



NATIONAL INSTITUTE
FOR
STUDENT SUCCESS
AT GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Diagnostic Analysis and Playbook

Prepared for

KANSAS STATE

U N I V E R S I T Y

April 2022

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KANSAS STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

Project Lead

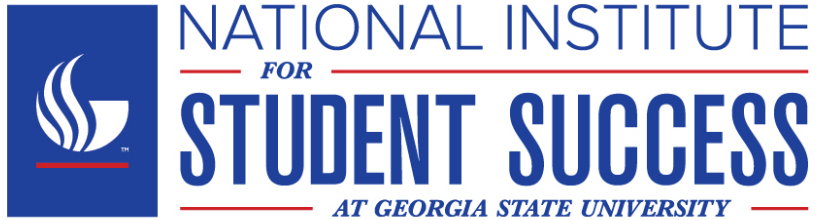
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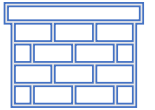
The NISS Mission is founded upon three core principles



"Our mission is to increase the ability of colleges and universities to identify and resolve institutional barriers to equity and college completion by increasing their capacity to implement proven student-success systems and data-driven interventions and to enact systemic change to institutional processes and structures."

1

Institutions inadvertently hinder their students' success through policies, practices, and structures that are among the key drivers of equity gaps.



2

Institutions can use data to identify and to understand these institutionally created barriers to completion.



3

Action-oriented institutions with the right coaching and support can create stronger and more equitable enrollment, retention, and graduation outcomes.

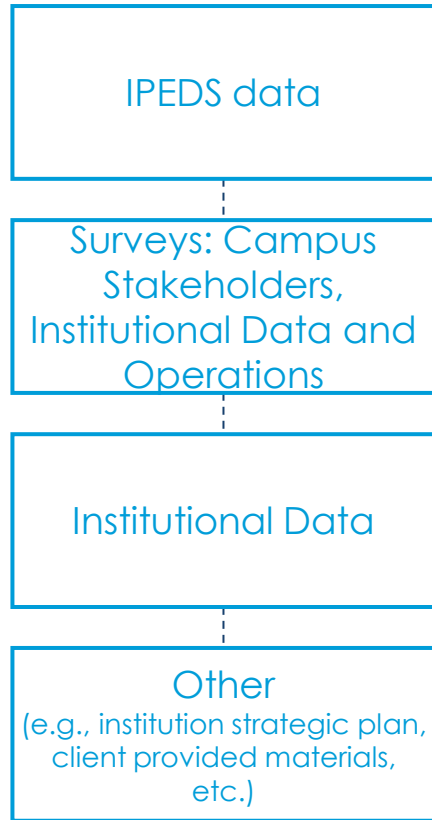


The Diagnostic Analysis is the first of two deliverables in the Diagnostic Process

DIAGNOSTIC PROCESS



Diagnostic objectives: Identify key challenges; Prioritize where to focus; Provide data-driven insights

Diagnostic Inputs



Current step

① Diagnostic Analysis

-  Analysis Purpose
-  Executive Summary
-  Supporting Insights
-  Next steps
-  Appendix

Provides data-driven insights relating to key challenges

Follow-up interviews
(Refine and build for Playbook)

② Playbook

-  Playbook Purpose
-  Executive Summary
-  Prioritized Actions
-  Implementation Steps
-  Appendix

Provides clear path forward to improve

Diagnostic Analysis Purpose



Prioritize and explain the most **important challenges** to scaling student success at your institution, identified through the NISS data gathering and triangulation process



Provide clear, concise, data-led insights on the unique composition of student success challenges your institution



Create additional **opportunity for alignment** on the challenges that your institution will tackle first to ensure the NISS develop an Action Plan that is in line with your resources to implement

Diagnostic Analysis Executive Summary

Current situation

While Kansas State has strong 4- and 6-year graduation rates that outpace national norms, enrollments are declining, and traditionally underserved populations are too often left behind. A siloed culture that inhibits the effective coordination of financial and academic support services across campus and a failure to systematize proactive student supports contribute to these challenges.

Key strengths

- First-year retention rates and 4- and 6-year graduation rates are strong.
- OIRA produces useful and accessible data for student engagement and success.

Key challenges

- **Declining enrollments**: Students are losing their way after being retained in the first year. Mitigating this loss is key to increasing enrollment.
- **Persistent equity gaps for students receiving Pell grants, first-gen, and non-white students**: Students who receive Pell grants, first-generation, and Black and Hispanic students encounter institutionalized barriers that often make it difficult for them to progress to graduation.
- **Inconsistent student support services**: Students in different colleges have varying experiences in first-year support and academic advising. Coordinated student support services and access to standardized student-level data across university units has been hindered by silos.
- **Under-coordinated student-facing communication**: Students often do not receive real-time, data-driven communication related to key support areas—specifically, financial services and academic support services—which can directly impact their progression.

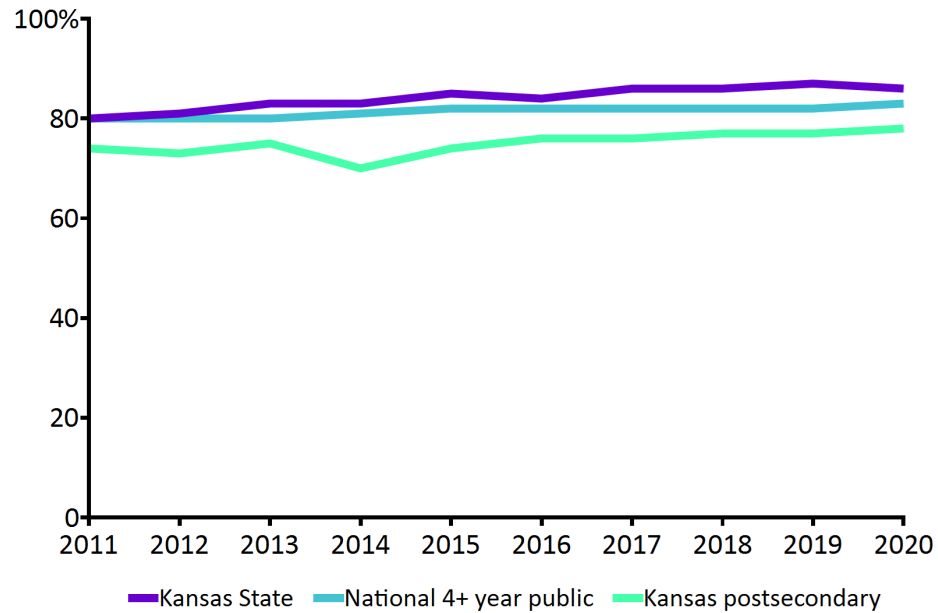
Strong retention and graduation rates and student satisfaction

KEY STRENGTHS

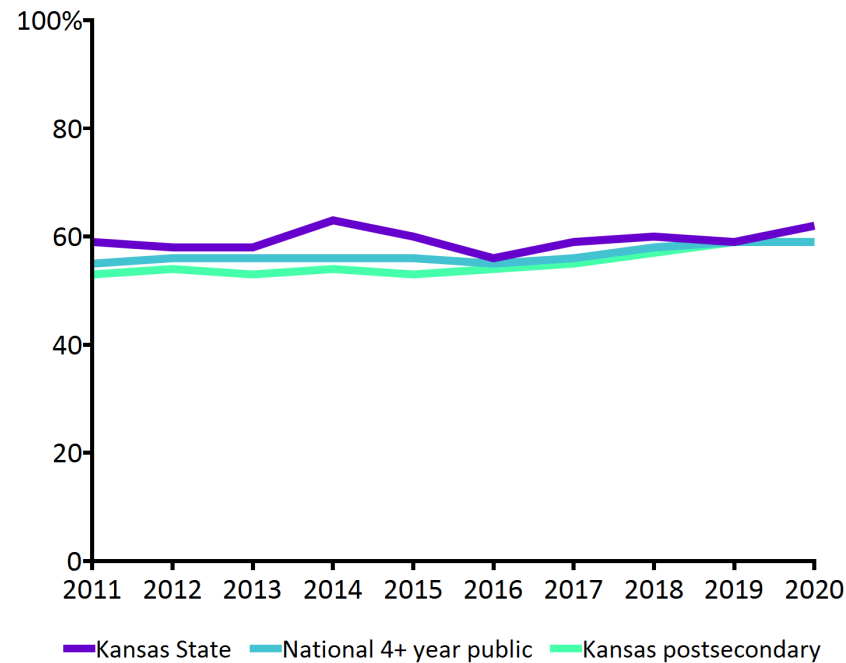
Kansas State exceeds national and state benchmarks in 1-year retention and 6-year graduation rates for all undergraduate students, and students report they overwhelmingly enjoy their experience at Kansas State.

