FROM INSTRUCTORS

- **Clearly set expectations** of course content, how it relates to career/major, and assessment criteria.

- **Curation of most important** content with step-by-step guidance and practice to ensure learning.

- **Understanding** of their unique goals and geared learning towards what is most relevant.

KEY NEEDS FROM COURSE MATERIAL

- **Clear outlines of content** that indicate what to focus on and why so students can effectively prioritize.

- **Quick feedback and analytics** in order to quickly identify areas for further study.

> " I define student success as getting work done, putting words on paper or on the screen, and submitting on time... Success to me is just getting it done no matter what it takes... Being able to talk about what each class is achieving and how it's getting me closer to what I want to be doing is helpful.
>
> **"Danielle"** | **Latinx** | **2nd yr** | **Private 4 yr**

Motivations

Discovery — Achievement

Efficiency — Socialization

Career Readiness — Life Readiness

Personal Opportunity — Opportunity for Loved Ones

HIGHER ED APPROACH

Targeted

Fold

Life-balanced

Students who need to contextualize education within broader life circumstances and situations.

KEY NEEDS FROM INSTRUCTORS

- Explanation of **how content relates** to their major/career goals, their community, and society.

- Space to **share their unique perspective**, life experience, and understanding with peers.

- **Understanding** of how their background and motivations have shaped their goals.

KEY NEEDS FROM COURSE MATERIAL

- **Greater flexibility** in engaging with content and in completing requirements to accommodate life needs.

- **Feedback** which considers the student's background and is tied directly to their motivations and goals.

> 66 It's not only me that is learning. It's my family. It's my kids. It's my husband…and that is a sense of empowerment to a certain degree. With my kids, I'll be able to contribute to their growth and their education. That's what really motivates me…I love using this quote—
> I tell my daughter, 'If I don't have the answer then we'll find it together.'
>
> **"Amanda"** | **Indigenous / Latinx** | **5th yr** | **Public 4 yr**

Motivations

Discovery	Achievement
Efficiency	Socialization
Career Readiness	Life Readiness
Personal Opportunity	Opportunity for Loved Ones

Robust Personal Support

Students with a foundation of support from friends, family, or community for their college journey.

NEEDS

- **Engagement:** provide opportunities to integrate supporters into their experience, such as family weekends and regular newsletters.

- **Advisors + Instructors:** understand context to provide relationship-based support.

Approximately 50% of students interviewed for this project reported having robust personal support.

Logistical Barriers

Students facing barriers to successful studying, including study space, digital access, and transit.

NEEDS

- **Study Space:** access to quiet, focused places to study.

- **Digital Access:** provide digital devices and reliable WiFi to ensure all students can participate.

- **Transit + Access issues:** share transit support and provide flexible class schedules and online options.

21% of surveyed students cited logistical issues as a barrier.
https://youthpolicylab.umich.edu/uploads/myvoice_ final.pdf

Cut

In-Direct Students

Students who are not entering college directly from High School, including GED students.

NEEDS

- **Advising:** follow up on class performance and experience to help overcome barriers (especially 1st year).

- **Class Placement:** use multiple measures for placement (classroom observation, structured practice, etc.).

- **Bridge Program:** build foundational skills for college transition, institutional navigation, and peer connection.

40% of undergraduates are nontraditional.
www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Hittepole_NASPA_Memo.pdf

Additional Learning Needs

Students seeking support for learning or physical disabilities during college.

NEEDS

- **Accessibility Support:** centralize resources for accommodation, support, advocacy, and navigation.

- **Faculty + Staff:** provide training, tools, and strategies to best support student accessibility.

- **Courseware:** ensure content and tech are accessible.

20% of undergraduates reported having a disability.
https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=60

Cut

Limited Personal Support

Students who may not have a foundation of support for their college journey in their personal life.

NEEDS

- **Advisors + Instructors:** understand context to provide relationship-based support.

