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Slides referenced in the plenary sessions, along with other companion documents, are available at reinventioncollaborative.colostate.edu/2016-national-conference-proceedings

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Elliot Cooper  
Kayla Cothrun  
Kim Daggett  
Amy Dinise-Halter  
Demetrios Godenitz  
Erin Heim  
Carmody Leerssen  
Heather Matthews  
Jill Putman  
Jessie Stewart  
Kalyn Stroik  
Coronda Ziegler  
Liz Mauk, Editor
We are pleased to share the Proceedings of the Reinvention Collaborative’s 2016 National Conference, Diversity, Culture, and Identity in America’s Research Universities: Research-based Initiatives that Promote Shared Discovery and Learning by Students, Faculty, and Staff.

While the timing of the conference, coming as it did two days after the 2016 national election, heightened the drama and sense of urgency around issues of human difference, the theme was actually chosen well over a year before. In early 2015 the Board and Program Committee concluded that a systematic exploration of questions involving culture and identity was both a natural follow-up to the 2014 conference and critical to enhancing the Collaborative’s ability to achieve its mission of advancing undergraduate education in America’s research universities.

The 2014 conference theme was Engaged Learning and the Ethos of Discovery – Achieving the Promise in a Tumultuous Era. This theme was chosen to connect our member institutions’ continuing commitment to achieving the foundational purposes identified in the Boyer Commission’s call to reinvent undergraduate education at America’s research universities to several cascading sets of changes that were making the second decade of the 21st century a truly tumultuous period in higher education. The first changes, which were analyzed in the first two plenaries and the following breakout sessions, were generating cascading pressures to innovate. The second and third sets, which were discussed in the third plenary and breakouts, involved a cascade of new knowledge and tools. Since the Boyer Commission report in 1998, there had been an explosion of new knowledge on robust, integrative, and self-regulated learning; on intellectual and personal maturation; and on other areas such as persistence to graduation. These research findings were increasingly supported by a companion explosion in analytics and advising tools that helped us understand where individual students were in real time and gave us the capacity to reach out proactively – if we could fully understand the tools’ capabilities and limitations and if we could train the tools’ users to use them in informed, effective, and ethical ways. The last consideration that informed the planners of the 2014 conference was the conclusion that, at least at the level of accepted narrative, an extraordinary transformation in people’s understanding of what an undergraduate educational experience at a research university had taken place. From a call for transformation that was regarded as so radical in 1998 that the Carnegie Foundation disowned its own commission report and the AAU attacked its conclusions and recommendations, by 2014 the Boyer Report had assumed an almost unproblematic, and even iconic, status on our campuses.

We believed that taken together, these intertwining developments were creating a once-in-professional lifetime opportunity to make real the enduring promise that America’s research universities could provide a distinctive context for engaged learning. That judgment led us to close the 2014 Conference with a challenge: Making the Promise Real in Real Time.

When the Board and Program Committee began the planning for the 2016 Conference in 2015, we were struck by the fact that our ability to deliver on the opportunities discussed in 2014 would depend on elevating a subtheme of that conference to a position of central importance: the effects of diversity, culture, and identity. We concluded that we needed to promote a far more broadly shared understanding of the impact of culture and identity on the lived experiences of diverse populations of students, faculty, and staff. The problem was not that we weren’t seeing extraordinary examples of grassroots initiatives and educational innovations across our campuses based on the new research and new tools, because we were. The problem was that these initiatives and innovations were too often not being connected in ways that were mutually reinforcing across the student lifecycle from matriculation to completion and that too many of them were not designed to take into account the breadth of human differences across varying cultures and identities.

That conclusion led to the decision to make the 2016 conference theme Diversity, Culture, and Identity in America’s Research Universities and to organize the plenaries and breakout sessions around research-based initiatives that promote shared discovery and learning by diverse populations of students, faculty, and staff. In this context, discovery not only includes substantive discoveries that emerge out of sustained inquiry or serendipitous “eureka” moments, but also individual and institutional self-discovery. The focus on curiosity, creativity, and sustained inquiry that leads to discovery applies not only to the characteristics the undergraduate experience universities should cultivate in students but also to an overarching commitment by universities to cultivate an ongoing process of institutional self-discovery about the impact of different practices.

The conference opened with a discussion of what we know about the multiple intersections between culture, identity, learning, and discovery in research universities across academic and student affairs. We purposely placed the focus of the initial discussion on what the research shows and what our experiences as administrators and educators suggests about the individual-level, lived experiences of students, faculty, and staff. The second and third plenaries then examined the interplay of these questions across the student lifecycle – from programs designed to build a more diverse and accomplished pipeline through degree completion and preparation for meaningful careers and life-long learning. The fourth, and concluding, plenary shifted the focus to macro-level institutional characteristics and posed the central administrative question: What would an institution that does these things well look like?
Conference Schedule

Thursday, November 10

8:00-3:00  UVP Network Meeting – Studio B

3:30-5:30  Specialized Network Meetings

Salon 6  Advising and Academic Guidance
Elizabeth Guertin, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Indiana University-Bloomington
Vanessa Harris, Director of University Advisement, University of New Mexico
Brett McFarlane, Executive Director of Academic Advising, University of California, Davis
Paul Thayer, Special Advisor to the Provost and Associate Vice President Emeritus, Colorado State University

Studio F  Curricular/Co-Curricular Innovation and Integrative Learning
Lisa Dysleski, Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Programs for the College of Natural Sciences, Colorado State University
Soncia Reagins-Lilly, Vice President for Student Affairs, University of Texas at Austin
Irma Van Scoy, Executive Director of USC Connect, University of South Carolina

Studio B  Science of Learning and Pedagogical Innovation
Gwen Gorzelsky, Executive Director of The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT), Colorado State University
Erin Sanders, Director of the UCLA Center for Education Innovation and Learning in the Sciences, University of California, Los Angeles

Studio D  Student Success/Learning Analytics
Pam Bowers, Associate Vice President for Planning, Assessment and Innovation in the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support, University of South Carolina
Laura Jensen, Associate Provost of Planning and Effectiveness, Colorado State University
Vanessa Roof, Director of Student Success Reporting and Analytics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Friday, November 11

8:00-4:00  Registration – Conference Information Desk

8:00-9:00  Breakfast and Welcome – Ballroom
Alan Lamborn, Executive Director, The Reinvention Collaborative
Claudia Neuhauser, Board Chair, The Reinvention Collaborative

9:00-10:30  Plenary Session 1: The Multiple Intersections between Culture, Identity, Learning, and Discovery in Research Universities – Ballroom
Amy Burkert, Vice Provost for Education, Carnegie Mellon University
Larry Roper, Professor and former Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Oregon State University
Paul Thayer, Special Advisor to the Provost and Associate Vice President Emeritus, Colorado State University
Co-Moderator: Blanche Hughes, Vice President for Student Affairs, Colorado State University
Co-Moderator: Mike Mullen, Vice Chancellor and Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, North Carolina State University

10:30-10:45  Break

10:45-12:00  Breakout Sessions

Salon 6  1A: Inclusive Pedagogies in Face-to-Face and Blended Courses
Christopher Lee, Professor of Chemistry, Biochemistry, and Molecular Biology, University of California, Los Angeles
Conference Schedule

Salon 7  
1B: Culture, Identity, and Discovery: The Impact of Co-Curricular Engagement on Integrative Learning and Inclusion  
Aileen Bumphus, Associate Vice President for the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence, University of Texas at Austin

Studio D  
1C: Inclusive Advising: Turning Indicators of Risk into Opportunities for Success  
Vanessa Harris, Director of University Advisement, University of New Mexico  
Brett McFarlane, Executive Director of Academic Advising, University of California, Davis

Studio E  
1D: Intersecting Expectations and Images: Assessing their Impact on Actual and Perceived Performance  
Elizabeth Guertin, Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education, Indiana University-Bloomington  
Rob Rodier, Director of Technology and Informatics, John N. Gardner Institute

Studio B  
1E: The Multiple Origins of Attainment Gaps  
Omid Fotuhi, Research Associate, Stanford University  
Warren Kelly, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, University of Maryland, College Park

Salon 5  
1F: Faculty Practices and Beliefs about the Effectiveness of Writing in Promoting Student Learning in STEM Disciplines  
Robert J. Thompson, Jr., Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Neuroscience, Duke University  
Leslie A. Schiff, Morse-Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor of Microbiology and Associate Dean for the University Curriculum, University of Minnesota  
Solaire Finkenstaedt-Quinn, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Michigan  
Jason E. Dowd, Postdoctoral Associate, Duke University

12:00-12:15  
Break

12:15-1:15  
Lunch – Ballroom

1:15-2:45  
Plenary Session 2: Unpacking the Student Life Cycle (1) – Strengthening College-Going Pipelines and Promoting Academic Success of Diverse Student Populations During Their First Semesters at a University  
Norma Day-Vines, Professor of Counseling and Human Services, Johns Hopkins University  
Nate Easley, Executive Director, Denver Scholarship Foundation  
Daron Roberts, Founding Director of Center for Sports Leadership and Innovation, Scholar-in-Residence with African American Male Research Initiative, University of Texas Austin  
Moderator: Beth Loizeaux, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, Boston University

3:00-4:15  
Breakout Sessions

Studio E  
2A: Transfer Students – Building Bridges that Promote Inclusion and Identity  
Ben Withers, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Colorado State University  
Thomas Grites, Assistant Provost for Academic Support, Stockton University

Salon 7  
2B: Engagement, Discovery, and Integrative Learning in the First Year  
Lara Ducate, Associate Professor of German and Applied Linguistics, University of South Carolina  
Lara Lomicka Anderson, Professor in Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University of South Carolina

Salon 6  
2C: Combining Pre-Course (Day Zero) Risk Measures, Within Course Analytics, and Inclusive Advising in the First Year  
Jim Folkstad, Director of Center for the Analytics of Learning and Teaching, Colorado State University  
Dave Johnson, Director of Research and Analytics for CSU Online, Colorado State University  
Jose Villar, Senior Programs Specialist for College Enrichment and Outreach Programs, University of New Mexico
Conference Schedule

**Studio B**

2D: Connecting Institutions Through New Technology: Sharing Case Studies and Research on Teaching and Learning

Gwen Gorzelsky, Executive Director of The Institute for Learning and Teaching, Colorado State University

Erin Sanders, Director of the UCLA Center for Education Innovation and Learning in the Sciences, University of California, Los Angeles

Gabrielle Rabinowitz, Community Engagement Manager for Trellis, American Association for the Advancement of Science

**Salon 5**

2E: Peer Mentoring to Promote Academic Transitions

Lucy Blackmar, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Initiatives, University of California, Los Angeles

Beserat Hagos, Director of Special Seminars, University of California, Los Angeles

**Studio D**

2F: NASPA Study on Student Engagement and Predictive Analytics

Amelia Parnell, Vice President for Research and Policy, NASPA: Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education

Michelle Burke, Consultant and CEO, Student Affairs Solutions

4:30-6:30 Reception and Poster Session – Salons 1-3 Pre-Function Area

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**Saturday, November 12**

7:30-12:00 Registration – Conference Information Desk

8:00-9:00 Breakfast – Ballroom

9:00-10:15 Plenary Session 3: Unpacking the Student Life Cycle (2) – Successful Transitions into Majors, Efficient Degree Completion, Visible Pathways to Post-Baccalaureate Educational Experiences and Careers

Peter Doolittle, Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning, Executive Director of the Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research (CIDER), and Professor of Educational Psychology, Virginia Tech

Wendy Troxel, Director, Center for Excellence and Research in Academic Advising and Student Success, NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising

Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Assistant Director of NSF for Education and Human Resources

**Moderator:** Archie Holmes, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, University of Virginia

10:15-10:30 Break

10:30-11:45 Breakout Sessions

**Salon 7**

3A: Assessment, Faculty Development, and the Promotion of Deep Learning in Upper Division Courses

Carol Rutz, Director of The Writing Program, Carleton College

John Bean, Professor Emeritus of Writing and Assessment, Seattle University

**Salon 5**

3B: Discovery and the Development of Professional Identities

Colin Potts, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Georgia Institute of Technology

Jeanette Herman, Assistant Dean for Academic Initiatives and Director of the Bridging Disciplines Programs, University of Texas at Austin

**Studio D**

3C: Linking Disciplinary Mentoring and Advising to Promote Degree Completion – Envisioning Complementary Roles

David Spight, Director of Undergraduate Affairs for the College of Engineering, University of California, Davis; President, NACADA

**Studio B**

3D: Professional Development for Faculty and Staff that Facilitates Applying Research on Inclusion and Achievement in the Junior and Senior Years

Marsha Lovett, Director of Eberly Center, Carnegie Mellon University
Conference Schedule

Studio E  3E: Inclusive Pedagogy and Engaged Learning in Foundational Courses: Setting the Stage for Future Success  
Valerie Otero, Co-Director of Learning Assistant Program, Professor and Program Co-Chair of Science Education, University of Colorado Boulder

Salon 6  3F: Advising Platforms and Analytics  
Greg Heileman, Associate Provost for Curriculum, University of New Mexico  
Chaouki Abdallah, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of New Mexico

11:45-12:00  Break

12:00-1:00  Lunch

1:00-2:30  Plenary Session 4: Envisioning the Overarching Institutional Pieces: What Would the Structure and Culture of a University that Did These Things Well Look Like? – Ballroom  
Mark Schlissel, President, University of Michigan  
Judy Genshaft, President, University of South Florida  
Diana Natalicio, President, University of Texas at El Paso  
Moderator: Tony Frank, President, Colorado State University

2:30-2:45  Break

2:45-4:00  Breakout Sessions

Studio E  4A: Promoting Academic Success and Inclusion: Integrating Diverse Faculty and Student Voices into Pedagogical Innovation and the Use of Learning Analytics  
Marco Molinaro, Assistant Vice Provost, Center for Educational Effectiveness, University of California, Davis  
Erin Sanders, Director of the UCLA Center for Education Innovation and Learning in the Sciences, University of California, Los Angeles  
George Rehrey, Principal Instructional Consultant for the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Program, Indiana University-Bloomington  
Jim Greer, Professor of Computer Science and Senior Strategist, Learning Analytics, University of Saskatchewan

Salon 6  4B: Linking Academic and Student Affairs to Promote a Culture of Reflection and Discovery  
Steve Dandaneau, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Kansas State University  
Irma Van Scoy, Executive Director of USC Connect, University of South Carolina

Studio D  4C: Creating Inclusive Policies that Support Student Success and Eliminating Policies that are Barriers to Student Success  
Elizabeth Guertin, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Indiana University-Bloomington  
Charlie Nutt, Executive Director, NACADA

Salon 7  4D: Creating Learning Collaboratories Within and Across Universities – Building Shared Libraries and Resources  
Elizabeth Loizeaux, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, Boston University

Salon 5  4E: Improving the Academic Success of Historically Underrepresented Students  
Archie Holmes, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, University of Virginia  
Karen Laughlin, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Florida State University

Studio B  4F: Data Governance and Ethics  
Pam Bowers, Associate Vice President for Planning, Assessment and Innovation in the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support, University of South Carolina  
Laura Jensen, Associate Provost of Planning and Effectiveness, Colorado State University  
Vanessa Roof, Director of Student Success Reporting and Analytics, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
The first plenary is designed to focus on what the research on diversity, culture, and identity in America’s research universities shows about the individual-level, lived experiences of students, faculty, and staff. We include faculty and staff because their experiences are intrinsically important and because the student experience is inescapably the result of students’ interaction with faculty and staff across the university. Indeed, in many ways, our goal is to encourage every employee in a university to think of themselves as educators who contribute to achieving the institution’s learning objectives.

We start at the individual level for two fundamental reasons. First, we believe that we must understand the effects of diversity, culture, and identity on the lived experiences of individuals if we are going to cultivate more effective communities of shared engagement, learning, sustained inquiry, and discovery. Second, most macro-level understandings and theories of institutional and organizational change rely on more or less explicit assumptions about people and how they react to different structural and cultural environments.

Having explored the research in the first plenary, in the second and third plenaries we will examine the impact of diversity, culture, and identity at two stages of the student lifecycle. The first stage involves the transition from the college-going pipeline through the first semesters as students in a research university. The second stage involves transitions into the major, upper-division experiences, and degree completion. Having applied the research on individual-level experiences for students, faculty, and staff from the college-going pipeline to degree completion, the conference concludes with a key macro question: What would the overarching institutional structure and culture of a university that did these things well look like?

The first plenary is, then, the foundation for the entire conference. We asked Paul Thayer (Special Advisor to the Provost and Associate Vice President for Student Success Emeritus at Colorado State University) to present a thorough overview of the existing research. Larry Roper (Professor and former Vice Provost for Student Affairs at Oregon State University) and Amy Burkert (Vice Provost for Education at Carnegie Mellon University) were asked to take a more applied look at the implications of the research on both the Academic and Student Affairs sides of the house. Finally, we invited our moderators – Blanche Hughes (Vice President for Student Affairs at Colorado State University) and Mike Mullen (Vice Chancellor and Dean for Academic and Student Affairs at North Carolina State University) – to contribute their thoughts as experienced administrators, as well as their skills as moderators.
The Multiple Intersections between Culture, Identity, Learning, and Discovery in Research Universities

worked on the Program Committee know, the theme was chosen well before Ferguson, well before the events of the last year, and well before – obviously – Tuesday’s national election.

The members of the Program Committee believed – and, I suspect, if we were to poll them this morning, believe even more fervently today – that we need to add a systematic understanding of what we know about the implications of human difference to our more general understanding of the sources of engaged curricular and co-curricular learning, how universities can cultivate an ethos of sustained inquiry and discovery, and how we can best use the newly available tools for assessing learning, enhancing academic guidance, and improving persistence to graduation.

The first plenary, and the breakout sessions that follow it, will focus on what we know about the multiple intersections between culture, identity, learning, and discovery in the distinctive context of America’s research universities. The discussion is designed to bring together an overview of what the general research shows in these areas and to highlight examples from both the Student Affairs and the Academic Affairs sides of the house. We hope to connect what our students, faculty, and staff are experiencing in this time and place with research findings that will help us understand better the significance of human difference in these areas and how it plays out in the educational environment.

Questions about identity, culture, and diversity on our university campuses obviously intersect with questions about the national events that have, and are, playing out in real time this week. These connections add a systematic understanding of what we know about the implications of human difference to our more general understanding of the sources of engaged curricular and co-curricular learning, how universities can cultivate an ethos of sustained inquiry and discovery, and how we can best use the newly available tools for assessing learning, enhancing academic guidance, and improving persistence to graduation.

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Questions about identity, culture, and diversity on our university campuses obviously intersect with questions about the national events that have, and are, playing out in real time this week. These connections add a particular intellectual and emotional poignancy to the fact that we have an opportunity, as colleagues, to learn from each other this week on this topic.

It is my pleasure to introduce Mike Mullen and Blanche Hughes, who are going to moderate the plenary. They will introduce the panelists and take the conversation from there.

Mike Mullen
Vice Chancellor and Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, North Carolina State University

Good morning. I hope you all are doing well this morning. Our panel today includes those folks who are still sitting. We have Paul Thayer from Colorado State, Larry Roper from Oregon State, and Amy Burkert from Carnegie Mellon University, and my co-moderator Blanche is going to – and Blanche is Vice President for Student Affairs at Colorado State – and I am, again, Mike Mullen, and I am Vice Chancellor and Dean for Academic and Student Affairs at North Carolina State University. I actually wear two hats. I’m in charge of Undergraduate Academic Affairs and Student Affairs in a totally blended, singular division. So, that’s my role. Blanche will spend more time introducing our panelists. She and I have some introductory remarks to make. And given – I think what Alan just said is very appropriate about the evolution of this conference theme and now the appropriateness of that theme given where we’ve been really for now well over a year on most of our campuses. I think the title of “Diversity, Culture, and Identity” rings true on most of our campuses right now, and I know my campus is struggling with these very issues, and today we will look at some of the intersections of diversity, culture, identity, and learning here.

I’m taking some liberties to actually talk about my campus in a few moments, but never before have we been more diverse – and from this point forward we will only become more and more diverse on our campuses. The proportion of high school graduates who are white students is dropping, and by 2027–28 it’s expected to be right at 50 percent. We know that the proportion of Hispanic students nationally and in many of our states is increasing with time and will continue to increase as that group is much younger than the white population [and] . . . fertility rates are higher. The black population will stay approximately 12 to 13 percent over that time, so we will see changes on our campuses and I know almost all of us have noticed those changes over the last decade or so, and that will be accelerating for us. So we are going to certainly be looking at a wider variety of people coming from a wider variety of backgrounds, experiences, education and cultural viewpoints that are going to only enrich our campuses and we’ve got to find ways to capitalize on that and make sure that our institutions are providing opportunities for all to learn in our environments.

This is just as true in North Carolina. I’m not going to spend a lot of time on this, but I just show you this to show the trend in the state of North Carolina, where the white population has been leveling off and the Hispanic population is growing fairly rapidly in our state as well. And then at our own campus at NC State, we are the least white and most diverse that we’ve ever been in the history of the university. This year we are 69 percent white. Our Hispanic population is growing rapidly. Our African-American population (by virtue of what is recorded) is actually dropping, but we also know part of that is offset by the fact that students can now check off two or more races. And you can see on this chart, two or more races has accelerated on our campus fairly significantly. So again, our black population is dropping, Hispanic going up, and then this is our total undergraduate population over time. And so you can see there’s been a drastic change on our campus.

And I think all of us in this room value diversity. We know from the research that diversity is very beneficial in the corporate setting. There are studies over and over again that have shown the multitude of viewpoints and experiences actually lead to better solutions. This is also very true on our campuses and I think that we all agree that when we have that multitude of views and the opportunity to share experiences across cultures we all are better for that. But I would like to ask in the current context: Do we have environments that always encourage learning? And my concern right now on my own campus probably mirrors some of what you are experiencing on yours, and so I’m just simply going to lay out very quickly some things that have been happening.

Of course, the events of Ferguson and New York and on and on and on with the killings of black men across this country have led to a lot of tension and a lot of concern amongst our minority populations on our campuses. Certainly, this is true on ours. We had a racial town hall last January, where out of that came a number of recommendations on things that we could do on our campus to make our campus more welcoming, and we were working on those over the summer, including: How do we enhance our orientation programs? How do we change our general education? How do we look at the way we admit underrepresented students? And a whole host of things. And most of those are things that we started to tackle.

Well, in September, as students came back, we had a variety of issues happening before September 20th. And of course, I’m in North Carolina, and on September 20th Keith Lamont Scott was killed in Charlotte, and many of our students are from Charlotte. And that ignited a firestorm on our campus that day, September 20th, which resulted in a lot of conversations, criticism from students about the fact that the Chancellor didn’t send out the appropriate message and when he did it didn’t seem personal, and we understand that. Sometimes we talk past each other instead of to each other. That’s very difficult.

That Friday our students scheduled a blackout, which was very well done and very poignant. Probably 400 mostly African-American students but a lot of white
students and administrators, myself included, all in black at that event. And that led to what you see in this picture, which was a “die-in” in our student union where about 400 students took over the union for about an hour and a half and laid on the floor while students spoke. It was very powerful, very moving, and really, I think was a very helpful thing on our campus.

But then the following Monday things got worse, and we had a group of white students in a dorm using GroupMe – I don’t know if you’re familiar with GroupMe it’s a texting app that – like if you text on your iPhone, you have three people on a conversation. If you want to add a fourth, you start an entirely new string of conversations – so these four students were having blatantly racist conversations, derogatory hateful speech in their conversations, and then later one of them said, “Well, you know, we’ve got to study for engineering, blah-blah-blah,” and invited one of their black student friends on the floor to join the GroupMe chat, and he scrolled up and saw the conversation and put it on Twitter. BOOM! Not good. Not good.

Things really got bad very quickly from that point on for the rest of that week. We had a previously scheduled racial town hall on that Thursday, which was supposed to be to update us on what was happening given the events from the town hall in January. That got co-opted completely – 700 people in an auditorium, the Chancellor there, the Provost there, all of the rest of the upper administration, myself there. Very passionate, very emotional. Lots of tears. Lots of yelling, but we sat and we listened and we listened and we listened and we’ve had many, many, many opportunities for conversation since.

Our black students particularly do not feel safe on our campus right now. That’s led to a number of things. We now have large task forces that are looking at the admissions top to bottom because as we’ve become highly selective, African-American enrollments have dropped. Students were involved on that. We’re taking a good look at diversity from orientation until graduation right now and what that looks like, and we’re really refocusing on faculty and staff hiring, which is always a problem at a large research institution. How do we both attract and retain faculty and staff of color? And so we were making good progress. And environment is important.

Wednesday morning, all hell broke loose again. I don’t know what’s happening on your campuses, but we now have – we’re running 50-60 students a day more visits to the counseling center than we had a week ago, or historically. We’ve had multiple listening sessions on our campuses. I have students wearing Trump t-shirts telling students on campus – female students – that rape is now legal in the United States. I have minority RAs being called racial epithets; I’ve had Muslim students spit on.

I’m not proud to tell you . . . that’s happening on my campus. That’s the environment that we live in. Our students are saying, “How can I study, how can I be part of this university, how can I be an engineering student in this environment?” And it goes back to this very topic: We have to provide environments that are safe for our students to learn, and if we can’t guarantee that, we’re not going to become that which we espouse to be.

So, that’s my soapbox for today. I think that this topic – we couldn’t have known that this would have fit any better than it has – and I think that we’ve got the opportunity this week for some very rich conversations, and I look forward to those conversations with you. So I’ll stop here and I’ll just let you read this. This is a comment from a student – one of our black students – that was recently posted. And you can read that for yourself. And this stems from YikYaks and other things that I didn’t feel were appropriate to put on the screen in this audience. Alright, everybody read that? And it’s not advancing now. There we go. At this point, I’ll bring up Blanche.

Blanche Hughes
Vice President for Student Affairs, Colorado State University

Good morning. So, when Mike and I got together to talk about what we wanted to do to open up our session, we compared notes on what was happening on our campuses, and this was, of course, before Tuesday. And much of what Mike has talked about that’s happened at North Carolina State, a lot of those feelings and things are also happening on most of our campuses. The kinds of personal attacks that are happening, they are happening on our campus as well. There is a difference that in our campus is in the middle of – in Colorado, where it’s still predominantly white, and although we’ve made strides to get more diverse students, we still are only about 17 percent of our students are ethnically diverse.

But nevertheless, no matter where you are – whether it’s a campus with a larger population in North Carolina or in Colorado – our students are still suffering. And so, what I was going to talk about kind of changed on Tuesday, and I thought I would give another perspective, and of course I started to reflect. Now, yes, I’m in Student Affairs and we embrace the whole idea of reflection, and I’ve come to embrace that. I have not always, but I really needed to do some reflecting. And what I started to think about is: one, how did we get to where we are now? And where are we going to go in the future?

But as I stepped back to think about our students, as we think about the cultures and the different identities that are represented on our campus, I think it’s important to recognize that this is not new, that we’ve had different cultures and different identities on our campuses for many years. It looked different and there have been pioneers that came to our – specifically predominantly white campuses, campuses that turned from all male to female – and I call these folks the pioneers because they were on the campuses, but it was different.

And when I think about myself, I was one of those pioneers, as I’m sure many of you were in some ways in this room today. I was first-generation. I was low income. I am black, and a woman. And I remember making the decision to go to a predominantly white college. My older sister went to a predominantly white school in the ‘60s, my brother in the early ‘60s. And, in my position, I work a lot with alumni from Colorado State that we’re trying to re-engage our diverse alumni and heard stories from them. And so, I know that my experience was not a unique experience, but I remember when I made that decision, my sister and other people in our community said – who had gone to predominantly white schools – they said, “Now, you know when you go, they don’t really want you, and so you’re going to have to go and make the best of it because they’re not going to support you. They don’t think you’re smart enough to be there. You’ve got to prove them wrong.”

And sure enough, you know, at that point the schools – the schools that many of us work at right now – were letting us in more than a couple. They let a few in before this but, you know, yeah, they had to let us in. Some by choice because they thought it was the right thing to do. But most by law because they had to if they wanted to get federal funding and they were forced to do it. So, it’s like, “All right, you know, we’re going to let them in,” they’re going to let us in, “but it’s going to be business as usual. You can come, but you better assimilate to our campus, to the curriculum, to the services. We’re not changing a thing about how we run business because this is how we do it. This is how we think is the best way to do it, and if you want to be educated, you come and you do it our way.”
Heaven forbid that I ever had a class – except for my Black History class – where there was a person of color in the reading, that when we talked about research it was never about me, never about my experience, never about my issues as a black person but about other issues that didn’t include us. Most of the researchers were white. Most of the researchers were men that we read about. And I didn’t question that – not to them – because I understood that that’s what it meant to go to a predominantly white college – that you had to go and just fit in the best that you could.

Eventually, many of the schools had some protests, similar to what we’re having now but not quite the same, and that provided maybe more support for us. That’s where we saw multicultural centers and different places where we could go to get help because they recognized, “All right, if we’re going to have you here, we get it – you need support. The rest of us don’t want to help you but let us hire some folks who will. And you go there, and we’re not going to give them any money, but you know, we are giving them a paycheck, so be happy for that.” And those people – those people were so dedicated and they worked their butts off to help us. And in my professional position, I was one of those people in those roles, and those were important roles.

And there were also the people – the majority – who did welcome us. And there weren’t a lot, but there were some, and I think about, well, they were pretty brave because that was not really acceptable, but they tried to make our experience the best that it could be. And then, I guess we were surprised that there were low demographics and they say, “For us to survive, we’ve got to look at this changing demographic and figure out a way to bring these students in.” Some wanted to do it, others reluctantly but feeling like, “If we’ve got to survive, this is what we need to do.”

But the difference now is that these students – our students are saying, “Hey, you want us here, we want to be here but you are going to have to acknowledge what we bring to your campuses. We want to know about our history. We don’t know – we don’t want to know about the one truth. We want to talk about the multiple truths out there. We want to see us in research. We want to see us be part of the thread of our university, making decisions, being seen, being heard and being valued. And I love that because they can do that openly when I couldn’t.

And as we think about now and the struggles that our students are having – because for many of them we’ve opened the doors, we’ve said, “we want you, we’re providing resources”, and for many of them right now they’re saying, “and half the country from our perspective is saying, ‘this was all crap, you all don’t care about us, you don’t really want us. We’re not part of this country. Who are we now and what do we need to be doing?’”

And so, for us – all of us – we’re still going to have to step it up. We often talk about the head and the heart. My observation working at a research institution is that we’re really good with the head – with the intellectual. We need to get better at the heart, and we need both. And Student Affairs people are not just the heart, we also have the head, okay? We’re both. And faculty, you’re not always the head, you also have the heart. But somehow, we don’t feel like it’s comfortable for us to talk about that. And so, we – if we’re going to get past this – we have to work together. We have to make sure that these students understand that they are valued – all of our students – the students who don’t want the diversity, we have work to do with them as well because they’re not quite understanding why it’s important for us to be working together.

So that is our challenge. That’s the challenge that I give all of us as we move forward. As hard as it feels right now, our students need us, our country needs us, and we’ve got to step it up and make sure that we’re providing that support that our students need as we ask our students that we have to help them be holistic, we too have to be holistic in our own lives and recognize that we need all of that to move forward. So, thank you.

Okay, so now the panel members – we’re so honored to have three of our panel members, each who are going to take a piece of our conversation. So Paul Thayer is going to talk about an overview of research on culture, identity, learning, and discovery. Paul is at Colorado State University and is the Special Advisor to the Provost and Associate VP Emeritus, even though he doesn’t know what “Emeritus” means – at Colorado State. Larry Roper, he’s going to give examples of the use of student identity and social justice to assist students in their path to success. Larry is Professor and former Vice Provost for Student Affairs at Oregon State University. And Amy Burkert is going to talk about the exploration of campus-wide partnerships and providing inclusive excellence. And Amy is the Vice Provost for Education at Carnegie Mellon University. So, we will start with Paul.

Paul Thayer
Special Advisor to the Provost and Associate Vice President Emeritus for Student Success, Colorado State University

Thanks so much, Blanche, and good morning to all of you. This is really good to be in this room together. I’ve been asked to review the research related to our topic in order to just kick off some of the discussion. By the way, the slides and an annotated bibliography are available on SCHED, on the website. Let me take the occasion to appreciate my good and capable colleague, Dr. Karen Gardenier, for her assistance with the research.

Well, here we are . . . , gathered in from research institutions all across the country. Now, it may or not surprise you that when we take a look at Carnegie Classifications and institutions by Carnegie Classification it turns out that our sector, Research 1s and 2s, (R1s, R2s), together are the most ethnically and racially diverse of any of the other sectors. Now, that shouldn’t obscure for a second how far we have to go or how far we are from true equity in representing
the population in general, but it’s important to know this about ourselves; that we occupy a special place among institutions and with that special place comes special responsibility. Sounds a little bit like a beverage commercial, doesn’t it? But we are substantially challenged as well. While we are the most diverse, the research also tells us that we, in our sector, are the least likely to use pedagogies that are most responsive to students from underrepresented backgrounds.

What kinds of things? Active learning, for example, the incorporation of multicultural perspectives built into the curriculum. Things that are, as I said, particularly important to students from underrepresented populations but also really speak to all students. There are effective pedagogies for all students. It’s also true, the research tells us, that we’re the least likely, we’re the least likely place for students to interact with faculty and we know just how important that interaction is. So here we are; the special place, a special responsibility, and a substantial challenge.

In thinking about this it’s useful to remind ourselves about the components of our learning environment. Put simply it’s an issue of the person, student, faculty, staff, and the environment and, most importantly, the interaction between them. When we think about the person and when we think about this interaction, culture and identity matter greatly. After all, no one goes anywhere without their identity. It is who we are. It is not some small artifact. It is literally who we are. It’s what we brought to the table, to each of our tables this morning.

Environment matters as well. Environment has an awful lot to do with how each of us performs. Environment can help us to absolutely outperform all expectations and, on the other side, environment can cause us to underperform greatly. But the point is that environment is never neutral. Each of us experiences the environment in a different way, given the differences in those interactions many times based on culture and identity.

Now that’s true in the macro environments, for example, the town, the city in which our institutions reside and the broad campus environment as well, as well as the microclimates. “Microclimates” meaning the classroom, your classroom, the residence hall, all the many other microclimates of our campus. All of those can be a source of support or they can be a source of stress and what we’ve learned about stress in learning is that stress interferes. And the science of learning, in fact, teaches us that that’s true right down to the – right down to the atomic level; that the ability of electronic impulses to move across to synapses in one’s brain is dependent on the absence of excesses of stress.

So back to the environment. There’s a whole – there’s just a myriad of signals in the environment through which we interpret things. Sometimes those are obvious, sometimes subtle, sometimes we perceive those on a conscious level, sometimes unconscious. And in some cases, we can be oblivious. It’s particularly easy to be oblivious if the environment is consonant with our identity and culture. And alternately we can be especially sensitive if the culture is dissonant with our environment and culture.

Well, one of the critical insights here for us and for our colleagues is that we, especially those from the dominant culture, can be inclined to be oblivious – to not notice the difference or in some cases to deny the obvious difference all around us. And denial can be alienating for anyone, especially anyone who’s operating with culture and identity at the forefront of their experience of the institution.

So recognizing and dealing openly with difference is one of the things that drives toward inclusion of all members. Sometimes that’s not even hard; I’m thinking of a professor at CSU who opens every single class at the beginning of every single semester with her story about herself as a first-generation person and in that moment she suddenly has affirmed and validated the whole quarter of the student body. We have one out of four students at our institution is first-generation; she suddenly validated and included that whole group. In addition to that, she has signaled to everyone in the class that difference is something that we talk about here. It’s something that we talk about respectfully here and people suddenly have invitation to reach out to her in ways that they wouldn’t have before.

So culture and identity matter and environment matters. Here’s the good news. The good news is that we are at least moderately, certainly substantially, in charge of the environment. I want to borrow from Estela Bensimon who talks about ways that we tend to frame our experience, the way we tend to frame problems. One alternative is what she calls the “deficit frame,” in which we think about students and student issues and student success in terms of what students don’t bring to their experience; the various ways in which they are less prepared and so on. And when we frame things in that way, she observes, then we put ourselves out of control of the environment. We frame the question in such a way that we have no answers. What she suggests that we do is adopt an equity perspective, one in which what we’re attending to are the student outcomes for which we are indeed responsible and framed in that way it moves us towards action. It puts us in the driver’s seat. It acknowledges our responsibility for the environment and our responsibility for equitable outcomes.

Another way that somebody has put that, Tia McNair and her colleagues have written a new book that you may have read. Instead of talking about the issue of students coming to our campuses under-prepared, what she talks about is the importance of our becoming a student-ready university. Now, none of this denies student responsibility for effort, for their commitment to learning, but it does emphasize those things for which we are responsible and for which we have control.

Well, thinking about that issue of deficits. Previously we’ve tended to focus on this whole array of factors that we’re aware of that all are associated with differential opportunity. So for example, lower high school graduation rates for particular groups, fewer role models in the environment, less math preparation and so on and sometimes that’s led us to falsely frame these issues in terms of student deficiency; what’s been called a deficit perspective.

We’re thankfully at a different point, or at least we’re on our way there. Much of the new research really emphasizes that these differentials are due to differentials in opportunity. So we ought to be engaged in blaming the system not blaming students; the system that produces those differentials and outcomes. Indeed, most anytime that we do research and view research that controls for ability and controls for other factors, what we find time and time again is that it’s indicators of differential opportunity – family income, for example – not ability, that account for differential outcomes.

So what’s more useful? Both because it’s true and because it’s what really helps us in our role as educators is to attend to that array of assets that students bring. A role of educators, of course, is to attend to and develop all the assets that students bring to their environment, or they bring to this environment. Well, when we look at the research on some of those assets, here are some of the things that we see. We see a variety of things. We see one of the most obvious is the tremendous, extraordinary commitment that first-generation students, students of color, low-income students often bring to their education. The resilience that represents even how they came to be there. What we call self-authorship; the idea that first-generation
students are literally writing their own story as they go along while their more advantaged peers are simply living out the story that their parents have written for them. They bring different perspectives; different ways of knowing funds of knowledge that represent the rich learning from family and community.

And there are ways we can cultivate those assets and some of those have just really surprising powers. Some of the new research relatively simple and affordable but very durable interventions are pretty darn amazing. For example, you may have heard about the experiment with students, new students, viewing a panel and the panel has more experienced students and those more experienced students tell their story. It's important that they include in their story a description of their different experience in terms of identity and culture. So for example, a student telling about coming to campus as an underrepresented student, as a first-generation student, and the difficulty that they encountered. The fact that it was, indeed, an alienating experience that they felt alone, that they felt like giving up many, many times. That as they proceeded they began to find the resources around them and built new networks and community. And as they did that they became successful and in the end, they are the success that one can view as the panel presents.

And here's the amazing thing; that when people hear that story those who identify in any way with that experience, it turns out it makes a demonstrable difference in their grade point average, in their grade point average for that semester. In the likelihood that they'll use resources, in the likelihood that they'll interact with faculty. Not only during that semester, when measured at later points a couple of years later it turns out that those effects persist. Quite amazing to reframe the narrative around challenge to, on the other hand, normalize but, on another hand, validate the difficulties in the environment based on culture and identity.

There are other kinds of interventions that in the interest of time I'm going to skip over but the way we offer feedback, for example, is so darn important. When the way we give feedback represents the high standards that we have for students. The resources that we're able to offer students to improve and, thirdly, our confidence, our genuine confidence, that students are capable of success makes a tremendous difference both in student effort and, ultimately student performance.

The other things that we need to attend to are the ways that the environment can sometimes suppress those very assets that we’re trying to nurture. We’ve talked a little bit about microaggressions, that’s one of the things that is present so often in student's experience. On any particular day, that I thought was a pretty darn good day, I might be interacting with my colleagues, or my students, who have encountered a whole series of microaggressions all through that day. What are the ways that we are within our own environments in which we have influence operating to stem those microaggressions?

Stereotype threat, what a fascinating and powerful concept. The idea that whenever we’re concerned about the ways that people might perceive us in terms of stereotypes about me and my group. On any of those occasions that I’m likely to underperform, that the stress that causes me to underperform. And that’s true for almost anyone, depending on the circumstances. It’s true for women in situations related to math. It’s true with white male athletes when they accept a stereotype about African American male athletes and the white students underperform. A whole range of experience that confirms that environment can trigger reactions that tend to depress one’s performance. A very powerful concept.

Another that we can – and, by the way, that’s one that we can address we can change. We can alter the triggers in the environment that tend to trigger that response. We can know people as whole people and disarm that response. Cultural mismatch – our institutions tend to value independence. Many of our students value interdependence, yet all our messages go in the opposite direction. And the important thing about the research is that’s just not a nice idea, a useful idea, it turns out there is a demonstrable difference in performance, dramatic differences in performance when one creates an environment where that cultural mismatch disappears.

So when we recognize and nurture all aspects of the whole person, we’ve talked about the separations, the artificial separations. One of those has to do with the separations around academic personal and social dimensions of ourselves. We walk around as whole people and our students do, too. One of the ways that we can diminish stereotype threat, the thing we were talking about earlier, is for somebody to know all of me, to know my whole story. To the extent that the question that somebody asks me in an interaction is simply, “How did you do on that math test?” Then what it triggers for me is the possibility that somebody's perceiving me entirely through a superficial perception about my – about stereotypical – about my – about stereotypes. When somebody – when we can know somebody’s whole story, when we can inquire about their story, when suddenly a student can be confident that we understand them in terms of more dimensions than just a superficial stereotype, suddenly stereotype threat can diminish and faculty can become facilitators and resources rather than gatekeepers.

Well, these separations for individual students are also true at our institutions, aren’t they? I mean, we’ve artificially separated into colleges, in disciplines, into academic affairs and student affairs and those artificial separations are a problem for us as well because if we can put them back together then the whole campus becomes a learning space. As Blanche would say and has said, “We want to create an environment where a student goes to class and they’re learning and then they leave class and they go to the residence hall and they’re learning. And then they participate in the student organization that has learning outcomes in and has designed their environment in that way and they’re learning. Then they go to an academically focused club or organization that is culturally responsive and they’re once again learning.”

So across the curriculum, across the co-curriculum, when we put all of this back together to create a whole learning space we are the better for it. And in this sense when we do that, it turns out that, indeed, we are all educators. Everyone who is interacting with students in an educationally purposeful way is, indeed, an educator.

So we operate in so many settings and we need to be thinking across all of those to build a whole environment. One of those settings is the individual student. Components of that? Well, of course, we think about the faculty-student interaction and the ways we can influence our faculty colleagues to make those interactions a positive cultural experience. Mentoring, a way of validating students, in a very personal and long-term way.

Creating counter spaces, creating cultural counter spaces within which students can be entirely comfortable, where they can find community with others with similar experiences. And one of the things that we need to do is to support those counter spaces, the cultural centers for example, and be sure that we’re not giving a student a message that competes with the other things that they may be doing. It is complementary and may be essential to the things that students need to do to be successful.

We need to think about group experiences. What’s a classic one? The classroom. The opportunity to influence a whole group of students and create an
environment through pedagogy instructor positioning that is going to support student learning. Learning communities, academically focused organizations that are culturally supportive. Culturally based organizations.

And then, of course, we need to think of the institution, as well. When we think of the institution and the whole institutional climate we want to think about those components that contribute. It’s almost astounding that some of the things that we would think are extraneous are really important. Stated mission and values turn out to be, yes, really important. It turns out that actions and statements of institutional leaders, including all of us in this room, are very, very important.

It turns out the curriculum, the way we construct it, the content of the curriculum is absolutely fundamental to students’ understanding of the climate of the university and ours as well. And, of course, we want to think about the ways that we can accelerate our learning and development as institutions and as leaders. And one of those is here; the opportunities that we have to develop relationships and understandings and learning across institutions about things that work, things that don’t work, and the ways that we can collectively advance the culture.

Well, obviously a review of the research can’t really happen in 15 minutes but there are a number of things that I’ve tried to touch on. I’ve tried to touch on our particular places, research institutions, that in terms of proportions and numbers we are the most diverse and so we have great responsibility, even though we are so substantially challenged. I’ve talked about identity and cultural mattering and we need to help our colleagues understand that. And that the environment matters and we have substantial control over that environment no environment is neutral.

That the environment – excuse me, that enhancement to climate and practice benefit all of our students, especially when we are designing that environment in a way that recognizes and supports difference. Talked about the surprising power of some of the things that we can do to recognize and cultivate student assets. And a whole variety of other things in each of our environments, those that are individual, group, institutional and cross-institutional, that collectively support our objectives of student learning.

Fundamentally, this is about the quality of the learning experience for students from underrepresented backgrounds and for all students. We need to know that we need to operate across all of those, that every environment within which we interact is our opportunity to create a system of support, across educational services, that will best serve our students.

Thanks so much. Let me welcome to the stage, Larry Roper.

Larry Roper
Professor and Former Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Oregon State University

Okay, morning. So I’m going to – I don’t trust myself to keep track of time. So I’m actually going to have to put a timer on here. They’re much more trusting than me and I’m going to talk about teaching, and I never teach with a jacket on, so this is all new to me.

So I want to spend some time actually talking about the practical application of some of the environmental issues that Paul just described, and so first, I want to set the context. I teach – I coordinate our Social Justice minor at Oregon State University as part of my role as a faculty member in the School of Language, Culture, and Society. And I teach as part of that, a minor, a course called Approaches to Social Justice, and one of the aspects of that course is environmental scanning, or sometimes they call it visual anthropology exercise. And so let me just describe a little bit about the course.

So the goal of it is to facilitate student understanding of their – the multiple identities that they carry and how those identities will influence their ability to act as leaders in the spirit of social justice. So to try to think about sort of, “Who am I and what does that mean in terms of who I show up as a leader or as a person who says they’re committed to social justice?” And so as a result of that, we explore dominant identities, we look at marginalized identities and we also look at the notion of border identities in helping students to understand sort of where they fit. We look at issues of affective learning because of – and some people talk – call it sort of “trigger warnings”, but it’s really about affective learning. If we think about sort of affective learning and what it really means in terms of a person having an affective reaction to a subject in such a way that it influences behavior – so think about people who go into medicine who go into it because they want to heal people and then they get exposed to suffering and death, and it influences their ability. Well, taking that into account is an important aspect of affective learning, not “trigger warnings,” right? It affects.

So the notion of – we look at social distance theory. Who’s familiar with social distance theory? Let me explain what social distance theory is; it’s really interesting. It’s a concept that was developed in 1925 and it looks at the level of intimacy versus aloofness that people perform – prefer in their relationships, which ultimately sort of makes sense in society in terms of how in-groups and out-groups get formed. All right, so if you think about it, we – there’s a social distance scale that lists relationships from the most intimate relationship to the most aloof expression of relationship that you might have with a person. So one of the exercises in the class is we actually have students reconstruct the . . . Triandis’ social distance scale, which has fifteen different levels of relationship, ranging from – the most important would be, “I would marry a member of that group,” and going down, “I would . . . accept as a roommate, would accept as a neighbor, would accept as a friend of my club, would grant refugee asylum but not citizenship to this group,” all the way to, “I would participate in the lynching of a person from that group,” right. So think of the range of behaviors that we – so it’s helping students to think about sort of – and then I ask students that say, “Now give us some examples of behaviors that you’ve seen that reinforce the presence of social distance in our society.”

