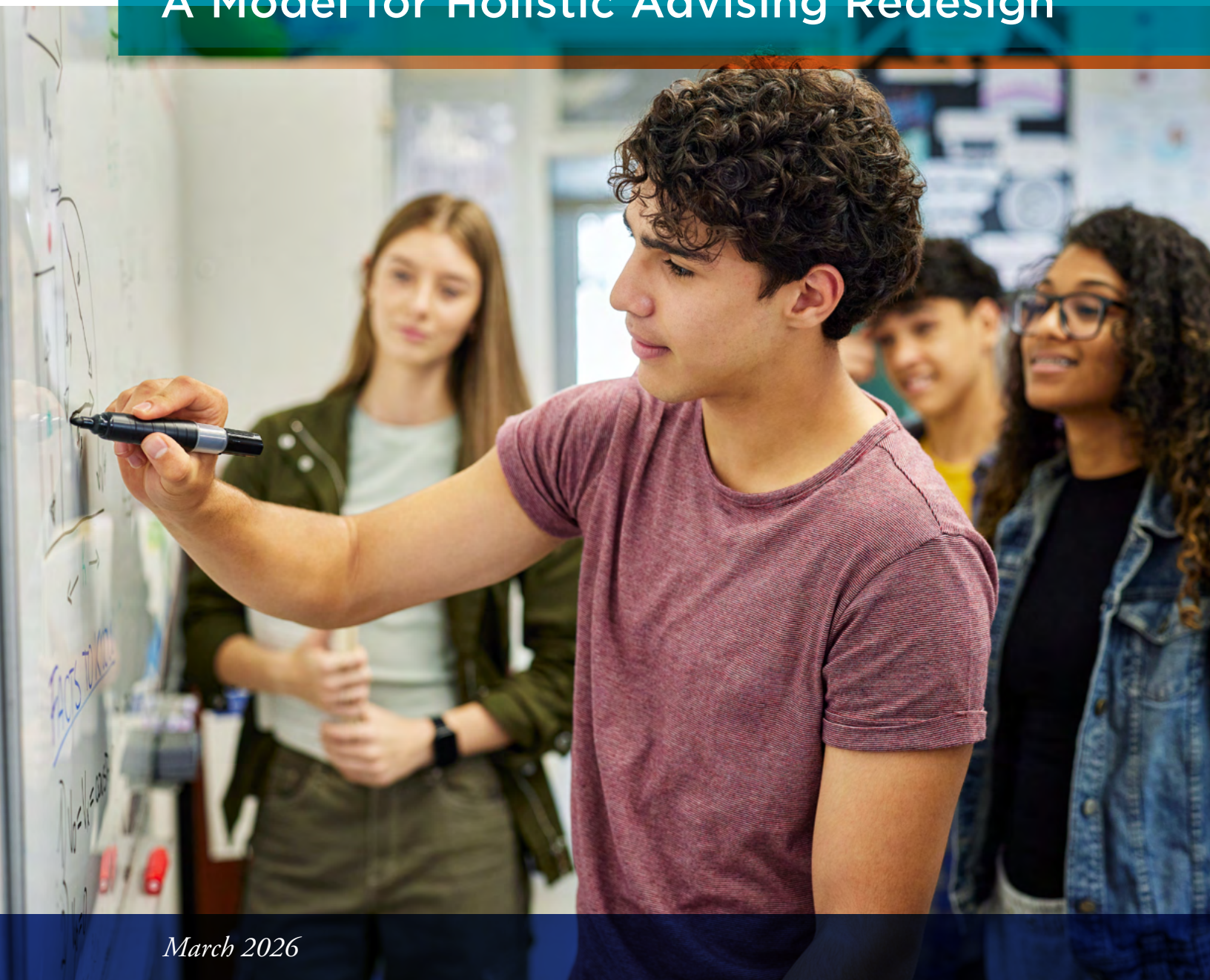
ADVISING SUCCESS NETWORK

StrategyForward ADVISORS

STUDENT FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS:

A Model for Holistic Advising Redesign



March 2026

Executive Summary

Institutions are making strides to center students in their advising policy and planning efforts through surveys, focus groups, and other data analyses that provide insight into student experiences. These methods, while useful in guiding policy and practice shifts, are extractive — students provide their perspectives but may not see or directly benefit from the results of their contributions. However, **fellowships provide a way to center student voice in advising redesign while directly benefiting both student participants and institutions.**

The Fall 2025 cohort of the Advising Success Network Student Fellowship program demonstrates the value of this approach. The Fellowship engaged 19 student fellows from diverse institution types nationwide. Fellows followed a structured engagement, which included cohort learning, professional mentorship, and a guided process for Fellows to recommend solutions to real-world advising challenges. Through team-based inquiry, Fellows identified pressing advising issues, conducted applied research, demonstrated learning, and ultimately envisioned and proposed usable tools for advisors and institutions.

