The Council of Independent Colleges

Creating **Tomorrow's Institutions,** Together

2026 Institute for Chief Academic Officers with Chief Advancement, Enrollment, Financial, and Marketing Communication Officers

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Value, Outcomes, and the Next Generation of Learners

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Presenters

- Lynne Bongiovanni
  Provost and Dean of Faculty
  University of Mount Saint Vincent (NY)
- Shankar Prasad
  Chief Strategy Officer
  Carnegie
- Joretta Nelson
  Senior Executive Advisor: Strategy & Student Success
  Carnegie



Today's Presenters



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Who is *Carnegie?*

OUR BELIEF IS SIMPLE.

When Students Succeed, Higher Education *Thrives*, and the World *Wins*.

40+
Years in *Higher Ed*

700+
Institutional *Partners*

90%
Client *Retention*

450
Experts on *Staff*

Award *Winning*
















Student-Centered Solutions

A suite of services that helps institutions thrive across undergraduate, graduate, professional/executive, online education.

Institutional Strategy

Shaping institutional direction through a student focused lens.

- Strategic Planning
- Leadership Development
- Strategic Communications
- Program Portfolio Analysis
- Campus Planning & Architecture

Branding

Defining who you are and your story that matters to students.

- Research
- Student Segmentation
- Brand Strategy & Identity
- Photo & Video
- Web Development

Enrollment

Supporting students across modalities to enrollment.

- Student Search
- Enrollment Strategy & Analytics
- Slate Implementation & Strategy
- Financial Aid Optimization
- Contact Center

Student Success

Keeping students supported and delivering on promises.

- Comprehensive Assessments
- Retention & Completion Analysis
- Career Readiness
- Student Communication
- Strategy + Implementation

Integrated Media

Meeting students where they search, explore, and decide.

- Media Planning & Buying
- Multichannel Campaigns
- SEO & AEO
- Website Personalization
- Reporting & Analytics

About University of Mount St Vincent

UMSV

Expanding opportunity.
Educating the whole person.

- Riverdale, Bronx, New York
- Founded in 1847 by Sisters of Charity—Vincentian/Setonian tradition
- 4,225 UG & GR students
- 50%+ Pell Eligible
- Hispanic Serving Institution
- Multiple pathways to opportunity (liberal arts, professional programs, flexible learning options, Seton College debt-free associate degree)
- Connecting learning to life after college
- Carnegie partnership: Moving the Needle (MTN) 5+% increase in retention



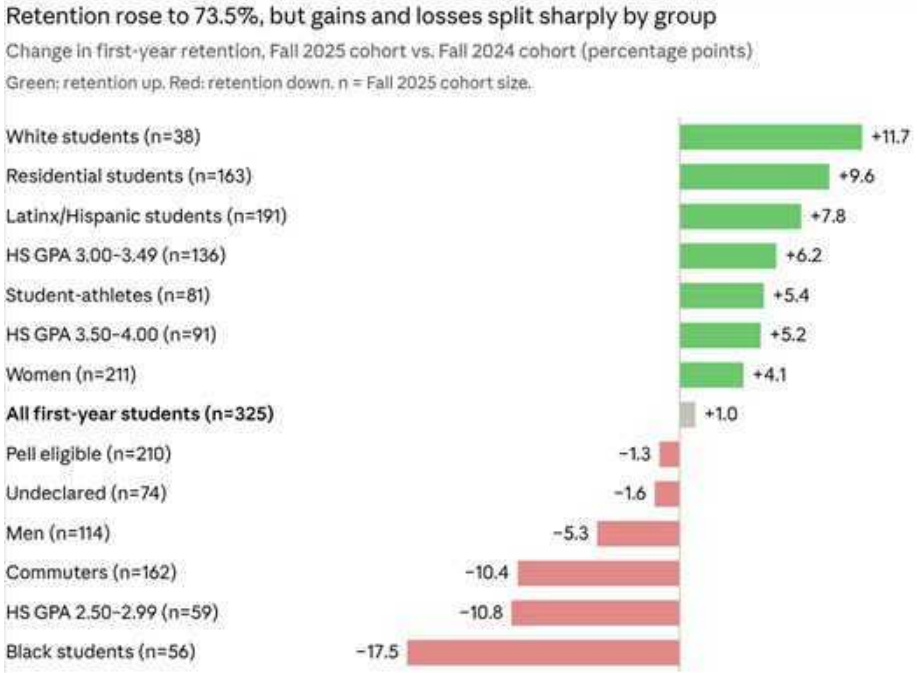
The results: Fall 2025 first-year cohort