What we found

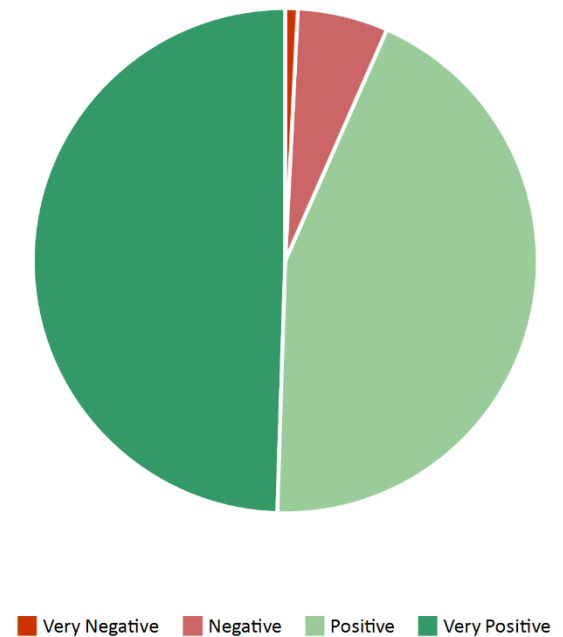
First-year retention rates, by cohort, 2011-2020



Six-year graduation rates, by cohort, 2011-2020



Kansas State Senior Satisfaction Survey, 2018
General attitude toward K-State?



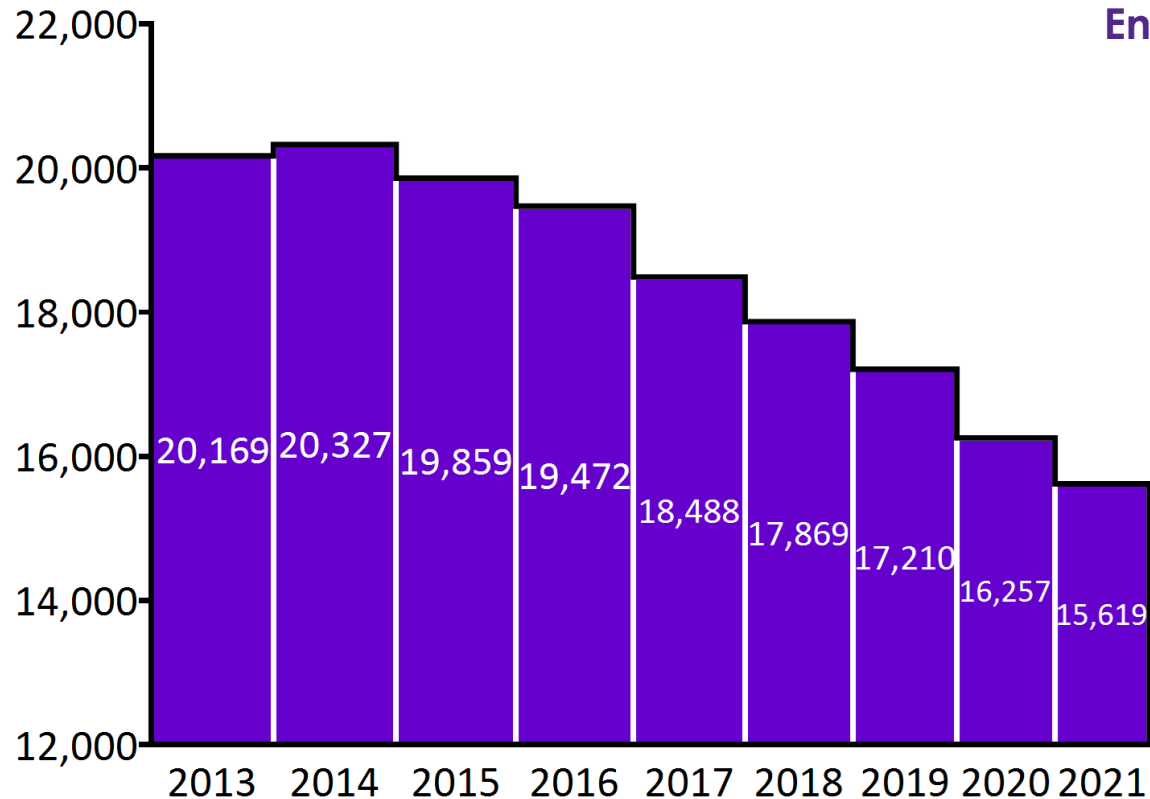
Declining enrollments

KEY CHALLENGES

Enrollment growth—a focus for Kansas State—has declined in recent years.

What we found

Undergraduate Enrollment Trend, 2013-2021



Enrollment Decrease
2013-2021

23%

What we heard

On Enrollments...

Our focus is to **increase total enrollment** ... We also intend to **increase underrepresented populations...**"

"Areas within **enrollment management** are **not always consulted or brought into the [data] sharing...**"

"I believe there is opportunity to **helping students** who are **struggling to complete necessary steps for enrollment.**"

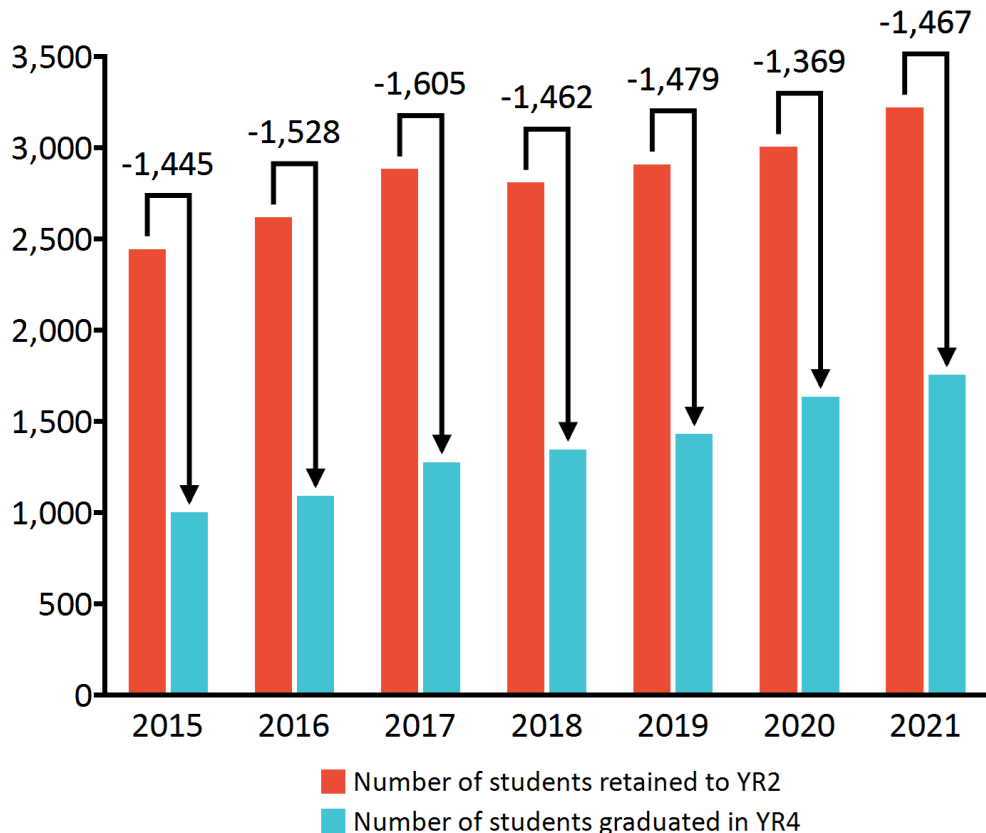
Students lose their way after first-year retention