Student fellowships are a highly promising approach to deeply and meaningfully engage students in problem identification, evidence gathering, and solution ideation for advising redesign. This is a model that any institution, system, or entity can replicate to better engage, understand, and collaborate with students in order to promote their perspectives, priorities, and recommendations.

The benefits of a student fellowship include:

- **Students become agents of change** while growing their research, communication, and collaboration skills.
- **Students' priorities in advising are centered,** based on lived experience.
- **Tools and resources are designed** for real advising workflows.
- **A culture of care is facilitated** while strengthening equity-centered practice.

This brief offers insights from the Fall 2025 ASN Student Fellowship program and provides guidance to institutions, systems, and others interested in replicating this model. The results of the student-led, research-based tools and resources proposed by Fellows to support advising redesign are included.



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ABOUT THE ADVISING SUCCESS NETWORK

The *Advising Success Network* (ASN) is a dynamic network of national organizations partnering to engage institutions in holistic advising redesign to advance success for all students, including Black, Latinx/a/o, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islander students and poverty-affected students. The network develops services and resources to guide institutions in implementing evidence-based advising practices. Since its formation in 2018, ASN has supported over 250 institutions in 30 states and created more than 50 *open-source resources* for practitioners and students. ASN is coordinated by *NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education*, and includes partners *Achieving the Dream*, the *American Association of State Colleges and Universities*, the *Center for Innovation in Postsecondary Education*, *EDUCAUSE*, *NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising*, the *National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition*, and *Young Invincibles*.

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ABOUT STRATEGYFORWARD ADVISORS

StrategyForward Advisors is a postsecondary policy, strategy, and boutique intermediary firm dedicated to transforming postsecondary education, serving as a strategic partner with national organizations, states, systems and institutions to design and advance policies and innovations. Guided by values of integrity, commitment, ingenuity and quality, StrategyForward Advisors is dedicated to removing barriers and expanding opportunities for all learners in order to strengthen communities.



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Introduction: Making the Case for Student Fellowship Programs

Holistic advising redesign requires aligning people, processes, and technology in ways that address institutionally-imposed barriers to student success. Research on holistic advising demonstrates that when academic, financial, and student support systems are intentionally aligned, institutions are better positioned to reduce structural barriers, improve persistence, and advance equity in student outcomes (Johnson et al., 2024). The Advising Success Network (ASN) was created to help the field implement evidence-based advising practices through a holistic approach, with an explicit commitment to centering students, including Black, Latinx/a/o, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islander students and poverty-affected students. ASN's evidence base underscores that advising redesign must be culturally responsive and attentive to structural barriers that disproportionately impact historically marginalized students (Johnson et al., 2024).

Standards guiding evidence-based redesign of academic advising emphasize the importance of assessment, continuous improvement, and shared evidence of practices as core conditions of excellence (NACADA & Gardner Institute, n.d.). Institutions regularly rely on a range of student data and feedback mechanisms to inform advising practices, including national surveys, institutional intake and satisfaction surveys, early alert and engagement data when available, focus groups, course evaluations, input from student government representatives, and ad hoc listening sessions. These sources provide important signals about student experience and can surface trends at scale. However, they are often episodic, decontextualized, or filtered through institutional frames, making it difficult to illuminate how barriers unfold across transitions or how students interpret advising interactions over time (Tinto, 2012). As a result, institutions may face challenges in translating this feedback into effective redesign.

The ASN Student Fellowship program operationalized ASN's commitment to holistic, student-centered redesign through a structured model of inquiry and co-creation. Institutions can generate more inclusive, contextually grounded, and sustainable solutions when students are positioned as collaborators rather than respondents (Healey & Healey, 2019). ASN Student Fellows helped elevate real barriers to holistic advising, gather and interpret evidence, and co-design solutions that can be piloted and scaled.