88.6%

Fall-to-spring persistence, up 4.4 points—second-highest in six cohorts

73.5%

First-year retention—the highest in six cohorts



Today's Purpose

Center current student research in broader student success context

Illustrate real-time application of findings on a campus and how that work is having positive impact

Energize audience confidence in institutionally controlled solutions

Today's Agenda

1. The Next Gen Learner research
2. Findings 1–3: cost clarity, clarity, and belonging
3. What UMSV changed
4. Findings 4–6: flexibility, people, and understanding
5. What UMSV changed
6. Where UMSV is headed
7. Questions and Discussion

Takeaways from Today's Presentation

Make Affordability Work in Daily Life

Make Belonging Something Students Experience

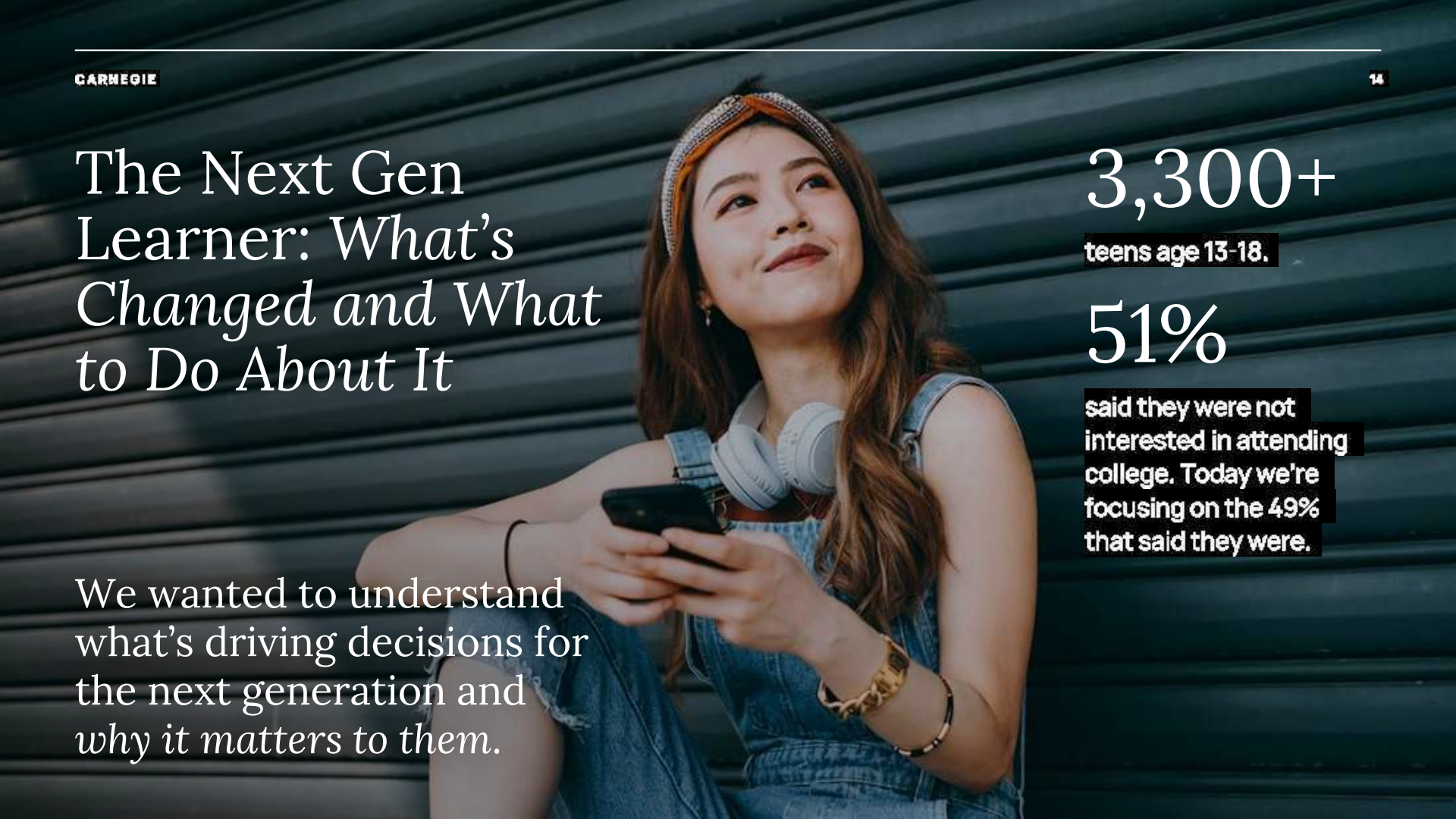
Build Flexibility Into Academic Pathways