KEY CHALLENGES

On average, almost half of students in a given cohort do not reach an on-time graduation after being retained to their second year. Mitigating this loss is key to increasing enrollment.

What we found

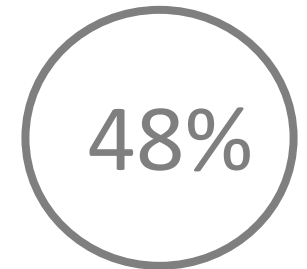
Total Number of Students Who Do Not Reach 4-Year Graduation After 1-Year Retention, by graduation year, 2015-2021



Average number of students who do not reach on-time graduation after being retained to Year 2, by graduation year 2015-2021



Average percent of students who do not reach on-time graduation after being retained to Year 2, by graduation year 2015-2021



*Note: This total enrollment number includes Architecture, Planning, and Design College students who are on a 5-year track: approximately 125 students
Source: K-State Fact Book

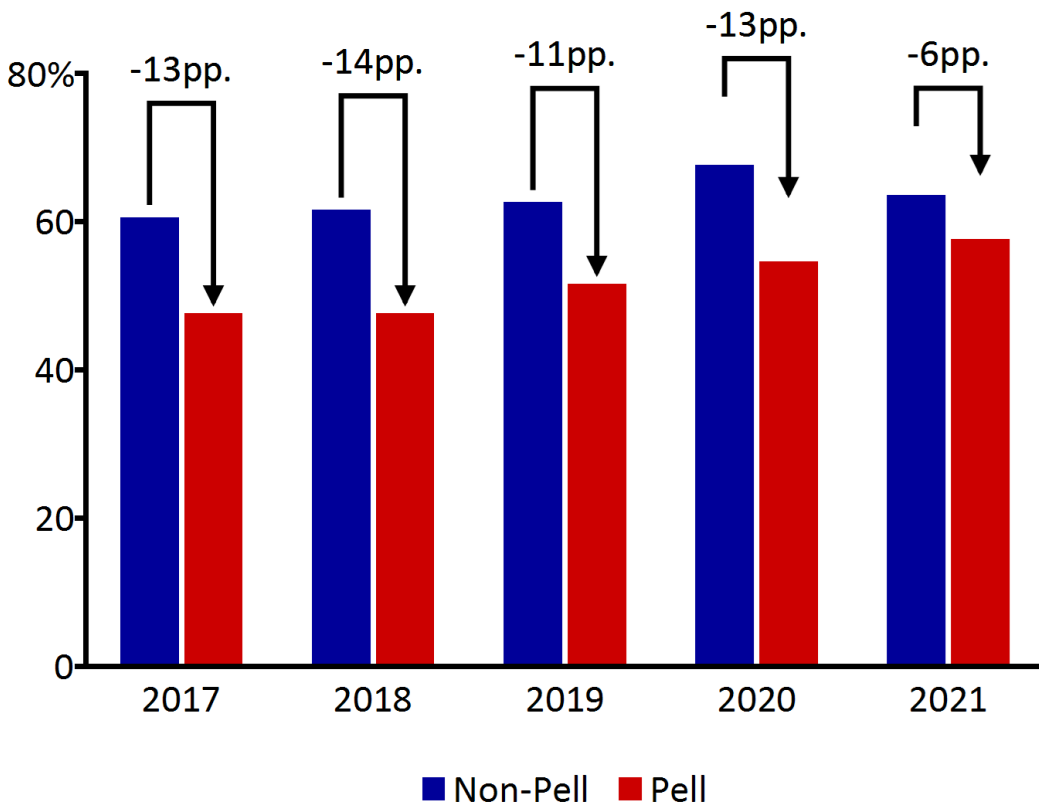
Persistent equity gaps for Pell students

KEY CHALLENGES

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are hindered in their progression to graduation by institutionalized barriers, though the process to begin closing this gap has recently begun in earnest.

What we found

Pell vs. Non-Pell students, 6-year graduation rates, by graduation year, 2017-2021



Average difference between Non-Pell and Pell 6-year graduation 2017-2021

11pp.

What we heard

“An area of improvement is to **emphasize the challenges of income limited students** ... who do not persist at K-State.”

Increase in K-State enrollment and graduation rate if Pell students graduated at the same rate as Non-Pell students

138 students enrolled

3pp. graduation rate

*Note: Potential increase statistics calculated using Fall 2020 enrollment, graduation, and tuition data as reported in IPEDS
Sources: IPEDS; NISS Campus Stakeholder Survey, 2021

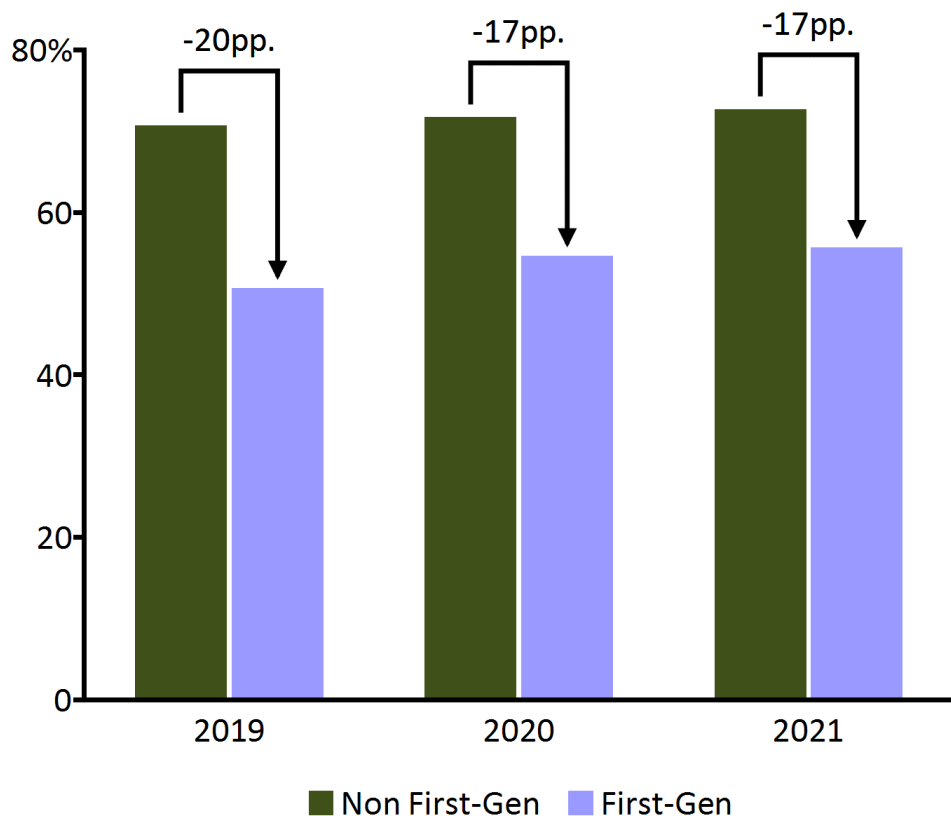
Persistent equity gaps for first-generation students

KEY CHALLENGES

First-generation students face significant equity gaps that have remained stagnant in recent years.