The ASN Student Fellowship program positioned students as partners in inquiry. Through sustained engagement, structured research methods, and supported reflection, Fellows moved beyond reporting experiences to **analyzing patterns, identifying root causes, and co-designing solutions**. Working over time, across multiple touchpoints, and in collaboration with peers and mentors, Fellows were able to translate lived experience into insights that are both nuanced and actionable. The Fellows were supported in applying research methods and iterative design practices, and their capstones function as practice-ready prototypes: advising tools with articulated assumptions, intended use cases, and implementation guidance. These student-created tools reflect how advising systems operate in practice. Student fellowships offer a powerful supplement to episodic feedback methods by pairing lived experience with sustained inquiry and structured product development. Advisors face limited time, siloed systems, and increasing complexity (Paritii, 2024). In this context, structured student partnership models offer a way to generate deeper insight about student experiences without placing undue burden on advising staff.

ASN Fall 2025 Student Fellowship Program

In Fall 2025, a cohort of 19 ASN Student Fellows from across the nation came together to engage in meaningful research with the goal of informing how institutions of higher education support students. The Fellows were selected from a pool of over 200 applicants based on their demonstrated potential, growth mindset, and clear personal alignment to the goals of the Fellowship. Together they created guiding norms for their work that showed deep commitment to equity, collaboration, empathy, and intellectual curiosity. Fellows met as a cohort for weekly learning sessions while engaging in small-group research projects and relationship-centered mentorship, culminating in design sprints to create practical advising tools that the teams then pitched at a public final convening. StrategyForward Advisors led the design and delivery of the cohort experience in partnership with ASN.

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The Fellowship consisted of the following elements:

- **A paid fellowship** with clear outcomes and deliverables.
- **Weekly cohort sessions** over a semester, focused on research design and methods, storytelling with data, policy analysis, problem-solving, action research, and professional communication.
- **Team-based projects** aligned to advising redesign priorities (including career-connected advising and peer advising models).
- **Dedicated expert mentors** supporting teams to translate research and lived experience into usable resources.
- **A final convening** where Fellows engaged in rapid design sprints and then "pitched" tools to a public audience.

DESIGN STRUCTURE

Project leaders took an intentional approach to develop a structure that would optimize the Fellowship and maximize the impact. The Fellowship design sought to:

Intentionally craft the experience. This consisted of defining an ideal Fellow journey map and student personas upfront to inform the Fellowship's design and ensure alignment between goals, activities, and outcomes.

Promote relationships and collaboration. Orientation was used to develop collaborative Fellowship norms, semi-structured activities during weekly cohort sessions were used to build community among the Fellows, and mentors were encouraged to focus on relationships and team dynamics before operational details.

Anchor expectations early. A Fellowship syllabus outlined the timeline and expectations for Fellows, including deadlines for team-based work. Fellowship leaders shared templates and examples of strong final products with Fellows to clarify quality, scope, and rigor and reduce uncertainty throughout the term.

Establish a consistent program rhythm. Fellows met virtually and were located across multiple time zones. This meant that a predictable weekly cadence for team collaboration and mentor touchpoints was essential for supporting momentum, accountability, and engaged participation.

Provide foundational research training. The Fellowship curriculum included instruction in conducting literature reviews, developing research questions, facilitating focus groups, analyzing data, and using data to convey a message. Fellows applied this instruction to complete their group research projects and design advisor tools.

Integrate evaluation as learning. Surveys and focus groups were incorporated into the Fellowship design both to evaluate the program and provide Fellows with low-stakes opportunities to practice these research methods. This structure helped to reinforce reflection, surface insights in real time, and continuously improve the program, as well as provide Fellows with scaffolded experience in research methods.

FELLOW AND MENTOR SELECTION

FELLOW SELECTION

The recruitment and selection process for the 2025 Fellows cohort was designed to prioritize equity, representation, and readiness for a collaborative, applied learning experience. Project leaders conducted broad national outreach with the goal of assembling a cohort that reflected diverse institution types, educational pathways, and lived experiences. Selection criteria emphasized what would make students successful in a team-based fellowship: curiosity, commitment, and the ability to collaborate across differences, along with a clear interest in improving student success. Rather than prioritizing prior research experience or traditional academic achievement alone, the aim was to find Fellows who could bring authentic perspective, ask strong questions, and engage thoughtfully in inquiry. The cohort was selected with team composition in mind, intentionally forming groups that included a mix of institutions and pathways so that peer learning was a core feature of the experience.

