

Challenger Brand Institutions: Redefining Academic Affairs to Optimize Student Success



The Council of
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Presenter

Brad Fuster, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs,
San Francisco Bay University (CA)

Chair

Ellen Goldey, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College,
Centre College (KY)

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Challenger Brands

A **challenger brand** is an organization or product that is not the market leader in its vertical, yet offers a clearly articulated positioning to compete against dominant brands in the industry.

Challenger brands confront the status quo head-on and offer their target audiences a viable alternative to what is broadly considered conventional, orthodox, or “business as usual”

Challenger Brands disrupt their markets by daring to take risks that redefine how we travel, communicate, sleep, hydrate, and learn.



Challenging the notion that electric cars cannot be powerful.

Industry: Automotive



Challenging the experience of travel, and the idea of accommodation.

Industry: Hospitality



Challenging how we communicate over the Internet (& how we monetize it, too).

Industry: Telecommunications



Challenging the traditional paradigms of shoe manufacturing & design – with a focus on sustainability.

Industry: Footwear



Challenging the conventional showroom sales & consumer experience – with a focus on science.

Industry: Mattress & Sleep



Challenging traditional beverage & soft drink sectors by tapping into a demographic of environmentally conscious consumers.

Industry: Beverage



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Had enough with the status quo? Heed the challenger brands

[E]veryone must admit that higher education has failed to deliver on its value proposition to students. Faculty must stop blaming administrators, and administrators must stop blaming faculty.

By **Brad Fuster** September 25, 2024



Brad Fuster

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Brad Fuster, DMA, is the provost and vice president for academic affairs at San Francisco Bay University.

Steve Jobs famously said, “It’s more fun to be a pirate than to join the Navy.” Amid higher education’s increasing [closures and consolidations](#), [shrinking enrollment](#), aging infrastructures and students’ skepticism with current tuition models, scholars have rightfully ascribed this quote [to the rise of challenger brands](#) in higher education offering cutting-edge curricula.

There’s no stopping us.

Our Story

1984

Established

Northwestern Polytechnic University (NPU) was founded on January 2, 1984.

2016

Largest Enrollment

NPU grew to 6,000 international students.

2021

Name Change

In 2021, NPU changed its name to San Francisco Bay University.

2023

New Direction

Under the leadership of a new president and cabinet, SFBU commits to a new mission and vision.

2024

Transformation

In less than a year, a new strategic plan adopted and an entirely new model of education is underway.

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There's no stopping us.

Redefining Academic Affairs to Optimize Student Success

90-credit
bachelor's degrees

Classes capped at
20 students and
taught year-round;
6 Days/week

In-person, hybrid,
synchronous
remote learning,
and AR-enhanced

Course-embedded
experiential
learning in Silicon
Valley

GenAI strategy
embedded within
curriculum

Start-Up Scholars

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There's no stopping us.

Redefining Academic Affairs to Optimize Student Success

Faculty Teach 9
classes; No research;
No tenure

Mandatory
pedagogical training
for all faculty
including adjuncts

Cohort coaches;
Unlimited mental
health services

Syllabus uniformity,
attendance policy,
tightly coupled
approaches

Faculty Handbook
and Faculty Review
conflated with all
employee HR
processes

Strong insistence on a
radically welcoming
culture

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Our students hail from all over the globe...

ED UP PROVOST

With YOUR Guest

Bradley Fuster

Provost & VPAA, San
Francisco Bay University,
Challenger Brand Champion



There's no stopping us.



There's no stopping us.

Questions?

Brad Fuster, Provost
San Francisco Bay University



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Thank you for attending this session!



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