

NINE STRATEGIES

For Delivering Equitable Student Outcomes



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LEARNING

Introduction

Higher education, at its core, has the power to open minds to knowledge and doors to opportunity. But often despite its best efforts, the disparities deeply rooted in our systems and culture remain barriers to student achievement.

Taking a closer look at our classrooms, programs, and services ensures we're not inadvertently reinforcing bias or perpetuating inequities in advancing student success. Data and analytics are critical resources in this work – not only to identify disparities and inequities, but also to diagnose them and proactively address them. They not only convey critical information, but also create a starting point for meaningful discussion and material changes.

When we know what's working for our students, we discover a path to remove the hidden barriers and unintended consequences that limit equity and student success. Our fall 2020 report, *Community Insights: What Matters Most For Equity*, provides insights around which student support initiatives advance equitable student outcomes. The insights from data alone are only a starting point.

Transforming those insights into data-informed actions that close equity gaps and improve student outcomes is the next step. If processes unintentionally reinforce barriers or if technology isn't inclusive, our work to create equity is limited. If teams aren't equipped with diverse perspectives or resources to dismantle systemic inequities, then even well-intended, important work can fall flat.

We know it's not always obvious where or how to begin the critical work to address disparities. That's why we created this playbook: to give you a starting point and a framework for taking tangible, practical steps that deliver more equitable student outcomes.

When we know what's working for our students, we discover a path to remove the hidden barriers and unintended consequences that limit equity and student success.



We've outlined key evidence-based practices, considerations, and strategies to help achieve equitable outcomes by:

Designing a More Inclusive Student Experience
Strategies 1, 2, 3, & 4

Use Data to Identify Hidden Barriers & Inform Action to Close Achievement Gaps
Strategies 5, 6, & 7

Aligning Processes & People to Close Equity Gaps
Strategies 8 & 9

Designing a More Inclusive Student Experience

Many of our partner institutions use the Civitas Learning Student Impact Platform to not only identify the evolving needs of their students, but also determine which support professionals, resources, and programs will most effectively solve student challenges. Access to the most up-to-date data allows them to design and deliver student experiences that remove barriers and improve student success outcomes with both speed and precision.

In this section, we share strategies our partners use to create a more inclusive student experience.

Strategies include:

- *Accommodating student needs, preferences, and expectations with holistic planning and scheduling.*
- *Removing uncertainty and anxiety about building a class schedule.*
- *Helping students prepare for and reduce expenses in and out of the classroom.*
- *Improving inclusion by ensuring accessibility.*

FROM THE FIELD:

Holistic Planning and Scheduling Improve Persistence by 6.20%

A university in Texas used the Civitas Learning Student Impact platform data science and predictive analytics to improve persistence for online students by 6.20 percentage points.

They leveraged their student risk and program impact data to enhance student access and promote holistic planning and scheduling. This university improved outcomes and expanded opportunities for its students by making it easier for them to find classes and learning modalities that align with their priorities and goals.

But they did not stop there. This institution then relied on lessons it learned from its student data to prepare for the challenges of the fall 2020 semester and to bolster campus wide efforts to enhance student's career readiness.

Its data analysis informed budget, staffing, program, and operational planning. This data-informed approach also allowed them to hire additional professional and peer staff for their academic coaching program so they proactively address identified student needs. And it paved the way for a more collaborative approach to student success campuswide.



#1 Accommodate Known— and Unknown—Student Needs, Preferences, and Expectations with Holistic Planning and Scheduling.



Embolden students to build plans and access resources that align with their commitments and support their goals. It's about more than just checking a box for the right classes at the right time. It's about finding and enrolling in a best-fit schedule mapped to their goals.

Prior to 2020, higher education was enrolling more nontraditional students than ever. Then the pandemic forced individuals, families, and communities to integrate work, life, and learning in a new way. Working parents were left to balance their children's virtual schoolwork with existing career obligations, leaving less time available to pursue their own credential or degree.

Other students struggle to balance co-curricular activities, student organizations, jobs, or internships around their course schedules.