The final cohort of Fellows represented 19 diverse institutions (e.g., two-year, four-year, MSI, tribal college) from 11 states. The Fellows also brought varied experience and knowledge to the cohort. Among the Fellows were student government leaders, military-affiliated students, first-generation college students, transfer students, and community organizers, as well as representatives from a wide selection of disciplines.

MENTOR SELECTION

The primary role of mentors was to help students translate insight into practice. They were chosen for their expertise as higher education practitioners and their relationship-centered approaches. Mentors were intentionally selected for their research expertise and dispositions supportive of trust and belonging, such as demonstrating an equity mindset and possessing strong facilitation and listening skills. To support a consistent experience across teams while still honoring mentors' individual strengths, mentor expectations were aligned through regular meetings and the use of shared templates and tools. Throughout the Fellowship, mentorship emphasized facilitation and translation rather than instruction. Mentors were positioned to guide the process, strengthen rigor, and help Fellows shape usable outputs, while ensuring that students remained the expert voices at the center of the work. This approach not only strengthened the quality of the final resources but also reinforced the Fellowship's purpose to center students' agency, confidence, and leadership in advising redesign.

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

As a result of the Fellowship, Fellows developed confidence and a sense of legitimacy and agency as contributors to the field. The tools they ultimately designed for advisors and other student success professionals reflected their personal experiences and demonstrated applied use of the research and professional skills gained through the program. The Fellowship offered insights for program leaders that went beyond student feedback, providing evidence-informed tools that were grounded in the lived realities of students. The Fellowship clearly demonstrated the promise of truly student-centered design in advising practice.

WHAT FELLOWS GAINED

Through the Fellowship, students developed a set of transferable skills and capacities that prepare them for continued leadership in higher education and related fields. Fellows identified the following skills as most important from their perspective:

- **Research skills:** Fellows learned to define meaningful research questions, select appropriate qualitative methods, conduct literature reviews and focus groups, and synthesize findings into clear, evidence-based insights.

> "Through the ASN Fellowship, I strengthened my research skills, particularly in conducting literature reviews and gaining hands-on experience with qualitative research methods." - *Fellow*

- **Collaboration across differences:** Working in distributed teams across institutions, pathways, and time zones, Fellows strengthened their ability to collaborate, navigate group dynamics, and learn from perspectives different from their own.

> "Working through differences in our group taught me a lot about teamwork and communication." - *Fellow*

- **Professional communication:** Fellows practiced translating research into accessible language by presenting findings and pitching solutions to advisors, practitioners, and other stakeholders.
- **Professional identity:** Through sustained mentorship and public presentation of their work, Fellows began to see themselves as contributors to the field of advising and student success — not only as recipients of institutional support.

> "I felt like my voice actually mattered, not just that I was there to learn."
> - *Fellow*

- **Expanded professional networks:** Fellows built high-quality working relationships with one another, with mentors, and with the StrategyForward program team. Fellows reported relationships with cohort members and mentors among the most valuable components of the Fellowship.

VALUE TO THE FIELD

In parallel, the Fellowship generated value for institutions, networks, and practitioners seeking more student-centered approaches to advising improvement:

- **Problem identification grounded in lived experience:** Student research surfaced where advising practices break down and why — insights that are often difficult to capture through traditional institutional assessments alone.
- **Actionable, student-informed solutions:** Fellows translated creative and innovative ideas into practical tools and resources that can be piloted and adapted in real advising contexts.

> "I'm proud that what we created could realistically be used by advisors or institutions." - *Fellow*

- **A replicable program model:** The Fellowship produced a tested approach, complete with templates, milestones, and evaluation practices, that other organizations and institutions can adapt to meaningfully engage students as partners in advising redesign.



Advising Tools from the Fall 2025 ASN Student Fellows

Through mentored, team-based inquiry, Fellows aimed to translate their learnings and insights into actionable, implementation-ready practice. Teams developed research questions collaboratively and reviewed academic literature to draw conclusions about specific and timely issues affecting students and advisors. The Fellows validated those conclusions by designing and conducting focus groups with advisors and/or students. Literature reviews and focus group research informed the design of practical tools to be used by advisors. Fellows developed their designs during rapid, creative sprints and pitched them to a public audience of advising and student success professionals, where they explained the research process, conclusions, and personal experience that informed their tool design.