What we found

Non-First-Generation vs. First-Generation, 6-year graduation rates, by graduation year, 2019-2021



Average difference between Non-First Gen and First-Gen 6-year graduation 2019-2021

18pp.

Increase in K-State enrollment and graduation rate if first-gen students graduated at the same rate as non-first-gen students

487 students enrolled

3pp. graduation rate

*Note: Potential increase statistics calculated using Fall 2020 enrollment, graduation, and tuition data as reported in IPEDS data
Sources: IPEDS; K-State delivered first-gen data report

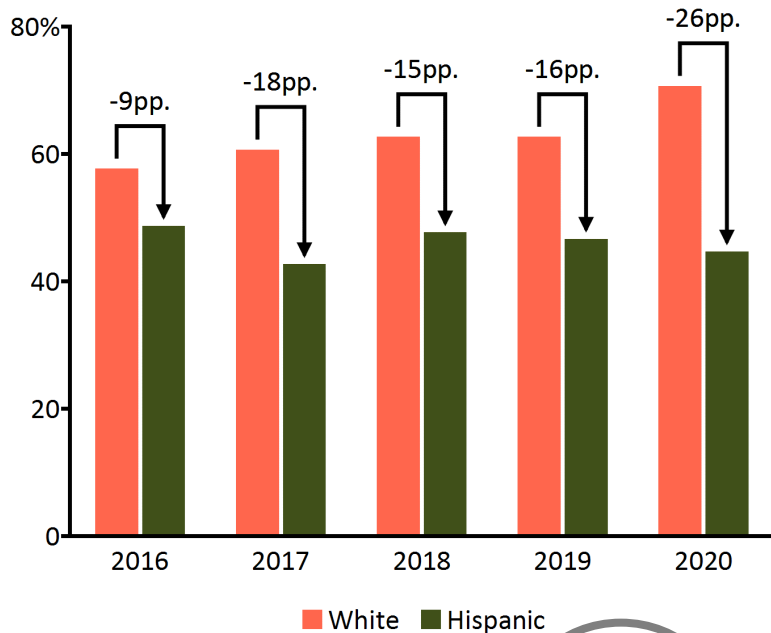
Persistent equity gaps for Black and Hispanic students

KEY CHALLENGES

Black and Hispanic students face significant equity gaps that have grown in recent years.

What we found

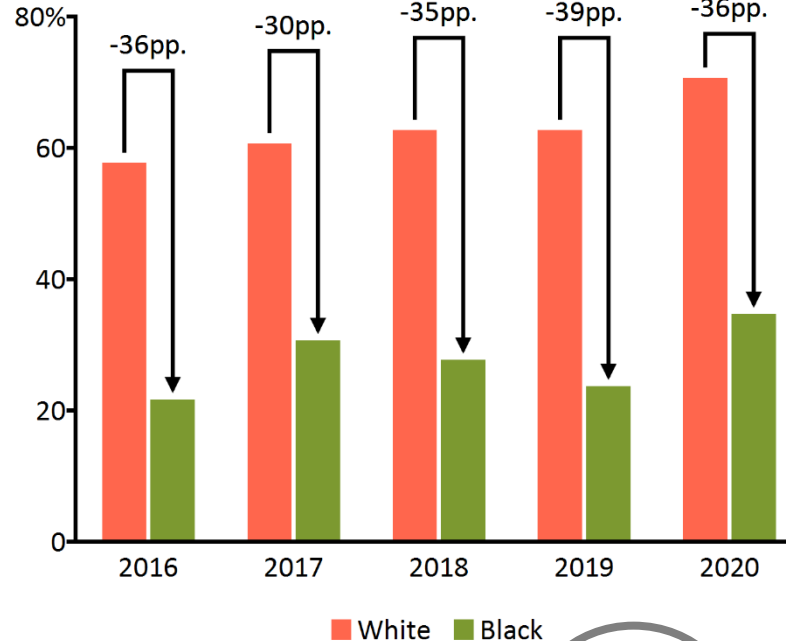
White vs. Hispanic 6-year graduation rates, by graduation year, 2016-2020



Average difference between White and Hispanic 6-year graduation 2016-2020

17pp.

White vs. Black 6-year graduation rates, by graduation year, 2016-2020



Average difference between White and Black 6-year graduation 2016-2020

35pp.

What we heard

“The **dominant population is more likely to receive supports** than ... non-traditional students.”

Increase in K-State enrollment and graduation rate if Black and Hispanic students graduated at the same rate as white students

65 students enrolled

1.5pp. graduation rate

Inconsistent student support services

KEY CHALLENGES

Students lack university-wide support services due to a siloed campus culture at Kansas State.

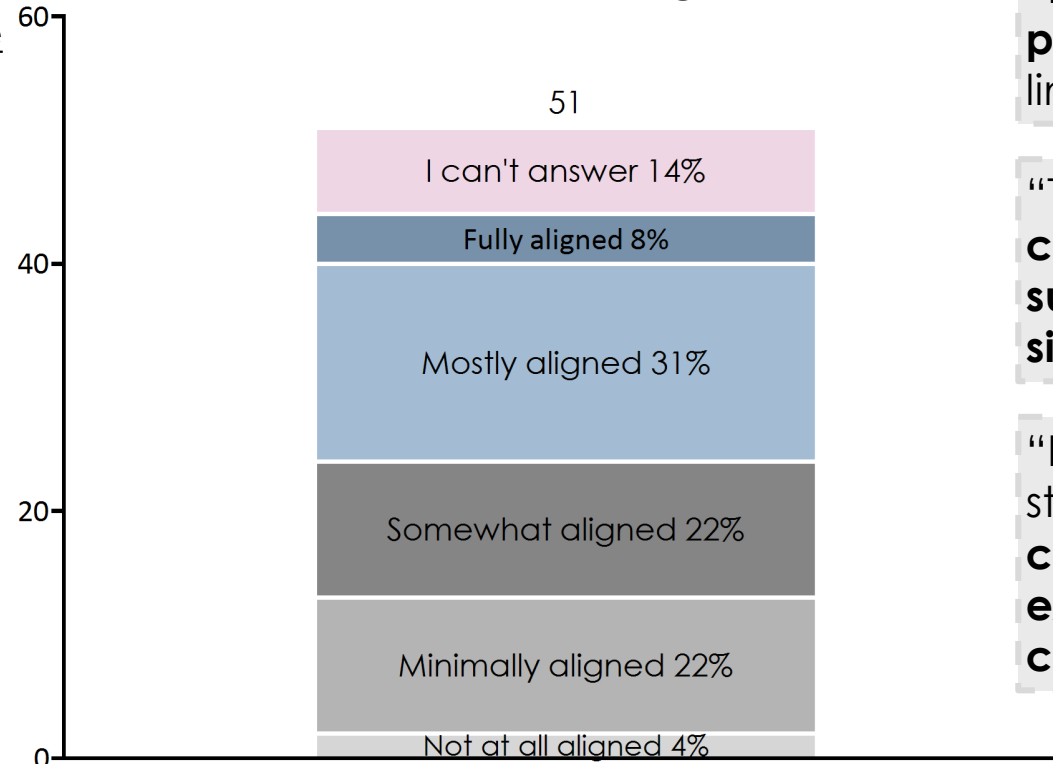
What we found

K-State 2025 Strategic Goals

Undergraduate Educational Experience

Action 1: Engage in a ... purposeful effort to **build a less-siloed university community at all levels to encourage student success...**

Scaled Student Success Programs



3.3 My institution actively and effectively works to scale successful student success programs.

What we heard

“Right now [student success programs are] **very siloed** and limited to few program areas.”