- **Mentorship:** help build a strong support network of peers, mentors, and other stakeholders.

- **Outreach:** develop programs for student's loved ones and supporters to bring them into the journey.

Approximately 25% of students interviewed for this project reported having limited personal support.

Student Parents

Students who are balancing college with raising and caring for children.

NEEDS

- **Class Flexibility:** offer hybrid/remote classes, multiple class times, and flexible assignment and exam options.

- **Support Services:** connect to child care, financial support, and housing support; include part-time students.

- **Affinity Programs:** foster parent groups + mentorship.

22% of student are parents.
www.gao.gov/assets/gao-19-522.pdf

Cut

1st Generation Students

Students who are the first in their family in college.

NEEDS

- **Bridge Program:** build foundational skills for college transition, institutional navigation, and peer connection.

- **Advising + Financial Aid:** connect to support programs (i.e. TRIO) and help apply and evaluate financial supports.

- **Connection:** give college and professional development mentorship and provide spaces for belonging.

42% of students graduating with a bachelors in 2016 were First Generation.
https://firstgen.naspa.org/files/dmfile/FactSheet-011.pdf

College Skillset Needs

Students who are learning to navigate college and building foundational study skills.

NEEDS

- **Growth Mindset:** foster a growth mindset through institutional culture and in-class teaching methods.

- **College Confidence:** help students learn to navigate college and advocate for their needs.

- **Key Skills:** grow foundational skills in writing, public speaking, note taking, and studying (metacognition).

14% of students had below basic prose literacy and 22% below basic quantitative literacy.
air.org/sites/default/files/The-Literacy-of-Americas-College-Students-Jan-2006.pdf

Cut

Working Students

Students who are balancing school with work.

NEEDS

- **Flexibility:** offer online classes, multiple class times, and options for assignment due dates and exams.

- **Advising:** help students select class schedules while balancing graduation requirements, class load, and work needs.

- **Support:** extend hours and access for advising, office hours, and other support services.

43% of full-time and 81% of part-time students are employed.
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_ssa.pdf

Cut

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NEEDS

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Financial Barriers

Students facing financial barriers, including housing and food insecurity, during their college journey.

NEEDS

- **Advising:** understand financial barriers to connect to support programs, services, and aid.

- **Support Services:** expand food + housing programs; help secure support (CARES Act, public benefits, etc.).

- **Campus Culture:** destigmatize use of public benefits through peer support and community inclusivity.

31% of undergraduates are low or very low income.
https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020460.pdf

Cut
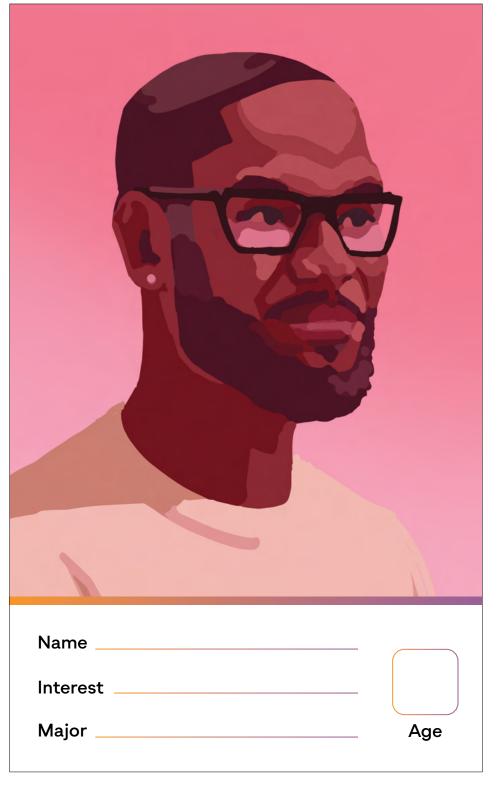
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NEEDS

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Name _____

Interest _____

Major _____ **Age**

Name _____

Interest _____

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