The student-designed advising tools included:

Advisor-Student Belonging Toolkit

Turns everyday advising into relationship-centered support to strengthen belonging in high demand pathways

Advising.io Platform

A personalized, proactive platform to help advisors sustain engagement beyond the first year

Values-Based Progress Tracking Tool

Shift progress checks from "Are you on track?" to "Is your education aligned with who you're becoming?"

First Meeting Conversation Guide for First-Generation, Low-Income (FGLI) Students

Standardize excellence in first meetings so academic and career guidance isn't left to luck

Career Pathway Mapping Tool

A mobile-friendly pathway map to make career planning feel doable, especially for FGLI community college students

A detailed synopsis of each advising tool is included in the following section. Developed as capstone projects grounded in Fellows' research and experience, these tools have not yet undergone formal piloting or broad implementation and are intended as prototypes for possible future piloting and refinement.

Advisor–Student Belonging Toolkit

TURNS EVERYDAY ADVISING INTO RELATIONSHIP-CENTERED SUPPORT TO STRENGTHEN BELONGING IN HIGH DEMAND PATHWAYS

Approach

Re-imagine traditional undergraduate advising processes to focus on personalized needs while creating a strong sense of belonging for pre-professional students.

This toolkit consists of:

- **Peer & Mentor Circles** to normalize seeking support and build community
- **Conversation guides** to deepen advising appointments and surface holistic needs
- **Peer connection strategies** to strengthen trust and working relationships
- **Student story snapshots** to help advisors build empathy and tailor support

Target Population:

Students in high-demand programs (e.g., education and healthcare) and the advisors and mentors who support them

Advising Focus:

Belonging, continuity, and relationship-centered advising

Student-Identified Advising Need

Institutions must modify their advising approaches to be more effective for students pursuing degrees in high-demand professions such as healthcare and education. Students entering these professions require specific resources, customized knowledge, and holistic approaches that meet the needs of future professionals. Based on their experiences navigating complexity in healthcare and education pathways, Fellows sought to identify strengths and gaps in the advising experience of students in these fields.

Value to Students

The aim of the toolkit is to strengthen students' ability to navigate complex and demanding pathways by nurturing a greater sense of belonging and legitimacy. By creating more consistent, proactive touchpoints for connection and reflection, beyond only crisis moments, students gain a clearer perspective of what is expected of them through their academic career and are encouraged to build stronger peer/mentor support networks.

Value to Advisors and Institutions

For advisors and institutions, the toolkit provides a shared, training-ready set of resources that can be embedded into advisor onboarding and professional development. The toolkit supports more consistent advising experiences for students while maintaining space for personalization and the professional judgement of advisors. By offering a practical structure of holistic advising, this tool complements existing advising models rather than replacing them.

Implementation Tips

Take the following steps to ensure successful implementation of this toolkit:

- **Provide advising team training** (60–90 minutes) to introduce the toolkit.
- **Establish a simple cadence for engagement** (e.g., one conversation guide used per term).
- **Designate a point person** to coordinate circles and track participation.
- **Create a shared repository** for snapshots and guides (optional).

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Advising.io Platform

A PERSONALIZED, PROACTIVE PLATFORM TO HELP ADVISORS SUSTAIN ENGAGEMENT BEYOND THE FIRST YEAR

Approach

Use AI-enabled resource mapping and proactive signals to support early outreach, reduce navigation friction, and strengthen continuity.

This platform serves to:

- **Centralize advising notes**, resource pathways, and key transition points
- **Flag disengagement risk signals** so advisors can intervene earlier
- **Support continuity across offices and systems** without duplicating effort
- **Provide structured guidance for students** while preserving human connection

Target Population:

Upper-division African American undergraduate students (60+ credits) and the advising teams who support them

Advising Focus:

Sustained engagement, early intervention, and continuity-driven advising

Student-Identified Advising Need

Advising engagement often declines after the first year as structure fades and communication gaps widen. Students navigating upper-division transitions can lose continuity, and advisors can struggle to intervene early without added workload. Fellows drew on personal experiences to surface gaps in continuity and highlight advising practices that promote equity through graduation.