“The challenge is **creating a culture focused on student success** and **moving beyond silos.**”

“Leadership is in place to support student success, but the span of **control is limited by a culture of extreme autonomy in the colleges.**”

Inconsistent student support services: Advising

KEY CHALLENGES

Students encounter a variety of advising strategies creating barriers to their progression through their degree path.

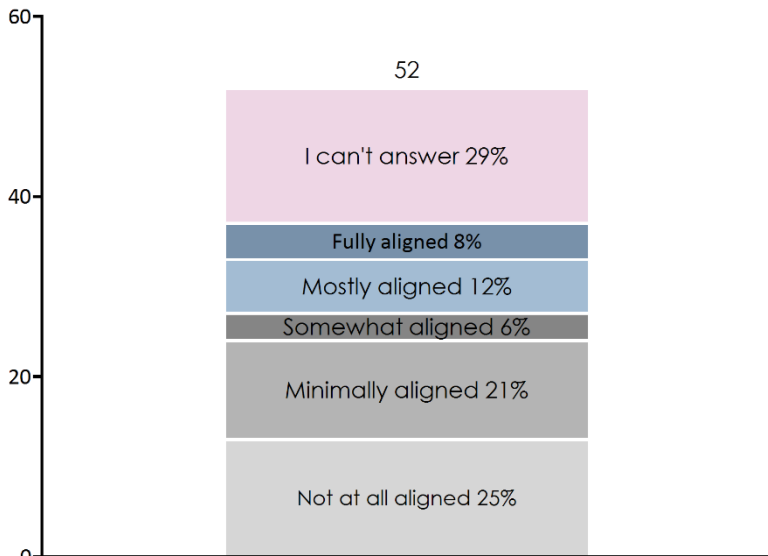
What we found

K-State 2025 Strategic Goals

Undergraduate Educational Experience

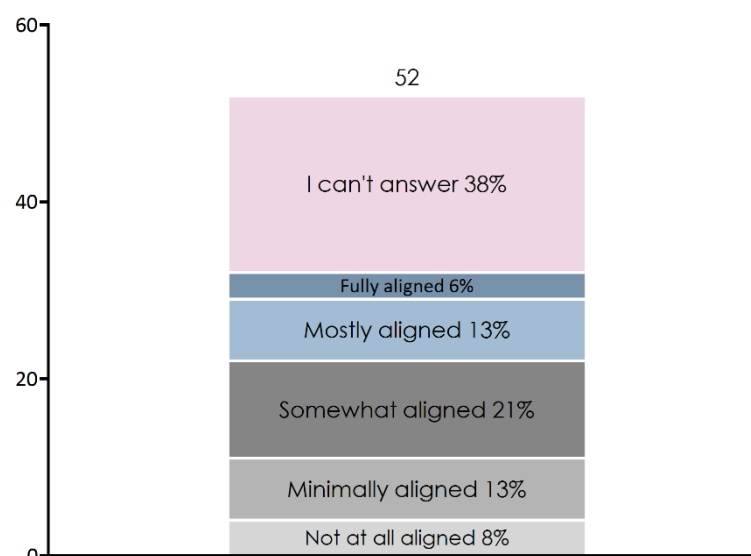
Action 2: **Dramatically improve advising services for all students** and develop flexible and effective academic advising models...

Coordinated Advising



9.6 My institution has the ability to coordinate and direct the activities of all advisors on campus without having to gain individual approval from a series of deans, chairs, or other administrators.

Proactive Registration



9.5 My institution monitors the registration records of all students before the start of each term to make sure they are registered for the right classes.

What we heard

“Advising experiences vary greatly across campus. Many faculty advisors are not qualified ...”

“The institution provides data and deploys systems to support advising, but advisors are slow to adopt. **Proactive advising is a culture change.**”

“Advising quality is **uneven as is the adoption and use of our advising technologies.**”

Inconsistent student support services: Onboarding

KEY CHALLENGES

A siloed campus culture means the first-year experience and degree pathway guidance varies among colleges and programs, putting some students off-track and at risk of stopping-out.

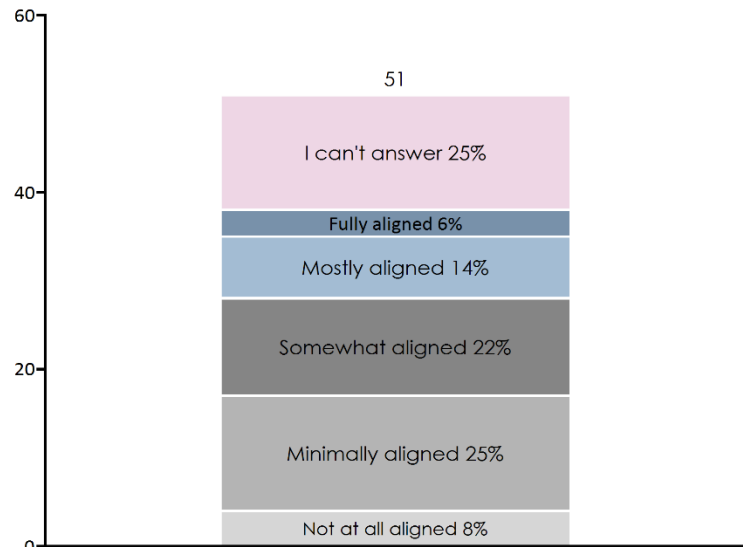
What we found

K-State 2025 Strategic Goals

Undergraduate Educational Experience

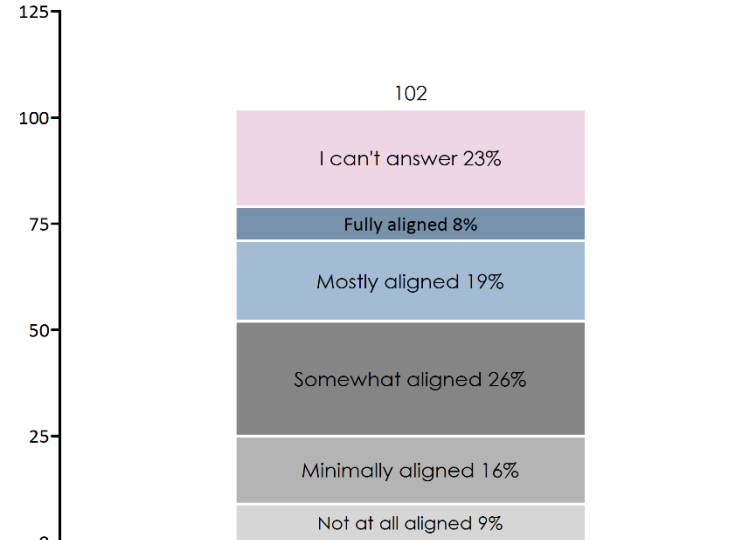
Action 3: ... [Implement] an **integrated, effective First Year Experience**

Summer Bridge Programs



5.1 My institution has implemented and scaled an effective summer bridge program to ensure that incoming students who are academically at risk have the academic and non-academic skills needed to succeed in college.

Guided Student Pathways



6. Guided Student Pathways

What we heard

On the First-Year Experience...

The **first-year experience varies by college.**

“There is **not a common experience for our first-year students.**”

“We have excellent models of summer bridge, but **participation is limited to a few colleges.**”

“Some programs and colleges offer academic maps, **but certainly not all.**”

Under-coordinated student-facing communication

KEY CHALLENGES

Students do not receive proactive communications related to academic support and financial services.