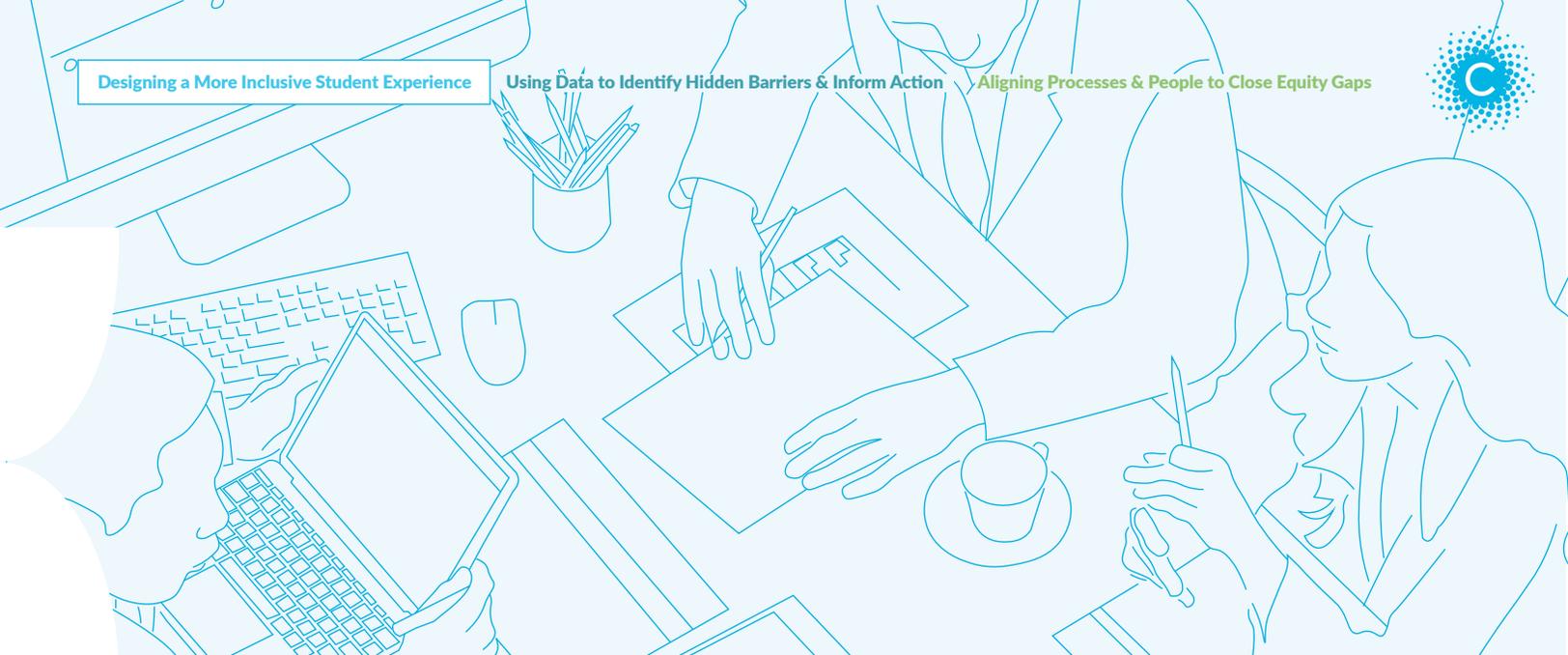
Even as COVID-19 vaccines offer promise for a return to in-person learning, the life and logistical challenges faced by traditional and nontraditional students seem likely to persist.

College and university leaders should aim to help students balance their learning with their life. Otherwise, institutions risk perpetuating barriers based on a student's ability to make learning their top priority, instead of enhancing a student's potential to succeed despite their circumstance.

Let's let students be successful in all roles of their lives. For too many students today, that simply isn't an option.

Approaches for addressing this issue include:

- Providing more choices for course modality
- Offering more courses on nights and weekends
- Making it easier for all students to build a schedule that works around their life
- Adjusting availability for support services



Opportunity:

All students will benefit from schedules and plans that support their priorities, preferences, and goals. But holistic planning is especially important for nontraditional students such as:

- Returning students
- Primary caregivers
- Part-time students



Actions:

Track section demand, course-fill rates and break patterns to help your institution plan future terms that better accommodate evolving student needs.

Action Step: Use the reports in your admin portal to dive deeper into trends across specific student groups. The data can inform actions to create a more inclusive student experience. For example, institutions could provide more sections of required courses to accommodate break patterns shown for different groups of students.

Equip students with opportunities to build a course schedule that accommodates their other priorities, such as taking care of children or parents, working, or commuting.

Action Step: Help students use the embedded “break” functionality to plan a best-fit schedule that accommodates their commitments and goals.

Action Step: Give students tools to auto-generate all possible schedules based on their personally configured parameters and preferences. This action will allow them to choose the best options for making timely progress toward their credential.

Action Step: Ensure that advisors and students can prioritize or “lock” degree requirements or filter for course modality. This process will help them find an optimal schedule and accelerate their time to completion.

Make applicable student support programs accessible virtually and during “nontraditional” hours.

Action Step: Measure your initiatives and programs to understand what works best for different students—those that are impactful for part-time or online students, for example. Based on the efficacy of your programs and your understanding of student schedules, adjust availability and focus resources on the programs that improve inclusion or outcomes for underserved students. More accessible support can help prevent unintended barriers that limit student success for nontraditional students.