Value to Students

The approach ensures more timely and proactive outreach, resulting in far fewer moments where students feel overlooked or "fall through the cracks." It provides clearer, more intuitive navigation and support during upper-division transitions, when students often face increased complexity and higher stakes. At the same time, it fosters stronger, more trusting relationships between students and advisors through consistent, meaningful touchpoints that reinforce connection, continuity, and care.

Value to Advisors and Institutions

The approach reduces staff burden by streamlining cross-system navigation and simplifying how information and resources are accessed across platforms. It strengthens retention supports by targeting a known drop-off point with more coordinated, timely interventions. It also delivers a platform that complements holistic advising redesign by integrating people, processes, and technology into a more cohesive and connected experience.

Implementation Tips

Take the following steps to ensure successful implementation of this platform:

- **Define use case and workflow** (who uses it, when, and for what decisions).
- **Ensure access to advising engagement data** (even if minimal) and a resource directory.
- **Establish a pilot group** (1–2 advising units) and clear success metrics.
- **Incorporate data governance and equity review** for AI-enabled features.

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Values-Based Progress Tracking Tool

SHIFT PROGRESS CHECKS FROM "ARE YOU ON TRACK?" TO "IS YOUR EDUCATION ALIGNED WITH WHO YOU'RE BECOMING?"

Approach

Introduce a shared, visible set of student-defined values and actions so advising conversations build bonds between students and advisors and connect institutional pathways to personal meaning to facilitate a sense of belonging.

This values-based tracking tool serves to:

- **Capture student value priorities** at entry (e.g., belonging, curiosity, independence)
- **Turn each value into 2–3 concrete actions** with timelines
- **Create an advisor-facing action plan** that keeps values visible over time
- **Support advisor–student matching** and conversation planning

Target Population:

First-generation students and their advisors

Advising Focus:

Student-centered goal alignment and advising relationship quality

Student-Identified Advising Need

Traditional advising metrics (e.g., GPA, credit hours) can unintentionally narrow the definition of success. Fellows reflected on their own experiences as first-generation students of feeling unseen when an advisor's approach prioritizes institutional metrics rather than a student's personal values and unique definition of success.

Value to Students

The tracking tool helps ensure that students leave advising conversations with a sense of being seen and understood and that who they are is important, not only how they perform academically. By ensuring that students' values are defined and regularly revisited, the tool helps guide advising conversations toward actionable pathways that reflect students' personal goals. This alignment can foster greater motivation and agency, helping students to make decisions that are values-aligned.

Value to Advisors and Institutions

For advisors and institutions, the tracking tool provides a structure to personalize advising at scale. By intentionally integrating values-based indicators, the tool can help strengthen relationships between students and advisors and encourage student engagement. This tool can serve as a complement to early alert systems by adding meaning-based indicators as context to help advisors interpret data and respond in a student-centered way.

Implementation Tips

Take the following steps to ensure successful implementation of this tracking tool:

- **Design a short intake survey** and a **values-aligned goal-setting document**.
- **Provide advisor training** on values-based conversations (30–45 minutes).
- **Establish a cadence** for revisiting values each term.
- **Incorporate a light-touch feedback mechanism** to refine the value/action set.

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First Meeting Conversation Guide for First-Generation, Low-Income (FGLI) Students

STANDARDIZE EXCELLENCE IN FIRST MEETINGS SO ACADEMIC AND CAREER GUIDANCE ISN'T LEFT TO LUCK

Approach

Create a consistent approach to the first advising appointment that standardizes the conversation, ensuring all relevant topics are covered. This uses the initial advising appointment to demystify a student's academic journey and broach extracurricular topics, such as career advising, travel abroad, internships, and opportunities for identity groups, to reduce feelings of overwhelm and facilitate a clear follow-up plan.

The first meeting conversation guide for FGLI students consists of:

- **A poster-based script** to guide the conversation from welcome through realities, goals, and next steps
- **Prompts that normalize questions** and surface life realities impacting progress
- **Quick reminders** to support consistent advisor practice
- **A built-in follow-up plan** so support continues after the first meeting

Target Population:

First-generation, low-income (FGLI) students and the advisors who meet with them early on

Advising Focus:

First-contact quality, clarity, and consistent next steps

Student-Identified Advising Need

Many FGLI students face significant challenges during transitions, such as orientation, pre-orientation programs, and course registration. They also may have little knowledge of extracurriculars and other aspects of student life outside of the classroom. The first advising meeting can be a high-stakes pain point for students who don't know what to expect. Without a consistent structure, students may leave without clarity on next steps, timelines, or how to navigate institutional systems, making early momentum fragile. Fellows noted shared experiences of feeling least supported when navigating unfamiliar systems and high-stakes decisions during initial advising interactions.