What we found

“**Call centers are segmented** among offices...**Chatbot is not deployed** across student service units **consistently.**”

“Our financial aid office does not have a record of **communicating helpfully** to students...”

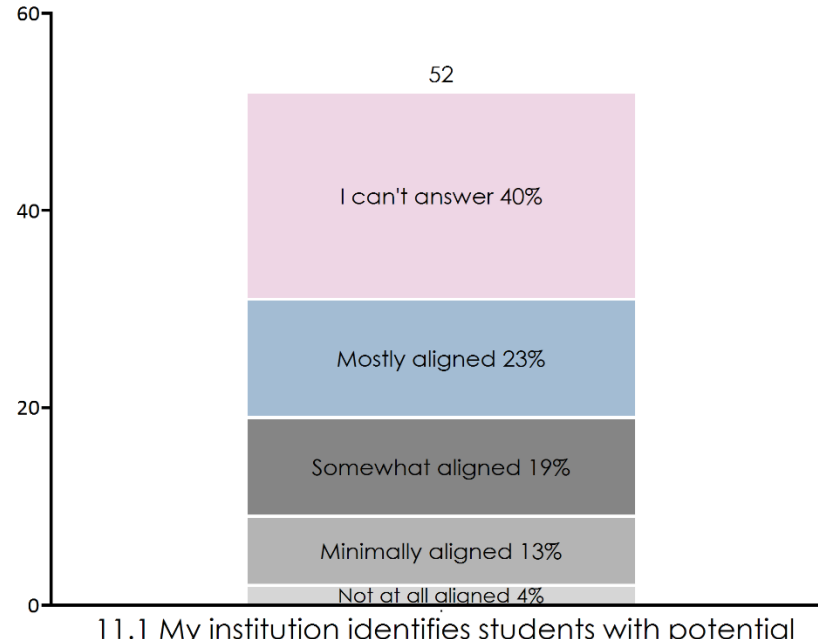
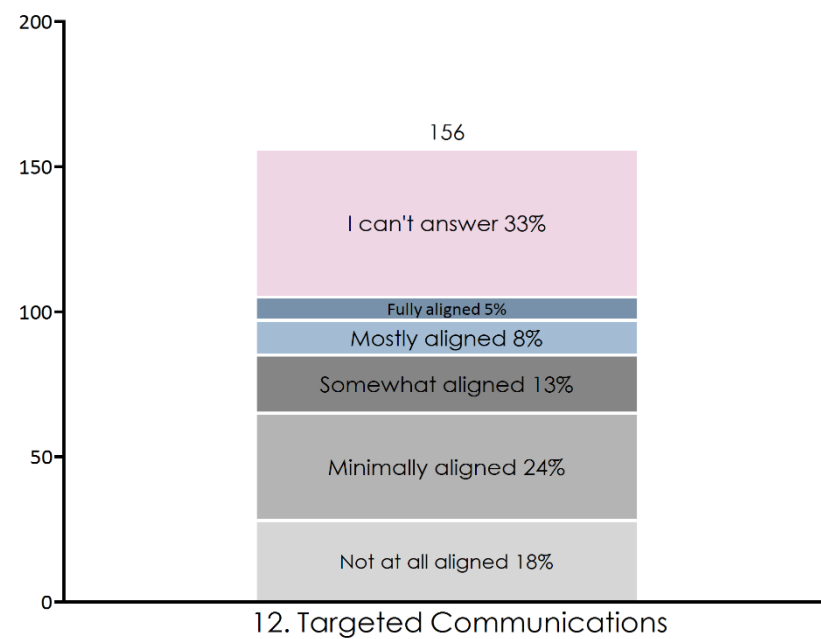
What we heard

On Student Communications...

Currently our **communication to students is not coordinated.**

Targeted Communication

Proactive Financial Services



“If the university were able to have **more clear communication strategies** about [academic support programs], we would see **better outcomes related to student success.**”

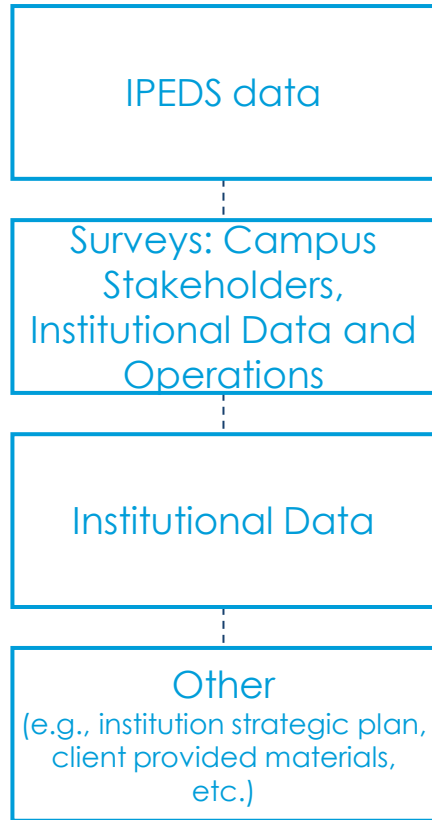
“**Some colleges lag behind in providing financial support and academic advice** in a timely manner to students.”

The Playbook is the second of two deliverables in the Diagnostic Process




DIAGNOSTIC PROCESS

Playbook objectives: Recommend and describe prioritized actions; Lay out implementation steps

Diagnostic Inputs



① Diagnostic Analysis

-  Analysis Purpose
-  Executive Summary
-  Supporting Insights
-  Next steps
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Provides data-driven insights relating to key challenges

Follow-up interviews
(Refine and build for Playbook)

② Playbook Current step

② Playbook

-  Playbook Purpose
-  Executive Summary
-  Prioritized Actions
-  Implementation Steps
-  Appendix

Provides clear path forward to improve

Playbook Purpose



Prioritize and explain the most **important actions** to improve and to scale student success at your institution, recommended due to their proven success



Provide clear, concise, research-driven steps to implement prioritized actions incorporating key stakeholder voices and in line with your resources



Create additional **opportunity for collaboration** on the prioritized actions among units at your institution and your partnership with the NISS

Playbook Executive Summary



Prioritized actions

Kansas State University, already a leader in student success innovation in the state, is poised to take the next step in improving outcomes for its students and reducing equity gaps. To do so, K-State must scale its successful programs across silos and implement systemic, proactive engagement with students using data in areas such as academic advising and financial services.

1

Standardize advising technology and protocols to deliver data-informed, coordinated, and proactive advising to students across K-State

2

Create structured pathways, including scaled learning communities, to guide students into their academic studies and through the first year

3

Coordinate student communications to prioritize and direct information to students in a timely, proactive, and personalized manner

4

Strengthen financial aid through collaboration with other units and coordinated, proactive outreach to students

Alignment with K-State 2025 & SEM

- By coordinating communications and building pathways into and between academic majors, **K-State can build a less siloed university community at all levels** (Theme 2, Goal 1: Undergraduate Educational Experience).
- By standardizing advising across units and delivering more proactive supports, **K-State can dramatically improve advising services** (Theme 2, Goal 2: Undergraduate Educational Experience).
- Through proactive, regular, and timely communications to students about pathways, degree maps, and other academic supports, **K-State can empower students to learn and promote their success** (Theme 2: Undergraduate Educational Experience).