So we do social distance theory. We look at notions of power, privilege, and oppression; we look at various theories of justice, obviously, since this is social justice. And we look at theories of social change and we look at social – we look at contact theory, which is – again, is a really important theory in terms of how relationships form. In our exploration of social change theory, again, we explore some of the issues that Paul referred to, which Paul referred in terms of the approaches to social change, right, and so is it a creative approach, change in terms of, “the world that I’m trying to create,” or is it an eliminative approach, “the world that I’m trying to – variables in a world that I’m trying to eliminate,” right? So the difference between, “I’m trying to – we want to have a project that eliminates hate,” to “We want to have a project that creates a more loving environment.” The differences; so giving them various leadership frames through which they would do that and all of that aligns with the kinds of assignments that we have in the course.

So students have to do a self-narrative as the first exercise; they have to do a web search looking at examples of groups that promote justice and groups that promote oppression – or oppression, one or the other, and then I give them an analysis of – process through which they would do an analysis of those sites. They have to do interviews with someone who’s experienced an issue of social injustice to be able to talk about that story and to talk about possible personal interventions. And then they have a final project –
and they have some other projects in there, but they have a final project in which they have to identify a particular issue of injustice on our campus where redesign of some aspect of our institution’s functioning would promote a more just outcome for a particular group. And again, they have a very – we have a very involved process through which they would do that. What happens through that is the notion of correlation building, ally-ship and creating shared understanding and shared commitment to action.

The exercise that I want to talk about now relates to our environmental scanning exercise and this exercise is – again, we put students into groups – we spend lots of time helping them to understand the theory of visual anthropology: how to identify issues in the built environment as well as issues in other aspects of the environment. So looking at all environmental variables and thinking about, “How do those variables influence how various people feel about themselves?”

So one of the things that we do is we ask people when they walk into – when I walk into the room for our first class – we start the conversation by, “So how do you experience this classroom?” Immediately they begin to talk about the fact that they see people of diverse backgrounds in a classroom creates a different sense of culture, a different sense of connection and comfort than a space in which they are underrepresented. So immediately, we begin to understand that people are a significant aspect of the environment and who’s in the environment says something about how you might feel about yourself, and so we begin to help them understand that.

So through this exercise, the exercise, we have them identify a space on campus where they will go with a group of their classmates and conduct an audit, and again, I provide them with an audit profile, and so we start with just sort of helping them to understand that, first of all – that in some ways that we don’t necessarily see the world as it is, we see it as we are. So we see it through our own particular frame and one of the exercises that I have them do at the beginning of a class is we do sort of an exploration of the landscape of their – the inner landscape of their own lives, right. So I ask them the question of, “How does it feel to be you? How much heaviness or lightness do you carry on a day to day basis?”

I introduce it by telling them a story [about] when I first started at Oregon State. I was walking across campus (literally, it was like two weeks after I started), and some freshman who was there for orientation looks at – walks up beside me and looks at me, and he says, “So who are you?” I say, “I’m Larry.” He says – oh, he says, “So what do you do?” I say, “I work here.” He said, “No, what do you do?” and I said, “Well, I’m the Vice Provost of Student Affairs,” and he says, “OK. So what do you do?” And I – so I describe – I said, “I supervise housing, I do student conduct and all that,” and he looks at me and he says, “Man, it must suck to be you.” And so I decided, “OK, I need to find a better answer.” So my shorthand became, “My job is believing in other people’s children, and here’s how I do it.”

But I told students that, and then I say, “So what – the question is who on this campus wakes up every morning and says, ‘It sucks to be me?’ And what messages have we built into our environment that reinforces to them that it should suck to be you here?” And so we send them out in teams, and so we had a group of – and so we asked to – I give them a protocol, which is much more extensive than this in terms of a protocol for conducting environments. But in looking at the environment, I ask them to think about, “So what messages are communicated, how might the design of the space influence behavior, what beliefs or attitudes toward a particular identity group does design of the space communicate?”

And I give them an example of years ago on our campus, and our colleague Brett will remember this. We had a room called the President’s Conference Room and in that President’s Conference Room were the portraits of all the former presidents of Oregon State University. And think about what groups may not have wanted to use that room, right, because again, the design of the space said to – communicated to certain groups, “You’re not going to be successful here; there’s nothing about you that suggest that you’re a leader if you sit in this room,” for certain groups and so again – So and then, “Where is there evidence of attempts to redesign the environment to meet particular needs?”

And again, campus planners and environmental – have people who’ve figured this out, right, because they would put in sidewalks and then people would sort of walk across the grass, and they’d be like, “OK, we put the sidewalks in the wrong place,” so you redo them. Well, that’s redesign of the environment; that’s a subtle example of redesign of the environment.

“What messages of encouragement or discouragement are observable in the environment?” And then, “Where else might the messages that you’re seeing be enforced?” So where is there redundancy around our – in our campus related to particular messages “And where might the messages or the message – or the messages be contradicted?” OK, so where might we build in contradictory messages and then, “What isms might the message or the contradiction influence?”

And so I want to give you an example of just one of the groups, and this was an environmental audit of Greek Row that was done by four Latinas who had said that they sort of feel like they gotten some subtle message, but now they had a new frame through which they wanted to take a look at those issues. And so one of the – part of the assignments is asking people to take photographs, to get any kind of materials, any things that sort of reinforce a message. There, they’d actually done a video, but that was a little more challenging and so their first – general first impression they had was, “We are in the wrong neighborhood,” right. And so immediately, they began to talk about the architecture, and then, they began to talk about the messages that were given to them of what, in their minds, represented plantation architecture.

And it was very interesting, I was talking at a board of trustees group at AGB, talking to some presidents about issues of campus design and talking – and just used that as an example, and one of the presidents immediately says, “Oh my goodness.” He said – I said, “What’s wrong?” He said, “That’s my house!” He says, “My – our president’s house looks like you’re going to a plantation.” He says, “So what do I do about that?” I didn’t answer him.

So the initial question, the issue they encountered was, “We’re in the wrong neighborhood,” and then, “What messages or values are expressed?” They talk about elitism. So they had a video and they had done a video of the cars that were parked in Greek Row, and basically said that they’re – really, it was very clear that there was a lot of wealth there, that it was sort of a separate world from the world in which they were living. Just the pure physical size of the spaces that they lived in relative to the houses that other students lived in, the amount of flags – again, some of the kind of political messaging that was there and that it was sort of sameness that went across those groups.

“What messages of injustice are designed into the spaces, the policies, human dynamics?” So again, we had some groups that actually looked at institutional policies; so we looked at all things that are sort of environmental variables that we may not look at. And so again, they talked about that they – in their environment, they felt like they experienced more messages of injustice than justice as it related to who they are, and so they – again, messages of colonialism, sexism, racism.
Again, they talked about some of the signs that were on the houses advertising various parties that had, in their views, racist themes, that it seemed to be – in their view, they seemed to be sort of a hyper-male environment, that there was, again, sort of a classism, ableism in terms of none of the houses were accessible. They all sort of sat up slightly on the hill with steps and so there was no visible sign that they were designed for people who might be disabled to actually participate as a part of that particular culture. Again, cultural appropriation with the ways that they were advertising various things. Colorism; again, in their view, there was sort of a toxic masculinity and again, in their minds, notions of white supremacy.

And so one of the – the final part of it was to ask them to think about interventions, and so they had to propose various interventions, and the general rules that I gave them, asked them to think about in the class, again, is much more extensive as part of the assignment, but focus on – the focus is on manipulating the environment, that, “What will we change in the environment that would make it feel more open, more accessible, more supportive of your learning, growth, and success?” OK and so the focus on that, and again, that the focus should be that we are redesigning environments to reinforce values and to support the identities of those who are part of our community.

So, “How will we approach that?” and then reinforcing – and again, that it’s sort of – it’s unethical to manipulate individuals, right. So it’s like, “How do you change students?” No, “How do we change the environment that influences the direction in which students may change?” And there’s a difference there.

And the final thing that I just want to share is that we try to – particularly because it’s a course on social justice and we attract students who have a particular energy for that subject is to think about how to teach that course in a way that’s not political, that in fact allows students to come into it and to enter the experience at whatever their level of readiness to learn is, but that also has a values basis to it. And so the final section that I cover is on servant leadership, and it’s the idea that you only change an environment that you care about the inhabitants of that environment, that you don’t change things to get your way or in a self-serving kind of way. So it’s that challenge of trying to figure out, “How do we meet students in terms of their urgency that they have but to also influence the frame through which they think about things so that they are approaching things in a way that their behavior is actually just?” Because again, sometimes in the quest for justice, we can act our own injustices, and to do that – and so I try to help students to keep that awareness of themselves, and again, how they see the world and how that might influence those places where they feel – that they feel affect the level of pain that they may experience. So that’s it. Thank you very much.

Amy Burkert  
Vice Provost for Education, Carnegie Mellon University

Good morning. I felt after the events of this week and some discussions that we had in the UVP network yesterday that I would change the focus of my remarks just a little bit because as Blanche mentioned, there are so many inspiring things that are going on on each and every one of our campuses, and in each and every one of our communities, but in many ways, I think over the last few months and days, we’ve seen we really do need to step it up.

And so as we close at this last formal part of the first plenary, I thought it was important for us, or for me, to issue a call to action to think about, “What does it mean to step it up, what does this conference give us as a way to learn from each other and with each other, and to leave here with some specific action items on our list?” And I decided that we have the example of the research grounding. We went into the specific example of a specific case, but as Vice Provost for Education – and if you think it’s hard to explain to students what a vice provost or president of student affairs does, try vice provost for education. For a student, that’s often very difficult as well and even to others on campus, but I felt that it was important to kind of take it back up to that higher level and talk about not only making excellence inclusive, which is a lot about that individual focus on disadvantaged and underrepresented populations. But I also think it is imperative for us to think about preparing all of us for inclusive excellence, and while that’s just a turn of words, it does mean something very different in the way in which we approach our work and what might be prioritized in our activities.

To begin, I always like to ground [my remarks] in a student and I want to challenge all of you to think about, “What student would you place in this picture?” This is literally one of my former advisees and that’s a picture when she came in in our first-year seminar, and that’s her at the very end of her senior year. You all have these stories in your hearts and in your minds. You know that they came in perhaps with a relatively narrow worldview, with very little confidence, not really sure of where they were going or how to navigate our institution. This student actually came from a small rural area in Louisiana and landed at Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh, and it was quite different in terms of environment as we’ve heard. But she took advantage of the curricular and co-curricular opportunities, in particular, undergraduate research for this particular person was something that transformed her. And I think when we look at our jobs and our focus today and this – the next few days, I really want us to look at that era because that’s what we’re trying to do. We’re trying to understand what contributes to that transformative experience on an individual level but also at a collective and institutional level.

As you all know, making excellence inclusive is AAC&U’s guiding principle for access, student success, and high-quality learning. The thing that I think is important is that it’s an active process and it does require us not just to focus on the student but to focus on ourselves and our colleagues and our infrastructure, and think about, “What is it that we are doing as an active process to make our campuses more inclusive and to challenge each other to gather the knowledge and expertise to have that sustained institutional change?” So as I said, I really feel that in addition to making excellence inclusive of all groups and perspectives, it’s also preparing all for inclusive excellence.

So again, we want to prepare each of our students. Again, when we look at some of the things that are happening on our campus, we may have a diversity requirement in our curriculum. We may have amazing courses like the one you heard about, but how many of our students are getting those experiences? We may have an amazing program on our campus. We had a program that the students actually supported that was called, “Why Take a Knee?” and there was a big dialogue around what happened in those discussions. We have all of those, but for the most part, they’re the same people coming to those events and opportunities, and there are a lot of people – maybe the silent majority – that are not engaging, and we need to think about, “How do we do that?”

So some elements of inclusive excellence that we’ve been looking at as part of our strategic plan – certainly, again, these align with many I’ve seen in benchmarking on your own websites and at other presentations that you’ve given. Broadening access and preparation; supporting and advancing success; cultivating competency with scholarship and experience, and this is something our students are actually crying for. They want it to be within the curriculum to validate that it’s important, that we take a stand and say that
The Multiple Intersections between Culture, Identity, Learning, and Discovery in Research Universities

we’re going to bring our expertise to bear and to help them develop the ways of approaching difficult topics and conversations. Facilitating the impact through infrastructure and assessment, and then an action-oriented commitment to improving the overall culture. Recently, our president and provost have mounted a university-wide task force on the experience and again, I think all of us are in an evolutionary process or a growing process. I don’t think any of us can say we are where we want to be, but I think all of us are trying to move that needle in the right direction.

One of the things I also thought was important as we look at inclusive excellence: to think about, “What are the unique aspects in a research university as we think about these activities?” We’ve already heard that we are among the most diverse in terms of international students, in terms of representation in volume and demographics of any types of higher ed institutions. So again, that does give us selective opportunities, but as you’ve seen in the literature, are we actually taking – making use of that and capitalizing on that for all of us to grow?

We also have stages of growth across the continuum. I know that, for example, there are folks who are looking at the relationships and mentoring from undergraduates to graduate students to postdoctoral students to the faculty and staff, and how do we take advantage of those vertical pathways across that continuum as role models and mentors? Access to innovative tools and technologies: We, in general, have a problem-solving mindset at a research university that again, I think, can help us as we look at our brainstorming and activity.

We are open to fostering new ideas and approaches, although implementing that change is not a trivial activity. Immersion in the complexity of real-world challenges: again, a lot of what we are trying to do is make the world better through our scholarship and our activity. There’s also active learning and mentorship, and undergraduate research. Certainly, that’s not only at the research university, but I do think it’s been a distinctive element of our institutions for many years.

There’s also an integrated loop between research and education. We’ve heard about that particularly related to learning science and how that translates back into the ways in which we are conducting our educational experiences in and out of the classroom, but again, I think we could be more deliberate in that place.

And then the final point I want to make is campus partnerships on our campuses, because of where we sit, can actually be scalable and sustainable rather than very small efforts that you might to try to do in an individual model.

Two examples that I wanted to share – one of an academic and student affairs partnership, and this actually is an unusual model in that it is very student-centered, but it is a holistic approach to the ways in which we advise and support our students. At the core of that relationship, as a former academic advisor myself, I feel that that is one of the cornerstones of that relationship, as is the faculty mentoring role, and I see those as distinct and important. We also, on our campus – in the division of student affairs – have both a college liaison model, where every college has a designated student affairs professional and for students in residence, they have a house fellow. And finally, we have a separate career consultant, and we look at that as a partnership for success, that every student knows who those people are and ideally, would be tapping into that as a support resource and a team helping them navigate. I think this does allow us to know their stories in a way as we’ve heard, to go beyond just, “What are the courses you need to complete?” But really being able to see that, “Your face isn’t looking quite the same today and how does that play out as part of the team?”

Also as we include curricular elements from both of these dimensions, we actually move from that “usual suspects” approach. So one idea that we’ve been trying in the science college on campus is an integrative model for a holistic core education and this was actually developed as a partnership between our academic and student affairs liaisons. And we actually are launching a new general core education for the college. It’s in its second year and it’s actually requiring students to meet these expectations of outcomes in four dimensions – scholar, professional, citizen, and person. And this is something that is started with a first-year seminar that is co-taught with faculty and peer leaders. There are elements of engaging in wellness, service, and the arts in a STEM college. Again, I can talk to you offline about trying to get that past some particular faculty, but it – we were successful in doing so. We have incorporated a teaching faculty advising model and authentic assessments, and then finally, I’ll just leave you with a teaser that our very early indicators showed a rise in our persistence and also a decrease in probation and suspension in the first year. So we’re excited; we have a lot of work to do, but it is an emerging model.

I do think we also have to prepare ourselves and our colleagues, and you’ve heard some of that. We’ve been trying to do that, recognizing some of the expertise you all have developed and what’s been going on even in the corporate sector, such as – Google’s Bias Buster training has been going on across our campus. I do think it’s important that we hold ourselves accountable. Again, we’ve proposed a diversity dashboard and inclusion dashboard on our campus, and also have been looking at the equity scorecard that USC has developed and put forward through AAC&U. So again, I think there are a lot of ways – we have a lot of work to do to go forward.

But I think I’ll just end by saying I always like the notion of, “Be the change that you wish to see in the world.” I think there’s probably not a more important time to be saying that, but I guess I would say instead of or addition to being the change, I would also challenge us to educate the change that we want to see in the world. So I hope you have an amazing conference and I look forward to our discussion.

Mike Mullen

Are there questions for our panelists, comments?

Marsha Lovett

Thanks. Hi, thank you for those inspiring words at such a delicate time. I work at a teaching and ed tech center. I’m Amy’s colleague at Carnegie Mellon and one of the things that resonated with me was that no environment is neutral. I think the same can be said that teaching is also not neutral, it’s values-laden and so we’ve been talking at our table today about how we can get these important messages and the education to more than just the choir. So the faculty at our campuses, the students, and so forth who may not be engaged. In particular, I think about the faculty members at R1 universities whom we want to bring into this conversation and yet who are having a lot of different initiatives and constraints and expectations put on them. So if you have thoughts on those challenges, we’d appreciate it.

Mike Mullen

Any of the panelists have a comment on that?

Larry Roper

I think the relationships are the core of all it and again, I think part of it is the question of, “What is the work that we will want – in which we want to engage with others?” as opposed to, “What is the work we want to get others to do?” And so I’ve – the places where I’ve seen to be most successful is when you’ve taken an effort to others and say, “Is there a way that we can partner to make sense out of this aspect of the student experience around which we think have a shared
concern or a shared issue?” Or you seize on a moment of controversy and use that as an example to change.

Many years ago, I had a W. K. Kellogg Foundation grant, Leadership for Institutional Change grant, and we some real controversy going on in our college of veterinary medicine around the teaching of a surgery class, and that involved euthanizing animals. And students’ concern about the curriculum and the messages that were given about that. And so we used that as an opportunity to go over and partner with them to say, “Is there a way that we can have a shared exploration of the significant issues in veterinary medical education?”

And again, I was in Student Affairs at the time, and typically, Student Affairs folks aren’t getting in the middle of veterinary medical education. But we had a tool, right, which was some support for the exploration of the curriculum, and so we did a yearlong symposium around that particular topic and ultimately ended up coming up with some really interesting ways that they were able to approach medical education and stimulate the faculty to think about a proposal, which ultimately, they got through. They got some funding to actually create a small animal hospital. So now they don’t have to teach the medicine in the same way, but it was just seizing an opportunity and so what I would say is scan the landscape for opportunities for partnership for institutional change as opposed to coming in out of nowhere and just sort of going at people and saying, “You need to change.” I think people react negatively to that.

Amy Burkert

I was hesitant to respond to Marsha because we talk about this all the time, but I will point back to something we heard in this very room two years ago and that was, “Until we change the faculty and staff recognition, reward and preparation structures, that’s going to be very hard to just keep adding on expectations.” So I know on our own campus, we took that as something that we’re trying to move, but that’s a difficult landscape to navigate. I do think at the national level that may be something we want to think about because I do think it is an important way in which we can support and perhaps motivate change.

Paul Thayer

A couple things that come to mind: one is that whenever we really can engage faculty, I’m always—I’m really surprised at how receptive people can be who I thought never would be. So when we can find ways to tell the story in a way that’s accessible, I become very encouraged. Another thought—and coincidentally, the meeting that I had for the three days before this focused on that very thing—I think when—one of the ways that we want to approach this is to think of, “Where do faculty gather? What are the opportunities that we have to engage faculty?” If we call them together only for our issue—and I think this relates a little bit to Larry’s comment—then they aren’t likely to come. When we can find the places that faculty are already gathering and then work with people who are in charge of that environment to figure out how these issues can arise in that context. Put that together with the optimism that I have about people, really understanding as long as we can find a good way to tell the story. I think that I have—I really do think that we can change environment. There is no question that we’ve got to think about the terms of promotion and tenure and rewards and so on, and if we wait for those to change, we’ll never get there. So at the same time as we were working on that issue, that can’t deter us from doing the things that we can in the instances where faculty are together.

Mike Mullen

Question?

Audience Member

Hi, thanks also for your comments. Along the lines of changing faculty reward and recognition—and could you speak to the problems we sometimes have? And we as faculty are pointy eggheads. So hearts all in is a very difficult move for many faculty. So instead of just saying we need to do that, could you talk to how we can help many faculty make that transition? We have faculty, as we all know, who you’ll hear from students, they look at the PowerPoint and then to the back of the room and then back to the PowerPoint instead of making eye contact and engaging with the learners as junior colleagues in their class. As a learning community, that’s a huge step across disciplines, but a huge step. Can you speak to how we might help that transformation so the rest could transform to?

Larry Roper

I think there are ways that we can humanize our classrooms by simple activities. One thing that I do to begin every class is give students—and I explain this in the first class that we would do this every week—and it’s to give students a chance to respond to one of two questions or both. One is, to start the class, “What is something that’s new and good and what’s something that may be taking up emotional or psychological space for you right now?” That allows us to invite the students’ whole self into the classroom and it is amazing the ways that students will begin to build educational community with each other by responding. So you get to certain points in a month and what was taking up psychological space for a number of students is, “It’s close to the end of the month; I don’t know if I’m going to have enough food money.” People start to share about, “Well did you know that there’s a food pantry here. Did you know that you could get support here?” So I think just a simple question that can help students to know that you care about how they are and you care about what they’re bringing with them into the classroom.

Amy Burkert

And I also think it’s important to give permission to faculty sometimes. I think particularly in our young faculty, they’re a little nervous about showing the heart and are not really sure how to do it. I’ll give one example of what we tried this fall. We actually, through our teaching and learning center and our task force, developed some syllabus wording that would be possible for faculty to just take and plop into their syllabus or adapt and adopt in any way they wanted to, but it gave them the resource but also was sent out from the provost saying, “I hope you’ll think about adding this more humanistic, ‘How do you get help? We’re here to help you; here are the resources,’ kind of language in their syllabus,”

And the—I won’t say that it was perfect. I mean we have heard from some students, “Every faculty member took two minutes to actually say they care at the beginning of our class when they were going over the syllabus,” and that was a minor thing. Now there were some faculty who stood up and said, “I was told to do this, so I don’t know what I’m supposed to say,” but again . . . I think we’ll take the small wins because, on whole, we heard more of the positive outcome than the negative. And I think that that sent—those are some practical matters of being able to say, “We value this; we want you to be able to do that,” and they don’t have to worry, “Am I going to be looked at as less than if I put that in my syllabus?”

Blanche Hughes

I teach a first-year seminar and one of the assignments that the students have to do is they have to go and interview all of their faculty members, and we have questions and things like, “If you could do something else, what would you do? What were you like when you were a freshman in college? What things did you participate in and why did you decide to go for an advanced degree?” And so it’s been fascinating. The students hate that assignment. It’s the one that they never want to do and it’s always their favorite assignment afterwards because they’ve learned
things about faculty members that they didn’t know and places where they connected. And they say after that, the faculty member tends to be more – they’ll go and say hello to them, will say, “Hey, I know you’re interested in this and I found this,” and so it’s really made a difference. So I think it’s multiple – depending on the faculty member, multiple ways in which you have to do this, but I think helping the faculty member, especially the shy ones and also telling our students that many of their faculty members are not – they’re into their research. They’re not – they don’t have great social skills, some of them. We’re just being blunt. They just don’t and that doesn’t mean they’re not good people or that they don’t care about you; they just – they lecture and they leave because that’s like one of the most uncomfortable things in the world is to get off their lecture, but if you talk to them individually, most of them, you’ll see that you can make a connection and in most cases, that’s been true.

Paul Thayer
Just a quick comment. A conversation that I had two days ago, it reminded me how important it is to remind our faculty colleagues and ourselves that we don’t have to be expert in these areas. We have to be genuine and if we acknowledge to students that we don’t know everything, that even though we don’t know, what we’re wanting to do is to create an atmosphere in which difference is respected. Then it disarms our needing to feel like we are absolutely perfect and have all the answers in advance because we never will.

Mike Mullen
Well, it’s 10:30 and we have a break scheduled. I think we could probably continue this conversation for a few more hours, but we do have six breakout sessions that touch on many of the issues that we’ve just covered in the last hour and a half. I will add my own thought to that last piece: I’m observing faculty on our campus asking us – Student Affairs, provost office – how to have these conversations and often times, they’re as nervous, or more nervous, about having these conversations than the students who wish that they might have the conversations with them. So I think part of the idea of giving faculty permission to have difficult conversations – it’s better to have that conversation and be awkward than to not have it at all. So to the extent that we can encourage our faculty to acknowledge the issues that are going on and the fact that they do impact what goes on in that microclimate, that classroom, I think, is really important. So I’d like to thank our panelists; let’s give a round of applause.

The Multiple Intersections between Culture, Identity, Learning, and Discovery in Research Universities

The breakout sessions that followed the opening plenary focused on research findings on central aspects of the intersections between culture, identity, learning and discovery: inclusive pedagogies; the impact of co-curricular engagement on integrative learning and inclusion; inclusive advising; the impact of expectations and images on actual and perceived performance; the multiple origins of attainment gaps; and the impact of writing on learning in STEM disciplines.

1A: Inclusive Pedagogies in Face-to-Face and Blended Courses
Christopher Lee, Professor of Chemistry, Biochemistry, and Molecular Biology, University of California, Los Angeles

In this session, Dr. Lee provided insight into how he recognized a need to identify students’ difficulties in his Computer Science classes more efficiently and how he addressed those issues. Lee described a number of barriers to student success, including “blind spots” (areas where students may not know the appropriate contextual information to complete problems successfully) or any barrier to two-way communication that reduces learning outcomes. By locating where these blind spots are happening, he could identify patterns in students’ learning and proficiency to find where additional teaching and interventions may be needed.

Lee created an online tool that can detect the moment a student is having difficulty with a problem during online practice sessions. Using this tool helps him assess students’ blind spots so he knows what he needs to cover or review in class to address what students had the most trouble with during the practice sessions. The instructor can notice trends and find common areas of concern for students. In this tool, students are also given a confidence measure so to allow the instructor to see how confident students are feeling about the material. The online tool also evaluates if a student feels an issue is resolved or if they need more information or explanation after the instructor has provided interventions.

Lee emphasized that in order to eliminate barriers to success in courses we need better tools for teaching, assessment, and intervention. Lee views “homework” as a formative assessment designed to help students learn without an emphasis on a grade, so he does not require practice problems to be completed for points or a grade. Practice problems should address real-world issues to which students apply the skills they have learned to something that they view as valuable and applicable to life beyond class. The problems should contain new material not previously covered in the course and be open-ended so that students can answer in their own words to explain their thinking. Students’ learning is then summatively assessed by an in-class quiz, also conducted online for continued assessment of blind spots by the instructor.

While these tools are promising for providing interventions to correct blind spots and other barriers to student success in these courses, Lee identified some challenges. The main challenge is that the practice problems are not required so not all students are benefiting from the “blind spot” assessment. If students are not doing the practice problems online, the instructor is not able to see when/where a student is struggling with the material. In addition, students need to complete the practice problems well in advance so the instructor is able to adjust assignments and class material based on the issues identified. While there is opportunity here for other STEM classes to use this tool, at this point, it is uncertain how non-STEM courses could utilize it. Using this tool also creates more work for the instructors since they need to see where each student has difficulty and adjust lesson plans and assignments accordingly.

Discussion in the session addressed faculty mindset toward teaching and interventions. Instructors and, as a result, students can be caught in a vicious cycle in which faculty think they have provided extra information and plenty of opportunity to discuss and consider the material, and students may, in fact, need extra intervention and time with the material. If faculty are unwilling to alter lesson plans to meet students where they are at, students then continue to struggle with the material. Faculty mindset is often informed and persuaded by data, and this tool provides an opportunity to gather and assess data that can help change their views. Additionally, some faculty view their courses as “gatekeeper” courses that are meant to weed out students who are not able to understand the material on their own. As a result, these faculty may feel that if they are not failing a specific number of students, they are not doing their job. Unless we can reframe this mindset, faculty may not be willing to engage with tools that will allow them to teach more effectively to students who may be struggling with the material.

Additionally, there was continued discussion of summative and formative assessment. The thread that came out of this was to implement harder formative assignments as homework, and then make the summative assessments less challenging so students
Preparing the pipeline continues throughout middle and high school with several outreach initiatives. The STEM Pipeline initiative is designed to prepare students in STEM areas. In order to prepare middle school students for college, UT has developed a math program focused on getting students college-ready in algebra, particularly in under-resourced schools. For high school students, the focus shifts to preparing students in chemistry. Additionally, UT Austin faculty members work with forty high schools across the state to develop curriculum and teach courses, as well as train teachers in curriculum development for college preparation. Texas high school students are also able to register for dual enrollment courses – to see themselves as college students before they are college students. Additionally, there are five UT outreach centers throughout the state that work in middle schools, high schools, and communities to help build the pipeline outside of Austin and help develop a college-going culture in smaller, more rural communities.

In order to help retain these students once they are enrolled, UT has instituted many key initiatives to help engage these students through graduation. Incoming students use ALEKS for math placement throughout the summer before coming to campus. The Gateway Scholars program currently works with more than 700 students as they transition from high school to college through a summer bridge program and targeted messaging during the summer before they arrive on campus. The Center for Gateway Scholars provides an on-campus space for these students to study, participate in co-curricular learning activities, receive tutoring, and work with academic coaches and advisors. These students also take one of more than 300 “signature” first-year seminar courses designed to connect them to the program, each other, and campus on day one. These courses help build skills necessary to succeed in college and beyond, including how to have conversations with those with opposing views, how to share ideas, listening skills, leadership skills, and how to find solutions to problems. The Gateway Scholars program also offers fully funded “Maymester” study abroad programs to China and South Africa for these students, many of whom have never been on an airplane.

Beyond the Gateway Scholars program, there are other university initiatives to promote student success and retention. The University Cultural Climate committee works to improve the campus climate for underrepresented students and educate the broad campus community on issues related to culture, identity, and inclusion. Faculty- and staff-driven initiatives include service-learning requirements in many courses, peer mentorship programs, proactive advising services, collaborative partnerships with other university groups and external programs, and reserving seats in certain classes for these students.

Bumphus also addressed the work of a faculty member in building an “inclusive classrooms” model at UT. Dr. Betty Jeanne Taylor (bettytaylor@austin.utexas.edu) created seminars that engage teaching assistants and assistant instructors in discussions about developing and sustaining an inclusive classroom climate. The classrooms are open, welcome, supportive environments where learning is interactive. Instructor and TAs help form study groups in the classroom. The program could be utilized to flip a classroom. Faculty members held additional office hours, take time to get to know the students on the first day of class, and are intentional about addressing and proactively avoiding micro-aggressions (e.g. learning how to pronounce names before saying them in front of the class).

The discussion that followed was primarily focused on finding resources to support similar programs, particularly outreach programs targeted toward rural communities, and incentivizing faculty and staff to participate. Suggestions for resources included working with university development offices to identify possible corporate partnerships, particularly in STEM fields, where businesses may be looking to invest in and groom diverse candidates; or to identify alumni who may be interested in supporting an endowment for a program. Incentive recommendations included rewarding, acknowledging, and offering opportunities for professional growth to employees who move the needle on student success; having conversations at the Dean/College level on engaging faculty in curriculum changes that may require course/lesson redesigns so that faculty are involved and do not feel as though they are being told what to do; as well as working to create a partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs in order to create a culture that values both curricular and co-curricular roles in creating integrative learning and inclusion.

1C: Inclusive Advising: Turning Indicators of Risk into Opportunities for Success

Vanessa Harris, Director of University Advisement, University of New Mexico

Brett MacFarlane, Executive Director of Academic Advising, University of California, Davis

This session was designed to discuss some of the institutional challenges facing advising at research universities and how to be supportive to traditionally underrepresented students and changing student...
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population profiles. A great deal of attention has been on scheduling courses and redesigning curriculum, and now institutions are looking at how to use advising to move the needle on student success. The presenters started the session by discussing the Advising and Academic Guidance specialized network that was created in 2015. They discussed the areas that the network has been exploring, including training and professional development; assessment; roles, responsibilities, and systems; and technology.

The presenters acknowledged that the terms in the session title could be debated (inclusive, risk, etc.) and they may have different meanings to everyone. The focus of the discussion was primarily on how we can transform institutions to be supportive of student success: How do we use advising to move institutional metrics and to be more inclusive? How can we focus on institutional barriers as opposed to “what is wrong with students”?

The presenters invited attendees to share their feedback on the first plenary session. Attendees shared the following reflections/themes:

• Reframing questions/issues to more asset-based and using institutional responsibility framework
• No “cost” to begin conversations about how we can utilize this framework
• Environmental scanning as a tool to build student agency – building problem-solving skills, involving students in conversation
• How can we make conversations on these important topics an expectation on campus and not a luxury during conference type of situations?

The presenters then outlined several small group discussion questions. Each table was assigned a specific question to discuss. Group discussion focused on the following questions:

1. How do you define “at-risk” students before they arrive at your institution?
2. How does your institution . . . help at-risk students?
3. How supported are the efforts to use analytics to measure program, instructors, and student success?
4. What are some intersections you have experienced at your institution and how did you address intersections?

After the small group discussions, the presenters asked members to report out to the larger group:

• Question #1: This group addressed the importance of looking at the landscape of campus and technology to assess cultural differences in the learning process. A challenge that they noted was that high advisor caseloads can be a barrier to being able to have in-depth inclusive conversations due to time constraints. Additionally, campuses are often good at one-year initiatives but struggle with continuing conversations or large-scale programmatic changes.

• Question #2: This group shared an advisor training course example from UC Davis called Developing Deeper Advising Relationships, which was a four-part series that was mandatory and included training on social justice in advising, self-awareness, cultural humility, and communication skills. This was a good example of partnership between student affairs and academic affairs and was a no-cost initiative as they used campus experts to develop and conduct the training. It was noted that other campuses have used workshop models but many trainings feel like “preaching to the choir” and attract people who are already invested. Another example shared was the Academic Advisors certificate course at Stony Brook, which was designed to improve consistency in the advising experience. It has expanded to include training for non-advising professionals. Stony Brook also offers university-wide training on implicit bias, which was partnered with a Whistling Vivaldi/book club and a visit by Claude Steele to campus to meet with staff.

• Question #3: This group discussed inclusive advising as a broad concept and approach that takes into account who students are, based on active listening and meeting students’ needs, and is focused on holistic development of the student. The group acknowledged that the use of inclusive advising varies by institution and structure and it is essential to use assessment data to determine weak areas within the institution. One challenge to assessment is determining a campus-wide definition of advising to use for assessment efforts. Two program examples that were shared included the University of South Carolina, which offers an advising training program and certification, and Virginia Tech, which hosts an Academic Advising conference. A challenge related to doing inclusive advising is that it may take more time to do and advisors are asked to do more with fewer resources. Technology may be one way to help with more strategic outreach initiatives.

• Question #4: Group members noted challenges to building intersections/synergies on campus are that individual motivations for particular roles vary greatly, and disconnections between conversations among upper-level administrators and the staff who are working “on the ground” more directly with students. Group members acknowledged the need to involve all staff voices. A related challenge is that the roles of advisors are not well understood and can create tension between faculty and staff. The group offered examples of effective models for creating synergy on campus. An example of an effective model from Colorado State University was shared regarding the Academic Success Coordinator model, which embeds staff members in academic units and creates partnerships between student and academic affairs. An additional example was shared from the University of California, Berkeley where faculty members hold offices in satellite locations in order to be more accessible to students. The group also highlighted that a major challenge for students is that universities are organized to be discipline-specific, but that is not reflective of the student experience. We need to think about how to design institutions and services around the student’s experience. We also need to be able to “tell the story” of advising to be able to move systemic change forward.

The presenters ended the session by encouraging attendees to connect and share on Trellis and also mentioned the upcoming NACADA Administrators conference as an opportunity for continued professional development.

1D: Intersecting Expectations and Images: Assessing their Impact on Actual and Perceived Performance

Elizabeth Guertin, Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education, Indiana University-Bloomington

Rob Rodier, Director of Technology and Informatics, John N. Gardner Institute

Since an “at-risk” student can look quite different in terms of academic preparation, residency, familial support, access to resources, fit within the chosen discipline, etc., there is not a single definition or equation for how best to work with students who may be experiencing challenges at any one institution. With that in mind, this session was designed to explore how institutions evaluate student challenges on their campuses. A common thread was that institutions are making efforts to know and understand their student populations and then trying to sleuth out what might be shared attributes affecting a particular set of students. At one institution, creating a Venn diagram of first-generation, low-income, and uncertain high school academic preparation showed that these markers did not overlap as much as the administration
thought they would, which changed the focus of their efforts to reach out to students with one or more of these characteristics. Additionally, there are concerns about how much labels and mindset could potentially negatively impact the success of a student who is viewed as “at-risk.”

The moderators had the group break into table discussions, with each table focusing on one of the following questions:

1. How do you define “at-risk” students before they arrive at your institution?
2. How does your institution (advisors, faculty, support staff) help at-risk students?
3. How supported are the efforts to use analytics to measure programmatic, instructional, and student success?

When the group reconvened for a large group discussion, discussion initially centered on what defines an at-risk student and communication with and about these students. The group noted we are working in the realm of human beings, and predictive algorithms cannot be relied on to provide correct answers to every question. Instead, faculty and staff need to be ready to listen and understand how students are experiencing challenges or barriers to success that impact their ability to persist. Examples of programs were shared of how different schools are evaluating student barriers to success, as well as how reporting and sharing information about these students on campus is conducted.

Several institutional examples were highlighted in the discussion. At Colorado State University, there is a “Tell Someone” initiative tied to campus safety and assessment. Additionally, staff and faculty can see a student’s referrals within the advising notes system to facilitate communication and follow-up with the students as well as other faculty and staff working with the student. The University of New Mexico has a system where advising staff can record comments, set flags, and create holds for student follow-up.

The discussion then moved to how data and analytics are being utilized. One example provided was of an institution that moved from anecdotal information to hard data and had great impacts. There was misinformation about what students were experiencing and what they then needed. In response, the institution collected and analyzed data and then involved the necessary administrators, faculty, and staff to address the issues. The group noted the importance of sharing information with administration as well as with student success professionals who interact with students; it is important to keep updates in the hands of people who should know about developments and patterns related to student research and data.

Another example was of an institution working to better understand influences on student graduation. One factor they found that had been ignored was the impact of low parental income and its influence on students. The school analyzed data of students who were not quite Pell-eligible and then implemented strategic Financial Aid deployment. This included two years of refinement with homegrown data/analytics systems and then sharing of the data and decisions around what the data was signaling. Relatedly, the University of New Mexico found that students from rural settings felt disconnected from the campus community because the large numbers of students on campus and in classes was significantly different from the small class sizes and community feeling in their rural hometowns.

UNM created a coaching program for rural students assessing their needs and help them adapt to new and unfamiliar situations as they transition to campus. This outreach was particularly effective for helping male students from rural populations successfully integrate into the campus community.

The group then discussed recommendations for how to help these at-risk students thrive and achieve success. Many of the recommendations related to mindset and helping students change their perspective in order to view themselves as successful, connected to the community, and capable of performing the work being asked of them. At Indiana-Bloomington, students are asked to create an aspirational résumé by responding to prompts such as, “In four years from now, what do you want to say that you’ve achieved?” “List majors you find interesting,” and, “What activities outside the classroom might you be considering?” Students are able to save their work through a survey system and return to view, edit, and add to their aspirational résumé. Another example given included asking questions in the application in ways that eliminate academic jargon that first-generation students may be unfamiliar with and then continue to provide messaging on campus that fully explains terms that may not be readily familiar to new students with little university exposure. This helps first-generation students feel that they belong and view themselves as on a level playing field with continuing-generation students, rather than feel more disconnected from academic culture and the campus community whenever they encounter something unfamiliar. It was also recommended that institutions improve messaging related to program options and visibility of lesser-known majors so that students can make fully informed decisions about discipline choices. General education programs in the first year can help with educating students on the full range of discipline choices and type of coursework involved before they have taken lots of credits in a field they may decide not to stay in.

Overall, the session focused on learning about students’ backgrounds and identities, continually analyzing data, and reforming ways in which data is utilized in order to better know and understand the needs of these students and the barriers to success that they face, and then using that information to create and implement programs and policies that meet students where they are, help them feel connected, and view themselves as capable of being successful.

1E: The Multiple Origins of Attainment Gaps

Omid Fotuhi, Research Associate, Stanford University

Warren Kelly, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, University of Maryland, College Park

Dr. Omid Fotuhi began the session by giving a broad overview of why some students succeed and others do not, and posed a question by introducing a New York Times article: Is College Worth It? (2014). The article concluded that a college degree is the best avenue for financial stability later in life and those with a 4-year degree earn twice as much as those who do not. Despite the apparent advantage of a college education, there are consistent achievement gaps between African Americans and White Americans nationwide.

Dr. Fotuhi then moved on to ask why the gap exists. Some have posited that there is a genetic explanation. However, Dr. Fotuhi suggests an alternative explanation related to mindset. Research shows that when people are told there is no achievement gap between people of different demographics on a test, the performance gaps are eliminated in the test results. When subjects are told that a certain demographic typically performs worse, people from that group tend to underperform. This experiment has been repeated hundreds of times (Spencer, Steele, and Quinn, 1999).

Another factor in the achievement gap is stereotype threat. Negative stereotypes about attributes of groups will can result in students believing that they are not capable of achieving what those from other groups can achieve. Students may feel at risk of confirming negative stereotypes about their group. Their anxiety about their performance hinders their ability to reach full potential. Stereotype threat can result in depletion of students’ working memory, increased stress, and
increased awareness/distraction, all leading them to underperform and disengage.

Dr. Fotuhi pointed out that reality is subjective. We create personal narratives, based on our experiences, and those narratives can become self-fulfilling prophecies: Two students get a D in math. One student might respond by saying to themselves, “I need to talk to the teacher about how I could do better, what I need to study, how to study harder, and change my behavior.” The second student might respond with, “This enforces my initial thought that I am not capable, I should just drop out because it was a mistake that I got into college in the first place.”

The Stanford Duck Syndrome is an analogy for how students see themselves. Initially, students see other students as seamlessly succeeding, like ducks gracefully swimming across water. Students may see themselves, however, as struggling and paddling furiously. As a result, students may feel a sense of failure or unable to reach out to access resources because they feel as though they are the only person having this experience. Some of the negative attributes of these psychological tendencies result in shame, isolation, and disengagement.

Dr. Fotuhi highlighted three types of interventions from a psychological perspective. The first is a psychological intervention targeting students’ vulnerabilities. The second type is structural reform that changes the way student experiences an environment. The third type is changing culture (language, implicit belief, institutional mindset, collective identity, mission statement, etc.). However, interventions will not work for all students in all contexts. Interventions need to be centered around the students’ experiences, which vary from context to context and group to group.

Dr. Warren Kelley then moved into an overview of existing approaches in closing achievement gaps. He got involved in addressing achievement gaps when the University of Maryland system launched an initiative to close their achievement gaps. One of the largest gaps was black male students compared to the university overall, with a 17 percent difference in graduation rates. Existing approaches fell into two categories— at the institution-level and a more localized approach. The institution-level approach is hard to do and the effect is unclear. The more localized approach tends to fall into cohort models. They are resource-intensive initiatives, require self-selection, and have small numbers. The University of Maryland’s student success initiatives were launched and grounded in the philosophy that the greatest determining factor in student success is the student. The greatest agency is with the student and getting them to understand their power.

The student success initiatives utilized two strategies. The first was triage/direct outreach. Advisors began reaching out to students that were not registered for classes before the start of a semester, often repeatedly. Instead of using negative language, advisors asked the students what was going on and why they weren’t registered for classes. Asking what’s going on as opposed to telling students it is a problem they are not registered is more beneficial to creating relationships and getting a response from students, and helps students see themselves as capable of being successful, rather than as failures. Black male students also received specific outreach as part of this initiative. The second strategy, at the institutional-level, was culture change. The Student Success Leadership Council was created to help enact culture change university-wide to emphasize the importance of positive messaging to empower students, building relationships, and effective communication about resources.

The results were significant. Retention rates, four-year graduation rates, and six-year graduation rates all increased as a result of outreach and culture change efforts. As the student success initiatives continue, the focus will be on prevention. Social media and predictive analytics will be an important part of this. The initiative will also continue working on triage and establishing ongoing relationships with underrepresented students and students at risk of dropping out. Continuing to change the culture will expand the population reach.

When asked about working with transfer students, Dr. Kelley recognized that universities are being incentivized to focus on first-year students, in terms of retention and graduation rates, and not transfer students. We can celebrate when we have improved retention rates of first-year students, but we need to improve on transfer student retention across the board. Dr. Fotuhi cautioned against letting averages take focus away from subgroups who may need distinct interventions. Not all students are necessarily being served by a one-size-fits-all approach, and we are here to serve all students and to do so we need to understand all their unique perspectives, particularly when students begin transitioning into upper division, discipline-specific coursework. Dr. Fotuhi recommended scaling-up psychological interventions that target populations of students who are vulnerable to stereotype threat to help students recognize that their doubts and struggles are not specific to them, but happen to everyone. A way of doing this is to capture student testimonials that demonstrate that what the student is going through is normal and that it passes with time. The idea is to equip students with an adaptive narrative so if they receive a bad grade, they change their mindset from negative, “all-or-nothing” thinking to positive, proactive thoughts. Messaging should meet students where they are in their development and in their own narrative. Poor performance in class can manifest itself in the student not feeling that they belong in the social atmosphere of the education setting. Therefore, targeting messaging to students at key transition points can help them to deal with setbacks as they are occurring.

The final, overarching recommendation from the session was that administrators, faculty, and staff are responsible for making the implicit explicit to help all students understand the university culture and expectations. Everyone working with or for students should understand the psychological barriers to success that students face so that appropriate interventions and messaging can be used in outreach efforts in order to close achievement gaps and decrease underperformance.

For more information about the University of Maryland Student Success Leadership Council program, please visit: http://umsuccess.umd.edu/

1F: Faculty Practices and Beliefs about the Effectiveness of Writing in Promoting Student Learning in STEM Disciplines

Robert J. Thompson, Jr., Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Neuroscience, Duke University
Leslie A. Schiff, Morse-Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor of Microbiology and Associate Dean for the University Curriculum, University of Minnesota
Solaire Finkenstaedt-Quinn, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Michigan
Jason E. Dowd, Postdoctoral Associate, Duke University

The session leaders presented their NSF-grant funded research findings from a collaborative study with the Reinvention Center (now the Reinvention Collaborative), University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, and Duke University on using Writing to Learn (WTL) Practices to promote student learning in STEM disciplines. Research was implemented at capstone level/undergraduate thesis level.
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The goals of the study were:
1. Investigate how STEM faculty use WTL pedagogies; how are faculty using/thinking about using writing in STEM courses?
2. What are the barriers to using writing in STEM courses?
3. Create a collaborative of faculty who are committed to/interested in using WTL in STEM courses

A survey was created to assess faculty understanding of WTL and epistemology of discipline. An intervention was implemented to determine how WTL pedagogies promote deep conceptual learning and critical thinking by diverse students across STEM disciplines. The study targeted large lecture classes using a common student framework. All universities involved use innovating technology to assess writing.