Connect Learning to What Comes Next

Align the Promise Across Divisions

Measure What Students Actually Experience

The Next Gen Learner: *What's Changed and What to Do About It*



We wanted to understand what's driving decisions for the next generation and *why it matters to them.*

3,300+

teens age 13-18.

51%

said they were not interested in attending college. Today we're focusing on the 49% that said they were.

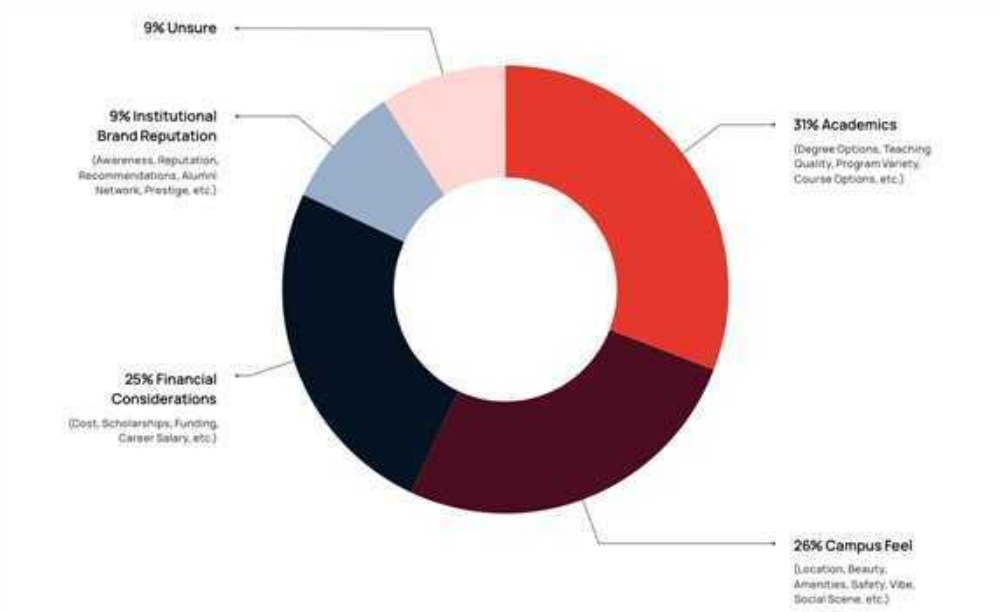
Most Important Factors

Most teens still believe in the value of higher education but the path to that decision looks less direct than it used to.

They are weighing college against the realities of their daily lives. They are balancing cost, flexibility, and practical outcomes while asking whether it fits into what they can manage right now.

Students are asking the question: Can college work for me?

Which of these four factors is most important to you?