#2

Remove Uncertainty and Anxiety About Building a Class Schedule.



First-time students and returning students alike often struggle to navigate the process of creating a schedule. First-generation students, in particular, frequently don't have anyone to help them build their schedule. This uncertainty also is likely to place a greater burden on historically underserved students and could result in late registration.

Delayed registration may compound challenges by preventing students from getting the classes they need. This experience can set the tone for an unsuccessful student experience.

Advising and orientation programs can help mitigate these concerns, but these efforts can be difficult to scale and typically occur only at certain set times in the year. While it's important to extend support and reinforce belonging at these predetermined milestones, it's equally important to offer support throughout a student's journey.

College and university administrators and advising teams can resolve these challenges in a few ways:

- Empowering students to explore their scheduling and planning options on their own terms
- Providing a clearer picture of what their path to a degree or credential will look like
- Creating opportunities for students to engage with advisors outside of high-stress moments
- Proactively building recommended course schedules for students

Opportunity:

Inclusive systems should also consider any unintended psychosocial implications of “traditional” processes or actions. Successful students are more likely to feel like they belong.

Removing uncertainty is especially important for:

- First time in college and first-generation students
- Neurodiverse students
- Students experiencing need



Actions:

Build recommended schedules for students who need more comprehensive support.

Action Step: Preload schedule recommendations for students prior to their registration process. This action helps them understand their path and reduces uncertainty about where to start. Additionally, advisors and students can collaborate virtually or in person on alternative course schedules, making it easier to determine what works best and to complete enrollment.

Focus proactive advising and outreach on underserved or vulnerable populations.

Action Step: Instead of assuming certain student populations need support, look at specific success predictions to prioritize advisor-student engagement. Taking this approach helps advising and enrollment teams focus their limited time on the students who need their support. The students who need advising support are often less likely to seek it, so it's important to use data to get a more comprehensive view of what students need, and engage early.

While it's important to extend support and reinforce belonging at these predetermined milestones, it's equally important to offer support throughout a student's journey.

Individualize academic planning guidance with predictive insights to accelerate completion.

Action Step: Use institution-specific insights about the drivers of success for your students to tailor academic guidance. Providing this individualized assistance can accelerate their path to completion and improved earning potential. Combine insights such as student-level success predictions and the number of credit hours that will increase their likelihood to persist, and use this data to build a list of students who are ready to take one more course. Engage these students—and make it easy for them to add a course by embedding a direct link to registration, with the recommended course, as a call to action or next step in email outreach.

#3

Help Students Prepare for and Reduce Expenses In and Out of the Classroom.



It's no secret that the cost to obtain a postsecondary degree is higher than ever. A 2020 analysis in "Forbes" showed the cost of attending a four-year college or university in the United States had risen twice as fast as inflation since 1985. The cost of two-year community colleges rose a third faster than inflation during that time period.

As we've improved access to higher education, the cost to deliver degrees and support students has also skyrocketed. To compound the challenge, public funding and appropriations now contribute a reduced percentage of total operating budgets. New student enrollment has decreased as well.

As college and university leaders work to do more with less, students—especially nontraditional and historically underserved populations—are also balancing limited resources. Sixty-seven percent of Hispanic and Latino student borrowers have educational debt, and 48% of Black students owe an average of 12.5% more than they borrowed four years after their graduation.

We can help mitigate these systemic challenges by:

- Shortening time to degree
- Helping with navigating financial aid processes
- Accelerating access to emergency aid programs
- Providing access to comprehensive services such as food pantries, high-speed internet, and laptops
- Anticipating or reducing supplemental expenses like textbooks
- Assessing how policies might be impacting subpopulations differently

Improving affordability is a critical part of higher education's approach to tackling equity and access. It's unlikely that your community college or university can do everything, but you can start somewhere—and create meaningful change in the lives of students today.

When students better understand the costs associated with their degree, they can make smarter decisions on transfer pathways, lending options, scholarship searches, or workload balance.



Opportunity:

Assisting students experiencing financial hardship or managing limited resources is key. It's particularly important for those who are disproportionately affected, including students from historically underserved communities and minority populations.

Actions:

Reduce or eliminate financial holds on registration.

Action Step: Instead of triggering a warning or notice to the student and blocking registration, alert the student's advisor or graduation coach. This notification prompts a conversation about what's going on with the student, giving administrators the context they need—and the student the opportunity to address the issue—avoiding the ripple effect financial holds can have on students' journeys.

Make it easier for students to access emergency aid with a dedicated fund and targeted support.

Action Step: In addition to streamlining required paperwork and disbursement processes, equip advisors and support staff to connect students with the help they need—when they need it. Alerting staff to changes in a student's likelihood of success should prompt action to engage with the student to determine what is happening. Connect students with emergency aid as needed.