The survey was sent to 29,000 STEM faculty members at Reinvention Collaborative member institutions (Carnegie R1 and R2 institutions) and approximately 5,000 responses were received. Respondents included representation from roughly 60 institutions. The survey included three parts: (1) what type of writing they were using, (2) perceptions of writing in the classroom; and (3) barriers and drivers of writing. Other parts of the survey asked about epistemology of discipline and demographics including discipline, academic rank, class distribution, size of classes, style of classes, etc.

The results showed that 70 percent of faculty surveyed said they are using writing as a part of their pedagogy. A graph was used to show both who is and who is not using writing. Highlights include disciplinary breakdown, gender, race, etc.

WTL was assessed specifically at intro level and upper-level courses. Results showed large use of writing in upper-level courses and by faculty who are teaching both upper level and intro level courses. The study examined the use of writing varying by course size. Results showed more faculty members using writing in smaller courses; however, a large majority are using writing in larger courses (50-100 and 100-500 course seat) courses.

The study examined six different writing practices including mastery, writing to learn, learn to write in scientific context, revision, peer review, and write in parts (scaffolding). The most frequently used types of writing were short answer, technical/lab reports, concept-based response (what is thought of as more tradition WTL), minute writing, and written abstract. The most effective writing practices were to show mastery, write to learn, and revision. The three biggest barriers to teaching writing from the survey results were insufficient resources (e.g. TAs); TAs are not prepared to assess writing, and faculty are not encouraged to do so.

There will be three institutes held in the summer of 2017 for institutional teams to share the data on the study and to design WTL strategies for STEM disciplines through collaboration by institutional participants.
The first plenary and following breakout sessions focused on the research on the effects of
diversity, culture, and identity at the individual-level, lived experiences of students, faculty, and
staff. Paul Thayer, who was asked to give a systematic overview of that research, pulled the
different strands together in the following way:

In thinking about this research it’s useful to remind ourselves about the components of
our learning environment. Put simply, it’s [about each] . . . person (student, faculty, staff), the
environment, and, most importantly, the interaction between them. When we think about the
person and when we think about this interaction, culture and identity matter greatly. After
all, no one goes anywhere without their identity. It is who we are.

. . . .

Environment matters as well. Environment has an awful lot to do with how each of us
performs. Environment can help us to absolutely outperform all expectations and on
the other side, environment can cause us to underperform greatly. But the point is that
environment is never neutral [in the sense that] each of us experiences the environment in a
different way. . . . The differences in those interactions are many times based on culture and
identity.

That’s true in the macro environments, for example, the town, the city in which our
institutions reside and the broad campus environment as well, as well as the microclimates.
“Microclimates” meaning the classroom, your classroom, the residence hall, all the many
other microclimates of our campus. All of those can be a source of support or they can be a
source of stress . . . .

There’s just a myriad of signals in the environment through which we interpret things.
Sometimes those are obvious, sometimes subtle, sometimes we perceive those on a conscious
level, sometimes unconscious. And in some cases, we can be oblivious. It’s particularly easy
to be oblivious if the environment is consonant with our identity and culture. And alternately
we can be especially sensitive if the culture is dissonant with our environment and culture.

. . . .

So culture and identity matter and [the] environment matters. Here’s the good news. The good
news is that we are at least moderately . . . in charge of the environment.

The challenge, then, is to use what the research shows about the effects of different
environmental conditions on the interaction between culture and individuals’ identities, their
aspirations, their sense of inclusion, performance, and wellbeing – and to do that in a way that
promotes shared discovery and learning. In the second plenary, we examine that challenge in
several of the most critical, initial stages of the student lifecycle: the pre-collegiate pipeline and
the initial academic and personal transitions that take place during students’ first semesters at
a university.

The plenary speakers include Nate Easley, who has worked tirelessly and creatively to promote
college readiness and successful collegiate transitions among historically underserved
populations in Denver. Dr. Easley’s experience includes serving as president of the Denver
Public School Board of Education, executive director of the Denver Scholarship Foundation, and
vice president for national and international programs at the Washington-based Council for
Opportunities in Education. Dr. Easley’s remarks, which focus principally on the pre-collegiate
experience, are followed by two speakers who focus on within-university transitions. Daron
Roberts, Scholar-in-Residence with the African American Male Research Initiative at the
University of Texas at Austin, examines the research-based initiatives at the Center for Sports
Leadership and Innovation. Dr. Norma Day-Vines, Professor of Counseling and Human Services in the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University, chose to focus her remarks on the lessons that have emerged from the Meyerhoff Scholarship Program at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. The discussion is moderated by Beth Loizeaux, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs at Boston University.

Transcript of Plenary Session 2: Unpacking the Student Life Cycle (1) – Strengthening College-Going Pipelines and Promoting Academic Success of Diverse Student Populations During Their First Semesters at a University

Norma Day-Vines, Professor of Counseling and Human Services, Johns Hopkins University

Nate Easley, Executive Director, Denver Scholarship Foundation

Daron Roberts, Founding Director of Center for Sports Leadership and Innovation, Scholar-in-Residence with African Male Research Initiative, University of Texas at Austin

Moderator: Beth Loizeaux, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, Boston University

Beth Loizeaux
Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs,
Boston University

Thank you. Thank you all. Welcome to the second plenary session, which is called Unpacking the Student Life Cycle: Strengthening College-Going Pipelines and Promoting Academic Success of Diverse Student Populations during the First Three Semesters at a University. A long title, but I hope thoroughly explanatory.

I’m Beth Loizeaux, the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs at Boston University and a faculty member in the department of English and a member of the board of the Reinvention Center. So I’m really pleased to see so many people here today. This is really, really exciting. Again, as the panelists this morning reminded us, this seems just the right time for us to be having this conversation about the intersections of diversity, of identity, and of a culture and learning. I think that, just to echo what was said this morning, that in light of our national election and as we struggle to understand what it means to live in a democracy, to understand across differences the power of culture and identity, clearly the work that we undertake to open our doors wide, to educate young people, to reach across all of the divides, to, in the words of Howard Thurman, who was Martin Luther King’s mentor at Boston University, “to discover common ground.”

The transformative work we do couldn’t be more important. As I was putting together these brief remarks, I thought, I’m going to say, it feels existential. And then I thought, no, no, no, Beth, that’s like way, way, way over the top. But as I was listening this morning, I realized that part of that sense comes from a kind of doubt that I think must be current among all of us, about the extent to which we’ve been successful in a kind of transformative education. And we live by the belief in the possibility of transformation. And I know that on our Boston University campus that one of the big challenges for us is going to be to be open to all students, those who are jubilant at the moment as well as those who are hurting at the moment and that it is all of our students who we want to transform by our educational, our educational system.

As Alan mentioned this morning, especially for those of you who couldn’t be here, the first plenary and breakout sessions focused on the research on cultural identity and learning and what experience in the academic and student affairs have taught us about their interrelations. And in the next two plenaries, we’re going to be looking at those inter-relations as students move through the student lifecycle.

What we are concerned with in this plenary in particular is that first part of the life cycle: pre-matriculation through the first semesters at college. The questions: How do we, in the nation’s research universities, big, diverse places, help build the pipeline so that more students are prepared for college so that there is truly access? How do we support all of our students again with their different needs so that they can adapt, grow, learn, and develop into thoughtful adults? Our focus is, again, going to be not just on the students themselves, but primarily on the interactions between students, faculty, staff, and administration – that whole environment – as students decide to come to college and move through those first three semesters.

We’re really fortunate to have a very distinguished panel here to talk to us about their research and experiences in this kind of transformative first part of a student’s experience with college. What we’re going to try to do is an open conversation among the panelists and between the audience and the panelists. So the panelists, I’ve asked them each to speak for about seven minutes. I probably will be kind of ruthless in keeping to that and then we will open the panel to questions from each other. I’ve asked each of the panelists to come with questions for each other and then we will open it up to the whole audience here.

I’m just going to introduce the panelists to start with and then we will take them one after the other. So, in order of their presentations, we have Nate Easley, who Executive Director of the Denver Scholarship Foundation. Nate has more than twenty-five years of experience helping disadvantaged students realize their dream of a college education. Prior to his current appointment, he served as the deputy director of the Denver Scholarship Foundation, overseeing a dramatic growth in the organization’s three-part program to help students from the Denver Public Schools succeed in college. Before coming to the Denver Scholarship Foundation, he served as the vice-president for national and international programs at the Council for Opportunities in Education here in Washington DC, and he served on the Denver Public Schools Board of Education as both a member and later as its president. His research focuses on how higher education institutions, so all of us can better support academic success particularly of black and Latino students.

Next, we have Daron K. Roberts, who is a former NFL and college coach, who serves now as the founding director of the Center for Sports Leadership and Innovation at the University of Texas at Austin. CSLI is the first university-based institute dedicated to developing leadership and character curricula for high school and collegiate athletes – something that I think many of us who are working on the whole student experience are going to be very interested in hearing about. Daron teaches two upper-division honors courses: Leadership Strategy in Sports; and Disruptive Innovation in Sports, and particularly relevant for our topic here, he has developed a course called A Game Plan for Winning at Life that is taught to all incoming freshmen student-athletes at the University of Texas Austin. After graduating from Harvard, with a Master’s in Public Policy and a J.D., Daron served coaching stints with the Kansas City Chiefs, Detroit Lions, West Virginia Mountaineers, and the Cleveland Browns. He is a contributor to Forbes.com and his numerous articles have appeared in the Dallas Morning News, Fortune, Houston Chronicle, Texas CEO Magazine, and TIME. The Harvard Kennedy School of Government recognized Daron as one of its seventy-five most fascinating
alumni and the World Economic Forum pegged him as a young global leader for creating a non-profit football camp called Fourth and One, which provides SAT prep, life skills development, and football training to at-risk youth in a number of states. And that program has served an impressive 500 students since 2010.

Then our last, but not least, speaker is Norma Day-Vines, who is a Professor of Counseling and Human Services and an affiliate in Africana Studies at Johns Hopkins University, just up the road here. She has published widely on counseling strategies for working more effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse children and adolescents. She has a special emphasis on African American youngsters. She’s developed a really interesting, something called the Continuum of Broaching Behavior, which is a conceptual framework for examining how counselors explore the contextual dimensions of race, ethnicity, and culture. And she has more recently operationalized the continuum of broaching behaviors using something that’s called the Broaching Attitudes and Behaviors Survey. Dr. Day-Vines has also worked with a collaborative team of researchers to examine the impact of school counselors and school counseling programs on student academic outcomes and college decisions, using a large national longitudinal data set. Her work has appeared widely in publications such as the Journal of Counseling and Development, Professional School Counseling, and the Journal of Negro Education. So, please join me in welcoming our distinguished panelists.

Nate Easley
Executive Director, Denver Scholarship Foundation

Thanks, Beth. And thanks to the folks at Colorado State who got me out of work today. Alan, I really appreciate the invitation. Every time I read my email, I thank God that I’m actually here and not there. So earlier, you probably heard my telephone go off and it wasn’t my ring. It’s probably more my age. I’m younger than I look, but I was playing this. Can you hear it? Some people are feeling that right? So why was Nate playing the Love Train in the middle of a session? I always say, God, she has a great sense of humor and she loves playing jokes on me because I was giving thought to what I could possibly say to you that would provoke you to go home and do something differently.

I have the honor of being a first-generation person who leads an organization that’s both publicly- and privately-funded to help every single Denver Public School graduate, not only go to college but achieve a college degree. Why is that important? Because public education is a cornerstone of our democracy and we’re seeing what happens when it starts to break down. There is no bigger threat to our way of life than ignorance, when we don’t understand each other, when we’re not enlightened. And so I was playing the Love Train because I was thinking the notion that there’s a pipeline that moves kids from poverty to prosperity couldn’t be more ridiculous.

There is no such thing as a pipeline and those who think that there is a pipeline probably don’t understand what a pipeline is. So I looked up the definition. I love doing that. With the internet, you can look up anything nowadays. And the definition of a pipeline is a set of pipes that move either liquids or gases from point A to point B and what’s interesting about that is it’s liquids or gas. In other words, if there’s a leak, it’s a major problem. And when you think about the chances of a kid who’s born into poverty in the bottom quartile of income in this country, moving through a public education system — whether that system be rural or urban — to prosperity, being able to pursue happiness with a college degree, that the low probability of that happening, there is no way in the world you can call that a pipeline.

The only pipeline that I know that exists, because I personally experienced it through my own family, is the pipeline from poverty to prison. And it’s one that is working so well that we can barely afford to maintain it. In fact, some of you know, there’s a move to privatize prisons and make them for profit, because it’s such a lucrative pipeline.

So I start off with that provocative thought with a bunch of professors and theorists, of which I am not, to get you to think about what your purpose is. And I had the opportunity to hear the education evangelist for Google talk about a month ago in Detroit and he started off by saying, “I don’t ask students what they want to do when they grow up, I ask kids what problems do they want to solve.” And I thought, that’s a much better way to think about it. So all of us mid-level, higher-level folks really ought to think about what problems do we solve in our jobs, what problems do we want to have, you know, as our legacy that we solved or helped to solve?

My purpose in life is to help kids in poverty be able to pursue prosperity, those who are in our public education system. Denver Scholarship Foundation invests four million dollars a year in fifteen- to sixteen-hundred of our public school graduates. We’re an open-ended promise organization founded by a wealthy couple, the husband of whom happens to be Latino and happens to be a graduate of Denver Public Schools, with a fifty million dollar gift, and the governor, when he was a mayor, with a fifty million dollar idea and a lot of luck. He was moved by his own words when he was talking to a group of low-income students at one of our failing schools, middle schools, and he said, “You know what, if you guys go to college, I’m going to pay for it.” And what he didn’t know was there was a reporter in the audience and on the front page of the Denver Post the next day, it says the mayor’s going to pay for college for every Cole graduate, and it became the Cole Promise.

Being one of the luckiest politicians on the planet, Governor Hickenlooper said it at the right time, because just a few months later, he met Tim and Bernie — Timothy and Bernadette Marcus — and they wanted to do something really nice. Instead of buying a bigger toy with fifty million, they decided to invest it in the city of Denver and ten years ago, November 9th, the Denver Scholarship Foundation was founded. I love to start with the end because I work with a lot of business people and they ask me how many dollars do I have to invest to get a college graduate out the other end. We’ve invested thirty million dollars in 5,000 students. Three out of four of those students in a certificate associate’s or four-year college degree program right now, three out of four.

And when I talked to Tim, he asked me about the fourth. He wants to focus on the 25 percent who’ve stopped out. I’m like, all right, let’s do that, Tim. Because now more than ever, it’s important that every single one of our students is able to pursue happiness. You have to understand that in Colorado, if you don’t have a college degree, it’s very difficult to get a living wage job, which means it’s very difficult to pursue happiness. Seventy percent of the jobs in Colorado require a college degree — 70 percent. Which is growing to 74, 75 percent by 2020. And so, if you just have a high school diploma, it’s very hard to pursue happiness. Ninety-two percent of our students who receive our scholarship are students of color — 92 percent.

And for those of you who don’t really know Denver, there’s not a ski mountain in the middle and we’re not all white. Our district is 80 percent minority, two-thirds of our students are low income, and it’s the largest school district in the state of Colorado, one of the fastest-growing urban school districts in the country, just to give you some context. And it’s in that context that John Hickenlooper, and Tim and Bernice Marcus...
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had the audacity to say, “We’re going to invest in an organization that’s going to partner with colleges throughout the state and focus on students finishing.”

At Colorado State, we have about 300 scholars. We give about $3,000 a year per scholar for up to four years, so you can start to figure out, that’s a major investment. They’re our second-largest partner. They were just bumped out by Metropolitan State University of Denver, just a couple weeks ago. There were like ten more students who showed up and so they became number two. Now how does a school in Fort Collins, which is about an hour and a half north of Denver – I happened to graduate from that great institution and learned how to cow tip – for all the animal rights people, I apologize. I don’t do that anymore. And if you know what cow tipping is, it says something about your background. Amen. Cow tipping.

So why would a school in Fort Collins where Nate learned how to cow tip attract so many students of color? Because they care. Because they understand they have to partner with school districts in order to make that happen and not only does Colorado State have a very lucrative partnership with Denver Public Schools, but it also has partnerships with other school districts around the state to attract that kind of diversity. Eighty-seven percent of the students in whom we invest at Colorado State are students who are persisting in college or graduate, okay? At one of our most competitive institutions in the state – oh, by the way, Colorado is a state that doesn’t get state support for higher ed. Colorado State University gets less than 10 percent of its general budget from the state: less than 10 percent. So these are institutions that are operating largely like private institutions.

So it’s in that context and that reality, that I challenge you to do two things: number one, think about what your purpose is, and number two, think about ways that you can reach out to school districts to create written partnerships that articulate in meaningful ways how you’re going to be part of that Love Train for low-income students, part of the solution of pathways. I say there’s no pipeline, but there are pathways. I found one. Many of you in the audience probably found pathways. How are we going to make those pathways work and how are we going to eventually build them into pipelines? I think that’s the question of the day. Now, I’m not supposed to ask my questions yet, right? Later? Am I at about my seven minutes?

Beth Loizeaux

You’re done.

Nate Easley

I’m done. So thank you very much.

Beth Loizeaux

Thanks, Nate. And, Daron, you’re next.

Daron K. Roberts

Founding Director for Sports Leadership and Innovation, Scholar-in-Residence with African American Male Research Initiative, University of Texas at Austin

Well, Nate, yes, I have to admit, I’m also a reformed cow-tipper. I grew up in a rural town in east Texas, population 12,291, and so when I arrived at the University of Texas as an undergraduate in 1997, the population – we were the largest public university at the time – was 50,000, so UT Austin essentially was four of my hometowns.

And so, at that time, the transition process for me, I was in a small honors program, was very challenging, in the sense that I was in the first post-Hopwood class – the Hopwood Decision from 1996 – and in many ways both myself and the university, we were both trying to find our way. The last year of my undergraduate years, I served as student body president. Quick story, I had a presidential candidate call me the night before the posting of, they call it posting of intent, and said, “Hey, would you be my vice-president.” I said, “Oh, well, let me think about it.” I get another call, “hey, Daron, we’d love to have you as vice-president.” So I hung the phone up and I thought, you know, maybe I should just run for president. All right, these people think I’m so great to be their vice-presidential candidate. And so I called back one of my friends and I said, “Well, I’ve decided to run for president.” He said, “I just don’t, I don’t know if that’s a good decision.” I said, “You’re doing it, obviously you think it’s somewhat of a good decision.” He’s like, “Well . . .” I said, “I’m black?” He goes, “Yeah, I didn’t want to say that, but there have only been two in the 150-year history of the university.” So I was fortunate to win.

Went from there, so in 2001, when I graduate from UT Austin, I am going to be the governor of Texas by age forty. That’s my plan. And I have a very linear, if A, then B, if B, then C type pathway to get there. It takes me to the Kennedy School of Government, where I rack up close to $100,000 in debt. I was still fairly risk-averse at that time and so I did what most people do when they don’t know what to do with their lives: I go to law school. Here I rack up $150,000 in debt and in the summer before graduating from law school in 2006, a buddy of mine asked me to tag along with him to a football camp. And I did and I had the best forty-eight hours of my life. So I was coaching sixth graders at the University of South Carolina’s football camp. All of these kids had more Under Armour and Nike than you can imagine. It’s like their parents had taken them to Academy and just opened up the credit card for them. None of them had any athletic talent, okay? I know there are some parents out there with children who have high hopes. If you pay for a camp at a college university, okay, there is a 99 percent chance that your kid is not being recruited. I just want you to keep that in mind. If you have a receipt to show for the camp, there’s a good chance your kid is not being recruited. All of these kids had receipts.

So, that experience, though, really forced me to rethink my notions of public service. So I went back to law school. I called Curt and Gwen Roberts. Curt, forty years as a Baptist minister, Gwen, twenty-five years as an elementary school principal. And so when I tell them that I’m going to coach football, my mom says, oh, that’s great, honey, I’m sure your law firm will let you do that as a pro bono project. That’s going to really get you a lot of good points with the partners. I said, no, I’m going to do this now. So I turned down my two offers, facing a quarter of a million dollars in debt, wrote a letter to every team in the NFL – a little trivia, how many are there? There we go. Thirty-two. I received thirty-one rejections. Bill Belichick, no. Tony Dungy, no. John Fox, no. Herr Edwards with the Kansas City Chiefs, yes. And so I began as a training camp intern, volunteered for a year. At the end of the year, we go four and twelve. For all you mathematicians, that is not a good record. Half of the staff gets fired and I get hired on full-time. So, sometimes it’s okay to be on a losing team.

I go from there to the Detroit Lions, where I’m a secondary coach for two years. Go from there to West Virginia. So this is where I start to see athletics from the college perspective, and I’ll talk a little bit more about how that experience informed the work that I’m doing now. Went from there to the Cleveland Browns. I mean, pity me, right? Okay, so Kansas City, Detroit, Morgantown, and then Cleveland. I don’t know what I did in a former life.

I get fired. The entire staff gets fired at the end of the season. I’m scrambling eggs at home, my three-year-old son walks in and he asked me, “You eat breakfast?” And I’m like, “Sit down, Dylan.” I just got fired today, you know, so I keep scrambling. And he’s tugging on my shirt, he says, “I’ve never seen you eat...
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breakfast.” So then the reality set in for me that I had spent the overwhelming majority of my time with other people’s sons and my own son didn’t know me.

So I returned back to the University of Texas to teach a leadership course and when I get there, the Ray Rice episode unfolds. Commissioner Roger Goodell comes into Austin to meet with our head coach of football, Charlie Strong. He asked me to sit in on that meeting and the conversation kept coming back to how better can we prepare high school and collegiate athletes, right, because by the time they get that first contract in the NFL or the first contract in the NBA, it’s too late. How can we start to prepare them from a leadership and a character perspective? And I took this idea to our president at the time, Bill Powers, and I said, we need to leverage our academic and athletic prowess to start to train our student-athletes in a very intentional way. And so that led to the Center for Sports Leadership and Innovation.

I’ll talk about one of our interventions now: A Game Plan for Winning at Life. This is a course that I crafted from the ground up. It focuses on leadership and financial management. The leadership component.

Every class that I teach begins with Brene Brown, vulnerability and empathy. So, for me, what’s lacking, and I think that this is unfortunately too timely, this ability to take the perspective of someone else. So the first book that we read is Daring Greatly. The second book that we read is Ta-Nehisi Coates’s Between the World and Me. And that experience then frames our entire discussion for the rest of the semester. This class, we take 150 student-athletes over the course of three semesters and we match them with non-athletes. So every class, we have 50 percent athlete, 50 percent non-athlete. What we are trying to do is break down this barrier between the athletes who can eat and – think about their calendars. They eat in a dining hall, right, with each other. They go and practice. They go to classes where many of them have the same classes. They go and practice. Then they go back to the dorms, where they stay with each other. They can live in a different experience and bubble on college campuses, so we are breaking those walls down.

This is a class within the School of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Texas. It’s a three-hour course and what we have really found is, and this is a presidential initiative, what we’ve found is that there has to be a mandate from the president’s office, from the provost’s office, and then a cooperative environment between athletics and academics in order for this to work. If it’s housed in athletics, it gets problematic and we’ve been able to form that connection there. Here’s what it means to lead. For us, it means empathy. So we have exercises that are built around how we can enhance your ability to empathize with others. Risk-taking – we have a lot of student-athletes, a lot of students coming from homes where mom has said, okay, you’re going to be the first-generation lawyer. So that’s the trailblazer phenomenon. Or they’re on the other end, you’re going to be the third-generation doctor, okay, and that’s the torch-bearer phenomenon.

What are we trying to do at the University of Texas is how can we incentivize risk, okay? Calculated risk, how can we give students the tools that they need to take those risks on, not just in their undergraduate years, but then after school. And then also effective communications. We have a series of mock press conferences, where they’re on the spot. Their peers are reporters and they have to ask questions based around different simulations. Just one of our student-athletes, Malik Jefferson, five-star athlete out of Dallas, he takes the class and we talk about being intentional. And one thing he said is, you know, I used to think that you were either – that there was some sort of gene for leadership. You either, you know, got it or you didn’t and a lot of the leadership history supports that thought, this trait theory. He said, but really, after this class, what I’ve learned is: one, it has to be taught, but then, two, this thing we call leadership has to be practiced. It’s not something that can just live in case studies and in textbooks. So I am excited to spend some time with you today. I look forward to connecting with you both offline and then here during the session and look forward to our conversation. Thank you.

Beth Loizeaux

Norma.

Norma Day-Vines

Professor, Counseling and Human Services and Affiliate in African Studies, Johns Hopkins University

Good afternoon. First of all, let me just say that my background is as a school counselor. I trained school and mental health counselors. And so, and most of my writing and research focuses on multiculturalism and diversity. And so when Beth asked me to speak, she asked that we find a program and sort of talk about a program, and I’m going to use a program from the University of Maryland Baltimore County to serve as a springboard for what I want to talk about.

But first one of the things I wanted to talk about is the STEM degree conferrals by race. When we look at the data, the number of degrees that were conferred in 2009 to whites and Asians and those to African Americans, we see that there is a big discrepancy. And that really is problematic, because when we look at the income that will result from children’s or students’ educational experiences and the degrees that they accrue, there’s a direct relationship between education and income.

I want to talk a little bit about the Meyerhoff Scholarship Program. It’s a program at the University of Maryland Baltimore County and it’s a STEM program designed to increase participation of African America children and other students who are of color so that they will pursue STEM careers and will enter, create this pipeline. Sorry to use the word ‘pipeline’ but it’s a proverbial term. But one of the things that I really liked about the program was that it had a lot of salient programmatic features that we talk about that are necessary in order to stimulate and promote student development growth. So part of the program involved students having financial aid. So for many students of color, particularly students who are first-generation college educated, money is a barrier to their ability to profit from the learning experience from college.

Recruitment efforts are really strong in this program and so the university had a dedicated office staff program commitment to recruiting students. And a lot of times, for minority students, particularly African American students, when we think about cultural values, relationships are highly prized in the African American community. So if you relate to someone in a distant kind of manner, it’s less likely that they are going to be responsive. So recruitment becomes an important factor. When we relate to people, we can’t just have a rhetorical commitment to issues around diversity. We have to have a really meaningful, well-intentioned, planned, thoughtful process that we engage in.

Another big component of this program is a summer bridge program. Students in this program come the summer before and so coming the summer before, not only are they taking classes, but they’re getting inculcated into college life so there’s a lot of training and preparation around what it means to be a Meyerhoff scholar. The whole notion of identity and belonging. And belonging is really important for many children who are – I’m sorry, I say marginalized children because, number one, because of my age and number two, because I was a school counselor for so long. But for many students, the feelings of marginalization, isolation, and alienation are real and contribute to high rates of drop-out.
Study groups were an important part, so when we talk about issues of belonging, developing an identity that says I am a scholar, when we look at the messages that are perpetuated about African Americans, many of the messages in the media and in popular culture are derogatory. And so African American children are taught that, or come to believe, unfortunately sometimes, that they don’t matter and that they are a tangled web of pathology and that they are just a problem in society. Bringing students together in a program like this, where they are given a strong identity, they are told that they matter and that they are valued and that they have a responsibility and that there are high expectations.

One of the things the literature talks about is “the soft bigotry of low expectations,” when we don’t have an expectation that student will thrive and that they can thrive, a lot of times they play to that. Students were inculcated with programmatic values, the values of belonging, values of achievement, the notion that they could go on to succeed. When I’m teaching, one of the things I talk about, I often reference the movie The Help, and some of you have probably seen The Help. And, in The Help, there’s a maid that works closely with – for a white family and she works with a little white child who is in a dysfunctional family, but every day she tells the child, “You is kind, you is smart, you is important.” And African American children need opportunities to hear repeatedly that they are smart, they are kind, and they are important, and it needs to happen so that they internalize it, not so that they believe that people are insincere about it.

There was a community established among the students and so if you look at some of the literature where they’ve interviewed students, one of the things that the students said is that they had opportunities to go to research labs. They had opportunities to go to other facilities around the state and around the country and when they went to different places around the country, people knew what a Meyerhoff scholar was, so there was a sense of pride and a sense of value associated with that. There was advising and counseling, meeting students where they are so that they can talk about those issues that impact or impede their ability to profit from the learning experience, tutorials so that students would be able to gather the skills that they need that may be impeding their ability to do well.

The students had opportunities for summer research internships. They had opportunities for research during the years, so there were a number of programmatic components that contributed to the student’s success. And to date, I think they’ve trained and prepared over a thousand students. There was a heavy level of faculty involvement. There’s a large financial commitment devoted to the program. There’s administrative involvement, mentoring, everything that you can imagine that would help a student feel a sense of belonging in school, that would help a student thrive, exists in this program.

Another part of the program that resonated with me is that students are taught that part of your involvement in this program is that you are going to pursue a Ph.D. Some of you have probably worked with students who had different kinds of goals when they come to college. When students come to college and their goal is to pledge a fraternity or sorority, a lot of times they pledge a fraternity or sorority, they’ve met their goals and then they’re free to go. But when you decide that you’re going to pursue a Ph.D., the very least that you need in terms of pursuing a Ph.D. is an undergraduate degree. So that notion helps contribute to persistence.

One of the things that the program did also was to address barriers faced by academically-talented students, so the course load, the social and cultural isolation, the notion that for many African American students, the climate on many campuses is inhospitable at best. So oftentimes students are seen by their peers and by faculty as “affirmative action babies,” as people that didn’t necessarily qualify for being in the program and that damages the psyche and it creates a level of psychological distress that makes it difficult to function, even when students have the ability.

One of the things that the literature talks about is the stereotype threat, this notion that – years ago, Steele and Aronson conducted this study; I believe it was at Stanford, they’re social psychologists. And one of the things they did is they administered the GRE to black and white students. And when they administered the GRE to black and white students, they did it in two conditions. In the first condition, they administered the GRE. In the second condition, they administered the GRE and they asked students for their race. In the conditions where they asked students for their race, students performed less well. And they attribute [that result] – they call that dynamic stereotype threat.

So people who are in a marginalized group often internalize the stereotypes that are associated with that group, and these are barriers that many students confront. They’ve replicated those studies with women. So when women were given the same instruments and they were given it under two conditions and asked to report their gender in one and not in the other, when they reported their gender, again, they performed less well.

So these are the kinds of barriers that students often encounter and so programs that are holistic, that help address the academic, the social, the non-cognitive kinds of issues that students confront, create networks of support, safety mechanisms, inclusion, money, a guarantee to help students function so they don’t have to worry about, they don’t have to worry about employment that may interfere with graduation. All of these are necessary elements that students need in order to be successful in college.

And then this last slide pretty much just talks about factors that are important to minority student success. Academic and social integration, so feeling a real sense of connection and kinship and belonging in schools, an opportunity for knowledge and skill development. So opportunities to really develop the foundational skills that are going to be necessary for them to achieve at high levels. Support and motivation, support and motivation from peers, support and motivation from faculty members, support and motivation in terms of resources. Ethnic minority role models. A lot of times, students are on campus – I teach in the Graduate School of Education and I am amazed, and I’ve been teaching for about twenty years, I’m amazed at the number of students that say to me, you are my first African American instructor. That’s problematic.

Students need opportunities to see themselves represented in universities.

Another thing that the literature talks about are horizontal and vertical networks. So students need opportunities to see people above them in leadership positions, but they also need collaborative mechanisms of support where they can grow and learn and study together and develop their ideas and their potential. And then, monitoring advising. How do we catch students early if things are going to go awry? What is it that we need to do to recognize that students may be off-track and how do we implement mechanisms of support that will guarantee their success? That’s it. Thank you.

Beth Loizeaux

Thank you very much all three of you for this inspiring stories. I’ve asked the panelists to ask each other some questions. So we just open it up to the three of you.

Nate Easley

Sure, I’ll start. I’d love to know how Tuesday changed the way that you all are approaching your work.
Daron Roberts

So interesting question. I teach two classes each semester. One’s a large class of a hundred students. One is a smaller honors course with twenty. And I very much believe in this notion of a nimble syllabus. So I considered it, and I talked with some other faculty members who were sort of wavering on whether or not there should be a discussion on what happened on Tuesday. I consider it a form of educational malpractice to not discuss the topic. And luckily, we have a framework around vulnerability and empathy and perspective taking to set the stage and then have the discussion. And there’s a real – I mean I’m not saying anything that I think is groundbreaking – it’s a very tangible, palpable feeling on both ends of the spectrum. And one that I don’t think will dissipate anytime soon. And so I do think for those of us who are in teaching positions, I think it’s critical for us to continue to have those discussions because this is not something that’s going to – these aren’t issues that will evaporate kind of into the atmosphere.

Beth Loizeaux

Norma?

Norma Day-Vines

So I teach on Tuesdays. I didn’t have an opportunity to have that debriefing discussion with my students but I look forward to having it again next week when we reconvene. And I imagine that the students will have a lot to share. And one of the things that I write about is how we have conversations around race and representation in meaningful and substantive ways so that people feel heard, they feel validated, and they feel affirmed.

One of the things that the election did for me is to help me realize that there’s a segment of the population that doesn’t feel heard. And I think that resulted in the outcome of the election. The other thing that I’m concerned about is students feeling a sense of safety as they go to classes. What will be the aftermath of all of this? And how will people respond? And given the contentious nature of the whole election season, I just hope it’s not open season for people on one another; that we will be able to engage each other in some of these difficult dialogues in a civil pro-social ways. W.E.B. Du Bois said in 1903 that the problem of the twentieth century will be the problem of the color line. Here we are in 2016 and we have even more complexities around race and representation. And we still haven’t begun to talk about them. I’m hoping – I’m hopeful that we’ll have an opportunity, be kind to talk about many of these complexities around race that keep us polarized.

Nate Easley

Is it all right to answer my own question? Wow! That’s a great question you had, Nate. So what do you think, Dr. Easley? Well, I’m glad you asked me that question because I’ve been struggling with it because a lot of our students are undocumented. And a lot of our students are Muslim. And they’re feeling outside, not to mention, 60 percent of our scholars are female. And even though you may not think it affects you directly, on Wednesday, we had both my staff and students who were struggling with wondering if their best friend’s going to be deported or if their parents are going to be deported, or cousins, or brothers or sisters or if they were going to be deported. And you had women who were struggling with what does it mean when you have a president who says the things he said on record? And what does that mean for me?

So I think as educators, we have to be prepared for what are we willing to do. There may be a need for example for another underground railroad, for the eleven million people who are unnoticed right now. And we’re all comfortable – as I got up in this really nice hotel this morning, I was thinking, “This is really nice! Would I be willing to sacrifice this lifestyle for my beliefs?” I mean I think it’s almost like that. I think it just got real on Tuesday.

Daron Roberts

I have a quick question. Norma, you mentioned the need to reaffirm to students of color that they are smart and kind and important. That kindness piece, you know given your background in counseling, are there ways that we can motivate and kind of facilitate that very basic notion of kindness in the higher education arena?

Norma Day-Vines

So again, my background is as a counselor, a counselor educator. And one of the things we talk about is empathy and I saw it in your slide, the notion that you understand from someone else’s internal frame of reference as if it were your own, without completely losing your sense of self. And so when we talk about that, we talk about ways of knowing in terms of a way of knowing from your own internal sense. So I know because I had an identical experience. And sometimes we will know about people’s experiences because we share similarities with what they’ve been going through. But sometimes we won’t know. We will have to rely on what people are saying. And so there has to be an openness.

The second way of knowing is knowing based on what a person is telling us. So we have to be open to learning and understanding someone else’s perspective other than our own and practicing opportunities for that. The group context when you’re in a classroom or a small group allows that to bubble up because students will begin to share their own experiences and they can hear and learn from peers whom they respect.

And the third way of knowing is from objective data. But opportunities to practice that, and to observe that, and model that, becomes really important. Another thing, you were talking about the kindness for African American children. I was in a workshop early this morning, we were talking about critical race theory. And one of the things that students need an opportunity to do is question images of themselves. So frequently, African American children are presented – and students generally, children from marginalized groups generally are presented with information that is stereotyped or inaccurate or distorted. And how do they question that?

I remember being in a school of – doing a site visit at a school one day and there was a poster for women’s history month. And there was a poster of the woman suffragist, what is her name? Susan B. Anthony. And there was a poster for Betsy Ross, in the same poster, Betsy Ross and Althea Gibson. And so I brought the poster back to my class – elements of the poster back to my class and I asked who’s present? Who’s not present? Whose interest is this to have certain people represented and not represented? Who should be here? And who isn’t here? What messages are sent by the fact – what message am I saying to white females, to African American females, to Latino females? To African American females, I may be saying that the only way you can be recognized in this society is through your athletic prowess. That’s one way of being recognized, but certainly not the only way of being recognized. To Latino students and Native American students, I may be saying, “Well, you didn’t even make the cut.” And so what is that saying about representation? So even when there aren’t adequate representations, teaching children or students how to critique the messages that exist becomes important as a way of validating and affirming themselves.

Beth Loizeaux

Thank you, Norma, do you have a question for your fellow panelists?

Norma Day-Vines

Yes, my question had to do – we spent time today talking about a number of different programs. What
do you think are the common threads among many of these programs that promote retention?

Daron Roberts

I think early engagement is one. I think about my own experience sort of entering the University of Texas as a freshman. I think you mentioned some of the summer bridge programs. I think you have to get to them early because it’s very easy especially in large Tier One institutions, it is easy to lose students very early on unless there are support mechanisms and wrap-around services that get to them quickly. I think also that I did away with office hours. Now I have a mandatory fifteen-minute meeting as a minimum and it’s a graded assignment. And I found that I get more follow-up meetings because they have to come the first time. We’ve all been there, the first day of class, “Okay, here are my office hours. Sign up.” And you’ll get probably 20 to 30 percent maybe. But I think we have to force those one-on-one interactions and create that safe space because, for a lot of students who are landing at institutions for the first time, they’re not going to reach out initially.

The last component I would say a common thread is this follow-up piece. And so I had one exercise and I ask all of my students to tell me who was the most impactful high school teacher they had. And we tracked down their addresses and then we write notes to them. And then you find this circle back phenomena where they come back and say, “Wow, my teacher told me that you wrote to her or to him.” And so this validates one, where they’re from and it also says, “Okay, someone here at my university cares about me outside of the higher ed context.” So I think getting to them early, almost making it mandatory in a sense for these meetings and then the follow-up component is probably the three common threads.

Nate Easley

I’m going to take more of a negative perspective. And I’m going to say I think a common thread is that inability to think and act beyond what’s in front of you. In other words, if a student comes to you and is a freshman year and they having certain challenges, why aren’t we dealing more with what happened to them before they came and working with those people in school districts to be more proactive instead of reactive? And I said it’s the same thing all the way up the pathway from early childhood to higher ed that we tend to focus really only what’s in front of us and not think about what happens after.

So when I have conversations with people in higher ed about what kind of jobs are your students going to get? If it’s a research institution, mostly I get a look like, “What did you just ask me?” like I just slapped their mama or something. We don’t prepare people for jobs, we’re educating them, enlightening them. I’m like, “Well, you know I sent two kids through college and I wanted them to have a job, not live in my basement. So we’ve got to come to some agreement here.” So I’d say there’s an inability of persistence programs to think beyond what’s in front of them. And I would really challenge us to get out of that. I mean the most magic thing that happens on any campus is the interaction between a faculty member and a student, and when that learning is really stimulated. But often times when we talk about student affairs, we don’t include faculty, not even at a research institution. And often times, the dean gets someone to act out in negative ways when they’re 25 started when they were two. And why do we feel an ability to act and think in ways that we can do something about that? So I would challenge us to think beyond and how do we really create a pipeline one of these days? And what does that look like in terms of just not what we do on a day-to-day basis?

Beth Loizeaux

With that provocation, let me open it up to questions from all of you in the audience. Questions? Comments? We’ve got a microphone coming here, thank you!

Audience Member

So I want to follow up on the kindness question. I had never had this thought before but it really just struck me. From your perspective, are there ways and are we doing enough to help our students receive kindness because one of the things I’ve noticed in life like – and I would include like receiving compliments and receiving positive praise. Because often, for many students, many people, it’s very hard – that gets awkward. And we don’t know what to do with it. And often we may not believe the kindness or the empathy we’re receiving. There may be a tendency to reject that for various reasons. So the other side of that I’d like to be intrigued by.

Norma Day-Vines

So I don’t know if I will answer your question but my response to your question is that for many students of color and people from marginalized groups, they’re always poised for some kind of inequity, this notion that you’re treating someone one way and someone another way. In the research literature, there is a book called, I think it’s called, Black Rage by Cobb and Grier and they talk about this notion of healthy paranoia. And for people from marginalized groups, there’s always this threat sometimes that may be physical harm, psychological harm and so people are always poised. And people refer to that as paranoia, but Cobb and Grier refer to that as a healthy paranoia as a protective mechanism, as an adaptive response to a hostile society.

So I personally don’t think that anything is inherently wrong with many of the students that come to school. I think they come to many schools, many but not all, but they come to many schools where there is a kind of hostility. There’s a kind of subtle indifference. There’s a kind of low expectation that makes them question themselves and second guess themselves and feel that they are inadequate. And so when we think about developing programs and interventions, we have to develop programs and interventions that allow us to promote the cultural competence of the people who work with these students.

When I’m teaching, we use a model that’s popular in counseling by Paul Pederson and his awareness, knowledge, skills model, so awareness of our own attitudes, biases, and assumptions. So what are those biases and assumptions that we have that people are aware of that we may not be aware of that contribute to the microaggressions. The example that I use in class is – I think it’s a recent one now but my daughter and I were leaving church the other Sunday, and we’re driving – I think we were out of the parking lot – but somehow we were driving somewhere and this woman pulls up and is trying to get in front of me. And I’ve just left church and I’m looking at my daughter saying, “She’s not going to get in front of me.” And then as a counselor, I realized, wow, look at the hypocrisy. First of all, I’m leaving church. Second of all, I’m trying to teach a teenager how to be respectful to others and as a counselor I’ve got to talk about it now because I’m educating a child. And so I said, “Jaylen, isn’t that terrible that I’m leaving church and I’m telling this woman that she can’t get in front of me?”

As some context, I don’t mind people getting in front of me but don’t impose your way, don’t “bogart” your way. That’s the background information. And so this is how perceptive children are. She said, “You’re right, mommy. You’re running around the house quoting scriptures, talking about the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, goodness, gentleness, self-control.” And so it wasn’t that she quoted the scripture but it’s that she quoted the scripture that I was able to identify the hypocrisy in my behavior. So we talk about this notion of healthy paranoia and people protecting themselves. The children or the students with whom we work, they are aware of these inequalities. They’re aware that one group of students
has this advantage and another group doesn’t have an advantage. And so we’ve got to recognize and be honest enough with ourselves so that we can see well maybe I am showing preference to one group and not another.

The second part of the awareness competencies, it has to do with awareness of the socio-political realities that children confront. So what does it mean for a student to come to a college from a privileged background versus someone who’s coming undocumented, someone who’s coming as a first-generation college student, someone who’s coming whose parents may have barely enough money to help them get the tuition but they don’t have enough money for them to pay the meal plan. How does that impact engagement? So what are the realities that students confront? What about the students that come from well-resourced schools versus those that come from under-resourced schools? So how do we use that information to better develop programs?

We talk about knowledge competencies. We talk about the factual acquisition of information that has to do with students’ cultural backgrounds. So what are their cultural attitudes towards education? What are their historical encounters with education? What are their historical encounters with oppression? All of those things are information that we need in order to work more effectively with students. And then what are the strategies and interventions that we’re going to use? Are we going to just put a program together at the behest of the dean or the provost, or the president and sort of let it fester and say, “Oh, we tried”? Or are we going to have all of the essential ingredients that are necessary to create this pipeline and open up this pipeline and transform students inter-generationally?

Daron Roberts
I’ll say one follow-up. I think you also have to create these sort of mildly pressurized environments. So one exercise I do around vulnerability is that I pair up the students in my classroom and I do it intentionally. I create some uncommon pairs. So I’ll put the 6’11” white center from the basketball team with the 5’4” African American girl from Dallas. And I give them two sets of blindfolds. We have two statues on campus, one’s an MLK statue, one’s a Barbara Jordan. Roughly about half of a mile distance separates them. So the unblindfolded partner has to lead the blindfolded partner across from one statue to the next. And then they reverse roles and go back. And they do a pre-write up saying, “This is what we think will happen. Here are our feelings,” and then kind of a post-assessment. And often times, you will find that being blindfolded and being led by someone you really don’t know who doesn’t look like you, who may not be from your same hometown, you’ll find a lot of these differences sort of dissipating when I just need to get across campus without falling down. So you have these great write-ups where this one Caucasian woman said, “You know, I really didn’t want to hold hands. And so when we discussed how we would get from point A to B, I didn’t even bring up holding hands. I said, ‘Oh! Let’s just hold each other’s backpack’, but then I fell down on a couple of stairs. So I grabbed his hand. And then he looked back at me and said, ‘Wait! That was okay, right?’ like nothing changed. The world is still rotating on its axis. So I think also kind of creating these ways to where you can take these theories and put them to practice and then for students to think back on, “Okay, what did I think before. And now what do I think after I’ve gone through the exercise?”

Beth Loizeaux
One of the things that I’m hearing from – I mean you’ve talked before about that real essential connection between the student and the faculty member. And we are research universities where the demands on faculty are immense. The pressures on their time, there are efforts to balance, to be human to themselves and to their families as well as to be good at their research and to be good teachers. And so I’m hearing some very practical things about what faculty can do to maybe dispense with the office hour but to require your students to come in early in the semester to get to know them, to use opportunities in classes. And I’m wondering if there are other basic things, simple things, tips you might give to faculty members to help make that connection with students that will be the starting point for a relationship that can help them succeed.

Nate Easley
One tip I would say is try not to bring your biases to the meeting or the interaction. We all have biases and we grow up in a racist, homophobic, sexist society. And the first thing before you deal with the problem is to admit you have it. But to try to leave those at the door when you’re working with students is so, so important. I think about my favorite faculty members back in the day, not in the olden days, that’s different, back in the days, when it was my time. And the ones who made the biggest difference for me had nothing to do – had no background that was similar to mine at all. I think about Professor Crabtree who was a history professor who turned me on to history. We were very passionate about talking about it. Or I think about another professor who turned me on to entomology. I didn’t even know what entomology was until I had to take a science credit. And it turned out I set the curve because bugs are pretty fascinating. And we just bonded on – I mean we had nothing in common except we both were into bugs and we both hate bugs. He created pesticides. That was his thing. And we just totally needed out on bugs. And if you had told me a kid who grew up in a black neighborhood was going to nerd out on bugs in Fort Collins, I ought to have been like, “Uh-uh, that ain’t going to happen.” So the ones you have passion for and the faculty member’s passion for their subject is contagious, if they mean it, as long as you leave your biases at your door and you don’t make assumptions for what people can or can’t do or what they’re going to be interested in.

Daron Roberts
I think also blending a mix of, I teach a lot of writing – there’s a lot of writing component to a lot of my classes, and having assignments that are revealing. So the last assignment, all of my classes, is my students have to write their obituary. And so I got this from the book Road to Character. And it talks about the eulogy and the art of writing your own eulogy and thinking through what you want to be remembered for. I think there often times, we can – the assignments that we give, you’re not really getting beneath the outer surface. And I am a fan of comparing research but also there need to be at least, I think – there needs to be a 50 percent component of your writing assignments need to be revealing text. You need to find out where these students are coming from, what they want. And you can do that within the framework of the research or the material that you’re teaching. But I found that that’s the best way for me to get better insights before meeting with students is to find that revealing aspect through writing.