Six *Key Findings*

1. Feasibility Starts With Cost Clarity
2. Clarity Beats Complexity
3. Belonging Is a Decision Driver
4. Flexibility and a Visible Path Forward
5. People Carry More Weight Than Institutions
6. Understanding Students, Not Just Messaging Them



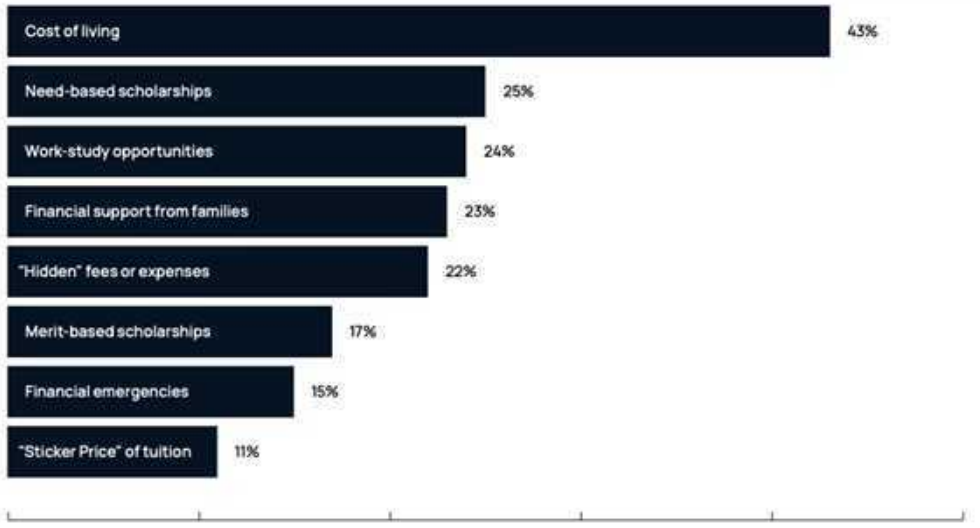
Feasibility starts with cost *clarity*

Affordability outweighs ROI

61%

of respondents were more focused on their ability to afford college than ROI.

Which of these financial considerations are most significant to you? (Select up to 2).



Clarity Builds Trust

What makes college marketing and information coming from a college feel authentic to you?

“If you can tell they aren’t hiding anything and the things they talk about come with the pros and the cons and it feels like they are trying to help you decide if you’d fit there instead of just trying to get everyone.”

Authentic student voices, transparent data about costs and career outcomes, and clear, straightforward communication make it feel real to me.”

College marketing feels authentic to me when it shows real student experiences instead of just perfect-looking photos and slogans. Hearing honest stories from current students or alumni about both the good and challenging parts of campus life makes the information feel more trustworthy.”

Belonging & Campus feel is a decision filter, not a soft factor.



26%

said campus feel is the most important factor to them in choosing a college.

“Vibes” and Aesthetics Are a Key Component of Campus Feel

What makes college marketing and information coming from a college feel authentic to you?

“To me, ‘Campus Feel’ means the overall atmosphere and vibe of a college. How welcoming, friendly, and inclusive it feels, how students interact, and whether I can see myself feeling comfortable and motivated there.”

Campus feel is like the aesthetic of the campus. For example, a college with a big and studious library, or a certain design on a railing.”

To me it means the overall vibe of the campus. It could be busy or calm, and I’d prefer a calmer campus.”

What UMSV *Changed*

Findings 1–3 in practice:
cost clarity, clarity, and belonging

Feasibility starts with cost clarity

What UMSV Changed

- "Ride the Wave," a branded clearance checklist with due dates and one task per office
- A communication and clearance calendar so offices reach students in sequence
- Advisors call and email students with financial holds before registration
- Financial wellness named a strategic priority

88.6%

Fall-to-spring persistence, Fall 2025 cohort—up 4.4 points

Clarity beats complexity

What UMSV Changed

- One Student Holds Guide covering 15 hold types across nine offices
- A holds audit: same-day holds and one coordinated message
- A start-of-term one-stop shop for Student Accounts and Financial Aid
- Advising moved next door to Financial Aid
- Readmission redesigned around one clear first step

73.5%

First-year retention, Fall 2025 cohort—about 239 of 325 students

Belonging is a decision driver

+9.6

Points in residential first-year retention, to 77.9% (Fall 2025 cohort)

What UMSV Changed

- Orientation redesigned with advisors at the table
- The library's first floor turned into a Student Center hub
- A Five Meaningful Relationships framework
- A Residential Student Success Initiative in the new plan