Value to Students

This guide can help to reduce anxiety for FGLI students by bringing greater clarity and structure to their first advising conversation. By clearly outlining expectations and timelines, the tool can help students feel more confident navigating institutional processes. Designing a concrete follow-up plan using the tool can support momentum and persistence during this critical early period in a student's academic journey.

Value to Advisors and Institutions

For advisors and institutions, the conversation guide encourages consistency in the quality of these first meetings across advisors and units, ensuring that all students are provided the information and support they need. The structured prompts allow for efficient identification of support needs (e.g., financial, workload, belonging) and help demystify institutional processes. This is a simple tool that can be added to existing advising workflows to strengthen proactive, holistic advising practices without adding an additional time burden to advisors.

Implementation Tips

Take the following steps to ensure successful implementation of this conversation guide:

- **Provide print or digital placement** in advising spaces (or within appointment templates).
- **Engage in a brief staff practice session** to customize language to the local context.
- **Develop a follow-up protocol** aligned to campus resources and referral pathways.

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Career Pathway Mapping Tool

A MOBILE-FRIENDLY PATHWAY MAP TO MAKE CAREER PLANNING FEEL MANAGEABLE, ESPECIALLY FOR FGLI COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Approach

This tool is a digital advising resource that allows students and advisors to track curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular experiences in alignment with students' career goals, ensuring students have a sense of how their college experiences might impact their future trajectories.

This career pathway mapping tool serves to:

- **Map curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular experiences** to career goals in a visual, student-friendly roadmap
- **Integrate inventories, salary and labor market insights, and budgeting tools**
- **Surface cost-of-education resources and financial literacy supports**
- **Create an advising-facing view** that supports data-informed, relationship-centered conversations

Target Population:

FGLI community college students; advisors and career staff supporting exploration

Advising Focus:

Career exploration, advising navigation, and student belonging

Student-Identified Advising Need

FGLI community college students often face fragmented advising systems, limited career exposure, and complex processes that make planning for life after college overwhelming. These limitations are often exacerbated by institutional barriers that disproportionately impact FGLI community college students. Fellows drew on their own experiences navigating limited guidance around internships, transfer pathways, and professional opportunities.

Value to Students

The mapping tool helps reduce student overwhelm by making pathways clearly visible. By limiting guesswork in connecting learning experiences to career goals and normalizing participation in experiential learning, the tool helps students navigate decision-making with stronger confidence and can help to enhance their sense of belonging. The tool also helps students align their career goals with their passions while taking into consideration financial realities, which surfaced as a concern of FGLI students in particular. The ultimate aim of this tool is to guide students in making more informed and realistic career decisions.

Value to Advisors and Institutions

For advisors and institutions, the mapping tool can support better alignment across advising, career services, and academic pathways. The tool can be used alongside personalized, relationship-based advising practices while helping to reduce inconsistencies and duplication of effort. By grounding advising conversations in the lived realities of students, as well as relevant data, guidance can focus on equitable student success.

Implementation Tips

Take the following steps to ensure successful implementation of this career pathway mapping tool:

- **Create a lightweight web prototype** (or adaptable template) connected to local resource links.
- **Ensure agreement on the core data elements** to include (e.g., programs, interests, experiences, goals).
- **Pilot with one pathway/program** and **iterate based on student feedback**.

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Key Takeaways from Student-Designed Advising Tools

The work of the Fall 2025 ASN Student Fellows surfaced several themes that cut across student populations, institutional contexts, and advising focus areas. They include:

1. **By positioning students as researchers and designers, the Fellowship surfaced dimensions of the advising experience that are important to them,** while producing concrete tools and implementation guidelines. The resulting resources reflect not only student voice but student *expertise*, demonstrating how structured student fellowships can strengthen advising systems while building student capacity and leadership.