Beth Loizeaux
So it sounds like part of what you’re talking about is encouraging faculty to ask questions that will enable students to reveal themselves. Norma, did you have something you want to add to that?

Norma Day-Vines
Well, a lot of times when I’m working with students, particularly on an individual basis, and in class because I teach a number of classes. But one of them is a diversity class that I teach but I spend a lot of time focusing on definitions of social and cultural capital. And we use – I train school counselors so we use Jean Anyon’s work and she talks about your social class
positionality sort of predicts the kind of education that you’ll have. And she did ethnographic studies – it’s older work but it’s really powerful with working-class children, middle-class children and affluent children. And the working class children were in schools where emphasis was placed on rote memorization and law and order – sort of sit down-be quiet. And the orientation that children had was towards rebellion and resistance because there was no connection between the teachers and the students. When she asked the children what knowledge was, they really didn’t have an answer for what knowledge was. And when she identified the theme that they were oriented to, in terms of their education, it was towards service occupations. And I add when I’m teaching, the prison industrial complex because I see a connection there. With middle-class children, they were exposed to a lot of rote memorization activities but in exchange for their cooperation, they had this promise of being able to enter the middle-class mainstream. And when they were asked about knowledge, they talked about learning. And they were oriented towards taking care of other people’s stuff and being in management.

With the affluent children, they were the ones that were told, “You is smart, you is kind, you is important.” And they were told – they were given the codes of power, they were told – what was really going on in society. And they were given problems solving, creative thinking, problem-based learning, all kinds of innovative learning opportunities. And so when you look at the kinds of educational background students have, it sorts of orient them for what’s going to happen in the future. And we talk about that. I ask students, “What kind of education did you have? And how did it get you here?”

But I also talk about social capital and cultural capital. We talk about social capital, the notion of networks and how important it is to develop networks. And for a lot of poor and minority children and a lot of my working-class students, they don’t have a context for the importance of networking. They believe the values that are espoused or at least are stated in terms of individualism, and even though that’s a core American value, the individualism is based on a whole lot of networking. And so teaching students how to network becomes important. I spend time teaching students of color and many of my white students who are either first-generation or working class.

And so as an example, I have a doctoral student that’s doing some research. And I said, you need to go out and talk to some of the people who are doing some of the groundbreaking research. And for months she’s been resistant to talking to the people. And I said, “You’re not just talking because – I know you’re uncomfortable because you’re introverted, but you need to get in the habit of talking to people because they will open up your ideas. They will carry you to places that we, as your doctoral committee may not be able to carry you. And it will create opportunities for yourself.” So that networking becomes a really important in teaching students how to do it. And then the social capital, what are the behaviors, mannerisms, the habits of mind, the thought processes that you need in order to achieve, so teaching students about that.

Last thing that I will say, I had a student that had gone to an online university, and she felt really inadequate and inferior because she was in graduate school with students who had gone to really top-notch undergraduate institutions. So I brought her in my office. And I asked why she wasn’t talking because her papers suggested that she had a lot to say. And she said that she felt inadequate. And I explained to her that a lot of the students that are pontificating know a whole lot less than you do. But instilling students with a sense of self and this understanding that you are capable and competent no matter how much people posture is really important. And how we do it individually and how we do it collectively helps students, can help students get where they need to go.

Beth Loizeaux
Other questions?
Audience Member
So I was really struck by this blindfolded walk assignment because it implies that we actually have to do an experiment in order to reveal something that’s new and real for the individual. And that at some level the words aren’t enough, we actually have to do the experiment and hit that surprise. Can you draw out some principles that you see there about how we get students to do such experiments? And how do we model them so that they are likely to be productive for people?
Daron Roberts
Yeah, so one component in my class is I have a thread of failure management, the two-week strand. And there’s some research done by a man named Jia Jiang. He challenged himself to go on one hundred rejection challenges. And so one was going to Starbucks and asking for a free drink. And he had a GoPro and he taped all of these. He went to Krispy Kreme and asked if they would arrange donuts in the shape of the Olympic Logo, just random things. Went to Home Depot and asked for a compliment. But then he talked about – he was a very introverted, shy individual before he started this project. But then after receiving more than 50 rejections, it built his immunity towards risk-taking. And so we reenact this.

So I give them two – I put them into pairs again. And I give them two rejection challenges. You can go to Starbucks with your partner and ask for a free drink. Your partner will videotape you on his or her cellphone. And then we bring that material back to the class. We watch every episode throughout the class. And they do the same thing, kind of a pre-assessment then a post-assessment. And I’ve had more students write in their post-assessment, “I didn’t think – I was shaking as I walked up to the barista. And I didn’t think I could even get the words out. And although she did not give me the free Chai Latte, life is still going on, like it’s okay.”

And I think – if I think about the experiences from my nine years of higher education that stick with me as a 38-year-old, it’s not this conversation that I had in Con Law 2 about the commerce clause, it’s the pro bono case that I took on in my third year of Law school and this client who was sitting next to me who was wondering whether or not she was going to keep her job. It’s those sorts of real tangible experiences. And so I do think we have to re-evaluate our syllabi every semester and think to ourselves, “Are there experiences in this syllabus that will stick twenty years from now?” Because we know – we have to cover the research but find your students ten years from now and ask them what Carol Dweck wrote on mindset and see how closely it resembles your PowerPoint slides, right? So I think we have to build experiences into the syllabi. I hope that answered your question.

Beth Loizeaux
Other questions?
Audience Member
I’ve been walking with this for a while and hearing some of you talk makes me think about it again. At a time where life seems very certain, I can Google Search something and get an answer. I can ask Siri and I can get an answer. I can look at a map and find directions. I was walking with a friend’s phone last night, never been in DC, “Just turn here.” Everything seems certain, how do we help students navigate uncertainty and I think the uncertainty that comes with learning because you show up and you don’t know. And I heard one teacher say, “Add to that, the word, ‘yet’. You don’t know yet.” So as students step...
into all of these settings, they feel very different, very challenging and very much telling me, “I don’t know.” How do we help them not write that it’s about their identity and it’s instead about some other challenge or adaptation?

Daron Roberts

You know, I just mentioned Dweck and you just said, “not yet.” And I think about this growth mindset. And I heard — before I really jumped into the fix versus growth mindset, I kind of thought it’s a little hokey. Then I started reading more. And as I worked with more — I have a football camp for African-American high school students, there was this real sense especially when we were teaching aspects of the ACT. So it’s a football camp but there’s also an ACT prep component. The same students who in the morning were going through a wide receiver drill and saying to their coach, “Okay, I’m going to get this route right tomorrow.” That same student who couldn’t reduce fractions would say, “I just can’t do this.” Same student, different context. On the football field, “I’m going to get this route right, coach. I’m going to get it better tomorrow.” In the classroom, “I just can’t work with fractions.” And so I think more conversation around this growth mindset, not yet, not yet, and reaffirming that is important. I think that’s important.

Nate Easley

I would add to focus: know your students well enough to know what their assets are. Paul (Thayer) had mentioned this earlier. And in education, we’re really good at focusing on what people can’t do. A great example, Denver public schools, 30 percent of our students speak Spanish at home. And we’d label them English Language Learners or ELA (English Language Acquisition) kids instead of talking about them as bilingual kids. Speaking two dialects, two languages is a talent and not a deficit. Most of the world, if you don’t speak two languages, you’re illiterate. So it always befuddles me why we have a public education system that has objectified a large population of the people who actually have a talent. And by the way, we don’t speak English in the United States. We speak American. And if you’ve ever been to the UK, you learn real fast you don’t speak English. So to be arrogant about our language is crazy, to be honest with you. So I think if we can do more on focusing on what people can do and how you build on that, as opposed to focus on what people can’t do. And for those of you who are in partnerships with another person, a marriage or partnership or whatever, long-term and you can think about your first conversation with that person, my guess is you didn’t tell them how they suck. But often times, in public education, that’s how we start the conversation. And so I think that you need to take enough time to get to know who they are and what they can do, and build on that.

Beth Loizeaux

There’s another question here in the front.

Audience Member

So my question is a little different since it’s my first time here in — although I really love the context in what we’re talking about, this is talking more in the perception of a professor and you being in my class, which is great because I am also a professor and most people here are. Although some of this may not be clear to do in a mechanical engineering class, it’s still good. It’s valid, we should do it. But in the context of being an administrator, perhaps, I want to switch back the conversation to that because as the vice provost, the vice chancellor, you’re not going to get to know the individual, I would love to but there 20,000 of them. I may get to know a few of them in that way. But most of them I would not. I think it’s more how do we trickle down all these great things that we can do in the individual classroom and when we get a student of one to something a couple of levels up in which we are dealing with maybe counselors, advisors, and then how does that trickle down rather than just in the classroom.

Beth Loizeaux

Thank you. Yes, so the question is institutionally, structurally, how do we build a university where these individual interactions that make so much difference that we can assure that those things are happening?

Norma Day-Vines

I would just argue that when we’re developing retention programs, that we make sure that they are multi-faceted, that they don’t just have a singular component, “oh, we’re going to do mentoring,” and think that mentoring is all that students need. Students really do need wrap-around services. So where is your staff identifying the areas of expertise; identify important programmatic components; determining how you’re going to focus on helping students develop the academic skills that they need; what mechanisms or supports are available in the university to help them develop social skills; how are you going to help them feel a sense of belonging and how are you going to get them integrated into the university? So it’s not just a single component. Whatever program it is that you’re using that is the springboard for promoting retention, you need to make sure that multiple elements are present and not just focused on a single element.

I think the other part of that is making sure that you have people who are part of that process who have varying areas of expertise. Someone may have the STEM expertise but somebody may have the counseling expertise, and somebody may have the development expertise. So everybody needs to have a role and everybody can’t wear the same hat, and it needs to be structured. The other thing I would add is when we’re developing these programs, how many students are involved in them? A lot of times we’re developing programs for students and we haven’t even asked them what do you want or what are some of the elements that you need? But also say that there’s quite a bit of literature out there that sort of speaks to the notion of what seems to be working for students and promoting retention?

Nate Easley

You looking at me? Okay, I’ll talk. That’s great. That’s what’s great about sitting up front. I would also put it in writing because in our society, what’s in writing is what lasts. And if you have a great program that is making systemic change, and you know that through data, it’s good to enshrine that into a written something that will go — when you win the lottery and become a philanthropist, it will outlast you. So we have thirty-two written partnerships with colleges throughout the state of Colorado that focus on kids who are mostly first-generation, low income and students of color about what that institution’s going to do to leverage our support to make sure that they finish. And what goes into that is really kind of like what would I think about for my own kids. And if it’s good enough for my own kids, and it’s good enough for the scholars we invest in.

And so I love telling people I meet with college presidents to talk about first-generation, low-income students. I had spent many years working for TRIO programs before I joined the Denver Scholarship Foundation and never had an audience with a college president with maybe one or two exceptions, one or two exceptional institutions to talk about low-income first-generation students. And we demanded. And so the reason I think I’m able to get them to call us back is because millions are invested in these students. And many colleges, we act like a donor and we expect them to treat us like a donor. And so each college puts in writing what they’re going to do with wrap-around services to make sure that our students actually graduate and it varies from Emily Griffith Technical College to Colorado College and Colorado School of
Mines. It's different in every one but it's in writing. And then we revisit it annually to see how we're doing. So I'd say as much as you can to enshrine those pathways in writing, that's really, really important so it doesn't just depend on the personality of an amazing individual.

Daron Roberts

I think to that point, determining as an administrator what your non-negotiables are. So for me, I have direct supervision. So I'm only controlling kind of the world that I can control, over two program managers and we touch close to 450 high school collegiate athletes and coaches. They understand that vulnerability and empathy will be a component in all of the programs that they construct at a minimum. And so when they bring the program plans to me, I'm going to first look for that. And then from there, their creativity can take over. So I do think as the administrator thinking, "Okay, I want the people in this department to have some flexibility constructing their programs." But what for me are the non-negotiables? What do I want the students to get from every experience that they have, whether it's engineering or liberal arts or communication? And I think that's important because there is a real gap in vision setting for administrators at the top. I felt like in football, the head football coach of the Detroit Lions at the very beginning of the season, we knew exactly where he stood in terms of what he wanted from the team, what our ideals, our goals were, our benchmarks. I think that gets fuzzy in higher ed sometimes like it's really sort of out there in the ether. And I think that finding ways to articulate as an administrator is important.

Beth Loizeaux

Norma, do you have anything to add to that? All right, thank you all very much! We are out of time. But thank you. Join me in thanking our panelists.

The breakout sessions that followed the second plenary focused on research about the effects of culture and identity on the capacity and inclusiveness of pre-collegiate pipelines and the success of programs supporting initial transitions for first-year and transfer students. Topics included: building bridges for transfer students that promote inclusion; promoting engagement, discovery and integrative learning in the first year; combining pre-course risk measures, within course analytics, and inclusive advising in the first year; inter-institutional comparisons of case studies and research on learning and teaching; peer mentoring; student engagement and predictive analytics.

2A: Transfer Students – Building Bridges that Promote Inclusion and Identity

Ben Withers, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Colorado State University

Thomas Grites, Assistant Provost for Academic Support, Stockton University

The presenters' main point was how to create inclusive environments for transfer students at our institutions. Even though they've been in college before at some point, they are first-time students at their new institution. During the transition, many things could be different from the old school to the new one, such as moving from semesters to the quarter system (or vice versa), credit systems, new advisor and possible differences in advising procedures, institutional policies, campus culture, language and acronyms, core classes, varied class size, registration, parking, cost, etc. What they learned elsewhere might not line up with the new institution and the cumulative effect of all of these changes is known as transfer shock.

The presenters also discussed the positive attributes of transfer students, such as their resiliency and their desire to be in college. Transfer students are also self-directed and bring life experience to the classroom. Some negatives associated with transfer students can include overconfidence, “at my other school” syndrome when students constantly compare the old and new schools, less confidence, and decreased engagement. Some reasons for neglect from the institution side include overestimation, underestimation, and overgeneralizing transfer students.

The presenters asked the group to define transfer students, which proved to be difficult since “transfer” can mean a multitude of things. As Dr. Grites explained, “transfer students are the most heterogeneous group on campus.” Dr. Grites also went on to explain some types of transfer students, including vertical track: two-year school to four-year school; swirling student: two-year to four-year to two-year to four-year, and so on; lateral transfer: two-year school to another two-year then to four-year then another four-year; reverse: four-year school to two-year school; stop-outs or returners/re-admits; concurrent enrollment students (with high school or in two colleges at the same time); thwarted students (no credit awarded); and graduate/professional students.

As discussed above the challenges transfer students may face are varied, but there are ways institutions can help ease the transition. The presenters discussed a few of these opportunities:

- Transfer specific orientations
- Adult learner/non-traditional student office
- Community college collaboration
- Pre-transfer advising program
- University advisors working directly in the community college
- Organize orientations by major with faculty panels
- What we do for traditional students we also should do for transfers (same length of orientation, same hand-outs/freebies so they do not feel “othered”). Transfer students pay the same tuition so they should get the same orientation experience.
- Recognize and adjust language being presented to students (express thanks to transfer and discussing their value to the university)

Dr. Grites discussed a program for transfer students he has implemented at Stockton University, which is a transfer seminar/orientation course. He said instructors implement similar concepts specifically for transfer students in regular academic classes. In other words, they take a common course in subjects like criminal justice, psychology, or education, but designed specifically for transfer students. This allows transfer students to get to know one another and have a common group of people who are experiencing the same things they are. It creates a space where transfer students can share and ask questions. One key element of these courses is the students must attend at least three co-curricular events so they get to know the campus and maybe get involved in clubs/or organizations. Dr. Grites emphasized that these need to be face-to-face classes rather than online to get the same community effect.

The presenters suggested that if other institutions implement these transfer seminars, they need to be writing intensive and include assignments such meeting with a professor or advisor, and attending co-curricular events. Not only should the students be learning about the subject matter, but the components that help transfer students connect to the university need to be there as well.

2B: Engagement, Discovery, and Integrative Learning in the First Year

Lara Ducate, Associate Professor of German and Applied Linguistics, University of South Carolina

Lara Lomicka Anderson, Professor in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, University of South Carolina
The session started with the group breaking into small groups to discuss the question, “What initiatives does your institution have to promote student success during the first year?” Then the small groups reported out the initiatives mentioned in the table discussions:

- UC Davis has a first-year seminar program that puts incoming freshman and transfer students in small classrooms with a faculty member so that they have a small, intensive academic experience. The challenge facing faculty is how to effectively assess and evaluate the student experience in these seminars.
- UC Davis also has a program called “First Year Connections,” where students are put in a small cohort around a theme and then the group participates in a series of workshops with a facilitator based on the theme. Students opt into this program. The facilitator has six lessons that they teach that first term where students are on campus. Again, assessment of the student experience and effectiveness as a program is a challenge.
- Another institution has first-year seminars run by the colleges so they vary widely.
- “Penn State Reads” is a program where all the students coming to the main campus read the same books. Then the institution invites the author to campus and holds a series of events around the book.
- Mentoring programs that vary — typically done through the colleges.
- Colorado State University has summer orientation followed by Ram Welcome during move-in weekend, Taking Stock (where advisors work with Residence Life to assess transition markers and academic markers), and UTurn, an early course feedback program to help students who are struggling in the first four weeks of a course become successful.

The presenters then discussed the initiatives in place for first-year students at the University of South Carolina, including University 101, the Student Success Center, USC Connect, and Living and Learning Communities. University 101 connects students with faculty, staff, other students, and campus resources. The Student Success Center offers peer tutoring, a writing center, and help with financial literacy. The Living and Learning Communities all have faculty principals who work closely with the students living in the community — one college has a live-in faculty principal. Finally, USC Connect is the University’s response to fully integrate students’ learning beyond the classroom and help them reflect on their learning.

The group then went back into small group discussions to answer the question, “What is integrative learning? Identify 5-10 keywords that come to mind when you think about integrative learning.” The responses in the large group report-out included:

- Penn State – Examples of courses integrating across content and content areas, with a course incorporating graphic novels and biochemistry, and “Making for the Masses,” which is a maker’s course using 3D printing and the culture around making
- Calculus in flipped classrooms
- Requiring all faculty to participate in co-curricular events outside of class
- Keywords included experiential, transparency (clarity of path), engaging, interdisciplinary

The presenters then discussed integrative learning from their institutional perspective. The University of South Carolina defines integrative learning as, “The active construction of knowledge across, within, and beyond the classroom.” USC Connect first came together as an initiative to connect coursework beyond the classroom experiences. Students can now graduate with leadership distinction in five different categories and receive recognition on their transcript and diploma. Involvement in the program requires six credits of enhancement activities, a public presentation or publication, development of an e-portfolio where they reflect and bring all these things together, and taking the course UNIV 401, in order to help them reflect on their different experiences and create their e-portfolio.

One of the most important outcomes from implementing and developing USC Connect is the importance of reflection. It increases the value of the learning experience, helps make meaning of the process, relates learning across courses, and enhances learners’ broad understanding. In order to incorporate reflection, educators need to rethink teaching strategies. Reflection does not need to be profound in order to help students benefit from the practice. In first-year courses, faculty can ask students to think back to previous related courses (e.g. language courses) in high school to the skills they learned, and then use their reflections to create goals for the semester. Then at the midpoint in the semester, students reflect on their goals from the beginning and the skills they have developed in order to assess what they have learned, how they are progressing on their goals, and potentially set new goals for the end of the semester. At the end of the semester, students then report on how they have or have not achieved their goals and the skills they can use from this course in future classes. This also allows faculty to get to know students on a deeper level and improve individual student assessment.

2C: Combining Pre-Course (Day Zero) Risk Measures, Within Course Analytics, and Inclusive Advising in the First Year

Jim Folkestad, Director of the Center for Analytics of Learning and Teaching, Colorado State University

Dave Johnson, Director of Research and Analytics for CSU Online, Colorado State University

Jose Villar, Senior Programs Specialist for College Enrichment and Outreach Programs, University of New Mexico

The discussion focused on the following questions, answered in presentation format by representatives from the University of New Mexico and Colorado State University, with participant input:

1. What student success programs are being fostered by CSU and UNM?
2. What strategies and systems are CSU and UNM considering as we build academic and learning analytics?

At the University of New Mexico, 30 percent of the student population admitted have low ACT scores and require remedial courses. Thus, students are limited in their chosen major. For instance, a student who wants to major in Engineering may be 3-4 semesters away from where they need to be. Scholarships required that students take 15 new credit hours; as a result, students could graduate with 180 or more credits instead of the usual 120. UNM analyzed all the classes that math impacts and what math course a student tests into, and then asked whether classes actually needed the listed prerequisite math courses.

Through an analysis of curriculum, UNM tried to figure out ways to minimize the path to graduation. For some majors, Calculus is an important course. Through a review of the curriculum, UNM was able to identify which courses actually required Calculus because it was an integral part of the course content. They also identified courses in which it is not detrimental for a student missing the Calculus prerequisite. Several questions were asked: Why is calculus important for this class? Is calculus necessary important to take this course? Can we move classes in which Calculus is not required earlier in the curriculum? By reconfiguring the way math was delivered, students could meet course prerequisites sooner, allowing them to move into major-specific courses more quickly and shortening the path to graduation. The institution also created
Unpacking the Student Life Cycle (1) – Strengthening College-Going Pipelines and Promoting Academic Success of Diverse Student Populations During Their First Semesters at a University

structures to test students on day one of the course and assign them to the proper path, and blended a 3-credit course with a 5-credit course to cover the content of several classes.

At Colorado State University, there was an interest in studying student learning in Calculus courses and how students engage with the material. It was assumed that student engagement could be an indicator of success in the class. Utilizing a learning management system (Canvas), students were given the option to engage in activities within Canvas to assess individual courses and the student behaviors tied to learning in these courses.

The goal was to understand the relationship between student behavior and student success. In the individual course, content was embedded related to self-learning material. The goal was to have students engage early with the material. Pre-calculus content was built into the LMS and students could self-assess. Students could test themselves with a performance quiz on pre-calculus content and reflect on their performance. There is also pre-calculus material in video format that students could use to aid in learning the material more effectively.

Behavioral data were collected from the first ten days of class in Calculus I. This timeframe was chosen because a student can switch into a two-semester calculus course within this time. Data was collected on usage behavior for all the tools built into the course. Data included what students did, what test they took, how many tools students engaged with, and how many videos students engaged with and which videos. The goal was to get an indication of how well the student did with pre-calculus material. A customized behavior plan was developed for students using the data from the behavior tools. Students’ attendance at the CSU Calculus Center was also tracked using a card swipe system. Data included information about what sessions student went to, for what class, and when. The data was used to move beyond individual interventions to create a comprehensive plan to help students succeed.

The presenters then asked the group to discuss the challenges in using data analytics and information to support students. The following list includes the major challenges highlighted in the group discussion:

- Getting access to the data can take 2-3 years.
- Cultural and privacy issues have come up as well. There are concerns about LMS and vendor products, and where student information is going beyond the institution, leading to student privacy implications. This has also led to tensions and disagreements between vendors and institutions. Ethical dilemmas have come up around student information that is shared with vendor products that students may not realize we are sharing with third parties. What kind of moral responsibilities do we have to inform students?
- There is difficulty agreeing on what FERPA means and its interpretation.
- If using a tool from a corporate entity, the provider of the tool cannot fully understand the institutional data in the context of the university. Trying to get corporate entities to transform data on an individual/local university level can be a challenge.
- Some outside companies will claim to own the data. They use the data to market jobs to students. External companies state they will do their best to maintain data but will do what they want to do with the data as their business evolves.
- Non-standardization associated with high school classes. New Mexico is ranked 49th as a state for education. This impacts the use of high school coursework. UNM has tried to develop “stretch” courses — these are courses that bridge the deficiencies between high school coursework and college readiness.

Overall recommendations that came out of the group discussion were related to dealing with these challenges:

- When building a predictive model, some students will be classified and this has to be considered while designing an intervention. There are challenges to using data and turning it into information and the decisions that are made based on the data. There need to be guidelines utilizing data for designing interventions.
- Turning data into useful information can be challenging. Getting access to data takes time, and can be challenging, and then once you have the data, it can be very difficult to interpret. The data is also not always in the best interest of the vendor’s bottom line.
- Outreach efforts that do not suggest to students that they are “on a list” or are being seen as failures are more successful. Working to reframe the conversation as, “this is a high-risk course,” not, “you are a high-risk student.”
- While it is easy to obtain, transactional data does not always tell us what we think it tells us or tell us something useful.
- Providing recommended course grades in prerequisite classes can help lead to student success. Despite the fact that a student can move on with a C or greater, some courses should have a recommended grade that is higher, based on course data from students who were successful in the next sequential course.
- More strategically placing courses in a student’s path to graduation to position them for greater success. For example, waiting until the 3rd semester for Chemistry allows students to transition effectively into the institution prior to taking more difficult courses.

2D: Connecting Institutions through New Technology: Sharing Case Studies and Research on Teaching and Learning

Gwen Gorgelsky, Executive Director of The Institute for Learning and Teaching, Colorado State University

Erin Sanders, Director of the UCLA Center for Education Innovation and Learning in the Sciences, University of California, Los Angeles

Gabrielle Rabinowitz, Community Engagement Manager for Trellis, American Association for the Advancement of Science

Gabrielle Rabinowitz gave an extensive demonstration of the Trellis site, which can be found at https://www.trelliscience.com. She explained each tab and menu item within Trellis and their use. Trellis is a closed site, so users must be invited to join Trellis through an existing group by existing members. She also stressed that Trellis is meant to be member-driven and not just controlled by the admins or a group.

After the Trellis demonstration, Erin Sanders provided more explanation of some of the features. The tagging feature is meant to help manage the volume of content and help find things easily. As part of today’s session, attendees will determine a group of tags to begin classifying items on Trellis in the Reinvention Collaborative groups. Sanders also discussed how Trellis can be used to document conference ideas and conversations and best practices. One of the anticipated benefits of Trellis is that it can be done exclusively through email so if people prefer to receive all content via email they do not have to go to a separate site/platform/app. Trellis also allows for
broader sharing with the entire community instead of exchanges between 1-2 people and may provide an avenue to gather evidence to inform/persuade leadership about potential programs and policies.

During the open discussion about the purpose, usage rules with Trellis, several audience members expressed concerns that they didn’t want to see Trellis become a massive repository, or database of resources that can be accessed through other professional associations or journals. In response to these concerns, Sanders mentioned that this is not meant to be a repository but may be valuable to share specific institution practices, policies, or case studies. Audience members seemed very receptive to the idea that Trellis can be used to share institution-specific information rather than general research or articles.

Gwen Gorzelesky shared her hope that Trellis can be used to connect projects across institutions so there may be the option to expand Trellis membership to additional people on campus in the future. She also shared that the use of Trellis was a response to a need for better collaboration and way to share resources that were identified at the 2014 Reinvention Center national conference.

The presenters also emphasized a benefit of Trellis is that it keeps a record of all discussions and content (not like exchange/email where it may be gone). Trellis discussions can also be held about any piece of content so it is more interactive than just transactional.

The group identified several potential challenges related to engagement with Trellis:
- People must choose to engage and post in Trellis so it is more interactive than just transactional.
- People may be more apt to use other search engines/peer-reviewed journals/professional associations for research.
- Trellis does not have specific webinar function.

The presenters then asked attendees to engage in a group activity to brainstorm tags by network and themes/topics/content, which will be the next step to build out Trellis.

2E: Peer Mentoring to Promote Academic Transitions
Lucy Blackmar, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Initiatives, University of California, Los Angeles
Biserat Hagos, Director of Special Seminars, University of California, Los Angeles
Assistant Vice Provost Lucy Blackmar and Director Biserat Hagos work with faculty and departments to create innovative curricular programs. They have structural partnerships with various departments on campus. They house many interdisciplinary programs, including minors such as disability studies, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement. This session explored the UCLA model for Undergraduate Student Initiated Education (USIE), the benefits student facilitators get from teaching seminars, and the benefits students in the seminars receive from being taught and mentored by peers.

The USIE program started when a group of undergraduates came to the administration and asked for the opportunity to facilitate seminars. Students wanted to create an environment where the class sizes were small and the topic was not already covered in existing curriculum. An advisory committee was formed and students worked with faculty to create a proposal and have it approved by the Faculty Senate. They were given provisional approval for two years for the USIE model, similar to another program started at the University of California, Berkeley. The students need to have a tenured faculty mentor that will work with them the whole year. They sign a contract and the faculty member ensures the facilitators meet the pedagogy expectations of the university. In addition, the students need to take two pedagogy classes in addition to being mentored by faculty. Faculty and students compose an advisory committee that reviews and ultimately approves seminar proposals. The process is competitive and rigorous. Most students selected are juniors and seniors with GPAs above 3.5. There are twenty seminars a year that serve 400 undergraduates.

Students in the program as facilitators earn 6 units – one unit for the semester with their faculty mentors, two units for each pedagogy class, and one unit for facilitating the course. Those who enroll in the seminar earn one unit. The course does not require papers, or finals, and is graded on a pass/no pass basis, based on attendance and participation. Not having a grade to worry about allows students to learn for the sake of learning, not just to get a grade.

There are a few instructors who teach the pedagogy classes and have the resources to do so. At UCLA, students sometimes struggle to find a faculty mentor. Some students do it as a capstone so it is connected to program curriculum. Faculty are required to attend one course session and students are required to have office hours.

Participating students reported that they learned skills in communication, time management, and leadership skills. They were able to share their knowledge and interests with others, which resulted in rich classroom discussions. The students share that they gained confidence in their ability to teach and felt rewarded by the power to change the way people view topics. Students learn how to propose an idea and work to get it approved, which translates into real-world business skills. Additionally, the program teaches leadership because students have to carry, champion, and facilitate the program.

Presenters shared that the program created many opportunities for interaction, mentoring, and engagement between student instructors and student class members. The program is unique in how the classes taught by students create an environment where students feel accepted and like a part of a learning community. Students think it will be easy to get an A, then they find that the courses are engaging and they are excited about the topic. Participants are motivated intrinsically, taking a course because it is interesting to them. Thus explaining why the classes offered by students fill fast.

A participant observed that the students involved seem very committed and motivated to complete the extra work. He wondered what was the motivator or drive to do so? Blackmar shared that some students say it is because they want to be a teacher (earn a Ph.D.). Some are very passionate about the topic and really want to share it with other students as they have searched for a course that covers the topic but is not offered by the university. This model allows universities to be responsive to current events and contemporary topics that faculty are less likely to be able to do so quickly. Students’ facilitators tend to underestimate the time or rigor required, but get very invested in it.

Blackmar stated that student advocacy and demand to create these courses is huge to their success. Students must own it. The initiative will likely die out without it, even if there are faculty and staff support. There may be obstacles for students because they need a job to pay for their school. They may not be able to afford the time commitment of taking an extra
Senior level administrators are leading institutional culture change toward data-informed decision making.

Key Findings from the study include:

- Senior level administrators are leading institutional culture change toward data-informed decision making.
- Data is collected and managed strategically for the purpose of improving enrollment management and increasing undergraduate retention.
- Institutions are assessing the effectiveness of their current programs and procedures and preparing to adjust or reallocate resources if necessary.
- Ongoing communication and training is critical.

The study involved 25 institutions and data was collected through interviews. The report will be published in 2017. A landscape analysis of student engagement data in predictive models was conducted by examining the collection of student engagement and behavioral data at involved at institutions being studied to determine the extent to which these data are included in predictive models.

- 5 institutions are in planning stages
- 9 institutions were in early implementation (within 2-3 years)
- 11 institutions had been utilizing analytics for 5+ years

A few specific findings from the study were related to intervention strategies for retention. Presenters mentioned a few examples that helped institutions understand student behaviors in order to effectively intervene with predictive analytics. The first example was a university who intervened with students who were likely to transfer to another university by focusing on students requesting transcripts. Are these students seeking to transfer to another institution and what can be done to help them stay? After asking these students about their situation and need for transcripts, students were referred to appropriate resources as necessary. A second example was intervening with students who were not engaging on campus within the first six weeks of the fall semester by looking at students who did not swipe their ID card at an event or service. Peer mentors reached out to these students. The final example shared was an intervention with “murky middle” students by intervening with current students in the middle based on predictive analytics and connecting them to support services.

Some campuses are using location tracking through a campus app and Wi-Fi to see where students are spending time, how the weather or traffic may affect student behavior, and are exploring messaging students when their location has services or events nearby. Advisors are able to see a student’s profile of where they have been; for example, advisors are able to see if a student has not been to the library but has been to four football games. Advisors then have a conversation about activities and academics based on where students have interacted with the Wi-Fi.

Barriers to effective use of analytics are that data collection on the student affairs side can be messy and inconsistent. This makes it hard to connect longitudinal data over the time a student is on campus. Data privacy is critical — staff need to be trained to use data in secure and meaningful ways. Inherent bias also needs to be considered when collecting and utilizing data, and how it could impact collection, analysis, and utilization. In order to navigate these barriers, data governance policies are critical. Data governance is not only to protect student privacy but also to prescribe how data is used for power and politics within a university structure. Data governance is also about training people around unconscious bias and stereotype threat/microaggressions based on analytics. This is an opportunity for us to being good stewards of data information by using it in positive and meaningful ways.
Unpacking the Student Life Cycle (2) – Successful Transitions into Majors, Efficient Degree Completion, Visible Pathways to Post-Baccalaureate Educational Experiences and Careers

The moderator of the third plenary – Archie Holmes, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at the University of Virginia – opened the session with the following observation:

[An entering] student, coming in early, might not know what it means to be a student at a major research university. They’re [implicitly] trying to figure out how does their prior identity match with our expectations. As they progress through and they get ready to graduate, that switches to “What is the identity I’m going to have when I leave this place as a professional?” . . . .

And so I think our challenge, as educators, is to figure out how do we, in this environment, provide them the knowledge and skills through the wide variety of things that we offer, both on the academic side, the co-curricular side, and the extracurricular side that are compatible with their understanding of themselves and create a foundation for them to be successful in whatever it is that they choose to do, knowing that whatever they choose to do is going to be decades going forward.

The members of the conference program committee believe that Archie’s opening question and the challenge he poses are central to understanding and addressing personal and academic transitions that are in many ways every bit as important as the initial transitions to university life in the first year. While equally important, these transitions have been far less extensively studied and are likely to turn out to be even more complex in their timing, the wide variety in individual students’ post-graduation objectives, and the range of disciplinary and institutional contexts within which they play out in real time.

The panelists included Peter Doolittle (an educational psychologist and cognitive scientist; currently serving as Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning at Virginia Tech University), Wendy Troxel (a professor of educational administration who studies teaching, learning, and advising with a special emphasis on first-generation students; currently the Director of the NACADA Center for Research), and Joan Ferrini-Mundy (a mathematician who has done research on math education, learning, and STEM education policy; currently the Assistant Director for Education and Human Resources at the National Science Foundation).

The discussion begins with the panelists’ analysis of:

• foundational questions involving the nature, origins, and plasticity of students’ multiple identities and how those characteristics interact with different experiences and choices as students at research universities;
• contemporary quantitative and qualitative research on students’ choices about whether to stay or leave at critical transition points and the role and impact of institutional practices and interventions on those choices;
• research on the significance of issues involving diversity and inclusion for the aspirations and experiences of the 45 percent of students who begin their collegiate experiences indicating an interest in STEM majors.

Following these initial presentations, the panelists and members of the audience engage in a wide-ranging discussion of the implications for a series of very practical and concrete steps that might be taken, not only on their campuses, but also with families and external stakeholders.
Unpacking the Student Life Cycle (2) – Successful Transitions into Majors, Efficient Degree Completion, Visible Pathways to Post-Baccalaureate Educational Experiences and Careers

Transcript of Plenary Session 2: Unpacking the Student Life Cycle (2) – Successful Transitions into Majors, Efficient Degree Completion, Visible Pathways to Post-Baccalaureate Educational Experiences and Careers

Peter Doolittle, Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning, Executive Director of the Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research (CIDER), and Professor of Educational Psychology, Virginia Tech

Wendy Troxel, Director, NACADA Center for Research, Kansas State University

Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Assistant Director for Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation

Moderator: Archie Holmes, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, University of Virginia

Archie Holmes

Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, University of Virginia

I want to welcome you to the second day of the national conference. I’m the moderator for this third plenary. My name is Archie Holmes. I’m the Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs at the University of Virginia. And when I was asked to do this on a Saturday morning, I realized I had a particular challenge. I try as little as possible to actually work on Saturday mornings. In an ideal world, I would be doing yoga right now and relaxing in some way and so we’re going to try to craft this as a conversation at a coffee house. So you’re going to see us be probably pretty casual up here in terms of just really having a conversation. Feel free to involve yourself in that conversation. I will be trying to pay attention to that as we go forward.

So I want to introduce the people who are going to join me in this conversation, starting from your right, headed over to the left. We have Peter Doolittle. We have Wendy Troxel. And we have Joan Ferrini-Mundy. And they’re going to give some additional introductions of themselves when they make their opening remarks. You will see that you have full bios of them in the program.

So, to get us started, one of the things I asked them to think about is what does this lifestyle look like for our students at our universities? Because we’re really complex and that’s a good thing for a research university to be. You know, when I think about the design and the way that it was probably designed, what would happen is a student would come in and maybe they would know what they wanted to do, but maybe they didn’t. But they would start taking classes and from that they would choose a major and then they would avail themselves of a wide variety of the opportunities that we have at a research university and graduate. And I still think that that is the way that the model is set up but it’s been more complicated for a number of our students. So a lot of the students are trying to worry about these issues that we’re talking about, culture, identity, and diversity. So for example, a student coming in early might not know what it means to be a student at a major research university. They’re trying to figure out how does their prior identity match with our expectations. As they progress through and they get ready to graduate, that switches to: “What is the identity I’m going to have when I leave this place as a professional?” And these are all sorts of things that are going on in our students’ minds in addition to what we have kind of designed from a systems perspective.

And so I think our challenge, as educators, is to figure out how do we, in this environment, provide them the knowledge and skills through the wide variety of things that we offer, both on the academic side, the co-curricular side, and the extracurricular side that are compatible with their understanding of themselves and create a foundation for them to be successful in whatever it is that they choose to do, knowing that whatever they choose to do is going to be decades going forward.

So I asked them to start off with and focus on the interrelationship between diversity, culture, and identity at three points. So one is when they transition into a major, one is how efficiently they can complete their degree, and the second is understanding the success that they will need in order to have a wide variety of post-baccalaureate options available to them. And so I’ve asked them to kind of talk about that based on what their experience is, what they saw are the main challenges in those transition points and how can we address these effectively especially for students from underrepresented groups. So we’re going to go in the order that is on here. So, Peter, has drawn the short straw and will go first.

Peter Doolittle

Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning, Virginia Tech University

All right, good morning. How is everyone? It’s nine o’clock, give or take, which in student hours is about seven o’clock in the morning, so I appreciate you all being here. I’m going to have to switch glasses. I’m at that stage where I can either see you or I can see what’s on my iPhone and right now you’re – unless you’re going to hold up placards with my talk on it, I need to switch. So you’re a little fuzzy, so if it takes me a minute, that’s – the other thing is I’m trying something new. I’m trying to use this as my set of notes. That may or may not work, so we’ll just have to see how that goes. Archie asked us to do all that he asked us to do, and so as Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning and a faculty member, I put on my faculty member hat and then ignored what he said and decided I’m going to talk about what I want to talk about. Actually, it overlaps, but I can’t say that I hit point for point, so if you’re keeping score with a rubric out there, I’m going to be in trouble.

Also, we’re here talking about diversity, culture, and identity and as an educational psychologist and a cognitive scientist, I’m going to go from the identity side in. We’ve been talking a lot about things that relate to identity without necessarily taking identity out for a little bit of a test drive, so I want to talk a little bit about that. Identity, we all have multiple identities. Identity is not a singularity and so we have a professional identity, a personal identity, a religious identity, a gender identity, a lot of these that interact and transact and so it ends up being extremely complex. And our students bring these with them to our universities in various phases of development. And so some of them are well-developed personally but don’t have a sense of professional. Some of them are still struggling with their gender identity. We have to deal with this as they come to us. We don’t choose only those students who have well-defined identities. There’s not an identity-finder kind of questionnaire and you have to score at least eighty-eight or you don’t get to come to our universities.

And so we develop our identities through socialization, through social institutions, through reflection, through symbolic interactions where we give a give and take between us and society. And in this complexity, there’s this kind of odd nature to it, because while it’s relatively static, it’s not fixed. While it has an individual component, still very social. And while we get choices over it, some of it is still culture-based. And so there’s this grand interaction and it’s not all within our power and within our student’s power and so sometimes when you talk to students, they’re not exactly sure why they are what they are, who they are, how they became that way, and that’s part of being in higher education is answering some of those questions. And that’s what we get to do. That’s part of the exciting part. They should be different as human beings four or five years
down the road, not just four or five years older, as they go through.

So our students come to this and one of the things that we need to prepare them for is that in their life, they are going to have to reinvent or re-imagine themselves multiple times. Because think about what you wanted to be at sixteen and then what you were at twenty-six and what you might be at forty-six, if you’ve reached that point. Life changes and we need to change with it. We need to figure out who we are. We don’t want to just be adrift. So how do we prepare people to think through those kinds of questions? And I want to focus on just three things very quickly as we think about how do we pursue identity within research institutions, the programming, the designing, and the thinking that we involve our students in.

All of us have programs of different types that are designed to help students. We have a first-year experience program that every college has a part in. Some of them are a little bit about what it’s like to be at Virginia Tech and most of them are how do you think in our areas, what do you know as far as problem-solving, what do you know as far as interpreting the world around us. So the first year experience is designed to get them into that transition of what is it now like to be at a Research 1 institution, which for some students is easy. For some, like first-gen students, they – there’s a lot implicit in higher ed that they just don’t know.

And so how do we help them through that process? We have a lot of learning communities and living-learning communities, which is odd because the opposite of a living-learning community is a like zombie learning communities, which is odd because the opposite of a living-learning community is a like zombie learning community, but it kind of depends on who you live, all right. So we have some that are focused on engineering, some that are focused on life sciences, some on biological sciences, but they bring students together peer-to-peer, both first and second year, also third and fourth year, along with professionals, as they begin to develop some sense of what it means to be a scholar, to be a student, and ultimately to be a professional.

So we have broad programs like first-year experience, we have more narrow ones like learning communities, then we have more specific ones like the black engineering support teams, where first-year black engineers get mentored by more senior engineers within the program. So what does it mean to be an engineer at Virginia Tech? What and what does it mean to be an engineer in general and sometimes the question is “where’s the bathroom on the fourth floor” and that’s okay, too.

But you need people to talk to and we know, when it comes to learning from others, observational learning, it helps to have somebody you can relate to, and oftentimes there’s a gap between a nineteen- or a twenty-year-old student and a fifty-year-old engineer, and they may have a hard time with that transition. But a twenty-year-old student and a twenty-one or twenty-two-year old student, that makes much more sense.

In addition to program, we need to step back and take a look at our design, that is, what is the nature of our majors, our minors? What’s the nature of our certificates and of our service learning projects? Have we designed them in ways that are focused on the students and not focused on faculty? Because sometimes we look around as we design these and we look around the table and go, well, given who’s here, let’s do this, as opposed to who are students coming in, what’s their performance environment going to look like when they come out. So how do we create it from that perspective?

So we have this big project called destination areas, where we are creating trans-disciplinary learning experiences and it’s all over the place. But that’s what’s going to make it magical. If what we did is pulled out a curriculum design book and went one, two, three, four, five, six – we’re going to end up where everybody ends up. So we are like deep in the weeds, trying to sort out how do we bring people together, philosophers and historians and engineers to talk about water, just to see what’s going on. And how do we create students that are flexible thinkers that, yes, they have an engineering identity or they have a history identity, but they also have an identity as a thinker? Okay, can we move forward with some of these thoughts?

Our general education program is under review. We are about two-thirds, give or take, depending on who’s counting, through that, trying to figure out how do we create this so it’s not just a series of courses? How does it become an integrated experience where students then can start to develop themselves as they move through their experience at Virginia Tech? So they develop identities along those lines.

We’re also now looking at how do we on-ramp students, first-year students and transfer students; how do we get them to be a part of our community. And then off-ramp, if they’re halfway through a minor, they’re nine hours out of eighteen and they decide, you know, this really isn’t for me. How do we make it so that they don’t lose those eighteen hours and at some point then have to step back and decide, well, do I even want to keep going? Because those can be tough transition points when there’s pushback. So how do we use destination areas, how do we use general education in order to impact their identities? And those are things we need to think about explicitly.

The last part of that is oftentimes students will get disrupted in that they want to be an engineer and they can’t get in. Or they get in and they’re just not successful. Or they get in, like I did, and went, yeah, no, you know, just not me. Yes, I like math and science, engineering I didn’t know what it was, now that I know what it is, I don’t want to be one, all right. And so I’m now a semester or two years in, what do I do? And it’s not just about credit hours at that point. It’s, “I’ve been an engineer in my head for three and a half years, and now what? Do I just leave? Am I defeated and I go home? Or what do I become and who’s going to help me with that?” So if we have neutral advisors that can see across the university, kind of academic counselors to help us with those questions because those are questions that a nineteen-year-old may not be able to navigate very well. How can we assist them with those and we have those all the time?

And the last thing is thinking. We want our students interacting with these programs and we want them to part of these majors and minors and educational, but when they’re done, they need to be autonomous thinkers. They need agency over who they are. So we need to do more than just pump them full of content and skills. We need to change how they think about themselves and the world around them. So we’re really talking about meta-cognition, the awareness and control of our thoughts and how we use those to govern ourselves as we move through. So how do we do that? There’s been a lot of talk lately about the idea of summer bridge programs and pipeline programs. We have those. That’s a good place to start to introduce, what does it mean to be a scholar, what does it mean to think like a scholar, to think like a historian. That’s the place to start, rather than waiting and hoping it develops magically after four years of education. A student success center – it’s not about learning study skills. It’s about being mentored into how do I become a better thinker, a better student, so that I can carry these beyond my four or five, six years at Virginia Tech or beyond into graduate school. And so it’s about developing as a human being.

So I’m going to leave you with this: part of thinking about how do we help students to think differently [is] to be aware of what they know and to be in control of themselves. One of the things we can do is we can create a short little packet of three to five questions – questions that they continually ask themselves every
day, not like every three years: what’s your three-year plan? And so my question to you is, what are your three to five questions for your institution, for your major, what is – what are the questions you want in students’ heads to make them better thinkers, better human beings? And so I’m just going to get you started and then I’m going to pass off to esteemed colleagues. How did I get here? Every present has a history. How did I get here? What were the questions that I answered? What were the decisions that I made? Where did I go? What was important? Because if we don’t know where we’ve been and how we got here, we’re not going to be sure what the next step is going to be for us. So think through, as we go through this, what three to five questions would you want all your students to be thinking about repeatedly, over time, and reflectively? Thank you.