Flexibility and *Real-World Readiness* are Priorities

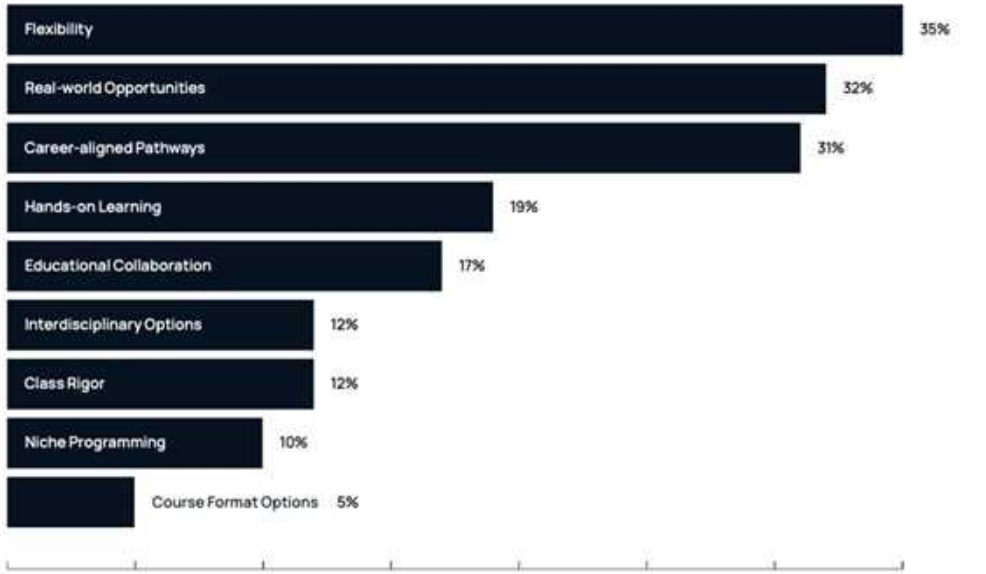
35%

of survey respondents said flexibility was in their top two most important aspects of their academic experience.

32%

said real-world opportunities was in their top two most important aspects of their academic experience.

Which of these factors of an academic experience are most important to you?



Variety is a core expectation

Why do you prefer academic variety at a college?

“A college that offers a wide variety of courses and majors is far more beneficial. This allows students to explore different fields, discover new interests, and find a program that truly aligns with their passions and career goals.”

Specificity is good for those that know exactly what they're going for, but I know a lot of people who have changed majors partway through, and without variety it can make that more difficult.”

A broad, diverse curriculum is generally better for fostering critical thinking and adaptability, while specialized, targeted programs often lead to higher immediate job-market readiness and higher salaries in technical fields.”



70%

trust personal connections over institutions

People carry more weight *than institutions*

Students are highly sensitive to what feels “real”

Understanding students, *not just messaging them*

Students Want Marketing that *Understands Them*

71%

of prospective students in the study said it was at least somewhat important for college marketing to “get you” as a student.

69%

of respondents say it’s at least somewhat important that media feels personalized to them.



Relevance Is the Entry Point

What makes college marketing and information coming from a college feel authentic to you?

“I feel as if it is them speaking directly to my interests.”

When they really want to get to know what type of person you are not just focused on academics.”

When it feels like they took the time to get to know me instead of receiving the same generic message that everyone else got.”

What UMSV *Changed*

Findings 4–6 in practice:
flexibility, people, and understanding

Flexibility and a visible path forward

What UMSV Changed

- “Undecided” reframed as exploratory, starting at orientation
- Career profiler and O*NET workshops for undecided students
- “Former Nursing Hold” rebranded as the Nursing Pathway
- Degree maps, a Major Declaration Day, and career readiness milestones in the plan

87.8%

Undeclared fall-to-spring persistence, up 10.9 points—fall return still a work in progress

People carry more weight than institutions

3

Consecutive registration campaigns: Spring 2025, Fall 2025, and Spring 2026

What UMSV Changed

- A centralized professional advising model for the first three semesters
- Advisors personally text students who go quiet
- An early alert workflow in EAB Navigate with shared expectations
- A simpler faculty feedback process