Clarify and proactively communicate scholarship and work-study opportunities.

Action Step: Provide easy access to resources within the same systems students and advisors are already using, through a shared resource library. Develop a communication plan to connect students to these

resources at critical times in the term, and reference appointment notes or outreach to make sure students are receiving the information. Make sure they know how to find and apply for these resources throughout their postsecondary career as their circumstances may change.

Survey students' need to identify emerging challenges.

Action Step: Embed microsurveys into outreach campaigns and other communications to students. Consider different channels to promote student participation and coordinate your outreach strategy with a cross-functional team. Ensure your data infrastructure can collect and process the results, develop actionable insights, and share these insights with key stakeholders.

Use Open Educational Resources (OER) or lower-cost textbooks when possible, share those options with students.

Action Step: Include information about OER or low-cost textbooks in the student planning and scheduling process, so students can build a personalized plan that works for them. Consider showing your students how to obtain these resources by:

- Discussing the process during an advising appointment
- Recording a quick training video and sharing it on your website
- Building schedules for students with that attribute already configured

#4

Improve Inclusion by Ensuring Accessibility.



All students, regardless of ability, should have resources, spaces, and technologies that support their learning and experience. It's a federal requirement that all public spaces be universally accessible.

Too often, however, accessibility in student success technology is an afterthought instead of a guiding principle.

Technology should not just accommodate improved access, but also foster inclusion and belonging. Without an accessibility-first approach to student technology and support, structural barriers will perpetuate inequities.

**Opportunity:**

Students with disabilities and/or reduced access to support services are most in need of accessible accommodations.

**Actions:**

Ensure your student-facing technologies are WCAG 2.0 AA, at a minimum.

Action Step: *Technology isn't helpful if it's not usable to complete tasks. Make sure students can navigate the experience by ensuring your solution meets WCAG 2.1 AA standards. Meeting this standard ensures accessibility—removing barriers to completing key tasks for all users and making it easier to support students.*

Use adaptive technologies or plugins for remote/virtual learning environments or support services to make them more inclusive.

Action Step: *Consider videoconferencing solutions that include rapid closed captioning services for live conversations or tools that can provide low-cost rapid closed captioning support for recorded programs and classes.*

Use Data to Identify Hidden Barriers & Inform Action to Close Achievement Gaps

Institutions across our community of practice use data to guide initiatives that improve equity. Data analysis empowers them to identify new perspectives and opportunities to proactively support students. By rigorously measuring the impact of services and interventions on student outcomes, achievement gaps are shrinking, and a more diverse population of students are completing their degrees.

In this section, you'll learn how leveraging data analytics provides key insights to help design tailored student support that improves equity.

Strategies include:

- *Understanding the patterns across multiple outcomes for underserved populations at your college or university.*
- *Disaggregating your data to identify top factors, programs, and courses influencing specific groups.*
- *Focusing resources and support on the most vulnerable students. Don't rely on demographic information alone.*

FROM THE FIELD:

Data-Informed Action Closes Equity Gaps in Retention and Completion

Florida Atlantic University leveraged its data to dramatically increase first-year retention and improve completion closing achievement gaps in the categories of race, ethnicity, and income.

When the state of Florida introduced performance-based funding, FAU administrators recognized that they would not qualify for – and thereby lose – state funding unless they improved their performance on two key metrics, *retention* and *completion*.

With less than 66% of freshmen progressing to their second year with 2.0+ GPA and a 40% six-year graduation rate, FAU was second-to-last in the state's performance funding model. Motivated to become the country's fastest-improving public research university for their diverse student body, FAU got to work on addressing student needs, improving outcomes, and meeting new state standards.

By analyzing real-time, individual student data from both the university's Student Information System (SIS) and Learning Management System (LMS), FAU gained an unprecedented level of insight into the full student journey. Additionally, they used their data to understand the efficacy of their student success programs for specific student groups.

Understanding the needs of its student population enabled FAU to take data-informed actions. They formed a cross-functional Persistence Committee to coordinate outreach with identified students and worked with various units across campus and administration to eliminate obstacles to student success. This data-informed shift to a dynamic Care Team led to:

- A 14.5 percentage point increase in first-year retention
- An 18% increase in its four-year graduation rate
- An 11% increase in its four-year graduation rate

These outcomes catapulted FAU to the top of the performance, earning it previously withheld funding as well as additional support.

#5

Understand the Patterns Across Multiple Outcomes for Underserved Populations at Your College or University.



Can you quickly—and robustly—review trends in your data? What could you do today if you could glean insights on outcome disparities week by week and year over year?

As you look at student enrollment, persistence, course completion, and graduation, it's important to look at overall trends and historical data. Perhaps most importantly, however, immediate and sustainable change requires a closer look at populations of interest and understanding how their student journey and outcomes compare, so you can identify gaps or unexpected shifts.