Wendy Troxel
Director, NACADA Center for Research, Kansas State University

Can I get an amen? Thank you so much. I’m Wendy Troxel. I represent the 14,000 members worldwide who have this primary mission to help students succeed, faculty advisors and academic advisors. Many of you are in this room. And we have to a new research center and as of yesterday, a new name, actually, for our research center, which makes me happy because that’s long. So we will now be called the NACADA Center for Research at Kansas State University, and all types of designs and paradigms.

I’d like to frame my remarks initially under three areas, with regard to our work with helping students navigate these critical transitions toward becoming what we view as productive members of society. And those are the worlds we create, the languages we speak, and the players involved in making sense of how to reinvent the undergraduate experience.

As we talk about critical transitions from an academic lens, filtered through experiences from a human lens, it doesn’t take long to acknowledge the research design challenges. I started my doctoral work earlier than I should have and started as a quantitative researcher with beautiful, tightly-controlled, experimental designs, and then I started working in higher education. And I got into the world of student learning and developmental outcomes assessment and I saw the difference between practical significance and statistical significance in working with students, and the truth in the phrase that I first heard from Barbara Walvoord, which was “A classroom is a place where every possible variable is actively varying.” It was certainly true as we consider the students who come through our doors and who experience the worlds we create for them in so many different ways in and out of the classroom and the tensions that arise when those worlds inconsistent with and often counter to the worlds they would otherwise thrive in.

The talent approach to working with students, as opposed to the deficit models – note, do a search on at-risk on your website and destroy it, please – gets to deeper and more meaningful reflections of our role and as Dr. Burkert posed yesterday, contributing to a transformative educational experience for each student. Because we each get transformed as we build upon what we already bring to the table and we’re faced with situations that cause us to re-balance and stabilize and that looks different for each student. Constant checking of the influences of power and privilege on the worlds we innocently create is necessary as we ask student to move through our view of their identities, first year to the often-forgotten second year to the “you’re-no-longer-a-newbie-here” world of the major and then now you’re out of the nest, outside world. A reflection about that should truly be all mirrors and no smoke.

I’ve learned so much from Shaun Harper – Dr. Shaun Harper and his work – through the concept of being “minoritized.” To me, it’s powerful because of the implications as a dynamic and intentional action from one person on another or even the unintentional effect of a policy on a person or a group and words do matter, as we know all too well. There are some hot topics right now that have both unintended and intended consequences of working with student sub-populations at these critical transitions. I’ll talk about a couple of them briefly. One, of course, is the explosion of technology and our capacity to capture and use data and use multiple ways to intervene in our students’ worlds. I’ll get back to that in a minute. And the other, the second is the completion agenda, which is a noble attempt to help students get more quickly to career exploration and to minimize massive debt.

We’re hearing an increasing volume from both ends of the political spectrum, frankly, of the value of choosing majors that will lead to high-paying careers and to career exploration and to minimize massive debt. These systems we’ve, in the worlds we’ve created. One is the difference between persistence and retention. These are not synonyms, though they are related. We know this: students decide to persist. And institutions count whether or not they were retained. Which one is more powerful? Retention is not a learning outcome. Repeat after me. It’s a binary indicator that comes at a point where it’s often too late to do anything about it.

This convening and the network of professionals is about, I believe, acknowledging the power, and I don’t use that term lightly, that our students have to stay or go and to each critical transition point and the role we have in helping them through every step of that journey. When we hang our institutional success on the construct of retention, we ignore that journey.

In a recent discussion about deficit terms like “at-risk”, we instead tackled the word “struggle.” Where and how do students struggle? And I heard an individual respond to that by saying our retention rate is 92 percent, our students don’t struggle. I don’t know if it’s a cart or horse thing or a chicken and egg thing, but I know that every single student struggles. At some point, in some way, and if we’re lucky, despite those struggles, they may show up as a positive retention number.

So that brings me some, finally to some cautious optimism of the emergence of predictive analytics. I mentioned that I started my professional training as a quantitied, but getting deeply into the world of student learning and developmental outcomes assessment turned me into a qualitative researcher. When I teach research methods courses, we talk about the false dichotomy of the qual-quant debate and the beauty of the marriage between inductive and deductive approaches to generating and testing theory. So what an opportunity we’ve missed if we don’t at some point capture the expertise, tying the question that Amy Burkert posed yesterday, when she said about
authentic interactions with students, “Your face doesn’t look quite the same today, what’s going on?”

Some years ago there was an interesting article about the complexities of capturing evidence of learning and how we prepare students in higher education, because of what the author described as the three curricula in the colleges and universities, the one in the catalog, the one our faculty teach, and the one our students take. Even if you define that term curriculum narrowly, the path of courses that efficiently leads to a degree, I would argue that’s one, there’s one group of professionals who see all of those three curricula at play and the connections and interconnections and tensions between them and they are our academic advisors. The research agenda within the NACADA is built on the scholar-practitioner framework, presented by Kaiser, which encourages collaborative inquiry, researchers – with researchers who know how to design complex studies that can handle the intricacies of higher education and the practitioners that ask the best research questions. And as Dr. Day-Vines rightly pointed out yesterday, our students can be amazing co-

So I represent an emerging and growing population of faculty and staff who are ready to be at the table, as many of you are here, in framing studies that will inform the important decisions we’ll make in reinventing the undergraduate experience and honoring pluriversal identities. Thanks so much.

Joan Ferrini-Mundy  
Assistant Director for Education and Human Resources, National Science Foundation

Good morning, everyone. I’ve really enjoyed these talks so far and I’m looking forward to our conversation. I’m also very pleased to be invited here. I’m Joan Ferrini-Mundy. I head up the Education Directorate at the National Science Foundation. And as I’ve been getting to learn about your organization and the work that you do and looking for ways to connect that to the work that I do so that I might say something remotely relevant to you.

I was taken back to some of my early teaching at the University of New Hampshire where I taught in the mathematics department and this was a while ago now. Teaching freshman calculus and having a sort of stream of young women coming to my office hours, very talented students, strong mathematics backgrounds, ready to take on the world, coming to me in tears to say that they really didn’t want to be an engineer; that often dad had convinced them that being an engineer was the thing to do. This would’ve been in the early ’80s and they wanted to be teachers, which was music to my ears. That is my own field, mathematics education, and so there weren’t a lot of structures in place yet in those days. But it occurred to me as I was listening this morning that the complexity of the contexts in which your students and our students engage is really an important piece of this and I’m so pleased, as I look through your program and hear these talks to understand that people do think of this in a holistic way where there are so many intersections and contextual pieces, social pieces, that need to be thought about as we aim to make the student experience the best we can make it.

The National Science Foundation is a science agency, so our concern is promoting the progress of science and promoting the prosperity of the nation through science. Fortunately, as an agency, we have had a mission in education and in investing in people since our very founding back in 1950. And so for that reason, we have had an education section that stands parallel really to our engineering directorate, our mathematics and physical sciences directorate, and so on in a way that I think can be very useful to the sorts of issues that we all are concerned with here in this room.

We do aim at producing those who will be the leaders in science and engineering, so we have a very strong focus on graduate education, a very large investment actually in the improvement of undergraduate STEM education and then a K-12 investment as well. Because the argument has been for many decades that we won’t have these leaders in science unless first of all we have a very rich diverse set of people at the undergraduate level who have studied science and engineering; perhaps who have majored in those fields but also who are, in a sense, literate in those fields and in an ever increasing technological society and who will be the STEM-capable workforce, the STEM-literate society, those who can benefit from science; those who can bring the reasoning of science to a host of other kinds of careers and settings and so I hope you’ll kind of let me be a part of your conversation, even though I really am very STEM-focused in my day-to-day work, I understand the importance of breadth in the undergraduate options.

Forty-five percent of students entering as freshmen indicate interest in a STEM major, and that number, of course – we, I’m now nervous about saying words like persist – do persist through a STEM . . . see, I’m a quick learner – do not persist through the STEM major. And so one of the questions at our agency is how can we be helpful? How can we be supportive? And so we fund an enormous amount of activity at the undergraduate level that is aimed at creating programmatic interventions, curricular experiments, and research around that. And a full range of research methodologies where we really do recognize that our scholars need to understand the complexity of the settings in which students are engaging. And then we look to see how best to be helpful. And I did take Archie’s assignment very seriously. I’m a mathy-type and, you know, there were the three areas of diversity, culture, and identity and the three transitions that he wanted us to speak to.

So I thought, okay, so that’s like nine things and two minutes each and that will take too long.

So I am going to kind of blur it a bit, but a major goal for our agency is one of diversity and inclusion and we have a number of programs that are concerned with creating opportunities for students who have been underrepresented in STEM to have equity in terms of learning opportunities and occasions to be engaging in the field in a whole host of ways. So I will speak just a bit to the transition into the major and to think about some of the obstacles, obstacles that tend to be more challenging for students who have been underrepresented in STEM.

One, and these will be things that you know, but there are actually things that I was able to learn in the last few days as I was preparing. One is that students who enter in a lower level mathematics course than calculus, at least for the STEM majors, are challenged in very serious ways, in ways that they sometimes can’t overcome. And so this brings me to one type of intervention that I think is of great importance and that is, it’s in this intersection of what students bring about, their beginning of their formation as an identity – a formation of identity in the science or engineering fields. And when they bring background that doesn’t enable them to start where they might best need to, then the kinds of interventions needed need to sit in the intersection of what people know about mathematics learning and mathematics curriculum and so on. And what people know about what students bring from their own experience, from their own culture, from their own families, their own expectations, and need to be designed in ways that can actually enable success.

So we are seeing some experiments with this early mathematics.

We’ve also seen the importance of the transition from high school or from the two-year college into the research university setting, creating a number of challenges, the need for students to be able to have a sense of belonging within the university setting, within their social setting, and of course within their academic
and major, as well. And how to develop that sense of belonging in all of those settings in some coordinated way seems to be a rather interesting challenge. The need to build social capital, to build the connections that will ultimately serve that student well as they proceed, as they face challenges, as they develop their own career interests, how does that happen both within, say, the engineering major and at the same time, within the larger university. Those are the sorts of questions right now that we are, we are seeing proposals that are trying to take on how to answer and address those questions. Some of them are quite discipline-specific in the engineering fields in particular and others are more general, looking at STEM.

As for completing degrees efficiently and effectively, again, we see some data that can be helpful around the STEM issues. When students are in general performing worse in their STEM courses than they are in their other courses, that is a deterrent for them to continue in STEM – when in fact it may be that there would be other ways of approaching this if their interest is still very strongly within the STEM fields. And so we’re interested in experiments and interventions around that. Some of that’s tied to a delayed start in the mathematics.

The need for academic support for counseling, for academic advising that, again, is cognizant of the broader context seems to be crucial. And I was happy to hear about the idea of on-ramps and off-ramps, because we too are using that language at NSF and talking a lot about pathways, particularly as we think about students coming from two-year colleges into research and four-year institutions because much more attention to pathways in and out of the STEM fields, as well as reentry in particular, so students may leave, may wish to come back, may get re-interested – what are the ways of supporting that? Those are questions that are of interest to us, particularly in helping students develop a sense of self-efficacy and, again, identity.

I should add that there is long-standing research that I’m sure this audience knows about around STEM, the work of Elaine Seymour and colleagues that indicates that students will still cite poor instruction as a major cause for their departure from STEM majors. And so, in all of these discussions about all of the very important kinds of co-curricular activities, supports of different types, keeping in mind the importance of a focus on the quality of instruction, in the classroom, in – among the faculty, continues to be a very important piece of this as I’m sure you know well. And then, moving from the major into the post-baccalaureate days into being a professional, it seems that one very important factor there has to do with the research opportunities that students have had along the way, and what they have been able to acquire relative to identity in the field. And I think we are starting to see some interesting work coming in, which is looking at a kind of developmental view of research opportunities. So what kind of a research experience might be most suitable for a freshman just beginning to explore different areas, versus what might we like to see by the time a person is a senior who is about ready to enter the workplace or enter graduate school. And so was – are there trajectories, are there almost learning progressions within the research experiences that could be much more clearly defined and sharpened going forward?

We are also seeing a lot in terms of what’s coming across our desks around understanding better the mechanisms that are leading to improved student persistence, improved retention for those who are interested in the retention question at the same time, improved student quality of experience essentially in their majors. And so looking for ways to link the nature of the intervention and the timing of it in terms of a student’s growth through college seems to be a way to look at how we might then begin to scale and share experiences. Are certain kinds of experiences necessary before other kinds of experiences can be provided and so on? How do we begin to refine the very wonderful work that is going on with peer mentoring, with study groups, with bridge programs, with all of the various promising interventions? Are we ready to begin to fine-tune this in ways that allow us to look at their developmental trajectories and their sequencing and their particular instantiations within different disciplines?

I’ll just end by saying that the National Science Foundation does have a number of programs that I would hope would be of interest to you and I wanted to just highlight a couple of them. One is a program that we run for the White House. It’s the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science and Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring. I don’t know if people are familiar with that award or if anyone here has won it, perhaps. But these typically are awards that go to undergraduate faculty who have had great success in working, often, with students who have been underrepresented in the STEM fields. And so if you take a look at the NSF website, you can find this PAESMEM program: Presidential Awards for Excellence. Because so much of the research shows us that students’ financial situations are crucial to them, we also have a program called Scholarships for STEM that is provided in order to supply students who have high financial need with scholarship programs to be in STEM fields and that’s another kind of avenue to pursue.

And then the last one that I’ll mention is improving undergraduate STEM education RED: Revolutionizing Engineering and Computer Science Departments. It’s a program that is focused on the professional formation of engineers and computer scientists within the second and third years. So it’s not so much aimed at the first year or the fourth year of the undergraduate experience, but indeed in those middle years and very focused on interesting ideas about forming identity and so on.

There’s a project that we funded that’s looking at how to provide entrepreneurship experiences for students as a part of their research experience. So we’re all about looking for innovation in these kinds of areas and activities, supporting good work. Work can cross beyond STEM into the larger culture of the university and we need it to for it to be realistic and useful. And so I hope that if you don’t know NSF well, you’ll at least take a look and consider us as a place that not only is available as a funding source but also is producing work that is relevant to the kinds of topics that are of interest to you all. Thank you very much.

Archie Holmes

I’m going to take Moderator’s prerogative to kind of ask a follow-up question to you, Wendy. So I was really interested about the second year, you know, and so at our institutions you know we probably have two different models at least, right? So one where the students are directly admitted into a major. And so by the second year, if their identity or their feelings about themselves changes, they’re having to select out of something, which may have some challenges.

On the other hand, we have somewhere they choose in, and because of restrictions, there may be opportunities where not everybody can get their choice. So do you have an idea from the research and looking at that second year how you would help us figure out looking at those two different ways of helping students in that transition to the major, especially at that second-year point?

Wendy Troxel

Yeah, sure. There are places who are paying more attention to the second year. And you know the interesting thing about the first year experience
is – I always say every student will have a first-year experience, whether you intentionally guide that or not. And this is true at every path along the way. And I was hearing yesterday of some programs where there is recognition about this, “I don’t have a Plan B, now what?” kind of thing. And I’m living that as a mom. My son is on his fourth major and is feeling kind of inept about that. And you know, his father is telling him pick a major and just graduate. And his mother is telling him, “It’s okay, explore; whatever it takes is good.” So he’s got it in his own house.

Yeah, we spend a lot of time on our newbies. And it doesn’t matter if it’s a traditional age student or an adult coming back to college. We have to be careful to allow that exploration, that kind of shifting identity; and we were hearing at our session yesterday of a program that sends students initially into a major from the front end, but they have a University College model – I’m sorry, I’m forgetting which school you are. Identify yourself at some point – where they actually have students choose a second major from the start. And to broaden their thought about the possibilities, because most first-year students, especially seventeen or eighteen-year-olds, don’t even know the possibilities within a given major, much less what it takes to be successful at it. So often there’s this hand-off from first-year advising to the major, and a huge number as you say who may be in that kind of murky middle with no place to go.

So attention to the hand-offs, attention to that first-year exploration, the what-would-happen-if game; I would love to find a project that gets a bunch of first-year students to go through a logic modeling exercise, you know, kind of with advising, with planning and ongoing aspirational résumé kind of stuff. I don’t know if I answered that, but attention to the second year while intervening in the first year is critically important to helping that student find those important transition points and deal with those shifting identities, which ought to be an expected thing, not a bad thing.

Archie Holmes

So kind of in follow-up then to that; you know one of the things, and I think about this in reflecting on my own career, and we talk about these visible pathways, right? You know when I was 17 years old there is no chance in the world I would have thought that I would have been a Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, even if I had the slightest idea that (a) such a position existed, and (b) what the hell it was anyway. But on the other – and so there’s always going to be these invisible pathways that some students are going to know about and some students aren’t going to know about, right? But I worry on the other hand if we try to make everything visible we run into the paradox of choice; that we’re just giving students way too many options and then they are paralyzed. So how do we value that in terms of trying to show students what all the opportunities are for them to ultimately be successful, but not overwhelming them in such a way that they feel that they’re losing their identity or something?

We’re going to start with you, Peter; and I would love to get everyone’s thoughts on that one.

Peter Doolittle

You’ve got to love it when you’re like wow; okay, I’ve got eight seconds to sort this out. See, I think part of this is going to involve kind of a point-by-point counseling or advising. That is, you’re going to get advised when you need it on what you need; and so rather than try to do it all at once it’s where are you at the moment, and what do you need, what kind of help, and what kind of discussions. And then a year later you may need to have a very different discussion but we don’t know where that was last year. And so we have to be prepared as our students move through their four or five or six years to have different conversations at different times that vary from student to student; which means we’re going to need professionals who have that knowledge and that flexibility.

A group of us from Virginia Tech were talking last night about neutral advisors: advisors who are not dedicated to specific domains. And so they’re not about keeping historians in history and engineers in engineering. They’re about, “So what are you doing? What’s your question? How can we move you forward in ways that make sense to you?” So much more student-centric than structure-centric.

Wendy Troxel

I think that’s where technology is helping, and it’s kind of redefining the role of that conversation because of the ability to play the what-would-happen-if games with degree audits and such, and then to have access to the experts in the career exploration field who are moving closer to the first year than ever before, as opposed to résumé builders. They’re starting to partner with advisors and have those conversations. And the power, frankly, of students who have been through that journey most recently, and the stories of what shifted you. And sometimes they’re not the predictable triggers that shift a human from one place to another. And so kind of paying attention to that and capturing some of that is helpful.

Joan Ferrini-Mundy

I was thinking too about this social capital idea; the student resources for helping other students see possible pathways, offer possible direction not only in conveying what their own experience might have been and how they moved around and how they navigated. But even peer groups who are figuring out how to get access to certain information while others can’t get access to that information – can they sort of help each other out a little bit with figuring out where you go to find out what, and where are the sorts of mentors and models who can help you imagine pathways and fields beyond the one that you think you might have started in?

So the management of it seems very complex and challenging but I think it’s really crucial to keep in mind the students, as a collective, bring so much to this as well, and how to tap that seems interesting.

Wendy Troxel

Yeah, I would ask you; from an educational psychologist perspective, where does goal setting fit within identity development and shifts along the way, and how can we help be more intentional about that?

Peter Doolittle

Yeah, part of goal setting is deciding where you are and where you want to go. And so at any given point students are somewhere – now whether or not they’re reflected on where they are or not – and so oftentimes it’s, “How do we get students to pause and to think?” So it could be they’re just moving 90 miles an hour through because that’s what they’re supposed to do, and with the idea “I’ve got to get out and make my bucks as fast as possible.” But oftentimes, especially within our culture, we don’t just say, “Hey, sit down, we’ve got us some tea, we’ve got doughnuts, relax. So what are you doing? How do you spend your days? What do you think about on weekends? What do you want to be? Do you really want to be an engineer?”

You know, just getting people to slow down and ask those questions that then lead to, “What next? What do you really want to be and how do you get there?” And the goals, both proximal and distal goals – short-term and long-term – that’s how you manage that. And this idea that somehow a seventeen-year-old is going to understand their goals for the next five years is nuts. I think back at seventeen, and I was lucky if I could get myself to the weekend. And now that I’m fifty-five, I’m still trying to just get myself to the weekend.

So I think we need pauses built in where we can ask ourselves these questions and reflect on them about

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who we are and where we’re going; and then, based on that conversation, decide on where we’re going. Rather than somebody who says, “Oh here’s your next four courses. That’s not going to make me who probably I really want to be.” So I think purposeful pausing is important.

**Joan Ferrini-Mundy**

So I have a question related to this actually, which is what about parents and families of these children, of these kids? They aren’t children, but of these young adults particularly, who are also – I know from my own experience – having those experiences at home. They’re kids coming home; they’re playing with new ideas, trying to think about other pathways. And I know that as a parent, and I’m watching one of my siblings challenged with this right now with his son. Are there ways that universities can draw in that community productively so that they are guided towards either saying – so they are not guided towards saying, “Finish this major now, please, and get out of there and get some salary and get insurance.” Instead, so that they can – I have a brother who’s an attorney; he’s a well-educated person. He just doesn’t know what to do with his son who is wanting to explore some radically different ideas than they thought they were headed for. So that’s a question for all of you. You’re in this business. Are the parents a resource or are they a challenge?

**Wendy Troxel**

I’m going to tackle that first. I think it is both. You know I have been in higher education all my career. I was a director of admissions, I’ve run orientations. I’ve told parents get out; we’ve got it, trust us. And then I became a parent of a college student and I was clueless about how to let go when he walked away from my car. Now luckily he goes to an institution that has decided to embrace that important connection often; not always, because many of our students don’t have that resource at home. But they’re pretty intentioned about working with us and they often use us as, you know, tell us when your child is struggling.

We can intervene without them knowing that you told them. I know in a lot of cases we do really need to involve – especially in those cases. Even though the parents may not know, they’re a really big support for that student and we do need to figure out how to involve them. I know in a lot of cases we’re worried about the fact that, for example, sometimes we don’t tell the students how – we don’t tell the parents how their child is doing, or their young adult is doing, in classes because we’re worried about the privacy and other sorts of aspects. And sometimes we lose opportunities to be able to do that.

Amy, you had a question?

**Amy Burkert**

Looking at the parents’ side, some institutions are looking at ways to engage the parental expertise beyond just their own son or daughter, and that’s another way that the parents learn and feel connected, and know the places to contact. But they’re actually not in that concept of, “I’m directing my son or daughter.” But the knowledge that they get actually helps their interaction with their son or daughter. So that’s some of the things that I think we are looking to explore and figure out how to do.

The other thing I will say is that I used to, in my early part, be a pre-med advisor. And that’s a place where often it’s the parent’s dream for the son or daughter, rather than the son or daughter’s dream. And thinking about pathways that help engage that entire collection of folks, or empowering the student to engage them; and thinking about “what does it mean?” and giving them viable pathways. I think because that identity of, “You’re going be a doctor,” is really powerful; but when you’re not going to be a doctor, or maybe not on the timeline that everybody else is being a doctor, we as advisors at institutions have to help give viable pathways that give them the ability to save face and have real things that they can be proud of. I know the NIH’s pre-IRTA program has been one of the ways that you can really help people buy a little more time. And they still may go on to be a doctor, but they get that time pressure release of, “I have to take the MCAT this summer.” And that gives them a real viable, “my son or daughter is going to be in the NIH as a biomedical researcher.” That gives all of them a viable pathway; a way to really feel comfortable about where they are and time to figure out where they need to be.

**Archie Holmes**

I mean, I seem to remember, there was a really powerful New York Times op-ed two or three years ago about a first-generation student really not knowing what to do. And so when invited to orientation she invited her whole family to orientation to stay in the dorm because she didn’t know how it all worked. And I just think that in a lot of situations we do really need to involve – especially in those cases. Even though the parents may not know, they’re a really big support for that student and we do need to figure out how to involve them. I know in a lot of cases we’re worried about the fact that, for example, sometimes we don’t tell the students how – we don’t tell the parents how their child is doing, or their young adult is doing, in classes because we’re worried about the privacy and other sorts of aspects. And sometimes we lose opportunities to be able to do that.

You know, at the end of the day, we’re talking about a community that will support them, and your alumni know the system, they love the University for the most part, but are willing to give back. And this is a really easy way for them to give back. Yes?

**Audience Member**

Hi. Thinking about the decision-making that you brought up, and meaning-making around choosing a major; and when I think about students navigating this I think it’s really powerful for us to help them understand that they’ve made decisions before and they can make informed decisions. And I think when we give them that, they’re not navigating this unknown of life and “how will I ever figure out what’s on the other side of that?” but instead saying, “Where am I now and what information do I need to make this next decision?” I think if they can take that home to family members as well, family members aren’t thinking you’re going to squander your education and end up nowhere; you don’t know what you’re talking about. Instead, they engage in a discussion around gathering information and making informed decisions; which I don’t know if that will be their forever right decision, but it will be an informed decision at the point in time that they make it. I think that’s really important.

**Wendy Troxel**

That’s a great point. I was thinking about that when you were talking about kind of metacognition and...
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learning about learning, and learning about articulating. Students, even adult students who are playing different roles now, have to find a language for that kind of discussion I would say.

Peter Doolittle

Yeah, I think oftentimes in higher ed we focus on the content and the action parts, and we don’t focus as much on the thinking parts. So how do we make decisions, understanding the process of decision making, which is then generalizable across your entire life for the length of your life? We talk about a life skill of, “How do I go about knowing what I know and planning ahead, and then monitoring as I go through?” Because we all see students that we know are going down the wrong path; and we just think, “If you just stop for a minute . . .” Or, “I’m just going to let you go because there’s value at the end even if it’s the wrong one.” But if there’s certain things that we need as human beings to control our lives, and decision making or critical thinking would be part of that; but I think we need to teach those explicitly and I think right now it’s very implicit. We just kind of hope they get it along the way. Our better students do, and sometimes our students who struggle, struggle because they’re missing some of this ability to monitor and control their own thoughts and behavior.

Wendy Troxel

And isn’t that the number one skill that employers want?

Peter Doolittle

Yeah.

Elizabeth Guertin

So, Wendy, you mentioned that at your particular institution, Indiana University, we do have a model where the majority of students come into a University College; some of them have declared majors – many of them – and some are exploratory. We are now requiring all of our students to declare a second major before the end of their first term to facilitate exploration; looking at other fields, affiliate fields of study that may open up their thinking about how they can proceed. Some of them will do a double major, and some of them will just find a new major or they will proceed into the major they originally chose. But it allows for parallel planning and those sorts of things. And we also have an aspirational résumé that all of our students do as they come into the institution.

My question for you, though, is that one of the things that I see, certainly in my own institution but really across the country, is the tendency that we have to restrict access to so many of our majors and programs. On the one hand, we very often are saying to our students that a 2.0, regardless of how we feel about that; a 2.0 is sufficient to stay at the institution, to persist, if you will, and it is often adequate to graduate. But, in so many fields, it is inadequate to actually be admitted to any of our degree-granting programs. So we create these additional restrictions on how students can move through the degree. And there are fields where certainly that’s reasonable, where there are licensure requirements at the end that are going to be higher to get in; and so you do not want to allow students to proceed and then find that in the end they graduate but aren’t able to pursue that field. And there are places where, of course, we have – they are popular so we have more students wanting to enter than reasonably our instructional capacity can support. So there may again be reasons why we would do that.

But, frankly, in many of those programs, those reasons don’t exist. It is simply a choice on our part within the institution to say you need a 3.0, or a 2.7, or whatever the criteria are to enter that program. I would be interested to have the panelists talk about that tendency on the part of our higher education institutions to do that, and the impact on students.

Wendy Troxel

Boy, there’s a lot there. Thank you, Elizabeth; thank you for reminding me that it was your institution, Indiana University, with that second major.

You know, there’s a lot there. The first one, I am always concerned about – having been in the world of academic assessment – is what grades mean; and how they represent or fail to represent actual learning and kind of what that looks like from a pedagogical scaffolding point of view. I think the emergence of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Instructional Teaching and Learning Centers on campuses, faculty actually talking to each other about learning, formative assessment gathering helps that. So those policies work best when there are actual data behind them and evidence of actual learning; that’s the predictive part of it.

I go back to the goal setting piece and the eighteen-year-old brain kind of thing. I’m so proud – my son, my only child – his motto in high school was “Cs get degrees,Ds get you credit.” So it has been really hard to let him figure out in college what failing looks like and what retaking courses look like, and how do you find where you’re successful, and that it’s okay to work harder than you ever thought you could and what that looks like. So I don’t know. I’m finishing up an article right now on grade inflation, and talk about grade inflation and the formative strategies in a summative world. Where you learn to teach, you teach better; I do formative assessments, I teach better, students learn better, their grades go up. And then I get called into my Chair’s office for grade inflation. So I’ve got to, what do faculty do when they face that? So I think digging down into what grades actually mean within an academic unit, and having real conversations across faculty is helpful. But that’s a tough one.

Peter Doolittle

I think part of this is we would never build the system we have now if we were going to start over. As I said before, our present has a history, and there’s a reason why we are where we are. In each of our classes or each of what we do, there’s this much information; we’ve got fifteen weeks, there are things we want them to understand, and then we pretend that a 2.0 represents our students’ learning. We all just kind of nod and we pretend because it works for us. We can take those with a 2.1 and pretend they’re different than those with a 2.4, and that somehow we understand that they know more or they know less. The fidelity is not that good. We are not – when we’re assessing our students, we’re not cutting diamonds.

It’s blunt force the way we’re assessing for most of what we’re doing. That’s okay; we just need to be honest about what we’re doing. Ultimately, we’ve built a system where we expect students to get everything right the first time because we’re not going back. I’ve got to get to chapter 12 and I’m on 8. I can’t go back to 7. And so we’ve got this weird system where everybody’s got to get it right the first time.

We also – and I’m going from weird to bizarre – we have a bizarre system where students generally aren’t taught to learn and faculty generally aren’t taught to teach, and that’s the environment. That’s their job. If I think about the percentage of faculty who have taken a teaching course before they get into class, it’s relatively low. If I think about the number of students who have taken courses in how they learn and how their memory works, it’s relatively low and yet that’s why we’re here. These are all things that can be remediated, but we’ve got to have an understanding and be honest about the system that we have.

If we really want our students – that 2.0 student can be a 3.0 student. They just need more time; they just need opportunities to examine that information in different ways from different perspectives to build deep, flexible
knowledge. We know all that. From an educational psychology standpoint, we’ve been studying that for 125 years. I can tell you how to do that. The downside is I’m also going to need four more weeks, and that’s where we run into problems. So now I’m going to get off my soapbox.

Joan Ferrini-Mundy

Just to add a little bit more to that, all of which sounds great, is that if faculty haven’t taken courses in how to be teachers then we certainly know they’ve probably not taken courses in how to do assessment and how to really clarify their learning goals for students. The technologies for doing that, the tools for measuring vary widely, of course, by field, but in particular, on the kinds of things that we’re starting to talk about; problem-solving, decision making, planning, becoming part of a cohort. Those sorts of skills that we would hope students are able to access during college; that’s not rolled into the 3.0 or the 2.1. So there’s a lot of work to be done on the assessment side and on the working with faculty to broaden out their views of what learning counts as. You all know that but just I just wanted to reaffirm that we are interested in that at the NSF in a very serious way.

Audience Member

So I think you really hit the nail on the head. But I want to amplify on one issue that I feel in what you said, which is that by formulating teaching as a passive consumer model is a one-way broadcast network. It’s broken from the start because real learning has to be a two-way communication process. In particular, when you zero in on this question of where people get stuck, I would put forward that they key for success for an institution going forward, the competitive advantage is not “Can they?” it’s “Will they?” Even if it’s intrinsic reward, I would appeal to the professionalism of educators who got into this to help others learn more about the things that they’re passionate about. So it just takes a little system approach.

Wendy Troxel

Who are you addressing that one to?

Audience Member

Why don’t we start with Peter?

Peter Doolittle

First of all, while this is on my mind, anybody who is an engineer in the room, I want to say it sounds like we’re bashing engineers and we’re not. That’s just a particular major within.

Archie Holmes

I’m an engineer. I didn’t feel it.

Peter Doolittle

We love engineers. I think part of the issue, to me, the question was how do we work with faculty who may not have had training in the teaching/learning process to move forward and I think at a Research 1 institution it’s particularly challenging because the reward system isn’t really set up for it. So if tenure promotion is not based on your teaching, then it’s not going to be up near the top of the list. If you are going to work on your teaching in an environment in which that’s not going to be rewarded for tenure promotion, you do it at your own risk.

Now, we have awesome teachers at our institution, as I’m sure you do at yours and they, some of them do it naturally. Some of them, we see all the time that we work with and we go in and help them. I think part of it is, we need a shift at the top so that it’s indicated that teaching is important and it’s not just impact of publications and grant money and things along those lines, but what are students getting as a part of being our institution, which gets back to a part of what Wendy and Joan were saying is, you know, do we just measure things we can count or do we try to go measure things that, in fact, count? I think when we start doing that, we’re shifting into what impact are we having on students in their lives, not just how many of them make it to the fourth year.

Wendy Troxel

Yeah, I couldn’t agree more. I worked with faculty in this realm for a number of years and I’ve never met a faculty member who didn’t want his or her students to learn. They really do. I would go into a particularly grumpy faculty member’s office and he would say to me, in this case that I’m thinking of it’s a he, “I don’t have an assessment plan. I don’t need an assessment plan. I’ve been teaching this way for decades and get out and I don’t need you, need an assessment, or learn anything more about.” And I said, “Give me an hour. Answer my questions and I’ll show you your own assessment plan. Of course, you do formative assessment. You do it every moment of every class.” I think too often when we try to do this, we kind of impose this one-size-fits-all model of pedagogy that doesn’t take into account the expertise of the discipline and the ways of knowing of that discipline and why they got into that business in the first place because the elements are very much the same. So it really is not “Can they?” it’s “Will they?” If it’s just intrinsic reward, I would appeal to the professionalism of educators who got into this to help others learn more about the things that they’re passionate about. So it just takes a little system approach.

Joan Ferrini-Mundy

Just real quickly, I agree with what’s been said, but particularly the point about faculty genuinely caring about their students’ learning because it’s all about sharing their passion and helping that move forward for their students. But there are techniques that fit within this notion of starting where the faculty are, the same way we are committed to starting where students are. It’s all learning. It’s just learning in a different context with different backgrounds.

One thing that has shown some promise in the sciences at the undergraduate level has been this tradition of developing concept inventories. I don’t know if people know these. These instruments – assessments, basically – started in Physics where people who are teaching these first-year Physics courses can do these assessments with their students and be quite, sometimes, shocked at things that they knew they taught but that their students did not learn through these kinds of tools. And so, finding ways, it’s all about teaching. It’s about teaching the faculty by starting where they are and helping to maybe bring them more insight or help them rethink their assumptions or help them be startled in some way that causes a little bit of disequilibrium and enables them to think differently. It’s a fascinating challenge and very, very interesting in the science fields in particular.

Wendy Troxel

And shifting the definition of teaching. What is good teaching? Good teaching is that which enhances student learning.

Archie Holmes

So we are just about out of time. Colin, do you have a very short question?
Colin Potts

Well, I was, a provocation to take away. I’m listening to this and I’m wondering whether the pathway is actually a very misguided metaphor that’s sort of leading us to ask the wrong kinds of questions. And, of course, you want people to make progress and so that’s where the pathways metaphor comes from but we seemed to be obsessed in teaching and advising in curriculum design with the notion of helping students make choices and that presupposes that there are preexisting things to use to choose among. The difference between chemical engineering and chemistry is a big deal for chemists and chemical engineers, but not necessarily for a student who’s interested in science.

The different between, you know – well, name your two disciplines; public policy and international affairs, which are different programs on our campus. Perhaps we should be thinking – and I think advisors really try to do this but we should be thinking about building identities and building understanding, responding very much to Peter’s whole thing about, “Let’s not be quite so busy,” because I think the idea of making progress through some sort of tree of possibilities is actually stopping students from really thinking about what they want to accomplish. If we could think a little bit more in terms of curriculum design around those kinds of things, rather than, “Here are the choices you need to make for next semester, well, these are the kinds of jobs you can do with this degree,” which is, I think, virtually, all of us in this room and our backgrounds so we’ll say isn’t quite true. That would be an interesting way of reformulating this whole debate.

Archie Holmes

Well, on that note, I really do want to thank Peter, Wendy, and Joan for joining me up here on a Saturday morning.

The breakout sessions that followed the third plenary focused on successful transitions into majors, efficient degree completion, and building visible pathways to post-baccalaureate educational experiences and careers. Topics included: assessment, faculty development, and promoting deep learning in upper division courses; discovery and the development of professional identities; linking disciplinary mentoring and advising to promote completion; research on inclusion and achievement in the junior and senior year; setting the stage for future success – inclusive pedagogy and engaged learning; advising platforms and analytics.

3A: Assessment, Faculty Development, and the Promotion of Deep Learning in Upper Division Courses

Carol Rutz, Director of the Writing Program, Carleton College

John Bean, Professor Emeritus of Writing and Assessment, Seattle University

The presenters discussed a study that Carleton College did with Washington State asking if it is the case that we employ people to do faculty development to improve teaching, then how do we know this model works? Much of this type of assessment has been done at the K-12 level, but not much has been done in higher education. The researchers gathered data through looking at student work; conducting interviews, surveys, and participant observation; and tracked who was participating in faculty development.

The main finding was that every institution has a culture of teaching and learning, but that culture can look very different from one institution to another. At Carleton College, faculty were very interested in advancing their curriculum development through creating rubrics, learning outcomes, scaffolding assignments, etc. At Washington State, faculty felt there was a large amount of turnover and “mixed” faculty, which impacted the culture of teaching and learning. The researchers found that institutions must learn about how faculty in different classifications learn about teaching and apply it — supporting faculty in all classifications improves teaching and cultivating teaching as a learning experience helps serve institutional goals.

John Bean gave a specific example of an effective faculty development strategy that involved a two-day summer workshop for most departments on campus. It was called the “writing the majors project” but really emphasized trying to teach students how to think within that specific discipline. Workshops were based on McDonald’s stages of writer development, arguing that basic composition courses do not translate well to later courses. Students go through four stages as writers in college

- Stage 1: What they bring from high school – not college-level writing
- Stage 2: Experience in first-year composition – generalized academic writing
  ✓ Each discipline has own writing structure, so writing falls apart as soon as they start their major.

- Stage 3: Novice writer in their major
- Stage 4: Expert writer in their discipline

Bean gave an example from an Economics department where faculty felt that students were not thinking like economists. The department tried to figure out how to build this thinking into their curriculum. They created focus groups with students and saw that they were unable to do tasks that faculty deemed important for a career in economics. Faculty decided to redesign courses with scaffolding assignments. Students were used to plugging numbers into formulas and getting the correct answer. Faculty began scaffolding assignments, they began to implement more thoughtful, complex questions with a writing component that required writing to a specific audience. This forced students to ask questions that they were not asking when simply “plugging” numbers into equations. Faculty wanted students to be able to identify which theory applied to real-world situations, match a situation to appropriate theory, tell the story or theory behind each graph, use economic databases and resources, and select appropriate data. Students were able to develop these skills through these more complex assignments. In order to scaffold assignments and courses, ask faculty what they want seniors to be able to do – what do you want them to solve? Then, assess what seniors can actually do. Work backward in the curriculum to scaffold these skills so that by senior year they can solve these problems.

The presenters then discussed considerations as institutions utilize this model. Instructors need to leave space for discussion and input, particularly in courses where there previously was not much space for discussion. In addition, allowing students to decide their own parameters in assignments can open up ethics discussions related to academics and the specific discipline. When curriculum developers work with faculty, they need to keep in mind a sort of “faculty amnesia” that exists— they do not remember being “non-experts,” which can cause them to lose empathy for students. Curricular developers and faculty members can help the faculty culture shed some of that and develop empathy and let students be beginners. Watching students struggle can be uncomfortable but that is what allows growth.
Potts stated that what we tend to get wrong in academia is that failure is a personal rebuke. Our policies and practices do not encourage failure and even if we did in higher education, high schools do not encourage failure either. It is difficult to assess values of careers in the future, even as we discuss educations students for careers that may not exist yet. Career services offices at institutions need to rethink career education. Georgia Tech has put career services and pre-professional advising into Academic Affairs in order to help with this reframing. Finally, there is an inherent paternalism to how we design programs for students to choose, although we constructed our own identities and possibilities. We need to change the mindset at research institutions to allow students to design their programs to build their own understanding.

A program at the University of Texas at Austin is trying to address these questions. Most incoming students have not been exposed to the variety of disciplines and options available to them. It can be difficult to move around and stay on track for graduation. Interdisciplinary education and choices can help students navigate campuses and degree programs while discovering their professional identities. The Bridging Disciplines Program, housed in the School of Undergraduate Education, provides interdisciplinary certificates for undergraduates that are all-college bridging. Completion of the certificate appears on student transcripts.

There are fifteen certifications. The creation of the certificates was sometimes student driven and some developed through faculty research centers. The certifications are designed to complement majors through coursework and connecting experiences. The certificates are 19 credit hours – a little more than a minor and less than a major. Students can “double dip,” so they are designed to not extend their time to degree.

Students in this program are supported through their development of professional identities throughout their experience from application to completion via interdisciplinary coursework tailored to students’ individual interest and goals and connecting experiences, including research, internships, creative projects, academic advising, reflective writing, and the alumni network.

The application process is designed to match goals articulated by students correspond with what the programs can offer. Other factors considered in the application process include whether students have time to finish the program without extending time to degree and student GPA. The GPA required for acceptance is 2.0, but students have the opportunity to reflect upon and explain their GPA. GPA as a factor is used to evaluate if the programs will help or hinder student success.

Once a student is accepted into the Bridging Disciplines Program, there is an orientation where students set goals and begin to select connecting experiences. We want students to design and take ownership over their education, but this program asks students to think about their own particular goals and make choices regarding their path. No lists of opportunities are given so the program is very individualized. Data shows 98 percent of the graduates were satisfied or very satisfied with their connecting experiences. Academic advising helps students choose classes that are interdisciplinary and choose a combination of classes from different disciplines. Students need to reflect upon how the connecting experiences relate to other components of the certificate. At the conclusion of the program, students write an integration paper to reflect on their experience and integrate what they have learned.

The Bridging Disciplines Program has an alumni network and alumni advisory board that is closely connected to the current students in the program. Alumni talk about with the current Bridging Discipline Program students about career paths during one-hour seminars and also participate in informational interviewing for students.

The program serves about 700 students and is continuing to grow in popularity. The connecting experience opportunity is unique. In 2015-2016, 64 percent of students who started programs completed them. These programs do not extend time to graduation, support graduation, and provide options for students who find it too difficult or too late to change majors. It also allows students to pursue interests outside of their majors. Students complete an exit survey when they leave the program. Alumni are also surveyed every two years.

Despite the success of the program, there are challenges. Creating incentives for faculty participation can be difficult. The interdisciplinary nature and who owns the curriculum can also be challenging, as it can require interdisciplinary collaboration of faculty. A lot of territoriality can become an issue during the formation of a School of Undergraduate Studies and an interdisciplinary degree or certificate program. Often interdisciplinary programs can eventually become
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housed in one school or college, posing barriers to faculty collaboration.

To learn more about the Bridging Discipline Program at the University of Texas – Austin, please visit: https://ugs.utexas.edu/bdp.

3C: Linking Disciplinary Mentoring and Advising to Promote Degree Completion – Envisioning Complementary Roles

David Spight, Director of Undergraduate Affairs for the College of Engineering, University of California, Davis; President, NACADA

David Spight began by introducing his goal for the session: How can we facilitate advising and faculty mentoring to promote student success? Student success should not be the “minimum” (degree completion); we should be aiming higher than simple degree completion and set high expectations. Spight asked participants to reflect on what disciplinary mentoring means. The group provided a variety of responses:

- Mentoring done by faculty that is not only about curriculum but also shows how transferable skills in a program can be used toward a career or other goals in life.
- Disciplinary mentoring does not have to be just faculty, as there are many discipline-specific advisors and other professionals, but maybe faculty should be the focus so they are more involved.
- Faculty may not always provide good advice about careers or transferable skills.
- Faculty can be crucial resources and provide networking opportunities.
- Subject-centered advising versus student-centered advising (University of Miami) – student-centered is more broad/big picture and subject-centered is more discipline-specific

He then asked the participants to consider the questions, “What is academic advising? What activities make up advising?” The discussion focused on the following points:

- Providing correct curriculum information to students.
- Understanding deadlines, dates and procedures, and general requirements.
- Tied more to curriculum program with links to student affairs.
- Information guidance, intellectual mentoring, developmental relationships – students want timely and accurate information (but do students always know what they need?).
- Responsibility to help students with educational and life plans
- Sue Kennedy, Boston University, shared the example that at BU they have an advising network composed of faculty and staff advisors with monthly brown bag meetings. This group has a designated mission statement that identifies advising as integral to the teaching mission of the university and engages students in the process.

Many agreed that the most important thing students want from advising is accurate and timely information. Additionally, advising is intended to help students with educational and life goals. One participant thought that it depends on where their expertise lies. There are competencies that the academic advisor helps students learn about the university. A faculty mentor can then help students to focus on a discipline area. This moved the discussion to the question of, “Where is overlap between disciplinary mentoring and academic advising?”

The discussion included the observation that in the past faculty did everything at the university – teaching, monitoring residence halls, creating/changing curriculum, helping students to find opportunities for professional development, etc. However, now all of these services are specialized. Some participants shared that we, in higher education, are artificially separating the identities of advisor and mentor while students may not see a difference between the two.

One person observed that for a student to act like a professional in their chosen field they need to be interacting with other professionals in their field, and that means interacting with faculty members. Spight indicated that he sees this not as a conversation about who is doing what, but how to get faculty and staff to work together. How do they collectively work together for the sake of students?

The group then divided into small groups to create a new unique idea for faculty and advising staff to work together to advance student success.

In the group report-out, the group mentioned students are confused about advisor role and responsibilities – successful models are co-led by faculty and staff to illustrate to students that advisors are just as important as faculty position, and promote respect between faculty and staff members. Challenges to successful faculty/staff advising integration are that faculty advisors see themselves as elevated compared to academic advisors, and a team model may not be practical from a time/resource perspective unless advisors are embedded in the department. Attendees also noted that getting students to buy-in to a partnership between faculty and staff and see them as equals may not be realistic, and there are structural challenges of where advising services are housed. One concern for faculty mentors is that some faculty are less comfortable with the role and the responsibility and they are not getting rewarded for advising in the tenure and promotion process. Some participants thought that a solution to the problem of faculty not knowing all the details regarding academic advising could be resolved by position descriptions that call for 50 percent teaching and 50 percent academic support coordinator/professional advisor.

It was observed that there is a need for each student to be validated by someone as a learner in their chosen field – this requires student and faculty involvement, as well as fruitful, concrete conversations within the context of the profession. Although advisors can reinforce that students are capable as learners in the field, there is more weight when it comes from faculty. Some felt that students were not always getting this type of reinforcement.

In order for integrated disciplinary mentoring and advising to be effective, the administration needs to communicate to faculty the benefits of working with academic advisors to encourage culture shift. There is a need to create and approve student-learning outcomes that result from the advising process, in order to direct advisors and faculty mentor efforts and activities. The learning outcomes would outline what we want students to know, do, and value. This would also validate the work done by faculty and staff in the area of academic advising. As a result of the jointly developed outcomes, faculty and professional advisors would speak a similar language, thus putting the focus on students and student learning. When students demonstrate they have met those outcomes, it creates data with which advisors and faculty mentors can show that they are successful and better tell their story in higher education.