Understanding students, not just messaging them

What UMSV Changed

- Retention disaggregated by entering GPA, housing, major status, program, and demographics
- A student success plan built around where students actually leave
- Data surfaced gaps one overall rate hides, such as students leaving with GPAs around 2.0–2.2

6

Strategic priorities built from disaggregated retention data

Where UMSV is headed: *Six priorities through 2029*

Remove Financial Barriers and Re-Engage Stop-Outs

- Next Gen finding: Cost clarity
- Target: Stop-out recovery +7.5% by 2029

Deliver Proactive Advising and Coordinated Intervention

- Next Gen finding: Clarity beats complexity
- Target: Early registration completion +5% by 2028

Foster Belonging and Engagement

- Next Gen finding: Belonging
- Target: Close the residential–commuter gap

Help Students Find Academic and Career Direction

- Next Gen finding: Flexibility
- Target: Undecided retention +5% by 2029

Successfully Transition Students Through The First and Second Year

- Next Gen finding: People over institutions
- Target: First-year retention 78%; sophomore
- retention 93%

Strengthen Academic Achievement and Recovery

- Next Gen finding: Understanding students
- Target: Gateway course DFW rates −5%

Thoughts?

REPORT

The Next Gen Learners Report

Download the Report



Takeaways from Today's Presentation

Make Affordability Work in Daily Life

- Identify costs and pressures beyond tuition
- Connect students to support before a crisis
- Remove financial surprises that interrupt progress

Make Belonging Something Students Experience

- Design welcoming moments beyond orientation
- Build connection in classrooms and campus life
- Ask students where the promise breaks down

Build Flexibility Into Academic Pathways

- Make exploration and changing direction possible
- Reduce avoidable delays and lost credits
- Help students see a workable path to completion

Connect Learning to What Comes Next

- Embed career exploration and real-world experience
- Help students name the skills they are building
- Make outcomes visible throughout the journey

Align the Promise Across Divisions

- Bring academic affairs, enrollment, finance, and student support together
- Give shared student needs clear ownership
- Check whether daily practice matches what was promised

Measure What Students Actually Experience

- Listen to all students, including those who leave
- Track where students stall or disengage
- Use what you learn to change the experience

Q&A

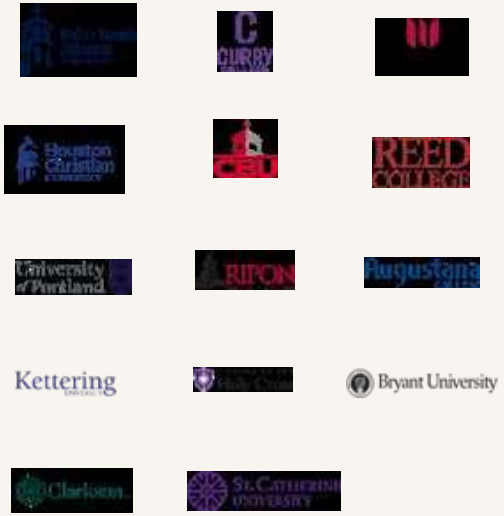


Thank you for attending this session!

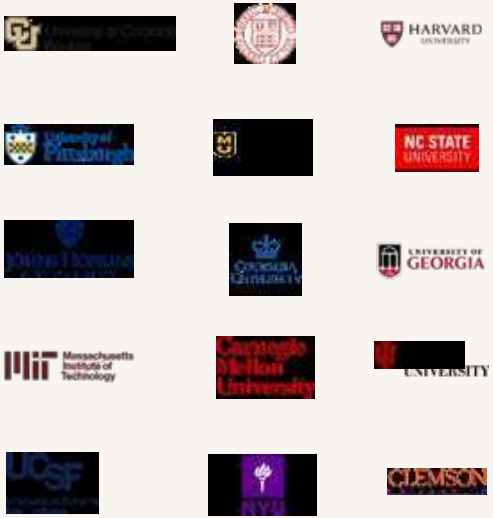
Serving All Segments

Expertise across all segments of higher education

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