To take it a step further: What would you do differently if you could uncover the primary factors that impact persistence and completion for specific student groups?

These types of insights provide valuable signals about where your institution can make changes to processes, policies, curricula, and services to:

- Better meet students where they are
- Reduce friction and barriers
- Encourage successful behaviors
- Ensure equitable outcomes



Opportunity:

As students progress through each course and term, their vulnerability may change. You need to know what's changing—and for whom—as it changes, so you can coordinate proactive, personalized support. Pay special attention to groups such as:

- Students whose likelihood to persist dropped in the last week
- Nonenrolled continuing students
- Students who will likely persist but are not likely to graduate



Actions:

Compare student subpopulations to uncover realities for historically underserved and underrepresented students.

Action Step: Apply filters to look more closely at specific subpopulations—because intersectionality matters in focusing care and support. Explore any disparities and/or new patterns across multiple outcomes for underserved populations, to glean a high-level view of what’s happening for current students and what is most significantly influencing their success. To move the needle immediately, examine this data during the term to inform timely action instead of taking a postmortem approach to your analysis.

Examine predicted success across student subpopulations. View and quickly compare persistence and completion predictions of specific subpopulations to identify disparities.

Action Step: Study the same student population across multiple categories of outcomes such as course completion trends, enrollment trends, persistence, and graduation. This review helps you understand the student journey for that group and create a complete picture of it. Then compare predicted success across all subpopulations. This analysis quickly reveals historical and predicted achievement gaps, showing leaders where to focus resources to facilitate more equitable outcomes.

Action Step: Look across multiple outcomes, so you know where there are students who are likely to persist but not complete. Then target support efforts to these students to help ensure they meet their goals.

Ensure you can translate macro insights to student-level details, so you and your team can coordinate outreach and care for the students who need it most.

Action Step: Whether you are identifying groups most at risk based on an overall predictive score or by key risk factors, immediately generate a student list so your team can prioritize support. Include prediction scores in any list you share with key stakeholders, so you can consistently prioritize your support strategy. Action can include communication that provides encouragement, support, and resources and reserved appointment times for specific student subpopulations.

Action Step: Use predictions to proactively reach out to vulnerable students, since they are often least likely to seek services on their own.

Action Step: Pull a list of students who are not currently enrolled, and coordinate immediate support for those students who are also predicted to be at risk.

Action Step: Organize a centralized care team to assess the list and triage support on a weekly basis. Equip your advising team with information about students in their specific caseload to prioritize proactive outreach.

#6

Disaggregate Your Data to Identify Top Factors, Programs, and Courses Influencing Specific Groups.



Colleges and universities need to know which of their students—specifically—might be vulnerable, and when, for different outcomes. In other words: Who needs support at what time? What actually works and for whom? Which combinations of strategies best accomplishes the goal of promoting equity in student success?

A more granular level of data allows schools to target support services and interventions to the students these efforts most effectively assist. Institutions should have access to data that:

- Is dynamic or automatically updates in real time
- Provides individual student prediction scores as well as aggregate predictions
- Offers the flexibility to apply to any student subpopulation



Opportunity:

By examining this institution-specific data in a variety of ways, schools can get a complete picture of the combination of support services to employ. Some success factors to include are:

- Academic progress
- Engagement
- Financial aid
- Course load

Also among the data to consider is how students' performance in specific courses is affecting persistence and completion outcomes. Additionally, what are the thresholds for student grades in those courses for maximizing the likelihood of success?



☰ Actions:

Determine top success predictors for each population. Find opportunities to mitigate or remove persistent barriers for specific student groups.

Action Step: Use predictive analytics to understand what's most likely to affect student success. Understanding the biggest influencing factors for specific groups—such as learning management system (LMS) engagement relative to peers, high school GPA, or registration date—can help pinpoint the types of interventions, resources or support programs needed. The ability to see this information by specific subpopulation means you can be more precise in how you're organizing and targeting support.

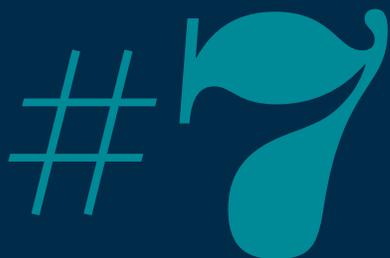
Understand which courses require achieving more than a passing grade to have a higher than average likelihood of graduating.

Action Step: Identify the most impactful courses for specific student subpopulations, and compare them for evidence of disparities in student experience or outcomes. Find opportunities to mitigate or remove persistent barriers for specific student groups in their academic journey. Prioritize the courses that should receive additional scaffolding, such as supplemental instruction or tutoring, to better support student performance and outcomes.