1 Standardize advising technology and protocols to deliver data-informed, coordinated and proactive advising to students across K-State

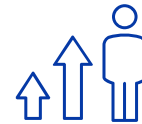
PRIORITIZED ACTIONS

What is it



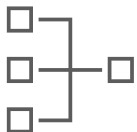
- **Standardize academic plans** for all academic pathways; **training** for all advisors; and the **systems** used for academic advising
- Ensure all K-State students receive a **standard of care that includes timely and proactive outreach** relative to academic map progression and early alerts
- Develop **common training** for advisors and common systems for advisors to use

Intended outcomes



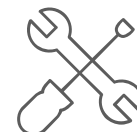
- Matriculate more students to an on-time completion, thus decreasing student-debt
- Raise retention and graduation rates, thus increasing tuition-paying enrollment
- Increase student satisfaction with academic advising and program of study

Why it matters



- Many K-State students do not know their educational goals at matriculation and/or will reassess them while enrolled
- Students often fail to self-diagnose the problems they are facing or do so too late to allow them to stay enrolled
- Gaps in advising disproportionately impact students from underserved backgrounds and are a major contributor to enrollment loss

Resources required



- **Costs:** Expenses related to training and ensuring advising platforms are available to all advisors
- **Personnel:** Advisors across all units; academic units to contribute to standardizing academic plans
- **Systems:** EAB Navigate

1 Standardize advising technology and protocols to deliver data-informed, coordinated, and proactive advising to students across K-State



ACTION STEPS

Actions

Standardize plans, training, and the systems used for academic advising

Ensure that all students receive a consistent standard of care

Develop common training for advisors and common systems for advisors to use

Key Steps

1. **Reconfigure and formalize the University Advising Committee (UAC) to play a prescriptive role** in ensuring all K-State students receive a standard quality of support from academic advising. A student's chances of graduating should not depend on whether or not they are fortunate enough to be assigned a strong advisor. The UAC should report to the Provost, continue to be chaired by the Vice Provost, have representation from advising units across campus, and meet on a monthly basis.
 2. The UAC should **prioritize drafting academic plans** for all academic pathways using a common template to set forth, semester by semester, the preferred sequence of courses for students to take to complete their degrees. To gain approval, each draft plan should then be shared with the applicable academic unit for input and revisions within a 30-day timeframe. This process will speed up the drafting of plans and their timely vetting.
 3. The UAC should **determine common systems and platforms** to be used by advisors and how they should be used.
-
1. **Deploy the standardized academic plans proactively** by using them in all advising sessions with students, having advisors work to ensure students are registered for appropriate courses before the start of the term, and empowering advisors to share "what if?" scenarios for students so that the students can make informed decisions about the costs and time-to-degree for different academic options.
 2. Standardize the use of some basic "**early alerts**" across campus to allow advisors to identify and address problems students are facing before the students drop out (e.g., students underperforming in the first course they take in their academic field, with multiple W's, with declining GPAs, or struggling to pass first-year math and English courses) and standardize the practice of keeping advising notes across K-State. For more on the impact of such approaches, see: [A Framework for Advising Reform in Higher Education | BCG](#)
-
1. The UAC should: a) **review and require training** for first-time advisors as well as regular training for all continuing advisors on rotating topics, for instance every 6 months; b) establish standards for **record keeping and tracking of students** and c) determine **common systems and platforms** to be used by advisors and how they should be used.
 2. **Systematize the use of technologies across all advisors** rather than allowing each advisor to choose their own approach. One goal, for instance, should be achieving a state where advising records and notes follow students even as they move from one academic program to another and are accessible to all advisors.

2 Create structured pathways, including scaled learning communities, to guide students into their academic studies and through the first year

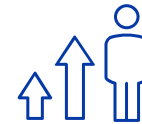
PRIORITIZED ACTIONS

What is it



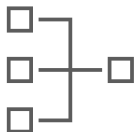
- **Enroll students who are most in need of support** in a for-credit summer program before first-year fall, building academic skills and introducing them to academic fields
- Develop intentional pathways including **meta majors** to help all students decide upon and, when necessary, transition between academic pathways and areas of study
- Appoint a small group of “**transition advisors**” trained in the special skills and data critical to helping students moving between academic pathways

Intended outcomes



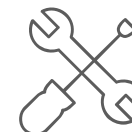
- Help more students reach on-time degree completion, thus decreasing student-debt
- Increase first-year retention rates through enhanced first-year experience and improving student sense of purpose
- Decrease summer melt rates, helping to grow in enrollments

Why it matters



- Students who change academic pathways after the first year have added time to degree, added debt load, and lower completion rates than students who find the right “fit” prior to sophomore year.
- Lack of clarity about the academic field of study is a strong predictor of student attrition after the first year
- Without the proper guidance, students changing academic fields can make choices that make it impossible for them to graduate given their remaining eligibility for financial aid

Resources required



- **Cost:** Expenses related to scaling summer bridge program and developing degree maps across all academic pathways
- **Personnel:** Academic Advisement, Orientation; Office of Admissions for coordination of summer program; support from chairs and faculty for learning communities and meta majors
- **Systems:** Admissions systems, course scheduling platform, EAB Navigate

2 Create structured pathways, including learning communities, to guide students into their academic studies and through the first year

ACTION STEPS

Actions

Enroll students who are most at risk in a for-credit summer program before first-year fall, building academic skills and introducing them to academic field

Develop intentional pathways to help students decide upon and, when necessary, transition between academic pathways

Appoint a small group of “transition advisors” to help students moving between pathways

Key Steps

1. Coordinate with the Office of Admissions and the K-State data team to identify students who are admissible but of greatest risk of not being retained and "require" them to enroll in a **summer program** in which they earn college credits while being oriented to college life before their first fall term. This would be a centralized version of the MAPS program available to all incoming students. Students enroll in 6+ college credit hours, meaning they can use federal financial aid (Pell, federal loans) to pay for their enrollment, which will facilitate scaling the program.
 2. Proactively **connect students with advisors** and other support staff during this program. Training advisors by meta majors rather than individual discipline can greatly reduce students changing advisors as they progress.
 3. Develop **formal on-ramps between the summer program and mandatory first-year programming** designed to introduce students to meta majors.
-
1. Ensure that CAT Communities are **meta-major-based and require that incoming freshman participate**. Meta major learning communities will help all students make informed decisions about their academic pathways while enhancing the preparation and success of students as they progress. Meta majors build on existing program requirements and do not require changes from the departments in courses required or offered. See: [Meta-majors | NISS](#)
 2. Have faculty and academic departments **facilitate meaningful deliberations** by students by offering programming—faculty meet and greets, department open houses, alumni panels—to guide students to more informed decisions about their academic choices. A **key metric is reducing the number of changes of majors** after the 1st year.
 3. Institute a program of **seed grants** to encourage faculty and departments to create assignments in gateway courses that have students explore the career competencies in the discipline.
-
1. Train a group of advisors to work with **students moving between majors** who understand the broad range of academic requirements and who can help students make informed decisions about their new fields of study. Require students changing pathways to meet with an advisor.
 2. **Equip advisors with basic financial information** about the students who are changing majors—including their remaining eligibility for Pell and other aid—to make sure that students' academic choices are compatible with their financial realities.