The group was then asked to describe what they would want students to know, do, and value – possible learning outcomes for linked disciplinary mentoring and advising models:

- Learning to advocate for self and find voice
- Self-regulation, learn independence
- Learn to navigate complexities of University and hidden curriculum
Unpacking the Student Life Cycle (2) – Successful Transitions into Majors, Efficient Degree Completion, Visible Pathways to Post-Baccalaureate Educational Experiences and Careers

- Information literacy – find and evaluate information
- Negotiate cultural differences
- Identifying own skills, abilities, and deficiencies
- Appreciation for general education requirements
- Critical thinking and analysis and ability to transfer that thinking process to new situations
- Professional communication and interpersonal skills
- Process to allow for self-reflection and planning
- Collaboration with others and ability to work with others

Spight noted that the learning outcomes identified by the group are meant to reflect the overall student experience and are not necessarily tied to a specific role. Outcomes are not tied to degree completion specifically; these skills go beyond time at institution and relate to things beyond advising.

Some participants voiced that they believe academic advising is replacing what used to be found in a Liberal Arts program: appreciation for the general education portion of the curriculum. Advisors and faculty mentors need to dispel the notion that students should “just get this out of the way” and help students understand why it exists, why it is important to have a breadth of knowledge, even in a limited format, and communication skills. All of these are behaviors and skills universities want their students to do beyond college.

A challenge identified by the group was how best to measure academic advising-related learning outcomes. Are student retention and graduation rates the outcome of reaching the learning objectives/outcomes? Additionally, it was not clear who would play a role in helping students reach the outcomes, although it was generally agreed that everyone would play a role, and a participant offered a visualization of a three-legged stool to illustrate the relationship, with student, faculty, and advisor acting as legs to support reaching the learning outcomes.

The group identified better curricular design as one benefit of deeper connections between faculty and advisors. They also noted a concern that outside pressures (i.e. the college completion agenda) negatively affect student-learning outcomes because the evaluations and metrics based on retention and graduation data do not enable us to provide a true picture of student success. Spight noted that, in the end, if student-learning outcomes are met, students will be retained and they will be successful.

3D: Professional Development for Faculty and Staff that Facilitates Applying Research on Inclusion and Achievement in the Junior and Senior Years

Marsha Lovett, Director of the Eberly Center, Carnegie Mellon University

Marsha Lovett began by introducing the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation at Carnegie Mellon University. The center is a place of support and resources for faculty and graduate students who want more information on student-centered learning strategies. Her position as the director requires:

1. Understanding and promoting pedagogical changes by gathering and synthesizing the research on student learning.
2. Talking about and sharing the research-based inclusive teaching practices with instructors, faculty, and graduate students.
3. Discussion of application issues: Taking honest looks at how to make teaching transitions happen at our institutions. The office hosts roundtables on teaching, a teaching and learning summit, and the website has many resources on teaching and class design.

Then Lovett had the participants divide into groups and to complete and discuss a worksheet on “Why Faculty Do/Don’t Talk about Diversity in the Classroom.” Each group was to list four reasons for each to understand the layers of support, struggles, and misperceptions surrounding this topic. Brainstorming about why some professors would and do talk about diversity in the classroom included:

- the research shows us it is beneficial for students, university culture, and community
- the instructor has a personal buy-in, is passionate
- can make subject matter more lively, relatable, engaging
- want to create safe spaces for students
- feelings of obligation or was told to by department/institution

Brainstorming about why some professors would not or do not talk about diversity in the classroom included:

- do not feel equipped or trained
- not my role or do not feel they have the right to
- do not know how to start
- does not feel it relates to the content/material they teach
- feelings of wanting to avoid potential conflict/getting off track
- It is a burden, resenting the assumption that we should all do it in the classroom or that we have to
- assumptions that those kinds of conversations are relegated to certain departments or offices

There was a discussion about some of the biases, assumptions, and misinformation around these conversations. One example is that if a professor argues that they do not want to take up time in their classroom or that it will move away from the lecture material, which is presupposing that diversity is completely separate from classroom content rather than always already inherently a part of what we do as educators and experts. This is where more conversation and research comes in to teach teachers more about this topic.

Then Lovett went on to discuss the Four Levers for Change:

1. Awareness: recognize what is going on at your institution, departments, classes, your own biases, and reasoning
2. Learning: digging into discovery, what students are going through, what multiple identities our student body has, if we can find ways to practice in “low stakes environments,” and being okay to move out of the expert zone to relieve some pressure
3. Practice: attending trainings, roundtables, conferences, etc.
4. Accountability: learn more about it and practice qualitatively and quantitatively—need to see if we need to change and have a willingness to be vulnerable in the change and incorporation

Carnegie Mellon is working with STEM faculty on incorporating discussions on diversity in the classroom and have done sessions on “evidence-based teaching practices” and active learning. They shared data with the faculty on achievement gaps and some practices that have seen results in narrowing gaps. Then they practiced utilizing the practices and gave the faculty ideas on how to monitor their own progress. Other low-stakes recommendations to share with faculty included interweaving diversity into classes, for instance, simply changing the names in a word problem, using Bob and Bill, instead of Bob and Sally, when discussing a couple. Then continue with class content as they normally would; as well as “visual anthropology” or utilizing office door space, bulletin board, and other spaces students might see as a way to bring up...
Valerie Otero, Co-Director of Learning Assistant Program, Professor and Program Co-Chair of Science Education, University of Colorado, Boulder

Dr. Otero began the session with a discussion of equity in the classroom so that all students could succeed. She said it is difficult for faculty to remember or think about the students who are novices to the field and faculty often forget what it was like to be in their shoes. Her aim is to have students and faculty move toward a more holistic learning approach. She emphasized the importance of showing students how they are learning applicable to the field/discipline. She presented a chart that described how students’ motivations, goals, and identities relate to the set of ideas, symbols, and behaviors that define a community and its cultural norms and practices. Students’ identity, goals, and motivations also relate to their understanding of disciplinary principles and practices.

It is crucial to make classrooms (particularly in STEM fields) more inclusive of student identities and learning styles. She said that professors expect students to just “get it” and forget to acknowledge the students’ diverse experiences in relation to the class. She discussed the types of instruction that are not helpful for students, such as “topless instruction,” where activities were tied to experiences but not followed up on – moving too fast without discussing and building on current material; and “bottomless instruction,” where activities were tied to discipline, but not connected to student identities.

Dr. Otero then discussed her learning assistant program. The learning assistant is a graduate or undergraduate student who is the go-between with the student and professor. The learning assistant helps transmit information about curriculum, discipline-based educational research, etc. between student and professor and professor and institution. The LA model is designed to help faculty understand and appreciate their roles in students’ lives. Sometimes learning assistants are also in learning teams (similar to a study group, but an LA is there as a facilitator). Learning teams help students reflect on the previous week, talk about what is coming up, and relate information back to the instructor.

A challenge of widely implementing learning assistants is the cost and finding students who can serve in this role. Also challenging is getting multiple professors on board with the program. So far the data has not shown if learning assistants impact transfer student success. It is also uncertain how LAs would work in non-STEM classes.

3F: Advising Platforms and Analytics

Greg Heileman, Associate Provost for Curriculum, University of New Mexico

Chaouki Abdallah, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of New Mexico

Presenters gave an overview of analytics and metrics related to advising and student progress, specifically related to the journey of the University of New Mexico. They introduced the idea of the university as an interconnected system. Students are the input of the system, and measurable characteristics are preparation, background, and demographics. The outputs are graduates. Their measurable characteristics are assessed outcomes, research productivity, and career achievements. There are also many unmeasurable pieces of this system. In higher education, we are using what we can measure, and work with those things to provide feedback to improve system performance.

One way to improve outcomes has been to be more selective in admissions, a path that some institutions have taken; other institutions, however, have focused on advising, student support systems, and other initiatives that help students who have already been admitted. This is the path that the University of New Mexico has taken, shifting the conversation from, “Are students ready for our institution?” to “Is our institution ready for students?” We do not always know what outcomes will be, even if we measure what we can. A key factor in educational attainment is momentum. Students who progress steadily tend to complete. We know that there are behaviors that tend to positively influence momentum: Direct entry from high school, full-time study, quick entry into a credential program, continuous study without breaks. $P=\frac{M}{V}$ is the equation for momentum ($P$), Mass ($M$): Must accumulate credit hours to graduate; Velocity ($V$): These must be on the right trajectory — credits that are correct.

At UNM there was the assumption that every student needed 128 credits to graduate. This was not always true — students were often graduating with more credits than they actually needed. Many credits were coming from other institutions, or were outside of their major, or did not count towards the credits they needed. This showed that preparedness was not the issue. What they learned was that students were not moving through the system efficiently and this was causing students to stop out and lose momentum. Efficiency is defined as the ratio of the useful work performed in a process to the total energy expended. The efficiency measure is the credits that count divided by total credits.

Analytics create a great place to start conversations, but people are not numbers or statistics. UNM is the first institution that has a majority of underrepresented students, and they have 46 percent first-generation students, 40 percent Pell-eligible, and are considered a Hispanic-serving institution. There is an obligation, financially, to provide the clearest path for students to finish their degrees. Advising students through an inefficient curriculum is very difficult. We should work to fix the inefficient curricula in majors where students are graduating with many extra credits first.

UNM took a “build your own” approach to advising and learning analytics, focusing specifically on flexibility and collaboration. They considered the following foundational aspects: analytics, preparation, and affordability.

UNM analyzed curriculum and degree requirements as data. The first step was optimizing these requirements. The ways that courses are structured in curriculum creates degree plans. Degree plans need to allow for degree exploration, remedial pathways, and transfer pathways. Extended time to graduation needs to be transparent. Curricular efficiency can be calculated and analyzed and UNM created a tool to do so.

UNM’s tool calculates a curricular complexity score. This score directly impacts how risky it can be when students miss prerequisites or take time off. One solution is to break apart pieces of courses that are important for other courses and combine them with other foundational courses, allowing students to move...
through pathways more efficiently. UNM's tool includes faculty-facing, student-facing, advisor-facing, and public-facing platforms. There are also administrative-facing pieces to analyze information about cohorts. This tool provides a great deal of information about the efficiency of different programs, including the ability to focus on specific cohorts of students and look at why some student's paths have been more efficient than others. It can work with a student to help them make their own path more efficient. It can also help faculty to make their curriculum more efficient.

The next step in the tool will be to examine how students have been advised versus how students actually registered. Another feature may be to complicate this equation by also measuring a student's efficiency: if they are failing classes, change majors, or withdrawing. It is also important for us to consider the policies and admissions standards that administrators put in place for programs.

The presenters also talked about iPASS systems in general and all of the different pieces that can go into their analytics.

For more information on the tool described here, please visit: [http://curricula.academicdashboards.org](http://curricula.academicdashboards.org).
Envisioning the Overarching Institutional Pieces: What Would the Structure and Culture of a University That Did These Things Well Look Like?

The first plenary and following breakout sessions explored what we know about the multiple intersections between culture, identity, learning, and discovery at individual-level, lived experiences of students, faculty, and staff. The second and third plenaries then examined the interplay of these questions across the student lifecycle – from programs designed to build a more diverse and accomplished pipeline through degree completion and preparation for meaningful careers and life-long learning. This concluding plenary shifts the focus to macro-level institutional characteristics and poses a central question for university presidents: From where you sit, what would an institution that does these things well look like?

It is, given the multidimensionality of the links between diversity, culture, and identity and the complex institutional environment of research universities, a daunting question. It is made yet more daunting because university presidents most try to navigate it at the juncture of its internal, within-university dynamics and the external pressures and expectations for which university presidents are uniquely responsible. Finally, while university presidents are able to learn quite a bit from each other about directions to take and how best to lead and respond, it is also the case that each usually faces a distinctive constellation of “facts on the ground.”

The panelists for the plenary (Presidents Mark Schlissel, Judy Genshaft, Diana Natalicio, and Tony Frank) represent quite different research universities: the University of Michigan, the University of South Florida, the University of Texas at El Paso, and Colorado State University. Across those different institutional contexts, the discussion suggests an emerging sense of direction on the challenges and opportunities in promoting shared discovery and learning that is responsive to diversity, culture, and identity.

Mark Schlissel, President, University of Michigan
Judy Genshaft, President, University of South Florida
Diana Natalicio, President, University of Texas at El Paso
Moderator: Tony Frank, President, Colorado State University

Mike Mullen
Vice Chancellor and Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, North Carolina State University

The moderator for this session is Dr. Tony Frank, who is president at Colorado State University, and I won’t go into a lot of detail on his bio. You can read that, but he’s been president at Colorado State since 2008; he has his doctorate of veterinary medicine degree from Illinois and he got his Ph.D. from my alma mater, Purdue. . . . He’s been really foundational in the transformation of Colorado State on very many levels, and I know he’s had a great tenure there. The thing that I want to say about Tony that I deeply appreciate is that as we were transitioning this organization, we were looking for a new home for what was then the Reinvention Center, and President Frank and his team came together four years ago and said, “You know what? Colorado State would be the perfect place for the Reinvention Center,” and they invested in the Center monetarily. They invested in the Center from a personnel perspective with Alan Lamborn, and I credit the strength of this organization today to the support and underpinnings that you’ve provided for us. It’s allowed us to really build ourselves on a really strong foundation and so President Frank, I want to thank you very much for your support of the Reinvention Collaborative, and with that, I’ll invite President Frank to the podium.

Tony Frank
President, Colorado State University

I thought . . . we’d start with . . . [a] number to think about: . . . fifty – that’s the years as sitting presidents that this panel represents. Half a century of – I don’t know. We were joking we were all part of the problem now; maybe that’s – but you do have some experience up here, for good or ill. This is a wonderful panel that I’m proud to help moderate and so I’ll introduce these folks. You can read about their bios and whatnot, but I’ll ask a panelist to come join me.

Judy Genshaft from the University of South Florida, Diana Natalicio from the University of Texas, El Paso, and Mark Schlissel from Michigan. Welcome.
Envisioning the Overarching Institutional Pieces: What Would the Structure and Culture of a University That Did These Things Well Look Like?

So last night, we were joking about this as we prepared for this panel. Last night on the plane, as I was looking at the questions that we had put together, I was reminded of how different words sound depending on the context in which you write them or read them. These questions were written a couple of weeks ago and they sound pretty different to me in the wake of the political events of last week than they did when we wrote them. Now I bring that up because while the election and the political events that accompany it are clearly important – and I’m certain we’re going to talk about that as a panel – we also wanted to make sure that we honored all the work that went in to putting this conference together, and we didn’t want those events to overshadow literally what have been decades of work and commitment towards certain projects around the theme of this session, and what we all anticipate will be ongoing work that will remain incredibly important to institutions and we’re all extremely committed to it as we go forward.

So with that, “diversity, inclusion, culture, identity,” paraphrasing the title of this session, “What’s it look like for institutions that are doing this well?” Now it’s a broad topic; we could talk about pipelines, transitions. We could talk about student success metrics, but let’s leave it broad and Mark, perhaps, we’ll start with you. What do you – what happens at Michigan that you’re proud of?

Mark Schlissel
President, University of Michigan

Sure. So first of all, thanks for the invitation to come and participate, and particularly, thanks to you all in that sort of frontline in educating our students, which is really our core mission. I am just learning about this organization, but I’m pleased that it exists; I’m very impressed at the turnout and the commitment that you all show to undergraduate education. So I think it’s fantastic.

Michigan has a long history involved in building a diverse student community. We were the party to a number of famous lawsuits that went all the way up to the Supreme Court. The situation that we find ourselves in now is under a voter initiative, which perhaps presaged the election of last week. The voters of the state of Michigan, with a fifty-nine to forty-one plurality, told us we’re not allowed to take any account of race or ethnicity in distributing educational benefits. So that’s what we’ve been operating under. The University of Michigan went from an undergraduate community that was 8 percent or 8.5 percent African-American to one that was about 4 percent African-American in the years since we’ve come into compliance with this law. I’ll tell you, I’ve only been in Michigan for a couple of years, but I have been so overwhelmed by the breadth of cultural commitment at the university to building a diverse learning and teaching community. It was amongst the first issues put on my plate as I was being on-boarded as a brand new university president a couple of years ago. So there is a deep and historical commitment operating in a state that really doesn’t support it.

Now what I’m proud of: what success is beginning to look like for us is within the confines of the law – increasingly creative programs to reach out into communities all around our state and in major cities around the country that haven’t traditionally sent their students to Michigan. We’re not at all limited in our ability to use geography or socioeconomic status to targeting our outreach and recruitment efforts, and we’ve reversed this tide. So we’re really beginning to build a university community, a student community at least, that looks more like the state we’re serving. In addition, for many years, we’ve had something I’m very proud of: a summer bridge program – it’s been in existence for almost thirty years – to take students from relatively weaker academic backgrounds who are nonetheless talented, hardworking students and give them a summer semester head start on their first academic year, and now we’ve got twenty-five or thirty years of data on these students, and they do spectacularly well. Their graduation rates approach that of the student body as a whole. So that’s been a big success.

Another thing that I look at with pride is a number of programs to try to build a more inclusive campus community embracing the diversity that we have been able to achieve. One of the things we have is a Diversity Peer Educators and these are students associated with dormitories, not quite at the same ratio as RAs, whose job it is to promote conversations and hold programming very locally to get students to engage with one another across difference, and this is a feature of Michigan that’s helping us make progress, something we’re proud of.

We have an incident response team, which has been called to action this week in particular. It’s a group of administrators and educators and student life folks that are involved in dealing with emergent issues, like the ones I’m dealing with this morning of a student walking near my campus in a hijab approached by a homeless man with a lighter threatening to light her afire if she didn’t remove her hijab. Other episodes on campus that are similarly sad stories to tell, but we’re geared up and the students know where to turn for help.

Then finally, we have a program that also, we think, contributes to a success called Intergroup Relations. This is an academic program that cuts across the breadth of the university but is run out of our liberal arts college that teaches one-credit courses and brokers host training and special discussions open to all students with lots of guest faculty about issues of diversity and inclusion and how groups relate to one another. So these are some of the features at Michigan that I think look like what success may ultimately be, although, in complete honesty, I think we’re quite far from being able to call ourselves successful at capturing the diversity of the state we’re serving and of using that diversity to help educate the rising generation.

Tony Frank
President, University of Michigan

Thanks, Mark. Diana?

Diana Natalicio
President, University of Texas at El Paso

Well, good afternoon. I want to compliment our moderator for arranging pillows for these chairs because every time I get into a panel like this in one of these chairs, my feet don’t touch the floor and so this is – I have a great sense of strength.

University of Texas at El Paso came at this whole issue of diversity through a slightly different path from most of your institutions, I’d suppose. We – in 1988, I became president of UTEP and one of the things that we did was to take a look at whom we served, and as we looked at the ethnic breakdown of our student population, what we discovered is that it didn’t reflect the region from which we were drawing 90 percent of our students. Instead of serving low-income Hispanic students, we were serving a mostly majority Anglo and higher income population. If you believe, as I do, that public universities are absolutely established to provide educational opportunities for people in – whether it’s a state or a region of a state, and your population on the campus doesn’t reflect the demographics of the surrounding region, then you have to worry about why that’s happening.

So we did a variety of things to achieve some level of authenticity at UTEP to be the university that we were supposed to be, located where we were in El Paso, Texas. And what we discovered – we looked at feeder patterns from all of the high schools – and that’s how it all began – to try to get an explanation from those
schools that were sending us very few students as to why they were sending us so few of their students, and the answer typically was, “They’re just not college material.” When you hear that answer, you begin to tease out, “Why is that?” “Well, because they’re poor; they need to go to work,” and a lot of other excuses, and, “They’re not likely to succeed because they won’t be able to sustain this because they don’t have enough money,” or whatever it might be.

And so we worked very hard at the outset to change the way in which our entire community thought about higher education, and that meant every sector of our community. And so what we did was to form something called the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence, which is a pre-K through sixteen partnership that has celebrated, this year, its twenty-fifth anniversary of partnering between elementary, middle, high schools, community college and the university. We still meet every two months, the board of the El Paso Collaborative – superintendents of all the school districts – twelve of them – president of the community college, myself and business leaders, and we talk about data. We don’t sit and opine on the latest political issues in the community or whatever it might be.

We talk about data and we provide a tremendous amount of data to our area high school. So we can tell one high school how their pre-calculus students are performing in calculus courses at UTEP and we give them that feedback in a very open conversation with all the superintendents present so that everybody knows that we’re tracking all of this information, and if we spot issues based on those data, we attack them. We try to find out who’s teaching pre-calculus at that particular high school. That person is likely a UTEP graduate and so we have this closed loop that we can begin to work very, very hard to try to raise the bar for all young people in all of the schools and prepare them well for success at the university level.

The other thing that we did, of course, was to reach out to parents and to counselors and principals and everyone in the community to talk about who goes to college and why, and why it’s important not to underestimate the future prospects of any young person based on ethnicity or gender or any other disparity. And so what we’ve been able to do today is that the student demographics at UTEP mirror those very, very closely; 80 percent of our students are Mexican-American and another 6 percent come from Mexico every day. So of our 24,000 students, we now look like the surrounding region. That’s a very important goal in terms of the authenticity of a public university in a setting like ours. So we work very, very hard at getting those students to enroll at the university.

The flipside of that, though, is that they have to also succeed and that’s where the pre-K, elementary, middle and high school preparation is so critical, and why the relationships with the teachers and the continuing professional development of the teachers and our respect for and celebration of the teachers in our community plays a big role. We’re going to have a football game on Thanksgiving weekend, Saturday, and every single teacher in El Paso is given four tickets to come to our game and to celebrate with us. We bring them out on the field at halftime and we celebrate who they are and what they do because they are the foundation upon which our success is going to be built, and they’ve done a wonderful job, I have to say. So the students are succeeding more.

Now more recently in Texas, there was a designation given to eight universities as what is known in Texas as Emerging Research Universities and that included Texas Tech and University of Texas, Dallas, Arlington, San Antonio, El Paso, and so the eight of us were placed in this special category for theoretical funding and a lot of other things that were supposed to come with it. But the important thing about it is that this designation was really about striving for prestige; it was talking about Tier 1 and a lot of other things. And the real danger with that for institutions like ours that are serving a 55 percent first-generation student population, 60 percent on Pell – very, very modest means kind of student population is that with the hunger to become a research university, you forget the commitment that you’ve just finished making through the El Paso Collaborative or whatever other commitments might have been made.

And so pairing our commitment to access was a very strong commitment to excellence, and research really became the tool that enabled us to create the quality educational climate on our campus. The kind of faculty, the laboratories, the facilities, everything that you would need to compete in research could also serve as a means of providing undergraduate students with jobs because they’re written into grant proposals. So we’ve created about 2,500 jobs on the campus for our students, all of whom work – and so working on campus is a good thing – and our whole research agenda has been controlled by our commitment to ensure that our undergraduate students benefit and it doesn’t drift away from the fundamental mission of our institution: our public mandate to serve the people of our region.

What’s so interesting is – and I’ll close with this for the first round of these comments – is that many people told us there’s a tradeoff. You can go for research, but you’ll have to compromise on access; you can’t do both. There aren’t enough resources; you won’t be able to do it and you’re going to have to give up on that. That’s the same thing that people said to us when we reached out initially to the schools twenty-five years ago. They said, “You’re going to have to lower standards in order to admit all these students from this region.” The fact is in that case, we not only were more inclusive but we raised standards.

In the case of research, we not only made the commitment to these young people that we would never let our research agenda run away from them – and our research agenda has grown dramatically at the same time. Our research expenditures have gone from five million dollars a year to ninety million dollars a year, and that is what people said you could not do. Whenever anyone tells us that, we say, “Oh yeah, we know that and we’re going to do it anyway.”

And so whatever I think we need to bear in mind is that we’re always cautioned about limited resources, meaning that you have to make those tradeoffs. You don’t; you just don’t and I’m just so pleased that our institution has been able to remain authentic at the same time that we’ve risen in stature and in our own self-esteem. We now define ourselves; we don’t let anybody else define us.

Tony Frank

That 80 percent statistic is really remarkable. Do you remember, off the top of your head, what your demographic was twenty-five years ago when you started reaching out?

Diana Natalicio

It was about 50 percent, yeah.

Tony Frank

That’s a remarkable change. Thank you and I’m going to use that theoretical funding line. That’s a great line too. Judy?

Judy Genshaft

President, University of South Florida

Well, thank you. It is a pleasure to be here and I just have to give a shout-out to one of my invaluable team members, Paul Dosal. Stand up, stand up. Yay! We’re glad and I do this and I say this because we do not operate alone. It’s all – it takes a team to make things happen and I think that’s been so valuable about hearing my colleagues speak about the institution.
Envisioning the Overarching Institutional Pieces: What Would the Structure and Culture of a University That Did These Things Well Look Like?

is you really need to understand the values and the culture of the institution that you work for because it really – it means so much to how we progress and how we change and how we move forward.

So as the University of South Florida – with the crazy name that we have, that’s based in Tampa and Tampa Bay area, which is a four–eight county area having four million people – have to understand now, Florida is now the third largest state in the United States with twenty-three million people. How did USF get the name South Florida when we’re not in the southern part of Florida?

And so I’ll just tell you very quickly that in 1956, the legislature decided that there was a need for another public university, and the public university – when the state was not populated at all, very sparse – they said, “Well, we’ll put in a university that’s south of Gainesville and south of Tallahassee.” South Florida; here we are in Tampa, not Miami! So we’re halfway up the coast on the Gulf side and we are now the University of South Florida with the first students starting in 1960. So we’re a relatively young university, but we’ve got – we pack a punch.

And so right now, we’re – we have three different institutions that are a part of USF. That is the main doctoral research, medical component – the big – the large – it’s 43,000 on the Tampa campus. We have a 5,000 – University of South Florida campus, gorgeous, in St. Petersburg, which is about a forty minutes’ drive away, and then we have about 2,000 – and I’m giving you rough estimates – about 2,000 in University of South Florida, Sarasota–Manatee, and that makes up almost 50,000 students across the University of South Florida system. I was telling Mark, who said, “How did you get your name?” and I said, “My first year, when I came in 2000, I did a survey among alums about changing the names.” I mean, don’t do that! Try to change a name of an institution, you won’t last long! So we are the University of South Florida and go Bulls. So that’s another one. Go Bulls!

Let me just say that as we started, when you talk about the culture of your institution – as we started, there was a private institution in the city of Tampa and the then big legislator – who really is the father of University of South Florida – went to the private institution and said, “How about joining us and we can work together and make this big institution happen in this – in the city and the state?” And the private institution – “But you have to be open to diversity and inclusion,” and the private institution board said, “No way, José. No, not going to happen.” So we went off and built the institution on – we have about 1,600 acres of land in the city of Tampa that we now reside on, and it was – so that’s a very important component in terms of the culture of the institution because the day we started, inclusion and diversity are a fabric of who we are.

So USF now has about 20 percent Latino – a large number come from Cuba, a large number come from Puerto Rico and a fair amount come from Mexico, but we’re almost 20 percent Latino. The other – we have about 12 percent African American; we have about – almost – not quite 5,000 international students. We have a large diversity in terms of race, in terms of religion, gender and we celebrate the diversity, we celebrate inclusion. So we have almost 38 percent to 40 percent Pell Grant students, a very, very, very large number of first generation to – in their family, to come to the university.

And research. When you look around different institutions – 4,000 institutions in the United States about – they’re different flavors. They’re not better than another; they’re different. So I think of it like ice cream; you have strawberry, you have butterscotch, you have whatever – butter pecan, and whatever you want to name it. They’re different and so of the different missions in higher education, University of South Florida was founded as a research institution. That’s what makes us separate; that’s what differentiates us from other institutions, both in the state and the United States. It’s not better or worse; it’s different.

So, with that mission, we bring in about $488 million every year in research grants and contracts. Now the type of research that we do is very much applied along with our cultural founding: medicine and health. The broad topic of health is the fabric of who we are. So our – the busiest Veteran Administration hospital is connected to the University of South Florida and our med school started almost the same time that we were founded as a university. So having military presence is huge and we were very pleased this very week to find out from the Military Times magazine that we were ranked number one in the country for veteran-friendly, and we applaud that, and we want to see the diversity of all kinds on the campus of University of South Florida. It’s very, very important to us.

But so is all of the undergraduate component and what we did is – for student success, we set up a 100 person committee and it was made up of everybody on the campus. Not just faculty, everybody, and it was headed by Dr. Dosal, because everybody comprises student success, and Florida is a very metrically-oriented state. Our performance funding is calculated very carefully statewide and so it used to be, “How many students are you enrolling at the university?” and that’s how we received our funding. Not now; now it’s output. “How many students are you graduating? What is their salary in their first year of their job, if they’re not going to graduate school?” It’s all about metrics.

So we work very hard to make sure that the success of our undergraduate students is very high and I can tell you – this is another point of pride for USF. In the country, you don’t find this very often. We have as many students graduating coming from lower SES as higher SES. There is no achievement gap between races, between SES, between any of our undergraduate students. They are all graduating at the same level and a very high graduation rate level, and so again, the work that your organization does really is so very important. And I love the fact that you’ll network with one another because as one of you have issues, you can connect with one another through email, or however you communicate, because we need to all work together. You are the team that makes the university presidents proud and I can’t say that more than, “We are a team working together.” I rely on my team members so much. So thank you for organizing this and being a part of such an important component of a university.

Tony Frank

Thanks, Judy. Now let’s flip that coin over, and briefly, because we’ve got a couple more questions we want to get to before questions from our audience, but let’s go back down the line in the opposite direction. What work do you still have to do at your institutions? What aren’t we so proud of? Judy, do you want to start with that one?

Judy Genshaft

Well, I don’t know about “what we aren’t so proud of” – I don’t go there. I mean, what I do go is, “What are some of the challenges that we have ahead of us?” And I don’t know how many of you in the room have this challenge also, but I did bring a couple of the Chronicles – most recent Chronicles of Higher Ed and one – “Counselors at Capacity;” mental health issues, psychological issues. That is in these Chronicles – what we used to call, when paper was the big thing, “top of the page, above the fold” – “Counselors at Capacity.”

We are finding that we’re raising our – bigger is not better to me; better is better – raising our profile and undergraduate research and everything goes together, but the counseling issues, the mental health issues, the issues that we have with attempted suicides, the issue
that we have throughout that you know so well, and many of you are in charge of those programs. That's one of the big issues.

The other issue that I'd like to find out, at some point, is we have, our enrollment – 57 percent of our enrollment are females and the rest, of course, are male or other – and what we’re finding is that males are not graduating at the same high level that females are, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. I know we’re not the only institution that’s finding this kind of question, “What’s going on?” So I have set up a Status of Men committee because I want to know why they are not succeeding at the same rate and I can tell you this: it doesn’t matter whether you’re white, African-American, Latino, whatever. The race isn’t the issue; it’s the same across levels. Now, where are the exceptions? If they’re coming from some of the Far East areas – China, Japan, South Korea – they’re graduating at the same rate, if not higher, but not so (for) America(ns).

So I – that is one of the – two of the challenges that I’ll mention and the others can mention more.

Tony Frank
Thanks. Diana, work still to be done?

Diana Natalicio
Well, my biggest worry is money. Money affects everything that we do at the University of Texas at El Paso. My concern is the decline in state appropriations for higher education, a steady decline over time, and if you serve low-income students, as we do, you can’t raise tuition, you can’t just say, “OK, I’ll just operate this like counterweights and what I’ll do is raise tuition to fill the gap that the state appropriations didn’t.” Many of you are facing this problem, but it’s particularly acute when you serve students like those that we serve. Forty-five percent of our students report a family income of $20,000 a year or less. That is an extremely modest income, as you might imagine; that’s a family income and that’s with aspirations to get a college degree, to go on and get a degree. As you know, Pell Grants haven’t kept up with inflation.

There are a whole lot of issues, but the most disturbing element of this is how vulnerable, how fragile a low-income student’s place is in higher education when financial pressures attack them. So let’s suppose that you have a family income of $20,000 a year, you are working, you have a younger brother and sister who need school clothes or whatever it is, you have a disabled parent, you have healthcare bills, you have a whole bunch of things to deal with and you have a job – many of those jobs, as I said, on the campus. But let’s suppose you have an old car and your brakes go out. That car is absolutely critical to your infrastructure; it takes you to school, it takes you to work, it takes you to childcare, it takes – that car becomes the single most important element in a person’s life to be able to manage what they’re trying to do. And you find out that it’s going to cost you, let’s say, $400 to get the car fixed. You have no savings account, you have no cash flow, you have no reserve and so what are your options?

Well, the most logical thing for many of those students to do is to say to themselves, “I’ll drop out of school this semester. I’ll work more hours, I’ll make more money and I’ll be back next semester.” I have heard that story thousands of times in the twenty-eight years I’ve been president. The number of students who actually take all of those steps is almost nonexistent; there are almost none who manage to do it in the way that they expect. They take the first step, they drop out of school; then they don’t have that expense and then they work more hours, and then they get their brakes fixed. And then somehow at the beginning of the next semester, something else comes up or it’s not a good time, and it’s just too easy to say, “I’ll defer another semester.” And pretty quick, they’re gone. And these are students of enormous talent, some of our very best students because their first obligation is to their families. They’re first-generation, there’s nobody else on whom that family may be depending and so they have to do what they think is right.

So we’ve come up with every manner of program and, I hope, if you’re serving low-income students, you have some suggestions for me because we’re always looking for new ways to do this. We’ve created an emergency loan fund and we’re very, very quick to respond. So if we get any kind of intelligence of a student who’s about ready to drop out of school, we’re proactive. We get into it; we try to find out, “How much money do you need?” And we will lend it to you so that you can finish the semester. They’re in good academic standing; there’s no reason for them not to finish, but they just can’t find their way to do it.

And so serving low-income students has become so much more complex in today’s world with lack of health insurance, with all the kinds of things that are affecting our students, and as the state refuses to pick up its share of the cost of educating its own people and assuming that tuition will cover it, institutions like ours are getting caught in the squeeze because most of our students are low-income. And for me, the whole commitment of public higher education is to enable talented young people who are the first in their families to have access to higher education, to really have that access. It is the American dream; it was my dream.

I was first in my family to go to college and I would have never succeeded if it hadn’t been for the Jesuits at St. Louis University, where I grew up. And why did I go there? I went there because I could get there on the bus. It was between Washington U and St. Louis U; there were no public universities in St. Louis. That was in the days when public universities were all in small towns. So it was in Columbia and I couldn’t afford to go away to school, and so I ended up going to St. Louis University. It was a private school, but it cost $300 a semester. I had a half-time job as a secretary because I majored in secretarial studies in high school. I learned how to type and do shorthand, and so I worked half-time, and I could earn enough money to pay my bus fare and my tuition and my books, and I was able to get an education. That’s how I did it.

A student can’t do that very easily today; it’s almost impossible because the differential between the cost and what you can earn in a part-time job just isn’t adequate. And for me, it’s payback time. I’ve got to figure out how to help these students do what needs to be done in order for them to get the education and enable them to be, then, leaders for their own families, and to enable them to do what they need to do.

So the cost of higher education today for low-income students – and if you look at baccalaureate degree attainment in the lower socioeconomic quartile, you know that in the – over the past forty years, we’ve only inched up a couple of percentage points in terms of baccalaureate degree attainment in the lower socioeconomic quartile. It’s around 10 percent – less than 10 percent. In the highest quartile, it’s more than 70 percent of young people in the highest quartile are getting a degree. So the gap is widening between the haves and the have-nots. It explains a lot about the recent election; it explains a lot about a lot of things if we’re not going to have access to higher education for young people like those that I know who are so talented but so limited in their financial resources.

So for me, it’s always about money and I go to the legislature and testify over and over again, and I always hear somebody say at some point during the proceedings, after fourteen legislative – biennial legislative sessions – I know all these comments pretty well, pretty predictable, and I’ll hear someone say, “But Dr., you know that you can’t buy quality with money.” And I always say, “Oh yeah, you can, actually, you can. You can,” and with all due respect, of course, you can. So I think we really do need to think about low-income
students and the challenges that we’re facing. Public higher education was not made for the rich and today, it’s becoming uniquely available to those who can afford to go. That’s not right.

Tony Frank
Mark, you get the enviable task of following that.

Mark Schlissel
Oh man! I can’t top that. So I actually will continue on a bit on this theme of the consequences of university financing. So we work hard to diversify our campuses as public institutions because we serve the public, we want to serve all of the public and I think that was pointed out with great eloquence. Another reason we work hard to diversify our campus is because a huge fraction of the learning that goes on – particularly at a residential university – the students are learning from one another. And I think one of our missions as educators is to take these young people during this magic window of time in their life where they’re separating from their parents psychologically, they’re figuring out who they are, they’re defining their pathways for the life ahead and have them do so with a broader appreciation of the breadth and culture and the difference across the breadth of this American society. To have them get to know the way people think that are different than them, that grew up and have had different life experiences is something that our society at large is not doing a great job on, and I think one of our important roles as educators is to expose students and to encourage them to engage across difference.

As universities – public universities get squeezed by this mistaken notion that education isn’t a common good – of course, it’s a common good. It’s a public good and we’re in an era where governments really are more and more narrowly defining what they’re willing to pay for. So as a result, the burden of education is falling more squarely on students and their families. And despite Michigan’s best effort to use philanthropy to enhance financial aid, to generate a mix of in and out of state students, with the tuition differentials so we can use some of those funds to help with financial aid as well, we’re becoming a campus that’s as economically polarized as the society we’re in the middle of.

We’ve got a pretty high percentage of students that come from the upper-income range, something which, I guess, one might think of as paradoxical for a public university. We’re becoming as unrepresentative of the public as many other things are in the privileged end of society and then that has a consequence that I’m finding particularly challenging, and that is the subset of our students that come from lesser means – as well as the partially overlapping subset of our students from traditionally marginalized groups – develop very significant amounts of interest in activism around the social issues of the day.

My campus – I’m having to discipline myself not to keep reaching my hand in my pocket to read about the next protest or the next act of intolerance happening on the Ann Arbor campus today as a consequence of this election season and its outcome. But what I struggle with is there’s a community of students that is very engaged in issues of social justice and they are trying to reach out and understand their place in the world, how society is changing, what the implications are for their lives. But I’ve got a pretty significant fraction of our students that aren’t engaging, and they’re students, typically, that come from majority families and wealthier backgrounds, and they’ll pay attention for a moment, but then it’s not quite real to them and they just go on about their lives. And that’s an enormous opportunity that we’re missing on our campus for all students to learn. The students that are coming from the more marginalized backgrounds, the less well-represented backgrounds, but also the majority of students that are here in what should be a sociological and cultural melting pot.

I tell our students a lot that one of our goals is to educate them to function in an increasingly multicultural and globalized society. Some of them get it, but I have been unsuccessful reaching out to what I’d have to say is a majority of students that because of their identities, haven’t really felt forced to engage and maybe this election cycle – if there’s a silver lining, perhaps they’ll get hit in the head enough that this is the world they’re going to inherit and it’s falling to pieces in some ways. But my struggle is to get engagement from majority students in these very challenging issues that we’re dealing with as a society and to have folks take advantage of being surrounded in class and the dormitories and the fraternities, on the playing fields, in the clubs by people that aren’t like them. There’s a richness of diversity in the United States that I think is actually amongst our biggest sources of strength and at least my campus isn’t really fully taking advantage of that.

Another way we’re struggling – and this is common amongst research-intensive universities – is we’ve made woefully little progress diversifying our faculty. We certainly recruit many faculty of color, but often we do it from other great universities and they steal our faculty away, and we’re not doing a great job being bold and creative enough in where we’re looking for talented people, and breaking out of this notion that, “You couldn’t possibly be talented if you didn’t go to the same school I did and have the same education I did, or study the same subjects I did when I was younger.” So we’re struggling with diversifying our faculty who can help lead these conversations not just in a few of our classrooms, but in all of our classrooms.

Tony Frank
Well said and that’s a good lead-in to our third question. Now, this is the poster child for how words can mean two different things at two different times. We’re coming out of one of the most contentious election cycles in history, the effects of which will reverberate across our society for years to come. And I found myself looking at that and looking at myself in the mirror and going, “What did I know and when did I know it?” That question’s changed when we wrote it and first talked about what we might think about it. So, let’s take a different twist on that question and let’s take a slant at it, perhaps through the lens of the word “safety,” but let’s perhaps even change that word a little bit.

Safety on our campuses has meant – not exclusively, of course – but it’s meant Clery Act, it’s meant guns, it’s meant sexual violence, Title IX Office of Civil Rights, and now we find ourselves very rapidly in a situation – as we were discussing before the panel – where there are certainly physical safety concerns, but there are tremendous concerns about perceptions of safety that are affecting large numbers of our students. Let’s work, Mark, from your end back this way. Talk about that.

Mark Schlissel
Yeah, so I’m guessing that all of you, you know, find this topic on your own campuses very challenging. There’s a little bit of a false dialogue, I think, on this point out in society where some are looking at the term “safe spaces” and interpreting that as areas that don’t have freedom of speech, that aren’t really educational. They argue that we’re coddling our students, we’re not teaching them resilience. And I think the term has not led us in a great direction. When people ask me about “safe space,” “psychological safety,” I think, actually every one of us – through our right of freedom of association to choose where you go, who you hang out with, who you go out to dinner with, what clubs you join, how you participate in our society – are creating safe spaces for yourselves in part of your lives and in other parts of your lives you’re interacting more broadly.

So, I think this argument around safe spaces is a little bit of a red herring. I think where we have to thread
the needle on our campuses to produce the sense of psychological safety that allows our students to take advantage of a learning community – hopefully, a diverse learning community where people are going to disagree – is to allow them the same freedoms that we have. You chose today who you were going to – well, maybe it was random – but when you go out to dinner you choose who you’re going to sit with at a meal, or you choose what movie you’re going to go see, or if you’re a member of a club you choose to join that club.

Our students should have the same ability to make choices about where they live on campus, who they dine with, if they want to hold a student group meeting in the evening, they can pick who they hang out with. And the idea is that having a fraction of their lives that they can define and achieve a level of comfort I think allows them to go off with another fraction of their time and look for trouble – look for areas of discord and disagreement, look for people they can argue with or discuss or learn from. And our job is really to help them strike that balance of having them all feel like they’re equally valued members of the community, that they all have the same opportunity to take advantage of the resources of the community, to make choices about how they spend their time and who they associate within a community, but yet be incentivized and mentored to have difficult conversations where people disagree with one another.

Our society is having an increasingly difficult time with any discussions where there’s any disagreement. I think, perhaps the symbol of this for me would be a person walking around campus with earbuds in their ear hooked up to a phone. We cut ourselves off, we tend to select the inputs we’re getting, we tend to hang out too much or build communities too full of like-minded people and then there’s nobody to argue with even though there’s huge discord in the world all around us and the world our students are heading out to.

One of the challenges on the Michigan campus is we don’t have a lot of diversity of political thought. I just discovered in this very recent election, we have four polling places on the campus and I live on the campus and vote but I’m probably the only person over 50 that votes on the campus; the rest of them are all students, and our campus was 90/10 in favor of the unsuccessful presidential candidate. That’s not a lot of political diversity amongst our students, and I’m guessing – although I don’t have data on our faculty – it’s somewhat similar, and yet we’re educating kids to go off into a world that was pretty much a 50/50 split, and they’re trying to understand all this.

So we have to find ways to build a culture that balances psychological safety that probably comes from hanging out with either like-minded people or people with similar backgrounds with a culture of stepping out of that safety zone and engaging purposefully with people that are different. And then we have to build campuses with more intellectual diversity, invite people in from the outside to help our students get exposed to a broader diversity of ideas, some of which are going to be threatening, hurtful, insulting, but when they walk out of graduation, they’re going to be walking into that world. So, we have to build them this microcosm so they can continue learning in that direction. So, I think this is a topic that can have an endless conversation but I think I’ll hand things off.

Tony Frank

Diana, this issue of safety has some very unique aspects at UTEP that very few other places in the country have. Why don’t you share some of those experiences with us?

Diana Natalicio

Actually, I was just thinking that as Mark was talking about the University of Michigan campus, and perhaps we couldn’t be more different in many, many ways. First of all, University of Texas at El Paso is located in a binational metroplex of two and a half million people, two-thirds of whom live in Mexico, and a third live on the El Paso side, so we’re basically a binational metropolitan area with an international boundary in between and a wall. We have a fence; we do have a fence in our area. It stops very quickly at the end of the city limits, but nonetheless, there is a fence.

What’s interesting about the political dynamic right now with respect to what students are thinking about, El Paso is, generally speaking, a very tolerant community. We’ve been an inland international boundary for a long time, a port. We have a lot of people coming through from Mexico to the US and going in the other direction, a very, very large amount of cargo and transport going back and forth. We have a very large military base, Ft. Bliss, so we have a large number of military people in our community, most of whom, of course, are not from our region. And so, it’s been a – for me when I first moved there I found it to be a very tolerant place, very easygoing, very working class, and people were very focused on getting their jobs done and not spending a lot of time reflecting on a lot of the issues around them. Many of them were recent immigrants, they didn’t vote, they weren’t involved in the political process, so it’s a very different kind of context.

So as a result of that we’ve not really been as involved as many other places might be in the US with many of the domestic, if you will, issues. But where this has really hit us very hard – the political campaign – has been with the conversation about the wall and about what that means, because if you can imagine this, most of the people that I know in El Paso have family members in Juárez; Grandma lives there, aunts and uncles, cousins, lots of people. People go back and forth with great regularity; it’s just part of the way we live. So, a wall and the concept that we’re going to stop forward motion into the US from Mexico for students – we have 1,100 students who commute, most of them every day, from Juárez to the university, so they come across that international boundary every day.

So the idea that we would somehow block all of that is very, very disruptive to who we are and makes people feel vulnerable because if they can’t go back and forth easily then they can’t see Grandma, they can’t see their cousins and so on and so forth. And there is a lot of financial interdependency. People work on one side to help support people on the other side – very complicated set of relationships.

We’re also very concerned about the fact that one of the immediate results of the election was the devaluation of the peso. Now the devaluation of the peso means that our Mexican students – who represent 5 percent, 6 percent of our student population – all of a sudden, their currency isn’t worth as much and they’re poor kids to start with. So, you have to think about, what is going to be the impact on them and are they going to need emergency loans – that’s one of the things we’ve been talking about – if the peso continues to drop what is that going to mean? Now if they’re working on our campus, they benefit, right? Because they’re getting more pesos for the dollar than they would have before. But it’s an extremely odd environment.

We’re also worried about undocumented students – the DACA students – because there’s been a lot of discussion about the possible implications of the election on that. We’re very worried about Pell grants. We’re very worried about all of the things that help young, low-income students achieve their dreams. And that’s on both sides of the border. We consider ourselves responsible for both sides. There are universities in Juárez, public universities, but they serve a relatively small number of people. Two and a half million people are not well served by the three universities that we have simply because we don’t have capacity to do the kind of education that we would like to be able to do at the price that we
would like to be able to charge. So it’s a really difficult circumstance.

Our students right now feel very vulnerable, but what I have to tell you is they are so busy working for a living and trying to pay their expenses that they don’t spend a whole lot of time reflecting on what all this means, other than those that might be directly impacted, because they are so burdened by the day-to-day life challenges.