Who needs support at what time? What actually works and for whom? Which combinations of strategies best accomplishes the goal of promoting equity in student success?

Measure what programs or services work for various student subpopulations.

Action Step: Analyze your institution's initiatives and policies, starting with those your institution uses most, to understand the impact for different types of students. Then repeat this analysis over multiple terms to identify any changes and the impact of any adjustments you're making. Share the results of your analysis and any recommendations for action. Advisors and support staff can use the information to connect students with the most effective resources. Administrators and institutional research (IR) personnel can consider the information when making investment decisions or evaluating adjustments to policies and practices.



Focus Resources and Support on the Students Who Are Most Vulnerable.

(Don't Rely on Demographic)



Historically prioritized students might not always be the ones who need support most. Instead of designing outreach just according to student status—first generation, financial aid received, or demographic information, for example—look at predictors of success within each subpopulation to determine what students need. Consider a more comprehensive probability score as well to make the biggest impact on student outcomes.



Opportunity:

Students with a low probability of success need more comprehensive and urgent support. Students with high probabilities of success should get a different message and type of support.

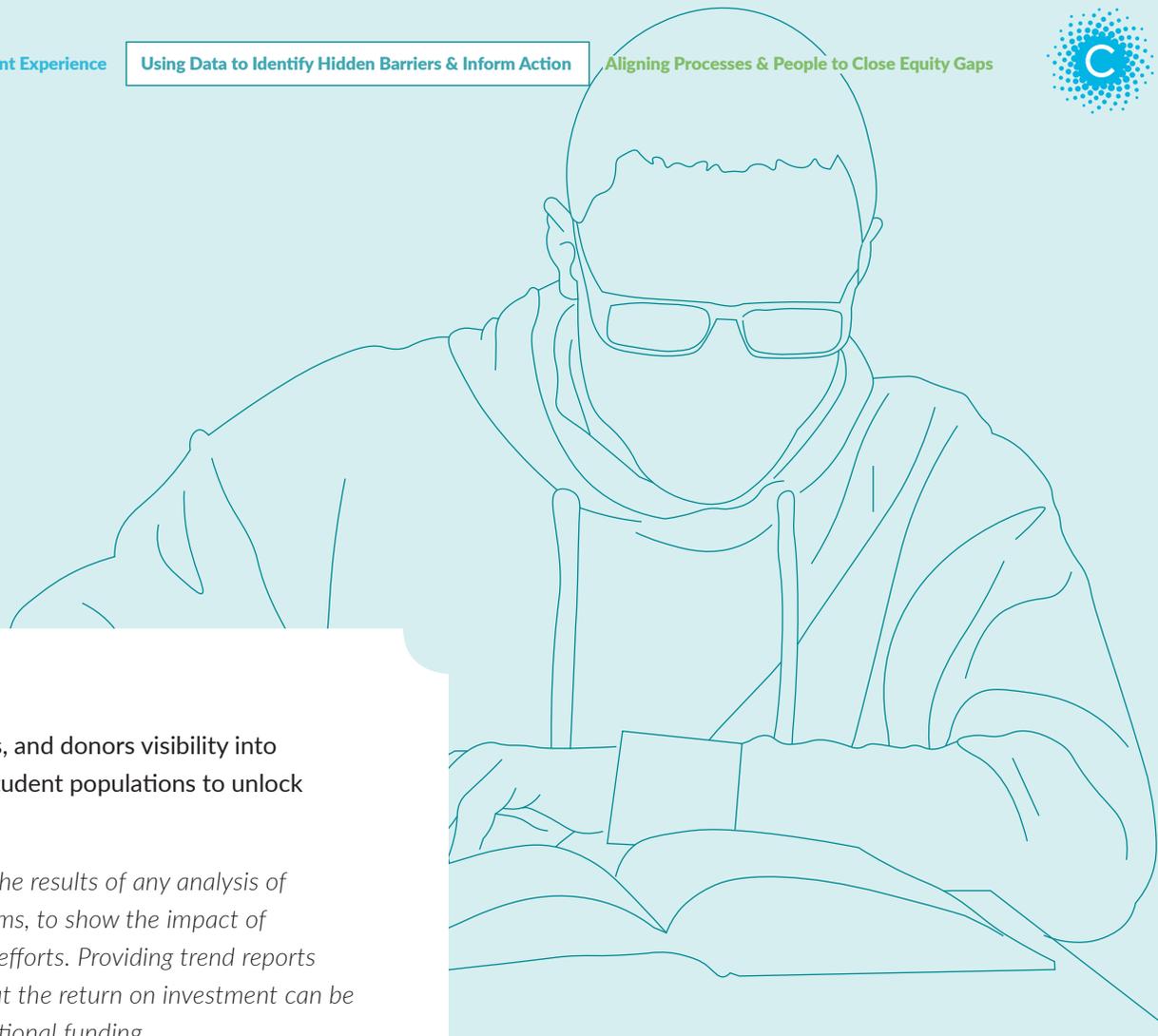


Actions:

Be intersectional in how you identify and prioritize student support. Don't assume need without considering a more holistic picture of the student.