3 Coordinate student communications to prioritize and direct information to students in a timely, proactive, and personalized manner

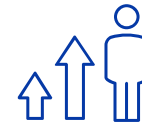
PRIORITIZED ACTIONS

What is it



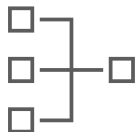
- **Map out current student communications** to better understand the manner and cadence by which K-State units communicate with students
- Prioritize communications from offices key to student progression, and **standardize college communications in critical areas** related to enrollment and academic success
- **Use data to focus communications**, including **text messages and the chatbot**, on personalized, proactive content

Intended outcomes



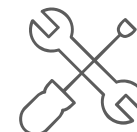
- Increase students' awareness of critical actions to take for progression, completion, and academic success
- Enhance student experience at K-State through regular, personalized communications
- Increase retention, progression, and completion rates by targeted communications to critical populations and help to address equity gaps

Why it matters



- Students cannot effectively prioritize frequent and uncoordinated communications, and the confusion and inaction that result disproportionately impact students from underserved backgrounds
- Navigating complex administrative processes is made easier by providing students clear, targeted, action-oriented communication at the right points in the semester
- Simple communications that map out ways to resolve issues help to reduce the load on academic and student-support staff and the offices in which they work

Resources required



- **Costs:** Expanding the use of the chatbot and development of a small chatbot team, FTE dedicated to coordination efforts
- **Personnel:** Data, admissions, communication professionals, Student Communications Committee members
- **Systems:** Mainstay, data support systems, CRMs

3 Coordinate student communications to prioritize and direct information to students in a timely, proactive, and personalized manner



ACTION STEPS

Actions

Map out current student communications to better understand the manner and cadence by which K-State units communicate with students

Prioritize communications from offices key to student progression, and standardize college communications in critical areas related to enrollment and academic success

Use data to focus communications, including text messages and the chatbot, on personalized, proactive content

Key Steps

1. Appoint a cross-functional **Student Communications Committee (SCC)** to lead a **census of current communications** going out to students via texting, phone calls, and especially email. Student-support offices as well as academic units should be represented.
 2. Conduct **design thinking exercises** by having the SSC ask offices represented on the committee as well as some that may not be (e.g., Athletics, student affairs, recreation center and intramurals) to collect the mass student emails (>100 recipients) that they have sent over the previous twelve months and map out a date-by-date calendar of when and what messages are going out by calendar day. Conduct **focus groups with students** to determine how they receive and process these communications. Be sure to include messages to incoming new students in these exercises.
-
1. Use the results of the mapping process to have the SSC develop and propose a better **designed system of coordinated communications**—one that makes it clear to students the issues that are to be prioritized and that delivers these messages in an impactful fashion that cuts through the current communications clutter.
 2. Commit to a process of **standardizing the timing and content of the communications most critical** to student enrollment and academic success. This process will be aided by **limiting the offices that can send mass emails** to K-State students (for instance, blast messages to 500 students or more) to no more than a few, such as the Registrar, Financial Aid, and the central communications team. Other units wishing to send mass emails will send them forward, where they can be vetted for content, prioritized for timing, and sent out in coordinated fashion.
-
1. **Use student data proactively** to support coordinated, centralized student communications by **delivering personalized emails and texts to students based upon their individual needs** rather than blasting mass messages to large groups of students or having multiple offices reach out to individual students in an uncoordinated fashion. Such coordinated, data-informed communications will support academic advisors, financial aid staff, and other support staff by reducing confusion and off-loading frequently asked questions. See: [Coordinated Student Communications | NISS](#)
 2. **Expand the use on the Mainstay chatbot** beyond its current role in admissions to support students as they navigate enrollment and academic issues from matriculation through graduation. Impacts of this approach have been shown to disproportionately benefit students from underserved backgrounds: [Chat Bots Bypass 'Communication Clutter' to Help Students | Inside Higher Ed](#)
 3. Run all chatbot nudges and messages through **a central chatbot team** that can coordinate the number and cadence of text messages being sent to students and thus help to minimize students who “opt out” of texting because of irrelevant or excessive messaging.

4 Strengthen financial aid through collaboration with other units and coordinated, proactive outreach to students

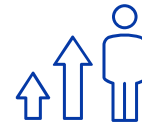
PRIORITIZED ACTIONS

What is it



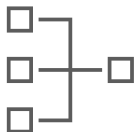
- **Ensure students receive all aid** for which they are eligible through focusing on timely completions of the FAFSA and other financial aid documents
- Use data systems to determine **processing priorities** and to implement **proactive outreach** targeting students needing help (e.g., FAFSA, SAP, holds) across all of K-State
- Use financial aid analytics across student-support offices to track **early signs of students who need support the most** and to deliver financial well-being supports, including scaled completion grants

Intended outcomes



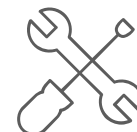
- Help more students matriculate and reach degree completion
- Lower equity gaps
- Raise student awareness of financial supports
- Increase student satisfaction with financial aid and their K-State experience

Why it matters



- Processing delays deflate new and continuing enrollments, create late fees that block progression, and suppress degrees conferred
- The attrition of Pell students after matriculation is a contributor to K-State's loss of enrollment after the first year and to its equity gaps
- Students facing financial challenges often have the least bandwidth to seek help, making it critical to proactively identify and support these students—and to do so systematically across K-State

Resources required



- **Costs:** Expenses related to improved data infrastructure, including data from admissions; potential additional staffing for processing and outreach
- **Personnel:** Financial aid and data staff; personnel involved in financial and scholarship efforts across campus
- **Systems:** Improved data systems are an important component of this effort

4 Strengthen financial aid through collaboration with other units and coordinated, proactive outreach to students



ACTION STEPS

Actions

Ensure students receive all aid for which they are eligible through focusing on timely completions of the FAFSA and other financial aid documents

Use data systems to determine processing priorities and to implement proactive outreach targeting students needing help

Use financial aid analytics across student-support offices to track early signs of students at-risk and to deliver wellness supports

Key Steps

1. Increase **early FAFSA completion** for incoming and continuing students through coordinated campaigns—targeted messages, signage, workshops and help sessions. Launch regular campaigns to get continuing students to complete the FAFSA before they leave for the summer.
2. Leverage university messaging systems—especially texts—to send students **nudges** indicating specific aspects of the financial aid and scholarship application processes that they need to complete with links to assistance.
3. Integrate the scholarship office(s) and financial aid to **maximize coordination, timeliness, and impact** of student financial packaging.

1. Maximize recruitment value of scholarships and aid while focusing financial aid processing efforts by working with the Office of Admissions to collect weekly data on where incoming students are in the **admissions "funnel"**—unknown, prospect, applicant, accepted, confirmed, confirmed and registered for orientation, or registered for classes. Prioritize processing and outreach to students in the later stages of the process.
2. Set up alerts for students that have balances, financial holds, SAP issues, are running out of eligibility for aid, and so forth and use communication systems—especially texts—to **reach out proactively** to these students offering steps for resolving the issues.

1. Make the financial aid alerts visible to staff in **academic advising and registration offices**. Financial aid should then participate periodically in cross-campus advisor training sessions offered by the UAC to train advisors in how students can access resources to resolve their financial issues.
2. For K-State to have a well-functioning student financial aid operation, it will need not only to move to a more data-informed approach but also to create a robust, **outreach component** that systematically delivers financial well-being supports for students when problems are first identified by the data and staff. Much of this work can be automated.
3. Continue the use of and coordinate **completion grants**—when these are well administered, the grants pay for themselves. See: [Expanded ROI Analysis: Retention Grants | GSU](#)

Keys to Successful Implementation

Insights for Leadership

The NISS is convinced that the recommendations outlined in this Playbook represent the best path to bringing about transformative change in Kansas State's student outcomes. There is, though, a difference between having a good plan and bringing it to reality. The NISS team would like you to keep in mind four essential implementation steps as you actualize this Playbook.

1

Ensure that leadership communicates clear and unwavering buy-in

2

Publicly and regularly connect the Playbook recommendations to your Strategic Plan

3

Prioritize the plan in budget decisions

4

Be ready to support the plan from multiple perspectives

Talking Points

- Every 100 additional degree-seeking students that Kansas State retains generate roughly **\$1.2M in additional tuition and fee revenues annually**. 100 Bachelor's students who stay enrolled through graduation rather than dropping out in the first year generate more than \$4 million in additional tuition and fee revenues for the university.
- Individuals holding Bachelor's degrees **will earn \$900K+ more over the course of their careers** when compared to individuals having only a high-school diploma. 100 additional K-State graduates will contribute \$90 million more to their communities over their lifetimes.



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