Tony Frank

Thanks. Judy, not surprisingly this question, and we sort of talked about this ahead of time and sort of melded into our fourth and final question, which was balancing free speech and the opportunity to provide safe discussion spaces and what not, part of this discussion about the new view of safety. Why don’t you close out this portion for us, and then we’ll turn to the audience. So, that’s your cue to start thinking about questions for the panel.

Judy Genshaft

Thank you. I really want this – the panel to be reflective of what you need to hear from us as presidents but also – so the interchange is going to be key. But I hope you’ve picked up as you listened to the three of us – and we’ve not even let poor Tony say a word about his institution – but all four of us represent very different cultural types of institutions across America.

So our population voted – as far as I’ve been able to discern – it was about a 50/50 split in the way the students voted in this past election. So safety is very, very key on the campus because you and I know that if you don’t have a safe campus, you don’t have students who will come or parents who will send the students to the university. So I was just reflecting back on the most recent presidential meeting of APLU, Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, and this is where the presidents get together and discuss some of the key issues of the day.

And the last one that we were at talked about Yik Yak. Are all of you familiar with Yik Yak? That’s the social media site that has no – you can say whatever you want to say. It’s free speech and some of it’s very, very hateful. Some of it’s inciting a lot of demonstrations that’s now playing out on the campus. What can we as leaders do about Yik Yak, which is almost nothing – very, very little. But it’s very, very hurtful. So, when we say “safety,” safety of speech, free speech and everything, it really is – it’s a broader issue now than it’s ever been before in my mind.

We talked about that. We talked about police and body cameras – should all of our police forces have body cameras or not? We were talking about – again, this is all under the rubric of safety, and issues of this most recent election caused a lot of graffiti and we’re seeing the results of it nationally right now in demonstrations. But even before that what we’ve been dealing with also is when the – mainly athletes start “taking a knee” during the national anthem, what does that mean, what does that mean for others watching? What does that mean for the rest of the campus? Is that free speech, not free speech? And it is free speech, by the way, and it’s not something that’s illegal. But it’s an offense to others in some way or not.

For example, being a military-friendly university, the military defense – whether you’re Republican, Democrat, or Libertarian or whatever – if you’re in the defense, your flag is the American flag, and so it’s very offensive to denigrate the flag for the veterans. But I don’t think that was the purpose originally of “taking a knee.” So this whole thing of safety, free speech, being offensive has so many ramifications now that once again I’m going to appeal to you as leaders of the team of your universities. We need to know early – really early on – when incidents occur on campus because we want to put out, as best as we can, any brush fires before they become wildfires, and then it’s out of control. So, for – you’re on the ground more than the presidents are on the ground, and it’s really key, we rely on you to help us out with the safety in whatever way we define it on our campuses. So again, it’s all part of a team, and we work together.

Tony Frank

So a lot of rich perspectives. Each of the topics we’ve been talking about you could – and we probably will at some point – have a symposium around each of these, but it gives you a flavor of what folks are thinking from some very different institutions as Judy said. What questions can we address for all of you? There’s a microphone up here, or you can stand up and if others can’t hear it, I’ll rephrase the question. Here comes a mic for you right there. Yeah, and introduce yourselves please, and where you’re from.

Weintana Abraha

Hello, my name is Weintana Abraha. I’m a post-bac fellow at the Vassar College Urban Education Initiative. I have a two-part question to the entire panel. I know that funding is always an issue, particularly funding for scholarships and financial aid, so what has been a successful approach for you in appealing to donors and allies in getting money specifically for those purposes and not for new buildings or things like that? And then the second question is to President Natalicio specifically: Has your office had success in cultivating allies and relationships with the state legislature and outside groups in trying to get more funds directly from the government?

Tony Frank

Diana, do you want to start with that part?

Diana Natalicio

Well, we certainly try every strategy that we can think of to get special-item funding from the legislature to develop relationships with various state agencies and that sort of thing to provide services for our students. We have great partnerships. One of the great things about El Paso is that although there are 750,000 people in the city, it functions almost as a small town. People know each other and all of the nonprofits work very closely together and we have a very tight network of relationships with all of the agencies so that we’re constantly trying to align the needs of students and their families at UTEP with whatever services might be available.

One of the characteristics of a historically undereducated and historically marginalized region like the US-Mexico border is that people have learned to rely on each other. And it’s really beautiful, looking at it from my perspective, to see how hard we work as a community, how much the university is viewed as an anchor for all sorts of social services. We work closely with almost every single agency in the city. We have big social work and other kinds of programs on our campus. And that’s intentional because we recognize that in a low resource region, we are rich. We are rich in talent. We are rich in resources, facilities. We have all sorts of mechanisms that we can bring to the community. And in return for that, we get a tremendous amount of goodwill and support.

So, for example, when I mentioned this loan fund earlier – this emergency loan fund – which I consider to be absolutely critical – in looking at all the reasons why students drop out of school – university – it’s never academic. It’s always money. I mean, over and over and over. It may be a different crisis of the day or week or month, but it’s money. And so, when I started thinking about how are we going to do this, I went to donors, and I went to donors across Texas because they know me now because I’ve been president so long, everybody knows me, and I just told them, “This is so important to save the trajectory of these lives. These are highly intelligent people, and for $200 they’re dropping out of school. We can’t let that...
Envisioning the Overarching Institutional Pieces: What Would the Structure and Culture of a University That Did These Things Well Look Like?

Bob Midden
I’m Bob Midden, Bowling Green State University. And we’ve worked well, I think, to create diverse and inclusive campuses. What do you perceive the university’s role to be to promote these values in our local, regional and national communities, and what do you think the best ways are to do that? So, for instance, Michigan voted against affirmative action. Does UM have a role to play in perhaps trying to shift those viewpoints in the state? I understand we have a delicate balance we have to achieve so that we’re not perceived as inappropriately unfairly using state resources to influence politics. Nevertheless, these are values that I think we consider to be important for the health of our society and for its future prosperity, and so perhaps we should play some sort of role in influencing that.

Mark Schlissel
We approach this in two ways. One is, our core business is education, and we do it at a scale and with a degree of success that I think if we do our jobs well during the years we have students on campus, in the fullness of time we will change society. So I’m optimistic in that way. Another way we attempt to have this influence—and this stems back to the era of the affirmative action lawsuits that Michigan—as I mentioned earlier, promulgated up to the level of the Supreme Court—is we and many other institutions, perhaps many of yours, started engaging in research about the value of diversity from an educational perspective, from a research perspective, so that we actually have data, that it’s not something that’s a liberal feel-good philosophy. It’s something that actually improves the level of functioning of society.

And then the third thing is—I talk about it a lot—and it’s been one of the key aspects of my still early presidency compared to my colleagues—is explaining to people the goal and the reasons behind the goal of building a diverse and inclusive learning environment. And then hopefully that either causes them to think about that in their own context or makes them argue back and then we can engage in a discussion. When I go lobby, I’m lobbying about funding for our students, funding for our campus. I’m not really—I’m trying to stay away from things that can be perceived as political when I go to the legislature.

Judy Genshaft
Well, I’m going to go back to what I said originally. Know the culture and the mission—the reason why your institution is who it is, and go from that. We have a really good, sound value system in each of our institutions. So we started from a very multicultural, inclusive university and we’re holding to that and the foundations of that. But the other part that’s very important for a public institution, how many of you represent a land grant institution? A lot. A lot. So one of the missions of a land-grant institution—because I went to Wisconsin Madison, which is a land grant and also worked at Ohio State—sorry Mark—worked at Ohio State for 16 years—

Mark Schlissel
You’ll be sorry in a few weeks. And so, it begins.

Judy Genshaft
No, I’m all for USF. I’m green and gold. But part of the mission of a land grant institution is to provide—it, at the time, in the 1850s, it was for agriculture. It was to benefit society. And society at that time was an agrarian society. So, it was agriculture and mechanics. Agriculture and engineering. It was a public university to serve the diverse public folks that weren’t able to go to school, but also agriculture and mechanics.

Well, now the nation has moved and they’ve moved from the agriculture society into manufacturing, into informational. And now, in my mind, the responsibility of a public institution, particularly in cities—because that’s where the major problems are now—is to be an economic engine for the region that you serve. So, by going out—and your question was at Bowling Green—how do you go out and represent the values of the institution? By us going out and representing, working with local and regional businesses and helping the different—through our community service, we are: 1) keeping to our values, our mission as well as helping the region make a difference. So, we don’t have to compromise on any of our foundational—our founding principles, and I think it’s very consistent. Regardless of the election, we need to stay focused on who we are and do that well.

Tony Frank
I think we have time for one final question here. There’s a gentleman in the back with a microphone.

Audience Member
I wonder what you think about the tradeoff surrounding online education? Its proponents often argue that it will promote an access agenda and therefore benefit exactly the kinds of students we’ve been talking about. On the other hand, its critics say that it’s a rather diminished kind of experience. All the other kinds of benefits that being on campus and the educational benefits one gets from being outside of a course tend...
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not to be as easily commodified as online courses are. So where do you stand on that?

Tony Frank

Who wants to take a stab at that one?

Mark Schlissel

Yeah, it’s a huge topic on its own, right? So, to really thoroughly explore that is almost sort of out of scope. In a nutshell, the way we’re looking at it on my campus is online modalities of teaching are yet another way to help our students learn and then to spread the influence of the University of Michigan more broadly. So, we put out large numbers of MOOCs, we were an early partner in Coursera. We’ve taught over 5 million students in Coursera online MOOCs. We’ve actually broken even. No one is making money; at least we’re breaking even and covering our costs, but we’re not looking at this as part of our university’s business model.

We’re looking at it as a set of tools we can use to make education of our on-campus students better; to reach into the high schools in our surrounding areas to give them a flavor of what university courses are like and help sort of advertise and get them into the pipeline coming to Michigan; to stay connected to our alumni after they leave the university – we think it’s a powerful tool for that. We also are exploring ways to blend online and on-campus education, particularly at the master’s level. So, it’s an area that’s captivated the imagination of our faculty that loved to teach using this as a new tool to reach new communities of learners but also to enrich the activities on our campus itself.

Tony Frank

Diana?

Diana Natalicio

I absolutely agree with that and I think at its best it does offer tremendous opportunities for us to grow the audience and to help spread the word, not only to offer the courses but a word about the university and quality of the people on the faculty and a lot of other things. My biggest concern about online education is that many of its strongest proponents are making it sound as though it’s a solution to enable low-income students to get a degree, on the cheap and very, very poor quality.

And for me, those kinds of programs advocated for low-income students are the worst possible outcome of online education. Because many low-income, first-generation students are probably the least good candidates for success in online education because of the many other life challenges that they face managing their own time and trying to do it in a sensible way. But beyond that, much of what is offered to them as an alternative is not high quality, it’s not University of Michigan level quality or UTEP level of quality. It’s an effort to try to get by on the cheap for low-income students.

I hear this a lot in the legislature. I hear it a lot from people who, when I ask them, with all due respect, again: “Is this something that you would want your son or daughter – is this program for your son or daughter?” And the answer is “No, my son is going on to medical school;” or whatever. So, I think we have to be honest about it. There is high-quality online education done in very, very capable ways and then there’s an alternative, which is being thrown out there by many companies that seek to make money from this. It’s a business model, it is not an effort to extend the university, and I think we just have to be on guard. I think that low-income populations have to have protection from a lot of the fraudulent stuff that’s going on with for-profits, with online, with a lot of things that are taking advantage of their American dream and putting them in debt forever and I think we just – all of us have to be vigilant, because it’s giving us all a bad name.

Judy Genshaft

I really agree with everyone’s statements. I think online has its place and certain people could not attend or be a part of school if they – certainly working adults who want to take courses as an MBA or towards another degree if they’re working fulltime can get on at three in the morning if they want and take their course. But it’s not for everybody, so it’s got its place and we know that about 50 percent of students that are living on campus or nearby campus are on, at least take one or two courses online in addition to their face-to-face courses, so they can mix it.

What I get worried about is when we have a transfer student moving from one city into – being at USF and they’re in an apartment and all their courses are online. They never get out to meet anybody. They don’t feel that they belong anywhere and they’re desperate to know: “How do I get and engage with the community to really enjoy the university?” And so that – it’s like everything else, as a tool it can be an opportunity, but we have to watch when it’s also not a healthy method.

Tony Frank

So, we’ll do, real briefly one last thought from each of the panelists. One parting word of advice, counsel or caution to the audience here. Judy, should we start with you?

Judy Genshaft

Keep up your good work. Keep up your good work. Connect, connect, connect. And stay in touch. There are a lot of issues that have come up in this past – I’d say month, particularly this last week, but institutions are strong and they’ve made it through history with ups and downs. We will get through this as well. Everybody needs to work together for the good values that higher education has.

Tony Frank

Well said.

Diana Natalicio

I think we need to be bold as advocates for public higher education. I think we’ve all been somewhat cowed by the potential threats to our job security, or to our institution’s funding, or whatever it might be, by the idea that if we are frank and honest and open about the needs and the importance of the work that we do that somehow we’re going to jeopardize our institution and we’re discouraged from being frank and bold. Now, after 28 years in my job, obviously, they’ve either gotten used to me or my tenure won’t be very long in either case, so it doesn’t matter.

But I think it’s so important that we not allow ourselves to compromise on the important mission that we have and the values that we stand for. And I’m just worried that we’re kind of the last bastion of defense for public higher education – it’s us, it’s our world. And I just hope that all of us are going to take away from, not only this recent election, but just the trends that we’ve seen in terms of a public commitment to higher education and try to do our part, whatever that might be, to change the way people think about this. This is an investment in the future of this country just like an investment in infrastructure or any of these other things that we’re talking about – it’s the most important one. It’s the investment in our people, and so I think all of us have in our hands the opportunity to be those spokespeople, and I think we’ve just got to speak up.

Tony Frank

Mark?

Mark Schlissel

Every time I listen to you, I get more inspired. I’m ready to rush back to my office. So, I think I would echo this in a sense, and I told my campus this the day after the election, is I firmly believe there’s never been a more important time in the history of our
American society to do what we do. I think that in an era where science is being questioned, the value of experts is being questioned, things are getting labeled and marginalized – things like education, calling it “elite” to be educated, this is something that simply we cannot tolerate for the sake of our children and grandchildren, if nobody else. So the work we’re doing, the importance of it actually increased perhaps paradoxically with this election result.

The second thing I’d say is as university administrators, campus leaders, we’re inherently cautious not to become overtly political, especially leading a public institution depending upon politicians for support. You can’t really go and ask somebody to restore your funding the same day you’ve criticized them for their positions on unrelated things. However, I don’t think that that extends to issues of bigotry, hate, telling people “you don’t really belong in America because of how you look or where your dad came from.” That’s not politics, that’s hate and fear-mongering, and that I do feel completely empowered for us to speak up about. That’s not the political process, that’s bigotry and prejudice, and universities are designed to shine lights on that kind of stuff.

So, I encourage you when you go back home to be careful for all your students, to look out for all your students, not to take a political side because there are real political arguments on the table that people legitimately disagree about and will continue to do so for all time. But whether somebody is allowed to exist in your community is not up for debate, and don’t sit down until everyone understands that.

Tony Frank

So, I’ll close out with a couple of thoughts. Of all the different ways that this panel could have gone sideways and gotten fractured, I did not see the Ohio State/Michigan football game coming, that’s what might have done that to us. And secondly, I’ll announce – and if any of you want to join me – I would like to announce today the formation of an exploratory committee, Natalieco for President. And I think that I probably speak for all of you that the three panelists here have brought a great deal of expertise, experience. They’ve been inspirational in their comments. Please join me in giving them a big round of applause.

The breakout sessions that followed the fourth plenary focused on more macro institutional questions about the overarching structural and cultural dimensions of research universities. Topics included: integrating diverse faculty and student voices into pedagogical innovation and learning analytics; linking academic and student affairs to promote a culture of reflection and discovery; creating inclusive policies and eliminating barriers to student success; creating learning collaboratories within and across universities; improving academic success of historically underrepresented students; data governance and ethics.

4A: Promoting Academic Success and Inclusion: Integrating Diverse Faculty and Student Voices into Pedagogical Innovation and the Use of Learning Analytics

Marco Molinaro, Assistant Vice Provost, Center for Educational Effectiveness, University of California, Davis

Erin Sanders, Director of Center for Education Innovation and Learning in the Sciences, University of California, Los Angeles

George Rehrey, Principal Instructional Consultant for the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Program, Indiana University-Bloomington

Jim Greer, Professor of Computer Science and Senior Strategist, Learning Analytics, University of Saskatchewan

The presenters started by introducing UCLA’s efforts to analyze and close achievement gaps. The focus was on differences by racial identity, gender, and socioeconomic status. Trends at UCLA pointed to assessing issues in the classroom to address what is causing disproportionate success rates and why underrepresented students move from some majors to others at a disproportionate rate. They also noted that in 34.2 percent of UCLA course offerings, these students were receiving non-passing grades at a disproportionate rate. They evaluated two years of course data with 50 students or more, then looked at ten years of data to see if the same patterns would be found. The analysis found clusters of courses with criterion-referenced grading (straight scale or competency-based) and norm-referenced grading (curving, clumping, binning, quotas). Faculty were surveyed about grading, then based on frequency response, they were assigned to one of the above areas. Researchers spoke with department chairs to see what information they were giving faculty about grading practices. The analysis found a clear disparity with norm-referenced grading practices underserving underrepresented student groups and traditionally represented student groups succeeding at a higher rate when these grading practices were used. As an institution, they created a tool to look at grade distribution to look at multiple layers regarding grading practices.

At UC Davis, assessment on instructional research and development, learning and teaching support, and education learning analytics showed system-wide graduation gap with a 68 percent overall graduation rate, and only a 40 percent graduation rate for underrepresented, first-generation, Pell-eligible students. All three factors combined have a much larger impact on student success. As a result, the institution has implemented many policies and programs to close this gap.

UC Davis also found course gaps in STEM programs. An analysis showed growing gaps in chemistry and calculus courses, but no change in gaps between underrepresented and traditionally represented students in economics courses, and even a diminishing gap in psychology courses. When they dug deeper, they found that in calculus, there could be up to 30 different people teaching a course, including many grad students. There were smaller gaps in biological science courses that are taught by professors with only a few different professors teaching the course.

George Rehrey discussed utilization of data and noted that big data can be a lot to take in and digest. Institutions need to understand how to best deliver information from data to faculty. There should be additional inquiry to understand why gaps are happening or widening and what efforts might influence the gaps. Rehrey discussed the model that the Indiana University-Bloomington uses. They built an interdisciplinary community to create robust communities that come together to think about teaching and learning. By inviting faculty to ask questions that are useful and what might be possible to explore using analytical data, this can be a helpful approach since faculty may not have experience working with big data. This model takes a bottom-up approach to student analytics where an individual instructor can see connections between decisions in the course and decisions students are making in regards to academic development. Then we can use that information to connect what is happening in the classroom and student experience across the campus. The Bloomington Assessment and Research Center is the support mechanism for fellows wishing to be involved at IU.

4B: Linking Academic and Student Affairs to Promote a Culture of Reflection and Discovery
Envisioning the Overarching Institutional Pieces: What Would the Structure and Culture of a University That Did These Things Well Look Like?

Steve Dandeneau, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Kansas State University

Irma Van Scoy, Executive Director of USC Connect, University of South Carolina

The session focused on the idea that universities and higher education professionals need to bridge the divide between academic and student affairs. Further, higher education professionals need cross training in both academic and student affairs.

Some of the main points discussed involved the differences and similarities of student affairs and academic affairs. The presenters described academic affairs as the “head” of the university: advising, grades, persistence, anything related to the academic realm. Student affairs is the “heart” of the university: everything else nonacademic such as student organizations, clubs, sports, residence life, and student government. The speakers went on to describe the various professional roles on campuses in both of these areas such as provost for academic affairs, president for student affairs, etc. and how these two groups have historically been divided.

The presenters then moved the discussion to challenges related to getting both sides of student life (academic and student affairs) to co-exist in order to create a more holistic learning environment for students. Some challenges discussed were due to funding and how some groups get more money than others, which causes tension between the student affairs and academic affairs programs and groups. There are some opportunities for linking these two parts of a student’s college experience, such as finding value in learning in and out of the classroom and applying what is learned in class to student life and extracurricular activities. Universities need to consider who the key stakeholders are in each area and in creating partnerships and potential approaches/next steps. Stakeholders in each area need to consider how student affairs can support academic affairs and vice versa. This might require campus-wide training and development programs from both student and academic affairs, and to discuss the importance of student engagement. If students are engaged in campus activities, they are more likely to persist in school. Overall universities need a shared understanding that the head and the heart are integrated.

One example that was presented on how to integrate student and academic affairs is the option for students to graduate with a leadership distinction on their diploma and transcripts. Van Scoy mentioned the USC Connect model currently in use at the University of South Carolina. In order to earn this, students must complete community service projects, complete an e-portfolio and reflection, and be involved somehow on campus. Although this is great progress of bridging the divide, USC is finding it difficult finding courses that fit the leadership model they have in mind for the leadership distinction. Also, they are finding students are not able to complete all of the requirements in time for graduation so finding and enrolling students in the program earlier is important.

When trying to bridge student and academic affairs, it is important to incorporate student voices in these meetings. Student perspective is key so universities know exactly what students want from their experience. This type of work also requires patience and stamina and needs to be intentional in its purpose.

4C: Creating Inclusive Policies that Support Student Success and Eliminating Policies that are Barriers to Student Success

Elizabeth Guerlin, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Indiana University-Bloomington

Charlie Nutt, Executive Director, NACADA

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Elizabeth Guerlin, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Indiana University-Bloomington

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The presenters opened with an overview of the session on policies, and noted that an extension of title may be “good intentions and unintended consequences.” Elizabeth Guerlin discussed the need for policies to be re-examined over time and for professionals to consider how students experience our institutions. How can we ensure policies have consequences we intend? Charlie Nutt noted that when examining policies, it may require us to be bold and also look at how institutions can be more student-serving. Nutt strongly encouraged audience members to ask advisors on the ground about issues they are seeing with students as this can be one way to collect qualitative feedback on how policies are affecting students on campus. Guerlin brought up that it is not just about policies, but also how they are enforced, that affect student experience. Policies communicate messages about the values and priorities of the institution.

The presenters posed several questions to consider regarding policies:

• What do your policies say to students about your institution?

• Do you have a protocol to review the impact of policies on students, and are advisors or advising administrators a part of that review process?

• Do established policies at your institution undergo periodic review?

• Does your institution use data to analyze the impact of policies?

• Do you survey advisors and advising administrators about policies that impact students?

Sometimes advisors find workarounds on policies, so administrators may miss the consequences of policies and the overall impact on students. Several factors, such as academic freedom, campus culture, compliance, etc. affect policy decisions. Institutions often spend lots of money on systems for predictive analytics for students, but how much do we look at predictive analytics for our institution (courses, trends, etc.)?

The presenters emphasized that policy conversations should address motivations behind policy. What are we trying to accomplish with this policy? Start from the perspective of student success – is this facilitating student success? Do we look at the broader impact of policies within the community? Across community colleges?

Guerlin wrapped up the session by covering several examples of different types of policies and possible implications and considerations:

• Restricted admission into majors and minors

• Do we consider how critical the restriction is for this degree program?

• How does this facilitate/impede degree completion?

• Retention policies

• Interventions to support student success before student is in academic difficulty

• Are probation policies oriented toward support and recovery?

• Are academic dismissal policies focused on support, return, and completion of degree?

• Have policies been reviewed and revised to determine if they contribute to probation and dismissal?

• Graduation policies

• To what extent do your policies facilitate degree completion?

• Why are students not completing degrees?

• What courses/requirements are most frequently repeated?

• Curriculum

• General Education

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Envisioning the Overarching Institutional Pieces: What Would the Structure and Culture of a University That Did These Things Well Look Like?

- Policies that allow comparable courses to be used in new majors
- Do advisors participate in curriculum discussions?
- Experience of transfer students
- Budget allocation formulations
- Bursar and fee policies
- Financial holds

4D: Creating Learning Collaboratories Within and Across Universities – Building Shared Libraries and Resources

Elizabeth Loizeauz, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, Boston University

Elizabeth Loizeauz gave an overview of Trellis and the Trellis networks create by the Reinvention Collaborative. The objective of these Trellis networks is to keep the conversation alive in between these conferences and for members to share ideas. It is a space to talk with other institutions at the R1 and R2 levels. It is distinct from what other professional organizations do because it encompasses best practices related to reinventing the undergraduate experience.

The challenges of creating shared resources across these networks include being clear the purpose, and articulating how this is different and necessary for the growth of higher education in research universities. Additionally, it is difficult to become an active member of an online community when you do not have buy-in yet, so how can the Reinvention Collaborative create buy-in?

Opportunities created by developing these online communities are that research is readily available for many topics, and it is possible to get quick answers from other members to help find research. Also, we are the pioneers and developers of this site, as members of the Reinvention Collaborative. That being said, we cannot wait for this site to be built – we ARE the builders! Our work to begin this process will help others who join later and make our collective greater.

This organization has become the premier professional organization for undergraduate education. This is the way we define and make ourselves distinct, and why Trellis is a useful tool.

Recommendations from the session included:
- Having high-interest items readily available with very few clicks to get to them. Example: the white paper on ethics written by the Student Success/Data Analytics specialized network would be important to have at our fingertips.
- Easy way to use data to create quick comparisons to other universities
- Have portfolios of information ready and available for Provosts and Vice Provosts for Undergraduate Affairs

Membership to the Reinvention Collaborative’s Trellis networks is by invitation only. Please contact reinvention_collaborative@mail.colostate.edu for an invitation to join. Trellis can be found at http://www.trellisscience.com.

4E: Improving the Academic Success of Historically Underrepresented Students

Archie Holmes, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, University of Virginia

Karen Laughlin, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Florida State University

Karen Laughlin began the session by introducing the CARE (Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement) program at Florida State University as a program that works with historically underrepresented students. Key components of the CARE program include collegiate and pre-collegiate programs, Summer Bridge Program, Financial Aid, tutorial lab, Unconquered Scholars program, academic advising, and college life coaching. Participation is defined as serving low income and first-generation students. However, any students that come to the center can utilize the majority of the services.

Pre-Collegiate Division programs include TRIO/Upward Bound, College Reach-Out program, and Horizons Unlimited Programs. These organizations serve surrounding regions, which are mostly rural. It creates a pathway to Florida State and other Florida universities.

Approximately 400 first-generation and Pell-eligible students come to Florida State through the Summer Bridge Program, which is a partnership between Academic and Student Affairs. Through this program, students get to know administrators. Over time, the program has been extended to provide support throughout the four years in the university. Financial literacy is a critical component. Advising and coaching are provided to help students transition to their majors. The CARE tutorial lab provides resources and a place to connect with each other.

Unconquered Scholars serves students from foster care, homeless students, and wards of the state. These students face additional barriers to college completion. They receive one-to-one support from the CARE staff, including crisis support, group meetings and socials, special events, and volunteering. Nationally, only 2 percent of students who age out of foster care graduate with a bachelor’s degree. There have been 100 students enrolled since its inception, and 93 out of those 100 students are currently enrolled or have graduated. The SSS (Student Support Services; TRIO) STEM Grant is housed in CARE. It provides academic, professional, and personal support services.

CARE students are outperforming the general population and continue to be leaders on campus. Critical elements for student success include adequate financial support and financial literacy training, careful and regular tracking of student success, target interventions and ongoing wrap-around services, pride, peer mentoring, and a sense of belonging.

Archie Holmes then led the group in small group discussions, which centered around the following questions:
- What are the primary obstacles to the success of historically underrepresented students on your campus?
  - Obstacles include under-preparation, access, financial commitment, representation, stereotype threat and other psychological barriers, and micro- and macro-aggressions from peers, faculty, staff, and administration.
- Are there particular fields of majors that seem especially inhospitable or challenging for some or all of these students? How have you capitalized on/addressed these?
  - STEM fields tend to be particularly inhospitable due to the preparation required to succeed in STEM majors and lack of resources to support students.
- What strategies do you have in a place to promote inclusiveness or a sense of belonging for these students? What might be developed?
  - If institutions are not able to create programs similar to CARE, then community outreach, targeted outreach, connecting with high schools, intrusive advising, and lots of follow-up can aid historically underrepresented students. However, building pathways through CARE type programs, in addition to other advising and engagement strategies, can put in place permanent measures to support students from underrepresented backgrounds.

More information on the CARE program and other student success initiatives at Florida State University can be found at http://care.fsu.edu/ and http://undergrad.fsu.edu/.
Data Use/Access

The number of individuals on university campuses who want access to student data has increased. As a result, conversations at participants’ home campuses focus on granting people access to data. Some institutions share data with whoever asks, creating a concern of oversharing. Other campus units hold back and resist providing data to faculty and campus constituents, acting as gatekeepers. Multiple concerns are associated with various positions on campus. Faculty and staff in residence life want access to data, and their motives for wanting the data and intended use vary. Whether or not campus constituents should have access to raw data is alarming, because the data may be manipulated in ways that were not originally intended. A solution is to have people access the data through a campus tool or database platform, where controls can be implemented.

A discussion about the distribution of data followed. Specifically, how data is distributed based on the request and the rationale for the request. Those responsible for the data appear to be uncooperative, when in reality they want an opportunity to pause and assess the request. When a request is denied, it is often not an absolute no; instead, more information may be needed as to why someone needs data and why a particular format. By asking why, alternatives are generated and it’s possible that there may be a better way for the person to get the data they want. The alternative solution has the potential to meet the needs of both partners, data distributors and data users. One institution requires written information about how one will use the data and a description of how the data will be handled afterward (i.e., data disposal).

Data Ownership

Data ownership is important in determining who gets to use and/or access campus data. This influences the use, sharing, and interpretation of data. Data ownership is an essential consideration when contracting with an outside entity. External companies may claim to own the data and add restrictions related to the use of data. It is important to clarify this point before committing to any agreement. The benefit of these systems is that they allow everyone on campus to use the same tool and are user-friendly. These systems allow for the monitoring of data usage, and for setting various permission levels for campus constituents. An added bonus is that these systems have data from multiple institutions, which enables the cross-comparison of data.

Similar concerns exist for data that is gathered at the institutional or department level. Can the institution dictate what happens to this data? Also, who does the data belong to?

Data Warehouse and Storage

Another concern was related to the storage of data and the creation of a data warehouse. Specifically, with the collection of data, there has to be enough storage to maintain the data. A key question associated with this concern is how long to retain the data, and who decides the retention policy. Thus, the question of ownership is also related to data storage.

Training

Individuals on campus who have access and request use of data should be required to attend training. This is crucial because it will help people understand scores and predictive modeling, as well as the ethical use, interpretation, and presentation of the data.

Ethics and the Use of Student Data

Ethics are related to data access and use. Those who are responsible for the data feel ethically responsible in terms of how the data is shared and who to share it with. Based on an Ellucian report, students are okay with colleges and universities collecting personal data and expect the data to be used to help them. The report can be accessed at https://www.ellucian.com/Insights/Students-Expect-Data-to-Transform-College-Experience-Can-Colleges-Deliver/

Institutional researchers feel that it may be unethical to determine admission based on a students’ pre-college information. Further, using the data we know about students, if we choose to enroll students we must provide support services and have an obligation to educate them. Is it ethical to admit students who demonstrate certain risk factors when the campus does not have the resources to support the students? Is it ethical to use the student characteristic data for admissions purposes? It has become increasingly important to develop a common language related to the use of data and understanding the importance of the data informing a holistic review process. Although predictive analytics may be correct about 70 percent of the time, 30 percent is wrong. Inevitably, we get something wrong and this impacts students.

Related to the use of student characteristic data, someone that has access to data is going to use or interpret the data incorrectly. Faculty or professional advisors may want to see their student’s data and this could potentially have negative consequences. What language is being used when communicating with an “at-risk” student?

Whether the collection of the data is actually useful and its impact is also an issue. One area of focus includes tracking an original risk score, interventions by the university, and then the final score. This may be helpful in determining how the data is used, its quality, and outcomes associated with the data. Ideally, it would be nice to rid the data of redundancies and narrow down effective data points.
Chaouki T. Abdallah obtained his BE from Youngstown State University in 1981, and his M.S. and Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1982, and 1988 respectively. He joined the Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) department at the University of New Mexico (UNM) where he is currently professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, conducting research and teaching courses in the general area of systems theory with focus on control, communications, and computing systems. Between 2005 and 2011, he was the ECE department chair and became the provost and executive vice president of academic affairs of UNM on July 2011, a position he currently holds. He has published eight books (three as co-editor and five as co-author) and more than 300 peer-reviewed papers. He also was the PI or Co-PI on more than $8.5 Million. Currently, Professor Abdallah is a senior member of IEEE and a recipient of the IEEE Millennium medal. He serves as a board member for the Albuquerque Academy Board, The GaTech ECE external advisory board, as well as that of STC UNM.

John Bean (B.A. Stanford, Ph.D. University of Washington) is an emeritus professor of English at Seattle University, where he held the title of “Consulting Professor of Writing and Assessment.” He is the author of Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom, 2nd edition (Jossey-Bass, 2011) and the co-author of several widely-used composition textbooks. He has published numerous articles on writing and writing-across-the-curriculum as well as on literary subjects including Shakespeare and Spenser. His current research and writing have focused on the development of institutional assessment strategies that promote productive faculty conversations about teaching and learning. He is particularly interested in pedagogical strategies for promoting transfer of learning and for accelerating students’ growth in critical inquiry and argument. He has delivered lectures and conducted workshops on writing and critical thinking throughout the United States and Canada as well as for universities in Germany, Bangladesh, Ghana, and Zambia.

Lucy Blackmar is Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Initiatives within UCLA’s Division of Undergraduate Education. She oversees a unit whose mission is to collaborate with faculty and departments across the campus to design, implement, and promote innovative, interdisciplinary educational programs for all students at UCLA. During her thirty-two-year career at UCLA, she has been dedicated to improving the quality of undergraduate education and has played a leadership role in developing UCLA’s signature programs such as UCLA Clusters, Fiat Lux Freshman Seminars, Undergraduate Student Initiated Education, the Center for Community Learning, a host of interdisciplinary minors (e.g., Civic Engagement, Disability Studies, Food Studies and Entrepreneurship) and other special initiatives such as the ASPIRE Lab. Her unit also supports UCLA’s system of shared governance by providing analytical and administrative support for the College Faculty Executive Committee, the Undergraduate Council, the General Education Governance Committee, the Diversity Initiatives Steering Committee and the Writing II Implementation Committee. With an advanced degree in urban planning from UCLA’s former School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Lucy brings background and skills in planning and organizational management to her passion for promoting educational quality and positive reform.

Pam Bowers has served in leadership roles for planning and outcomes assessment in both student affairs units and academic programs. At the University of South Carolina, she leads an effort to incorporate records of student involvement in support and enrichment programs into institutional data for reporting and analysis purposes; this project is part of the Lumina Foundation’s Comprehensive Student Record project. Bowers served as a reviewer for the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) and as a member of the Peer Review Corps for the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. She is a frequent presenter on assessment and student success topics. She currently serves as a co-chair of the Reinvention Collaborative’s Student Success/Learning Analytics Network.
Presenter Biographies

Aileen Bumphus is the Associate Vice President of the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence (LCAE), which is the academic portfolio of The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin. LCAE is a consortium of four student success programs: 1) Gateway Scholars; 2) Longhorn Link; 3) McNair Scholars; 4) Summer Bridge.

Dr. Bumphus holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Research from the University of Southern Mississippi, where her academic area of study centered around leadership behaviors, resiliency, and emotional intelligence. Prior to becoming the Associate Vice President of the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence, Dr. Bumphus served as Executive Director in the Gateway Scholars program, also in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin.

Michelle Burke has worked in higher education settings as an educator and administrator since 1985. She has consulted on more than 50 college campuses in the United States and is the CEO of Student Affairs Solutions, a consulting firm helping organizations with assessment, strategic planning and staff development. As a consultant with NASPA, she conducted a national landscape analysis on the use of student engagement data in predictive analytics. She is currently working with NASPA, AACRAO, and the Lumina Foundation on the Comprehensive Student Record project. Michelle’s previous higher education positions include Dean of Students at Florida State University and Director of Student Life at Grand Valley State University. She teaches undergraduate courses in public relations and leadership and is the CEO of Student Affairs Solutions leadership.

Amy Burket is Vice Provost for Education at Carnegie Mellon University. She is responsible for university-wide education initiatives at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Dr. Burket has long been recognized as an innovator in higher education. Before becoming Vice Provost in 2010, she had been Assistant Dean for the Health Professions Program at the Mellon College of Science, where she was credited with strengthening and advancing the pre-medical education programs across the university. She is also Teaching Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, where she won many awards for her teaching and mentoring of students. She pioneered new courses in biological sciences, and collaborated with MCS colleagues to create EUREKA, a first-year seminar for MCS students that combines the disciplines of biological sciences, physics, chemistry, and mathematical sciences, and has championed the use of reflective writing for science students. Dr. Burket received her B.A. from Washington and Jefferson College and her Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon.

Steve Dandaneau is Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies at Kansas State University and, since 2013, a member of the Reinvention Collaborative Board. At K-State, Steve is engaged in principally university-wide student success efforts, which includes student life collaboration, working with the academic advising community, and oversight of undergraduate academic policies and practices. He also supports the University Honors Program, Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry, K-State’s First-Year Experience Program, Pre-Law Advising, Nationally Competitive Scholarships, and Honor and Integrity System. Steve is a first-generation college student who earned his B.A. in economics from Michigan State University and his M.A. and Ph.D. in sociology from Brandeis University, and, previous to Kansas State, held full-time faculty and university-wide administrative appointments at the University of Dayton and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Norma Day-Vines is Professor of Counseling and Human Development in the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University. She is an affiliate faculty member in the Center for Africana Studies. Her research agenda examines the importance of multiculturalism as an indispensable tool in the delivery of culturally competent counseling services for clients from marginalized groups. More specifically, she specializes in the measurement of counselors’ attitudes towards discussing the contextual dimensions of race and representation with their ethnic minority clients and the identification of strategies for working more effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse clients in general and African American clients in particular. Her scholarship has appeared in leading counseling journals such as the Journal of Counseling and Development, the Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, and the Journal of Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development. She was recognized with an Exemplary Diversity Leadership Award in 2013 by the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development. Norma earned her Bachelor’s degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her Master’s and doctorate from North Carolina State University.

Peter Doolittle is currently Assistant Provost for Teaching and Learning, Executive Director of the Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research (CIDER), and Professor of Educational Psychology at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia. CIDER is involved with a variety of institutional initiatives, including the Pathways for General Education, Destination Area Support and Strategic Growth Areas, Personalized Learning, Large Class Pedagogy, Early Career Teaching, and Inclusive Pedagogy.

Jason E. Dowd is currently a postdoctoral associate in the Department of Biology at Duke University, where he is involved in interdisciplinary science education research with Dr. Julie Reynolds. He is interested in understanding how scientific writing may shed light on both students’ scientific reasoning and differences in epistemic beliefs across disciplines. Prior to arriving at Duke University, Dr. Dowd earned his Ph.D. in the Physics Department at Harvard University, where his research focused on the interpretation of assessments of student learning in the introductory physics classroom and laboratory. In addition to researching science education, Dr. Dowd has put ideas into practice as member of the teaching staff of writing-intensive courses at both Duke University and Harvard University. Building on his roots in experimental laboratory physics and physics education research, he is always looking for opportunities to bridge disciplinary boundaries and participate in diverse academic communities.

Laura Ducate (Ph.D. – University of Texas at Austin) is an Associate Professor of German and Applied Linguistics at the University of South Carolina, where she currently serves as the Director of Basic Courses for the German Program. She also regularly teaches the capstone Graduation with Leadership Distinction integrative learning course for USC Connect and strives to incorporate integrative learning techniques into all of her courses, including study abroad, to help students make connections between their in and out of the classroom experiences. Her research interests include...
Presenter Biographies

Lisa Dysieski joined the College of Natural Sciences Dean’s office as the Assistant Director of the College of Natural Science’s Learning Community in the summer of 2013. Prior to that, she was a faculty member with a senior teaching appointment in the Department of Chemistry at CSU, teaching general chemistry and serving as the department’s Key Academic Advisor. She became the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Programs in 2015. Originally from New Jersey, Lisa received her B.S. degree from the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia, with a double major in chemistry and performing arts, and her Ph.D. in Chemistry from Colorado State University.

Nate Easley, Ph.D., is Executive Director of the Denver Scholarship Foundation (DSF). Since 2006, the DSF has invested $21 million in 4,000 Denver Public Schools graduates, 75 percent of whom have completed a college degree or continue to persist towards that important milestone. Dr. Easley has served as President and Secretary of the Denver Public Schools Board of Education. He also worked as Vice President for National and International Programs for the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) in Washington, DC. Dr. Easley serves on Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper’s Education Leadership Council.

Dr. Easley has extensive experience helping disadvantaged students realize their dream of a college education and securing grant funding to sustain student programs. His master’s and doctorate focused on how higher education can better support the academic, development, implementation, and assessment of writing assignments in large, intro level courses. As a graduate student, her research was in the field of bioanalytical chemistry at the University of Minnesota. Her work involved using platelets as a model system to investigate how the cytoskeleton directs granule release during exocytosis. In addition to performing research, she is committed to increasing the scientific understanding of the general public through teaching and outreach.

Solaire Finkenstaedt-Quinn is a postdoctoral researcher in the field of chemical education, with a joint appointment in the Chemistry Department and Sweetland Center for Writing at the University of Michigan. Her research involves development, implementation, and assessment of writing assignments in large, intro level courses. As a graduate student, her research was in the field of bioanalytical chemistry at the University of Minnesota. Her work involved using platelets as a model system to investigate how the cytoskeleton directs granule release during exocytosis. In addition to performing research, she is committed to increasing the scientific understanding of the general public through teaching and outreach.

Dr. Easley has served as President and Secretary of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel, and co-chaired the Instructional Practices Task Group (2007-2008). She was a member of the Mathematics Expert Group of the Programme for International Student Assessment (2009-2012). Currently Dr. Ferrini-Mundy is co-chair of the White House National Science and Technology Council’s Federal Coordination in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education Task Force. Prior to coming to NSF, she was a University Distinguished Professor of Mathematics Education at Michigan State University. She holds a Ph.D. in mathematics education from the University of New Hampshire. She was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (2011), and a member of the Executive Committee of the Association of Women in Mathematics (2013). She began her career as a high school mathematics teacher. Her research interests are in calculus learning, mathematics teacher knowledge, and K-12 STEM education policy.

Joan Ferrini-Mundy is the Assistant Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) for Education and Human Resources (EHR), a position she has held since 2011. Previously at NSF she served as inaugural division director of the Division of Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings. Dr. Ferrini-Mundy served as an ex officio member of the U.S. President’s National Mathematics Advisory Panel, and co-chaired the Instructional Practices Task Group (2007-2008). She was a member of the Mathematics Expert Group of the Programme for International Student Assessment (2009-2012). Currently Dr. Ferrini-Mundy is co-chair of the White House National Science and Technology Council’s Federal Coordination in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education Task Force. Prior to coming to NSF, she was a University Distinguished Professor of Mathematics Education at Michigan State University. She holds a Ph.D. in mathematics education from the University of New Hampshire. She was elected a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (2011), and a member of the Executive Committee of the Association of Women in Mathematics (2013). She began her career as a high school mathematics teacher. Her research interests are in calculus learning, mathematics teacher knowledge, and K-12 STEM education policy.

Jim Folkestad is a professor in the School of Education at Colorado State University. He has over 50 publications within his research area of technology enhanced learning (TEL). He is the Director of the Center for the Analytics of Learning and Teaching (C-ALT), a campus-wide transdisciplinary center for improving education through the use of learning analytics. In addition, he has been recognized at both CSU and nationally with awards for his scholarly work and for advancing the practice of teaching.

Omid Fotuhi is a Research Associate at Stanford University with joint affiliation in the Department of and the Graduate School of Education. He has served as Lead Project Manager for the College Transition Collaborative – a Stanford-based consortium of researchers invested in applying proven psychological interventions at scale. Over the past four years, Dr. Fotuhi has provided strategy consulting on projects aimed at applying social psychological solutions to real-world environments through the Stanford Interventions Lab. Much of his work is founded on the principles of (1) recognizing the importance of identifying psychological vulnerabilities that impede performance, motivation, and well-being; and (2) collaboratively developing well-timed, tailored, and targeted (3T) solutions and interventions that foster more adaptive mindsets and mitigate the harmful effects of those vulnerabilities – freeing people to reach their full potential.

Tony Frank is the 14th President of Colorado State University and Chancellor of the CSU System. CSU is a public land-grant research university with more than 25,000 students and more than $300 million in annual research activity. Since his appointment to the presidency in 2008, Dr. Frank has overseen a period of record fund-raising and enrollment, rising graduation rates, increasing diversity, and unprecedented research support. He earned his undergraduate degree in biology from Wartburg College, followed by a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Illinois, and a Ph.D. in pathology and toxicology at Purdue. In addition to the Denver Chamber, he served for many years on the board of the Food Bank for Larimer County and currently on the board of the Boettcher Foundation, the Denver Public Schools College and Career Pathways Council, as a trustee for the National Western Stock Show, and as chair of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities Commission on International Initiatives.
Judy Genshaft was named president of the University of South Florida System in 2000, and has led USF to become one of the fastest growing research universities in the nation with a rapidly expanding international reputation for academics, research and innovation. Under President Genshaft’s leadership, USF has been recognized as a top 25 public research university as ranked by the National Science Foundation and grown to become the 9th largest public research university in the nation.

Nationally, she has served as Chair for the American Council on Education (ACE) and is a member of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) Board of Directors. In 2010, President Genshaft made National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) history when she became the first woman to chair the Division I Board. She is also past chair of the Big East and American Athletic Conference Councils of Presidents.

President Genshaft is a native of Ohio and earned her baccalaureate degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and both her Masters and Doctoral degrees from Kent State University. The author or co-author of more than 75 journal articles, she has edited and authored three books on gifted education and intellectual assessment and also contributed chapters, essays and articles to more than 20 books, journals and publications on current topics in higher education leadership.

Gwen Gorzelisky is Executive Director of The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT) and Associate Professor of English at Colorado State University. To foster effective learning and teaching at CSU, TILT supports course and curriculum redesigns; professional development initiatives; undergraduate tutoring, mentoring, research, service learning, and academic support programs; hybrid and online course design; the development and use of adaptive learning platforms; and initiatives to encourage research on learning and teaching, including the use of learning analytics.

Her research interests include writing development and writing instruction, learning transfer, metacognition, and literacy learning, particularly uses of literacy for personal and social change. With Co-PIs, she conducted the first multi-institutional, mixed-methods, longitudinal study of students’ writing development and transfer of writing knowledge from general education to disciplinary courses, work supported by the Spencer Foundation and the National Council of Teachers of English.

Jim Greer, Ph.D., has been a faculty member in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Saskatchewan, specializing in Artificial Intelligence in Education for more than 25 years. In recent years his research interests have moved toward privacy and privacy-preserving personalization as well as big data and learning analytics. From 2006 to 2015, Greer served as the director of the University Learning Centre, a campus-wide organization to support learners and instructors to learn and teach more effectively. Currently, he reports to the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning as the University’s first Senior Strategist, Learning Analytics.