Action Step: Build strategies based on a precise understanding of your students. Provide your advising and care teams with the ability to drill down to specific student populations, like first-generation students, and combine that list with a comprehensive indicator of risk that includes behavioral data. This level of insight makes it faster to determine the highest and best use of advisors' time.

Action Step: Conduct an impact analysis to find opportunities to better serve these students by focusing on what works best for them. Different programs help students to varying degrees. Advisors can use this information to approach how they triage student care and support throughout the term. They can identify where programs and services will create the biggest impact and help connect the right students at the right time to the support they need.



Give boards, foundations, and donors visibility into outcomes for different student populations to unlock additional funding.

Action Step: *Share the results of any analysis of initiatives and programs, to show the impact of investments in these efforts. Providing trend reports and information about the return on investment can be helpful in raising additional funding.*

Instead of designing outreach just according to student status—first generation, financial aid received, or demographic information, for example—look at predictors of success within each subpopulation to determine what students need.

Align Processes & People to Improve Clarity & Equity

Our partner institutions find that quickly and easily accessing relevant data in a centralized location allows them to work together to promote student success by providing a shared context across teams. By creating a single source of truth about who needs assistance everyone from the administration to the front lines can personalize interactions and align strategies. Sharing data within the tools that are appropriate for each stakeholder's job helps institutions identify subgroups of students who need help and more effectively target their assistance.

In this section, we're sharing how data-informed actions can improve equity by aligning processes and strengthening collaborative student support initiatives.

Strategies include:

- Reinforce belonging and fit by personalizing student support.
- Collect and share data to improve visibility, action, and continuity.

FROM THE FIELD:

Precise Coordinated Care Prevents Drop in Enrollment During COVID-19

Lorain County Community College used real-time data analysis to erase expected re-enrollment gaps during the COVID-19 pandemic. LCCC's prior work using the Civitas Learning Student Impact Platform had shown that the use of the institution's emergency aid fund increased student persistence by 3%. With that in mind, when the pandemic began, the school went to work quickly determining student needs so they could proactively address them.

LCCC made the decision to build on interventions that the data revealed to be most effective. The data allowed them to assess the true impact of initiatives for specific types of students. With this knowledge at hand, it became clear that advising and emergency funding efforts were highly effective programs they could leverage to help students during the pandemic. Plus, their practice of extending data and analytics beyond academics empowered them to more precisely and quickly coordinate care. They were able to successfully build a culture of collaboration and improve outcomes for their students by making meaningful data available to students, educators, and leadership across campus.

Ultimately, data-informed practices and programs built prior to the pandemic coupled with an ability to use data quickly and precisely to respond to new challenges empowered LCCC to not only prevent an expected drop in re-enrollment, but confer 2.3 times more degrees and certificates.





#8

Reinforce Belonging and Fit by Personalizing Student Support.



Take a do-no-harm approach when connecting with students.

For students who are predicted to be most vulnerable or at risk, highlighting their academic struggle may do more harm than good. Regardless of the system or process you use to identify academic struggle, highlighting a student's risk through an automated flag or transactional message magnifies their vulnerability.

Automated alerts or flags, intended to scale student outreach and provide early notifications for at-risk students, had the highest percentage of negative or insignificant impact on students among the program categories we analyzed for our 2020 Community Insights Report.



Opportunity:

If the goal is to keep students on their academic journey, then it is vital to prioritize inclusivity when connecting with and supporting students. Integrating belonging and positive mindset messaging into individualized outreach can increase engagement from vulnerable students.



Actions:

Involve a cross-functional team in student outreach.

Action Step: *Instead of automating alerts from faculty or staff directly to students, make the student's network, such as an advisor or coach, aware of the potential issue to help individualize and humanize the engagement with the student.*

Action Step: *Encourage faculty to connect directly with students, but use personal outreach. Engage an advisor to proactively reach out to the student and help connect them to resources they need to mitigate a growing challenge.*

Use caution with automation. Sending an automated message, based on a pre-defined trigger like attendance or registration, can be a jolt to an already vulnerable student.

Action Step: *Use real-time and precise insights into your students to inform engagement strategies and messaging. Communication is most effective when it's personalized, timely, positive and with a specific call to action or recommended next step.*

Action Step: *Use messaging that focuses on students' opportunity for growth, to nudge them to connect with appropriate resources.*

#9

Collect and Share Data to Improve Visibility, Action, and Continuity.



Seek out and maintain better data about your students.

Too often, colleges and universities fail to collect critical data or to share insights across teams, due to issues with reporting or fears of misuse. But higher education cannot avoid uncomfortable truths about what's happening with students. If we don't measure it, we cannot improve it.

**Opportunity:**

To have confidence in the data, institutions must collect it consistently and share it in a way that is actionable.

Higher education cannot avoid uncomfortable truths about what's happening with students. If we don't measure it, we cannot improve it.

**Actions:**

Expand visibility into your data and across systems of record.

Action Step: *Unify your data so you have a comprehensive and easy-to-use view in one place. Create a single source of truth for collaborating across academic, enrollment, and student services teams that can accommodate additional data over time.*

Action Step: *Use microsurveys to gather qualitative feedback from students.*

Action Step: *Make it easy for advisors to efficiently take notes about interactions with students and to share, as appropriate, with other support staff. Providing these details lends relevant context, to encourage individualized and consistent support throughout a student's journey.*

Democratize access to student trends.

Action Step: *Share a single source of data and access to key dashboards, so teams can organize around a specific priority and work from a shared and up-to-date understanding of your students.*

Action Step: *Enable teams and individuals to drill into data or specific insights that align to their responsibilities, so they have immediate access to make data-driven decisions and take action that influences outcomes.*

Conclusion

Looking closer at equity is the right thing to do. But it can be difficult. Many factors influence equity and inclusion on campus. This playbook looks at how data can drive the student success initiatives, policies, and programs that are critical in addressing these factors.

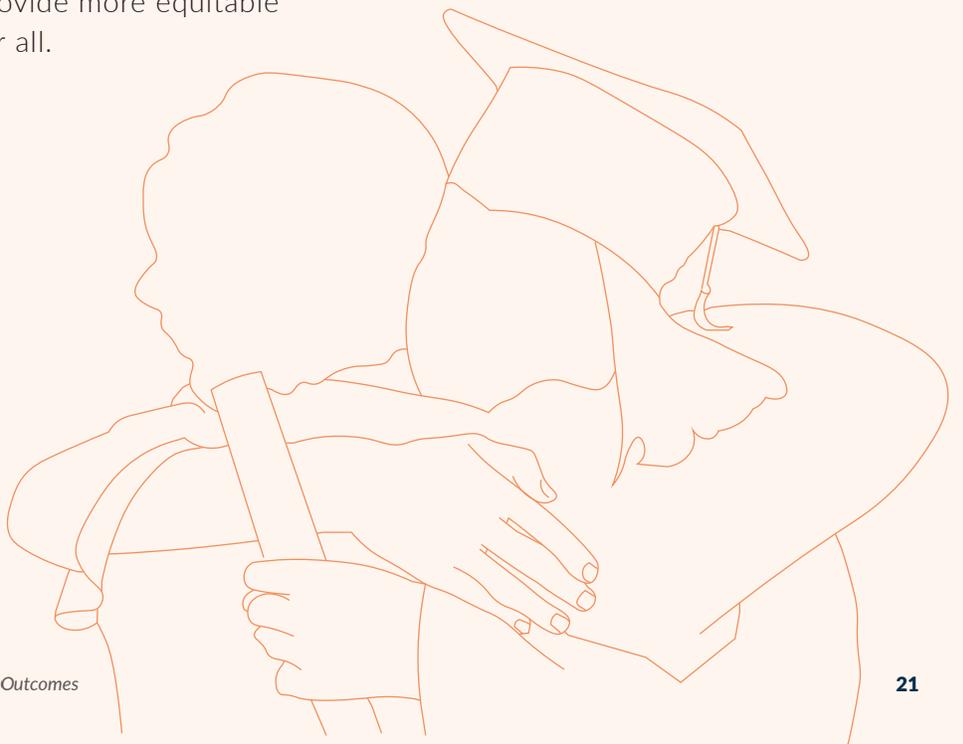
We can—and we must—remove the barriers that limit student success. Hopefully this playbook helps you in your work to do just that.

Anyone can lead or participate in equity and inclusion work, and we applaud you for your commitment to the work. It's important to have diverse people, experiences, and perspectives at the table, and remember: You don't have to be part of a historically underserved or underrepresented population to be an effective ally. It's important to listen and learn, but your own demographics don't preclude you from creating more inclusive spaces for your students, staff, and community.

So, as you begin—or continue—this work to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion, take care to be inclusive, listen, learn—and make space.

Visibility into student impact data is critical in providing a foundation to continue this work and uncover specific opportunities to address equitable outcomes for your students. Combine findings from this data with the lessons learned from each other to provide more equitable opportunities and learning spaces—for all.

We can—and we must—remove the barriers that limit student success. Hopefully this playbook helps you in your work to do just that.





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