Dr. Thomas J. (Tom) Grites has served as Director of Academic Advising, Interim Director of Teacher Education, Interim Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and currently as Assistant Provost for Academic Support Services in his 39 years at Stockton University. He currently has responsibilities for Academic Orientation programming, First-Year Experience efforts, transfer student initiatives, liaison with the Division of Student Affairs, and various other projects. He also teaches regularly, now exclusively a seminar course for new transfer students. He was one of the founding and charter members of NACADA; he chaired the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th National Conferences; and he served as its President for two terms. He currently serves as a Senior Editor of the NACADA Journal and regularly provides other services to NACADA. Dr. Grites has written more than 70 journal articles, book chapters, and professional reports; he has delivered more than 150 conference presentations; and he has conducted faculty development workshops and academic advising program reviews on over 100 campuses.

Tom earned his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Illinois State University and his Ph.D. from the University of Maryland. Both institutions have awarded him distinguished Alumni Awards, and he was inducted into the College of Education Hall of Fame at Illinois State in October 2007. He was also named a 2015 Transfer Champion by the National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students.

Elizabeth Guertin is currently Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Executive Director of Advising at Indiana University Bloomington. In this role she has responsibility for leading initiatives that enhance student success and persistence, that foster high quality academic advising and that promote integrated academic and career planning for all students. She is past president of the National Association of Deans and Directors of University Colleges and Undergraduate Studies and was the founding director for new advising programs at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and at the University of Colorado Boulder. Elizabeth Guertin is currently a co-chair of the Reinvention Collaboratives’ Specialized Network on Advising and Academic Guidance.

Besarat Hagos is Director of Special Seminars in the Undergraduate Education Initiatives unit within UCLA’s Division of Undergraduate Education. She oversees the Undergraduate Student Initiated Education and the Fiat Lux Freshman Seminar Program. Undergraduate Student Initiated Education (USIE) is an innovative program designed to provide a select group of juniors and seniors with the opportunity to develop and facilitate, under close faculty supervision, a lower division seminar for their peers. The mission of Fiat Lux is to offer undergraduate students an opportunity to study with world class faculty in small seminars. It provides students and faculty with small group settings to engage in meaningful discussions on a range of topics. During her 27-year career at UCLA, Besarat’s signature accomplishment has been to developing small class opportunities for undergraduates; she has played a leadership role in developing and directing new seminar programs (in addition to Fiat Lux and USIE) such as the Professional Schools Seminar Program (PSSP), Council on Educational Development (CED), Collegium of University Teaching Fellows (CUTF). With M.A. degree in political science, specializing in international relations and diplomacy, Besarat has been successful in collaborating with deans, faculty and departments across the campus to design, implement, and promote innovative, interdisciplinary educational programs for all students at UCLA.

Vanessa Harris is the Director of University Advisement at the University of New Mexico (UNM). She has been employed at UNM for 16 years in various academic and student affairs positions. In 2011, she became the first Director of University Advisement. She has a Bachelorate degree in Political Science and a Master in Public Administration. She is currently completing her doctorate in Educational Psychology. Her area of research is the Sophomore Slump, Performance-Based Scholarships and assessment. She is also a Certified Academic Coach. She serves on various committees for the National Academic Advising...
variety of academic initiatives in certificates for undergraduates, and she works with students to learn about other cultures. She also directs the Bridging Flags, which fosters excellence in courses across UT that examine ethical questions, and inquiry and discovery. Joining the School of Undergraduate Studies in 2006, Jeanette was the editor for UT’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies, where she managed three series of scholarly popular genres, and the rhetoric of political bodies. Before receiving her Ph.D. in English from The University of Texas at Austin in 2004, and she has taught courses on feminist research methods, women writers of the South Asian diaspora, women’s popular genres, and the rhetoric of political bodies. Before joining the School of Undergraduate Studies in 2006, Jeanette was the editor for UT’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies, where she managed three series of scholarly monographs and literary translations. In her current role, she directs the Center for the Skills and Experience Flags, which fosters excellence in courses across UT that teach students to think critically, write cogently, engage in inquiry and discovery, examine ethical questions, and learn about other cultures. She also directs the Bridging Disciplines Programs, a set of 15 interdisciplinary certificates for undergraduates, and she works with a variety of academic initiatives in the School of Undergraduate Studies, including the Office of Undergraduate Research and the Archer Fellowship Program.

**Gregory L. Heileman** has served as the Associate Provost for Curriculum at the University of New Mexico since 2011. During that time, he has led campus-wide student academic success initiatives and worked with key entities on campus to produce all-time record retention and graduation rates. In 1990 he joined the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE), where he is currently a Professor. From 2005-2011 he served as Associate Chair (Director of Undergraduate Programs), and led the department through two ABET accreditation visits. In 2011 he became an ABET program evaluator. During 1998 he held a research fellowship at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, and in 2005 he held a similar position at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. He earned his B.A. degree from Wake Forest University in 1982, M.S. degree in Biomedical Engineering and Mathematics from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 1986, and Ph.D. in Computer Engineering from the University of Central Florida in 1989.

**Jeanette Herman** is the Assistant Dean for Academic Initiatives in the School of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She received her Ph.D. in English from The University of Texas at Austin in 2004, and she has taught courses on feminist research methods, women writers of the South Asian diaspora, women’s popular genres, and the rhetoric of political bodies. Before joining the School of Undergraduate Studies in 2006, Jeanette was the editor for UT’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies, where she managed three series of scholarly monographs and literary translations. In her current role, she directs the Center for the Skills and Experience Flags, which fosters excellence in courses across UT that teach students to think critically, write cogently, engage in inquiry and discovery, examine ethical questions, and learn about other cultures. She also directs the Bridging Disciplines Programs, a set of 15 interdisciplinary certificates for undergraduates, and she works with a variety of academic initiatives in the School of Undergraduate Studies, including the Office of Undergraduate Research and the Archer Fellowship Program.

**Archie Holmes** is a Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Virginia and currently serves as the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. He received his BS from the University of Texas at Austin and his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of California at Santa Barbara. His research interests are focused on the development of novel optoelectronic devices, particularly in the short- and mid-infrared wavelength ranges. Over his career, Archie has co-authored over 110 referred technical articles and 70 conference presentations. As vice provost for academic affairs, Archie serves as chief advisor to and representative of the executive vice president and provost in academic matters related to the curriculum and general health and welfare of the academic units. Areas of responsibility include academic planning and program review, institutional accreditation, enrollment management, high impact experiences for undergraduate students, total advising, and the coordination of additional academic activities with other University leaders.

**Blanche Hughes** is in her tenth year as the Vice President for Student Affairs at Colorado State University. In this role she works with a Division that includes 21 departments that collaborate with other units in the University community to help our students and staff be successful. She also teaches and advises in the Student Affairs in Higher Education Graduate Program. Before becoming Vice President, Dr. Hughes spent 6 years as the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, 11 years as the director of Black Student Services at Colorado State and also served as a professor of the Sociology Department at Pikes Peak Community College for two years, one of those years as chair of the department.

Dr. Hughes received her bachelor’s degree from Earlham College, and a master’s of education degree and doctorate degree in sociology from Colorado State University. She enjoys teaching, mentoring students and staff, presenting on issues related to diversity, parent transitions, and issues around managing work and family. Dr. Hughes is married with four children (two are alumni of CSU) and four grandchildren.

**Laura Jensen**, Associate Provost for Planning and Effectiveness, has over twenty years of professional research experience and worked at the University of Colorado and Front Range Community College before coming to Colorado State University. She is committed to helping the institution better understand issues surrounding student success, program evaluation, assessment, enrollment, faculty/staff, research, and operations. She serves on a variety of internal and external committees related to educational research, reporting, and data management. She is a co-chair of the Reinvention Collaborative’s Student Success/Learning Analytics Network.

**Dave Johnson** is the Director of Research and Analytics at Colorado State University where he and his team support assessment and educational research at CSU. He directs IT, applications support, web and software development, analytics, and instructional design for CSU Online. And, he serves as the functional lead for building learning analytics capacity across the institution. Dave has a decade of experience teaching all levels of undergraduate education, from freshman to seniors, and he employs his background in research and teaching support CSU’s goals and mission as a research and teaching-focused land-grant university.

**Warren Kelley** is Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Maryland College Park (UMD) and assists the Vice President in leadership of the Division of Student Affairs, comprised of 15 departments and 1,800 employees. He manages major financial, facilities and administrative functions for the Division. Warren directs career services, parent and family services, and diversity initiatives, and initiated the Student Affairs Diversity leadership group.

Warren co-chaired the campus Closing the Achievement Gap effort in support of a UM System-wide goal. He launched an initiative focused on Black male undergraduates, whose six-year graduation rate has increased 9.3 percent in five years, to 74.3 percent, twice the overall university increase. He co-chaired the Internship Task Force to expand the quality and quantity of internships across the University. He created and chaired the campus-wide UMD Alcohol Coalition, chaired the Facilities Master Plan Transportation Committee, and co-chaired the UMD Veterans Task Force. He served on the Provost’s Task Force on Retention, the Commission for Blended and Online Education, and the Governor’s Task Force to study the presence of destructive groups at colleges and universities across Maryland. He co-founded the NASPA Region II Mid-Managers Institute.

He holds a Ph.D. and a Master’s degree in Counseling Psychology and is an affiliate faculty member in the...
College of Education. Warren also holds a Master’s degree in General Administration, and a Bachelor of Architecture.

Karen Laughlin, who currently serves as Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Florida State University, also holds a tenured position as Associate Professor of English. She received her B.A. from Duke University and earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto. Dr. Laughlin came to FSU in 1982 and held a joint appointment in English and Humanities for several years. Her teaching interests include modern and American drama, women’s studies, film, and critical theory, and she has a particular interest in the plays of Samuel Beckett. She was awarded Teaching Incentive Awards in 1994 and 1996, and she served as President of the FSU Faculty Senate from 2000-2002 before accepting the position of Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Under her leadership, the University has significantly expanded academic advising through the Advising First Program and launched the College Life Coaching Program. Other student success initiatives she helped to establish within the Division of Undergraduate Studies include the Office of National Fellowships and the Center for Undergraduate Research and Academic Engagement. As Dean, Dr. Laughlin is committed to ensuring that the University continues to give a high priority to undergraduate education and to providing all of FSU’s undergraduate students with the richest possible educational experience.

Chris Lee received a B.A. summa cum laude in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in 1988 from Harvard College, and a Ph.D. in Structural Biology from Stanford University in 1993. He co-founded Molecular Applications Group with Michael Levitt in 1993, and served as Vice President for Research until 1998. After completing a postdoctoral fellowship in the Department of Chemistry at Stanford, he joined the UCLA faculty in 1998 in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. His training provided an unusual combination of experimental cell biology, biophysics, and algorithm development, which he has applied at UCLA in bioinformatics analysis of genome evolution. He has led efforts to establish a bioinformatics Ph.D. program at UCLA. He has served on the Board of Scientific Counselors, NIH National Center for Biotechnology Information, and serves on the editorial board of Biology Direct. His current research focuses on alternative splicing and its role in genome evolution.

Elizabeth Loizeaux is Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and Professor of English at Boston University. In addition to collaborating with BU’s schools and colleges on undergraduate curriculum, Beth oversees the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, and the Killachand Honors College, and pursues special projects on academic advising, the use of educational technology, and living-learning programs. She is currently leading the development of BU’s first university-wide general education program.

Lara Lomicka Anderson (Ph.D. – Penn State) is Professor of French and Applied Linguistics at the University of South Carolina, where she serves as Faculty Principal of Preston Residential College. She recently served as Graduate Director for Languages and previously served as Basic Courses Director in French for a number of years. She regularly conducts workshops, consults with language programs, and gives talks on technology in language teaching. Her research interests include teacher education, intercultural learning, social media, microblogging, study abroad, service learning, and computer assisted language learning. In addition to variety of publications in reputable venues, she has co-edited two books on technology and language learning. She served for a number of years as Chair and Co-Chair of the American Association of Teachers of French Technology Commission and recently finished a term as the French Section Head for the American Association of University Supervisors and Coordinators (AAUSC). She currently holds professional roles of VP of the AAUSC, VP of the Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO), and VP of the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations.

Marsha Lovett is Director of the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation, and a Teaching Professor in the Department of Psychology, both at Carnegie Mellon University. At the Eberly Center, she applies theoretical and empirical principles from cognitive psychology to help instructors improve their teaching. In her research, Dr. Lovett studies learning, memory, and problem solving. She has published more than fifty articles on learning and instruction, co-authored the book How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching, and developed several innovative, educational technologies, including StatTutor and the Learning Dashboard.

Brett McFarlane serves as the Executive Director of Academic Advising at UC Davis where he oversees campus-wide advising initiatives, advising assessment, advising training and professional development, advising technology, and collaborative programming between academic and student affairs. Prior to UC Davis, Brett served as Director of Undergraduate Programs for the College of Engineering at Oregon State University and Director of Student Services for the School of Business at Portland State University. He serves as a co-chair of the Reinvention Collaborative’s Advising and Academic Guidance Network.

Brett holds a BS degree in Accounting from the University of Oregon, an M.S. in Postsecondary Adult and Continuing Education, and an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership, both from Portland State University.

Marco Molinaro, Ph.D., is the Assistant Vice Provost for Educational Effectiveness at UC Davis where he oversees the Center for Educational Effectiveness which includes learning and teaching support, instructional research and development and educational analytics. Dr. Molinaro has more than 20 years of educational experience creating and leading applications of technology for instruction, scientific visualization and simulation, tools for evidence-based instructional actions, curriculum development and evaluation, and science exhibits for students from elementary school through graduate school and for the general public. Currently Molinaro is leading the UC Davis university-wide effort to improve undergraduate student success through the Center for Educational Effectiveness. He is also the founder of the Tools for Evidence-based actions community, a group of researchers and administrators from over 45 universities dedicated to sharing tools and methodologies that encourage evidence-based instructional actions.

Mike Mullen serves as Vice Chancellor and Dean for the Division of Academic and Student Affairs at North Carolina State University. As Vice Chancellor, he is responsible for academic and student affairs programming across the student life cycle that contributes to the success of all students at NC State. He is also a professor in the Department of Soil Science at NCSU. A native of Fort
Wayne IN, Dr. Mullen received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Purdue University. He completed the Ph.D. in Soil Science from North Carolina State University in 1987.

Prior to his arrival at NC State in 2012, Mullen served as Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education at the University of Kentucky from August 2009 to July 2012. He also was Associate Dean in the College of Agriculture from 2004 until 2009 and was on the Plant and Soil Science faculty from 2002 through 2012. Before joining the faculty at the University of Kentucky, Mullen spent 13 years in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at the University of Tennessee.

Diana Natalicio became UTEP’s president in 1988. During her long and distinguished career with the University, Dr. Natalicio has also served as vice president for academic affairs, dean of liberal arts, chair of the modern languages department and professor of linguistics. Her sustained commitment to provide all residents of the Paso del Norte region access to outstanding higher education opportunities has helped make UTEP a national success story.

Dr. Natalicio has served on numerous boards including Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF), ACT, the Rockefeller Foundation, Trinity Industries, Sandia Corporation, U.S.-Mexico Foundation for Science (FUMEC), American Council on Education (chair), National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME), Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), and Internet 2.

In 2016, Dr. Natalicio was honored with the Hispanic Heritage Award in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, and she was included on the 2016 TIME 100 list of most influential people in the world. In 2015, The Carnegie Corporation of New York honored her with its prestigious Academic Leadership Award, and in 2011, she was presented with the Orden Mexicana del Aguila Azteca, the highest honor bestowed on foreign nationals by the President of Mexico.

Charlie L. Nutt, a NACADA member since 1991, joined Kansas State University and the NACADA Executive Office in 2003 as Associate Director and Assistant Professor in the College of Education. Charlie earned his Associate Degree in English from Coastal Georgia Community College (formerly Brunswick College), Bachelors in English Education from the University of Georgia, Masters in Administration and Supervision from Georgia Southern University, and Doctorate in Educational Leadership in Higher Education from Georgia Southern University.

Charlie has taught both at the secondary and post-secondary levels since 1977. He taught English in grades 9-12, as well as at the community college level. At Coastal Georgia Community College, he was Assistant Professor of English before being appointed Director of Orientation and Advising. He next served as Vice President for Student Development Services from 1993 until he moved to the NACADA Executive Office.

As Executive Director of NACADA, Charlie is responsible for coordinating the work of the Executive Office staff as well as working with the various NACADA units on professional development issues and external relations for the Association.

Valerie Otero is a Professor of Science Education and Physics Education Research, Executive Director and co-founder of the Colorado Learning Assistant model and Co-Director of the Center for STEM Learning at CU Boulder. She has served on committees for the National Academy of Sciences, the National Task Force for Teacher Education in Physics, and NASA. Professor Otero’s innovative models have spread throughout the world, reaching over 90 universities in the U.S. as well as in Singapore, Ireland, Japan, and India. She has been awarded over $17 million dollars in grants and gifts to support her projects and build her ideas. Otero has published broadly with research scientists as well as with K-12 teachers. She has received awards for her research and has been recognized nationally by the American Physical Society for her contributions to the physics community. As a first generation college student, she has served as a role model for other Chicanas who want to make a difference. Otero’s research investigates and builds learning environments that engage students’ hearts and minds through scientific experimentation, natural curiosity, and pure enjoyment of understanding our world.

Amelia is vice president for research and policy at NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. Amelia directs the Research and Policy Institute (RPI), which links research, policy, and effective student affairs practice in support of student success. Amelia is leading NASPA’s examination of several critical higher education issues, including colleges’ use of emergency aid programs to address student needs. Prior to her arrival at NASPA, Amelia was director of research initiatives at the Association for Institutional Research (AIR), where she conducted two national studies related to future directions of the institutional research function. Her current research portfolio also includes studies on leadership attributes of college presidents and vice presidents, documenting and assessing co-curricular learning, and assessment and evaluation in student affairs.

Amelia is co-editor of the forthcoming book, The Analytics Revolution. She is an advisory board member for the DC Public Schools’ Urban Education Leaders Internship Program Alumni Board and an advisory committee member for Lumina Foundation’s Beyond Financial Aid toolkit. Amelia holds a Ph.D. in higher education from Florida State University and masters and bachelor’s degrees in business administration from Florida A & M University.

Gabrielle Rabinowitz is a new groups on Trellis and helps them develop strategies for member engagement. Gabrielle has a master’s degree in Biological Sciences from Rockefeller University. She was a faculty member at Bard College’s Citizen Science course for freshman and has experience developing science outreach activities for young students. Gabrielle
Dr. Sонcia Reagins-Lilly began serving as vice president for student affairs and dean of students at The University of Texas at Austin in September 2016. She collaborates with students, faculty and staff to help create a safe and welcoming campus where students can thrive through healthy learning environments. Dr. Lilly leads a diverse portfolio of nine departments in the Division of Student Affairs that are dedicated to providing a cutting-edge student experience from orientation through graduation. The Division includes 14 on-campus residence halls and their dining facilities, medical and mental health services, new student orientation, recreational sports and two university unions. The Division also supports 1,300 student organizations, student emergency and veteran services, and leadership programs. As a College of Education faculty member, Dr. Lilly serves on the Graduate Studies Committee. Dr. Lilly joined the university as senior associate vice president for student affairs and dean of students in 2006. She earned a bachelor’s degree in economics at The University of California at Irvine, a master’s in education at California State University, San Bernardino and a doctorate in education administration at the University of Southern California.

Daron Roberts is a former NFL and college coach who serves as founding director of the Center for Sports Leadership and Innovation (CSLi) at the University of Texas. CSLi is the first university-based institute dedicated to developing leadership and character curricula for high school and collegiate athletes.

A lecturer at the University of Texas, Roberts focuses on issues of governance and innovation in the sports arena. He teaches two upper-division honors courses – Leadership Strategy in Sports and Disruptive Innovation in Sports. He also developed a course – A Gameplan for Winning at Life – that is taught to all incoming freshmen student-athletes at the University of Texas. During the course of each academic year, Roberts teaches over 300 students.


Robert Rodier is a seasoned network and IT security professional. From 1998-2002 he served as the Microsoft Servers administrator for the Selee Corporation in Hendersonville, NC, and from 2003-2010 he worked for Brevard College in Brevard, NC, where he most recently served as Network Manager. He has been a member of several technology-related professional associations ranging from InfraGard to numerous regional groups such as the Asheville Networking Professionals Group, the Western North Carolina Association of Information Technology Professionals, the Western North Carolina Linux Users Group, and the WCI Information Technology Professional group.

Robert has presented on an array of IT topics to groups as varied as the Appalachian College Association Information Technology Directors and Linux user groups. Robert holds a B.A. in Economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an M.S. in Information Assurance from Norwich University.

Vanessa Roof, Ph.D., is an Institutional Retention and Assessment Analyst at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Over the past three years she has helped to develop and implement several initiatives focused on using data to support student retention, engagement, and time to degree including the following: 1) an online advising and early warning system, 2) a probation recovery program, and 3) a predictive analytics system for first-year outreach. She currently serves as a co-chair of the Reinvention Collaborative’s Student Success/Learning Analytics Network.

Larry Roper is a Professor and Interim Director of the School of Language, Culture and Society at Oregon State University, where he also serves as Coordinator of the Undergraduate Social Justice minor and Coordinator of the College Student Services Administration graduate program. Previously he served as Vice Provost for Student Affairs at Oregon State University from 1995-2014. Larry currently serves as a Commissioner with the State of Oregon’s Higher Education Coordinating Commission, on the Board of Trustees of Heidelberg University, as President of Jackson Street Youth Services (serving homeless and vulnerable youth), and on the Education Committee of the Oregon Community Foundation.

Larry has more than 50 publications, including co-editing the book, Teaching For Change: The Difference, Power and Discrimination Model (2007) and Supporting and Supervising Mid-Level Professionals: Charting a Path to Success (2011). He writes a regular column for the Journal of College and Character.

Carol Rutz has directed the Writing Program at Carleton College since 1997. In addition to teaching writing courses, she works with faculty on writing across the curriculum and assessment of student writing through a required sophomore portfolio. Her research interests include responding to student writing and assessment of faculty development. With four others, she recently co-authored Faculty Development and Student Learning: Assessing the Connections (Indiana UP, 2016). Her research expertise is in soil microbial community diversity, soil quality and restoration, and soil ecosystem services. She is the recipient of a Fulbright Scholar Award, the Charles N. Shepardson Faculty Teaching Award, and the Gamma Sigma Delta Faculty Award. Mary is a member of the Soil Science Society of America, Crop Science Society of America, Agronomy Society of America, and Soil Ecology Society. She is currently the chair of the Soil Biology and Biochemistry Division of the Soil Science Society of America and is an Associate Editor for its journal.

Erin Sanders is an accomplished leader in the development and assessment of innovative strategies for undergraduate STEM education. Dr. Sanders earned her B.S. in Chemistry from DePaul University in Chicago, IL, in 1998 and her Ph.D. in Biological Chemistry from UCLA in 2005. As a faculty member in UCLA’s Department of Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics (MIMG), Dr. Sanders pioneered the development of a multidisciplinary undergraduate curriculum, resulting in the creation of new courses that engage all MIMG majors in authentic research experiences. Dr. Sanders is the author of a popular textbook about this curriculum, has published on her assessment-informed curricular reform efforts, and so is a recognized scholar in STEM education.

As the founding director of UCLA’s Center for Education Innovation and Learning in the Sciences (CEILS), Dr. Sanders works with faculty in departments and interdisciplinary programs responsible for instruction of undergraduate courses in the Life and Physical Sciences.
Her efforts extend across campus, with a mission to promote and support education and diversity initiatives that strengthen the teaching community at UCLA. She also serves as a co-chair of the Reinvention Collaborative’s Science of Learning/Pedagogical Innovation Network.

Leslie A. Schiff is a Morse-Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor in Microbiology and Associate Dean for the University Curriculum at the University of Michigan. For many years she has taught a writing-intensive course on the biology of viruses and she co-teaches a two-semester thesis support course for honors undergraduates in biology. Leslie serves as a faculty liaison for the College of Biological Sciences’ Writing-Enriched Curriculum project, which is part of a campus-wide initiative to more effectively integrate authentic disciplinary writing into undergraduate curricula. In addition to her teaching and administrative roles, Leslie plays a major role in ongoing collaborative NSF-funded research programs focused on pedagogies that promote critical thinking and science literacy, particularly Writing-to-Learn strategies.

Mark Schlissel is the 14th president of the University of Michigan and the first physician-scientist to lead the institution. He became president in July 2014. He was previously provost of Brown University, where he was responsible for all academic programmatic and budgetary functions within Brown’s schools and colleges, as well as the libraries, research institutes and centers.

A graduate of Princeton University (A.B., summa cum laude, 1979, Biochemical Sciences), he earned both M.D. and Ph.D. degrees at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (1986, Physiological Chemistry). He did his residency training in internal medicine at Hopkins Hospital and conducted postdoctoral research as a Bristol-Myers Cancer Research Fellow MIT’s Whitehead Institute.

President Schlissel began his career as a faculty member at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in 1991, where he earned a number of awards and fellowships for his research and teaching. He moved to the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology at the University of California-Berkeley in 1999 as associate professor, advancing to full professor in 2002. He taught undergraduate and graduate courses in immunology as well as a large introductory course in biology for life science majors. He was UC-Berkeley’s dean of biological sciences in the College of Letters and Science and held the C.H. Li Chair in Biochemistry until his appointment as Brown’s provost in 2011. He served as vice chair of the Molecular and Cell Biology Department from 2002-07.

David Spight began his career in higher education in 1997 as a residence hall director. In 2001, he sought a change and found his passion providing academic advising to undecided students at Colorado State University. In 2008, David was named the Assistant Dean for Academic Advising in the School of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Texas at Austin and was tasked with developing a new advising center for a new academic unit aimed at helping students explore majors. Earlier this year, David transitioned to a new position as Director of Undergraduate Affairs in the College of Engineering at the University of California, Davis. He has been highly involved in NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, having served as chair of Commission on Undecided/Exploratory Students, a member of the council, a board member, Vice President, and most recently as President. David has presented and published articles on advising undecided students, first-generation students, assessment of advising, and integrating academic and career advising. David earned his M.A. in educational policy and administration from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and a B.A. in history from Truman State University. David is currently pursuing an Ed.D. in higher education administration through the University of Alabama.

Paul Thayer is Special Advisor to the Provost and Associate Vice President Emeritus at Colorado State University, and Assistant Clinical Professor of Education. His career has focused on student access to and graduation from postsecondary education. At Colorado State University, he focused on student learning and success while serving as Executive Director of the Center for Advising and Student Achievement and Director of Undergraduate Student Retention. Earlier, he directed pre-college efforts for the University as Director of the Center for Educational Access and Outreach. At the state level, he has served by appointment of the Governor as a member of the Governor’s P-20 Council and as board member for Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative. He served for many years as Chair of the Statewide Advisory Board for the Colorado Counselor Corps Grant Program. He presents nationally and internationally on institutional strategies for increasing student success. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Williams College, and his Masters and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from the University of Colorado at Denver. He was awarded the art Quinn Memorial Award by the Associate of Special Programs in Region Eight (ASPIRE) and the Walter O. Mason Award by the Council for Opportunity in Education.

Robert J. Thompson, Jr. is Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Neuroscience at Duke University where he has served as Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (2004-2007; Dean of Trinity College of Arts and Sciences (1999-2008); Dean of Undergraduate Affairs in Arts and Science (1997-1999); and Head of the Division of Medical Psychology of Duke University Medical Center (1977-1997). His research interests address how biological and psychosocial processes act together in human development; coping with chronic childhood illness; and teaching, learning, and assessment in undergraduate education. Dr. Thompson is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association; served as President of the Association of Medical School Professors of Psychology (1986-1988); received the Distinguished Researcher Award (1993) and Distinguished Service Award (1997) of the Society of Pediatric Psychology; and served as associate editor for the Journal of Pediatric Psychology (1998-2002). Dr. Thompson received the Bachelor of Arts degree from LaSalle College in 1967 and the Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of North Dakota in 1971. He served on the faculties of Georgetown University Medical School and Catholic University of America prior to coming to Duke University in 1975.

Wendy Troxel was recently named the inaugural Director of the NACADA Center for Research in May of 2016 and began her position in June. The Center will provide opportunities for research and professional development to a diverse global membership and the academic advising profession. As an Associate Professor in the Department of Special Education, Counseling, and Student Affairs she teaches graduate level classes in research methods and support the scholarly work of students.

Prior to coming to KSU, she served as an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations at Illinois State University. Her research interests are in the area of teaching, learning, and advising in higher education, formative assessment techniques in the classroom, and the theoretical underpinnings of the navigation challenges of first generation students. Prior to her faculty appointment she was Director of the University Assessment Office at Illinois State. She earned her doctorate in educational leadership.
Ben Withers  Hailing from University of Kentucky where he served as associate provost for undergraduate education and dean of undergraduate studies, Dr. Ben Withers brings more than 20 years of experience in higher education – ten of which were exclusively in administration – to his position as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Colorado State University. Prior to his work at the University of Kentucky, he was assistant dean of the Raclin School of the Arts at Indiana University. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Carleton College, and a master’s degree and doctorate from University of Chicago.

Irma Van Scoy  is the Executive Director of USC Connect, the University of South Carolina’s initiative to enhance students’ undergraduate education through integrative learning. Dr. Van Scoy joined the Provost’s Office to lead USC Connect in 2011 after serving as associate dean of the College of Education for 11 years. She has been on the USC faculty since 1990. Her M.S. in Child and Family Studies and Ph.D. in Teaching and Curriculum are from Syracuse University.

Jose Villar  is the Associate Director of the College Enrichment and Outreach Programs (CEOP) at The University of New Mexico. In this role, Jose oversees a number of programs that collaborate to create a seamless support pipeline that promotes P-20 success. This pipeline is designed to create access and increase the recruitment, retention, graduation and development of students in higher education. Jose is certainly grateful for this opportunity because it provides him the opportunity to give back to students who are ‘just like him’. Jose is from the small town of Grants, New Mexico, and he was the first in his family to go to college! He earned his B.B.A. in Human Resource Management and his M.B.A. in Organizational Leadership from UNM. He has a passion for meetings students where they are at and helping them get to where they want to go.

Jose Villar

Irma Van Scoy

Ben Withers
Beyond The Classroom Matters: Incorporating Records of Student Involvement into Institutional Data

Pam Bowers, Associate Vice President, University of South Carolina

Abstract: Student success is influenced by many variables. A student’s persistence, timely progress to degree, and employability at graduation may be affected by factors other than academic performance, such as the student’s:

- sense of belonging on the campus, social network
- self-understanding and ‘fit’ of major choice with interests, aptitudes, values
- ability to manage personal affairs such as finances, time, relationships
- physical and emotional well-being
- engagement in the life of the campus and community (community service, leadership roles, civic engagement)

Universities provide support and enrichment programs to assist students in these and other ways, but records of student involvement in these programs have not been systematically available in institutional data. Without these data points, we can’t really “see the whole system” that contributes to student success, as indicated by retention rates, graduation rates and time to graduation, and post-graduation employment or admission to graduate and professional programs. In order to leverage institutional data to improve student success, we need to be able to see additional variables (in our institutional data) to understand what is producing our current results (retention, graduation, employment). Beyond The Classroom Matters is a systematic approach for defining and organizing data about student involvement in educationally purposeful support and enrichment programs, and linking these data points to academic data to produce a more comprehensive student record. These holistic records of students’ educational experiences provide additional information to understand and improve student success, as indicated by retention rates, graduation rates, and employment of graduates.

Presenter Bio: Pam Bowers is Associate Vice President for Planning, Assessment and Innovation in the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support at the University of South Carolina. She has held assessment leadership roles for both student affairs and academic programs. Bowers served the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools as a reviewer for the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) and a member of the Peer Review Corps. She has presented many workshops and conference sessions on assessment topics (NASPA, SACSCOC).

She joined the faculty in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics in 1989 and served as chair of the Faculty Senate in 2009 and Past Chair in 2010 when she led the revision of the Faculty Manual. Lyn received her Ph.D. from the University of Southern Mississippi specializing in secondary mathematics education and research.

Collaboration Across Academic and Student Affairs to Enhance Learning: USC Connect

Irma Van Scoy, Executive Director of USC Connect, University of South Carolina

Abstract: This poster session will describe how academic and student affairs united across a flagship research university and its four regional campuses to develop and implement a university-wide integrative learning initiative. The initiative was developed in 2010-2011 and has been implemented over the last 5 years. Hundreds of faculty and staff and over 2,000 students have been directly involved in enhancing learning through intentional reflection across within- and beyond-the-classroom experiences. Many more faculty, staff, and students have been impacted indirectly and steady growth continues.

Key areas of collaboration across academic and student affairs will be highlighted including leadership at multiple levels focused on a shared mission; student engagement in purposeful beyond the classroom experiences (e.g., research, service learning, internships, study abroad, leadership, and social advocacy); strategies to support reflection (e.g., e-portfolio, senior seminar, course and program development); and the impact of assessment of student learning on faculty engagement and program development.

The poster will include critical components of success including (1) a graduation distinction that attracted the support of students, faculty, and staff and (2) the engagement of faculty and staff through a wide range of activities (e.g., grants, conferences, training/professional development, program specific articulation of opportunities, and shared assessment of student work). Limitations of the initiative, greatest challenges, lessons learned, and goals for the future will be addressed.

Presenter Bio: Irma Van Scoy is the Executive Director of USC Connect, the University of South Carolina’s initiative to enhance students’ undergraduate education through integrative learning. Dr. Van Scoy joined the Provost’s Office to lead USC Connect in 2011 after serving as associate dean of the College of Education for 11 years. She has been on the USC faculty since 1990. Her M.S. in Child and Family Studies and Ph.D. in Teaching and Curriculum are from Syracuse University.
Declarating a Major with Confidence: Working with Sophomore Exploratory Students
Rose-May Frazier, Director of Advising First, Florida State University
Jill Flees, Director of Graduation Specialists, Florida State University

As state and federal appropriations continue to demand increased graduation rates in order to qualify for continual or increased funding support, universities are constantly forced to amend support efforts when working with at-risk populations. Second year exploratory students without a major are one of those challenging groups. During the 2015-2016 school year, the Advising First Center for Academic Planning (CAP) at Florida State University redefined the institutions use of the term exploratory and adjusted the processes in place for working with these undecided students. Through intentional outreach, renewed partnerships with campus partners, and mandatory advising, the CAP office saw a 70 percent decline in students matriculating into their junior year as an exploratory major.

In working with this at-risk population, the goal of the CAP office is not just to get the student into a graduating major, but to identify a major that fits their values, interests, and skills thus setting the tone for a successful academic experience at the institution. This presentation will address the challenges of working with these high hour exploratory students, as well as the institutional barriers that advisors and students must overcome when identifying a graduating major. It will also highlight the importance of defining a structure that makes students accountable for their current and future academic decisions. Finally, the presentation will showcase the importance of implementing initiatives to support retention and graduation with a variety of at-risk student populations

**Presenter Bio:** Rose-May Frazier serves as the Director of Advising First within the Division of Undergraduate Studies at Florida State University.
Jill Flees serves as the Director of Graduation Specialists at Florida State University.

### Transition of Transfer Students to Four-Year Institutions

**Lisa Kiely, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies, University of Maryland**

**Ann Smith, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies, University of Maryland**

**Abstract:** Transition of Transfer Students

**Problem:** Many community college students transferred to the University with a completed associate’s degree but still needed to take major-specific lower level coursework at the University of Maryland, thus delaying graduation and adding additional expense to their educations. Many return to the community college and enroll in the lower level major courses due to the lower cost.

**Solution:** In 2008, the University of Maryland opened a Pre-Transfer Advising program in the Office of Undergraduate Studies. PTA staff work closely with potential transfer students to advise them on the appropriate course work at the community college that will help them earn an associate’s degree and ideally complete their education at the University of Maryland in two years. Advisors can also help students determine the best time to transfer.

**Process:** University of Maryland advisors work closely with students when they first enroll at the community colleges, initially evaluating previous coursework. Using the Four-Year Plan templates, required by the Student Academic Success Degree Completion Policy, students plan out their own four-year plan based and enroll in transferable courses that can be used toward their majors.

**Result:** Transfer students come prepared to begin their chosen major at the University. Other students who use PTA realize that the program they wanted to do was not what they thought it would be and transfer elsewhere, or realize that they will not be eligible for competitive majors. These students are able to focus on meeting the requirements at another four-year institution. Advisors also work with students from out-of-state and Maryland private four-year institutions. Many state residents who initially enrolled in college out-of-state wish to transfer to the University of Maryland. Many students are older students returning, and some are veterans.

This poster presentation will outline the process for PTA advising and explain the implementation of the Student Academic Success-Degree Completion Program.

**Presenter Bio:** Ann Smith, Ph.D. is an Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Studies at the University of Maryland. She works with the University’s General Education Program, working closely with faculty members in developing coursework and leading the assessment of General Education. Dr. Smith also serves as the Undergraduate Ombudsperson.

Lisa Kiely, Ph.D. is an assistant dean for Undergraduate Studies at the University of Maryland. Dr. Kiely works on advising policy, specifically on issue of retention and graduation.

### General Education at Penn State: Changing the Conversation

**Margaret Slattery, Interim Director and Assistant Dean for General Education, Pennsylvania State University**

**Abstract:** Over the past several years, the Pennsylvania State University engaged in a deliberative conversation about General Education – examining the current program, highlighting its strengths and identifying opportunities to strengthen student learning. The process was guided by a commitment to embrace breadth of knowledge and facilitate intellectual engagement for both students and faculty. Another goal was to frame the program by a set of contemporary learning objectives that reflect the mission and values of Penn State and while enabling meaningful assessment. Recommendations were made by a task force and approved in 2015, subsequently implementation reports were approved by the Faculty Senate in spring 2016.

General Education requirements will change for students beginning in academic year 2018-2019 and Penn State is working to prepare for these changes. First, a new Office for General Education opened this semester. This office will help with the coordination, collaboration, and communication among those teaching General Education; support and recognize instructors teaching General Education; and support assessment to enable ongoing evaluation and improvement. Second, a General Education Faculty Fellows program began. Sixteen fellows were selected and will serve as advisers as courses are developed and/or revised and they will identify and share high impact practices for general education across our institution. The Fellows will build the capacity of faculty to use educational change initiatives to advance greater intentionality in general education curricular design, learning outcomes and assessment. Third, a seed grant program to incentivize development of new integrative Studies courses is beginning. Integrative Studies courses, a new requirement for students, are intended to make integration of knowledge across disciplinary areas an explicit part of the General Education program for students. In these courses, students will be provided opportunities to understand and practice different intellectual frameworks and ways of thinking around a similar topic, text, community-project etc.

**Presenter Bio:** Margaret Slattery Ph.D. has been a faculty member at Penn State University in Biomedical Engineering since 2007 and is passionate university educator with a focus on undergraduate students and their academic experiences. In various past roles, she has worked with undergraduate students at all levels: coordinating college prospective student recruitment events, teaching core curriculum – from first-year
Using Latent Class Analytics to Build First-Year Outreach
Mike Stevens, Senior Researcher, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Abstract: This poster showcases how the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is using admissions and survey data from first-year freshmen to develop groups for focused outreach. UNL is a public land-grant research institution with more than 19,000 undergraduates. Over the past five years, UNL implemented systems that collect, integrate, and create actionable data reporting for supporting undergraduates’ retention, engagement, and time to degree. This poster highlights the process of analyzing data from the fall 2016 freshmen cohort that identifies unique latent groups of incoming freshmen for development of directed advising and support. Latent Class Analysis is used to group students based on their characteristics from the admissions application and a first-year survey where students self-report their preparedness for college. These unique characteristics of each latent student group are translated and eventually integrated with already existing outreach programs, allowing UNL to create more targeted intervention for future cohorts.

All UNL first-year students are strongly encouraged to complete an online survey where they self-report attitudes and behaviors on topics including time-management, self-motivation, perseverance, aptitude, hours they plan to study and work, difficult course subjects, the number of groups or organizations they plan to join, etc. Institutional researchers examined correlations between students’ responses to these surveys and their academic success during the first year as represented by cumulative GPA, hours earned, and good academic standing. Based on this analysis, UNL’s Office of Academic Affairs created scales that predict student success that were translated to the advising platform. Prior outreach occurred when students met the criteria for topic-specific, proactive outreach during the first five weeks of the fall semester. This poster highlights the next iteration that will include more sophisticated, multi-scale modeling.

Presenter Bio: Mike Stevens is currently a Senior Researcher and a Ph.D. in Sociology student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His areas of focus are survey methods and quantitative methods. He serves as the campus expert for predictive modeling and analytics related to student success.

Facilitating Success of First Generation Students in a Large Introductory Psychology Class at a Research University
Phil Kraemer, Chellgren Endowed Chair for Undergraduate Excellence, University of Kentucky
Jennifer Wu, Research Scientist, University of Kentucky

Abstract: An introductory psychology class affords a valuable opportunity to study and improve student success at a research university. Participants in this study (N = 103) were enrolled in a 4-credit course that included a lecture component and four affiliated laboratory sections (n = 23-28 each). One goal of the project was to implement interventions designed to improve course success for First Generation students. This cohort performs significantly lower than other students in Introductory Psychology, sometimes exhibiting grades 10 to 12 percent points lower than other students. To address this performance discrepancy, we embedded explicit study skills training (e.g., how to take notes, how to process notes, how to memorize and use flash cards, how to outline readings, etc.) in lectures throughout the course. In addition, we measured and attempted to develop the students’ Growth Mindset. Based on final grades, First Generation students performed as well as other students with no evidence of a performance gap. A second goal of the project was to evaluate variables that might predict success of all students in the course. We found that midterm grades were significantly higher for students who completed an assignment given on the first day of class, t(101) = -3.23, p < .01, and that Test 1 scores and midterm grades were both significantly higher for students who participated more in early laboratory discussions, F(3, 102) = 7.55, p < .01 and F(3, 102) = 68.94, p < .01. Mindset scores, but not optimism scores, correlated with midterm grades. We will present additional analyses describing effective interventions that eliminated the usual performance gap found with First Generation students in Introductory Psychology, and we will describe other data indicating that a teacher in a large lecture class typically featured at a research university can identify potential at-risk students early enough to intervene.

Presenter Bio: Phil Kraemer has a Ph.D. from University of Western Ontario. He is an Endowed Chair and Professor of Psychology at the University of Kentucky.

Jennifer Wu is a Research Scientist at the University of Kentucky with a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Kentucky.

A Diversity Dashboard and the Howard Thurman Center Ideal
Kenneth Elmore, Associate Provost and Dean of Students, Boston University

Abstract: This past spring, the Howard Thurman Center Vision Committee issued a final report, which laid out a series of recommendations for leveraging and building upon the Center’s mission as we work to nurture a diverse and inclusive University community. Under its expanded mission, the Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground ‘will be an interdisciplinary, intercultural, interreligious, intersectional, and interpersonal hub where students can relate what they learn in the classroom to a broader quest for understanding, social progress, and peace.’ This poster session is a look at the Howard Thurman Center in relation to investments in diversity and an accompanying dashboard.

Presenter Bio: As Associate Provost and Dean of Students, Kenneth Elmore coordinates University efforts to provide a safe environment, where students can find their way within a vibrant academic community. He additionally works with the President and Provost to raise philanthropic support for undergraduate student scholarships, and shares leadership and management of projects associated with student-focused facilities, physical infrastructure, and capital projects.

Kenn’s duties as Dean of Students include advising student organizations, planning ways to acclimate students to the University, setting and regulating standards, offering academic support, helping students navigate career goals, making certain the University experience is accessible, and creating a vibrant and welcoming living-learning environment.

Advancing Critical and Creative Thinking at North Carolina State University
Sue Carson, Associate Professor of Plant & Microbial Biology; Director of TH!NK (QEP), North Carolina State University

Abstract: The focus of the NC State Quality Enhancement Plan, TH!NK, is to improve students’ higher-order thinking competencies, including critical evaluation, creative thinking, and reflection on their own thinking. The incorporation of an explicit common
language of intellectual standards in courses across disciplines, combined with discipline-specific activities and feedback that emphasize the critical and creative thinking process throughout each THINK course are integral in carrying us toward this goal. Approximately 75 faculty members to date, in disciplines spanning our institution, have participated in intensive training in the use of evidence-based pedagogies and have integrated these strategies in their courses. In this presentation, we share tools used in our faculty development, the structure of the program, as well as promising preliminary results of the student learning outcomes and plans moving forward. More information about this program is available at think.dasa.ncsu.edu

**Presenter Bio:** Sue Carson graduated from Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ) with a B.S. in Biotechnology, and from the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, NC) with a Ph.D. in Microbiology. Her area of scientific expertise is in molecular mechanisms of bacterial pathogenesis. Prior to leading the QEP, Dr. Carson spent over ten years leading curriculum development for the NC State Biotechnology Program as its Academic Coordinator. Her scholarly work over the last ten years has focused on college-level biology education. She has received multiple awards for teaching excellence and innovation and is a member of the Howard Hughes Science Education Alliance, promoting and implementing inquiry-guided learning and authentic research in the undergraduate classroom laboratory. She co-authored two molecular biology lab manuals, and has published numerous peer-reviewed papers in the area of course and curriculum development. She has mentored more than 100 undergraduate students in research projects and is the PI and Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded Integrative Molecular Plant Systems Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Program. She serves on the Leadership Council of the National Science Foundation BIO REU, and on the Board of Directors of the Wake County Beekeeping Association.

Assessing the Use of Small-Group, Active Engagement Exercises and Peer Evaluation in Introductory Biology Courses

**Marcia Shofner, Faculty Member in Department of Entomology, University of Maryland, College Park**

**Abstract:** This study measures the effectiveness of using small-group, active engagement and peer evaluation exercises in a large enrollment introductory biology course – BSCI106 (Principles of Biology II: Ecology, Evolution, and Diversity). BSCI106 is a 4-credit course, required for all biology majors, offered in a traditional lecture and laboratory format each semester: three hours of lecture and three hours of lab per week. In Spring 2016, a course redesign was initiated to move from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. The course was taught in two sections. One section (n=95) was based mainly on traditional lecture style (Traditional), the other section (n=115) employed several group exercises. In particular, we piloted one group activity followed by peer evaluation (Experimental). Students in the experimental section received significantly better grades than students in the traditional section, suggesting that student learning outcomes may be impacted by class activities. Across all sections, minority students received significantly lower final grades, holding other variables constant, such as gender and section. The group activity and peer evaluation exercise offered in the experimental section were positively perceived by most of the students. This study can contribute to the teaching and learning community by highlighting general and specific recommendations.

**Presenter Bio:** An ecologist by training, Marcia Shofner teaches introductory biology emphasizing ecology and evolution to undergraduate majors. She has been teaching introductory biology courses for majors and non-majors for over ten years. In addition, she teaches upper level courses in conservation biology and ecology and several online graduate courses. Her research interests are with freshwater invertebrates, specifically the meiofauna, and in the classroom redesigning the biology course curriculum to include active learning.
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The Reinvention Collaborative is a national consortium of research universities dedicated to strengthening undergraduate education.

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