2. **Fellows consistently identified belonging, continuity, and trust as foundational to effective advising.** Whether focused on first-generation students, upper-division learners, or students in high-demand pathways, Fellows' research surfaced how advising breaks down when relationships are episodic, reactive, or overly transactional. In response, Fellows designed tools that intentionally shift advising from one-time problem-solving toward relationship-centered practice. Their focus suggests that students experience advising as most effective when it is predictable, human, and anchored in who they are becoming.

3. **Fellows did not stop at identifying challenges in the research; they designed tools with implementation in mind.** Across tool designs, Fellows emphasized integration and alignment with existing workflows while critiquing traditional approaches to advising. This focus reflects a sophisticated understanding of institutional realities and highlights a key strength of the Fellowship model: Students engaged in applied research to translate findings and personal experience into practice-ready resources. The Fellowship's structure, combining research skill-building and mentorship, created the conditions for students to move beyond insight, designing solutions for advisors that can be piloted, adapted, and scaled.

> "This Fellowship made it possible for us to stop being 'subjects' of institutional policy and start being architects of it." - *Fellow*

Taken together, these themes underscore the importance of treating students not simply as sources of feedback but as experts in the systems they navigate. The tools developed through this Fellowship reflect students' ability to diagnose root causes, anticipate implementation challenges, and design solutions that balance empathy with feasibility. The Fellowship model emphasized student expertise as a critical driver of advising redesign, creating outcomes that are more responsive, more equitable, and more likely to address the real needs of students.

How to Create a Student Fellowship Program

This Fellowship is highly adaptable and can be implemented at multiple levels — within a single institution, across a system or state, or through networks and national organizations. While the scope and infrastructure may vary, successful fellowship programs share a commitment to centering student insight, producing usable outputs, and moving quickly from research to action. The guidance below outlines what it takes to launch a similar fellowship and what additional conditions support quality, sustainability, and impact across different contexts.

> "This work matters because it treats students as partners in improving systems they navigate every day. The Fellowship demonstrates that when students are trusted to think critically and contribute meaningfully, the results are more thoughtful, practical, and grounded in real experience." – *Fellow*

PROGRAM GOALS

A fellowship program is an opportunity for students to dive into real research about college advising, helping them build skills for future careers while also developing strategies for higher education entities (e.g., institutions, systems, states, networks) to be responsive to advising challenges as they are defined and understood by students and with tools designed by students. The Fellowship model can be adapted to many contexts, but the goals remain constant:

Listen: Capture problems, priorities, and lived realities *as they are defined by students*. Other methods for data collection and analysis may overlook how processes are actually experienced by students and what solutions would most improve those experiences.

Learn: Pair students' lived experiences with applied research methods to test organizational assumptions, identify the root causes of institutionally-imposed barriers, and build shared understanding of both the problem and the solution.

Build: Translate insights into practical, research-based tools and resources to strengthen advisor practice and improve student experience.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The following core components are recommended to create the conditions for a successful fellowship program that supports meaningful student engagement, rigorous inquiry, and practical impact:

- **Teams:** Project teams of three to five undergraduate and/or graduate students
- **Term length:** 14–16 weeks
- **Deliverables:** One tool/resource per team and a short memo explaining their research process and insights
- **Mentors:** One mentor per team; regular touchpoints in tandem with cohort sessions and asynchronous feedback
- **Operations:** A program lead and light administrative support

Institutions, systems and states, and other organizations can adapt this core model to their contexts and goals.

FOR INSTITUTIONS

Two- and four-year institutions are well positioned to use student-facing fellowships as a focused, practice-oriented approach to advising redesign, particularly when internal teams are seeking deeper insight into student experience and rapid testing of solutions. Institutional fellowships should be focused on clearly identified advising challenges and carefully structured to ensure student engagement. Recommendations for institutions include:

- **Develop a clear focus for advising redesign** (e.g., first-year transitions, upper-division retention, first-generation academic and career navigation).
- **Design a tight scope and templates** for research questions, data collection, synthesis, and tool design.
- **Plan for dissemination** (e.g., advising council, professional development, web publication, conference session).
- **Ensure student compensation** that signals value and reduces barriers to participation.
- **Commit to pilot implementation** of at least one tool.

FOR SYSTEMS AND STATES

Higher education systems and state education agencies can leverage student fellowships in a coordinated, cross-institutional approach to identify shared barriers, compare contexts, and advance coordinated solutions aligned with statewide student success goals. Systems and states should focus on surfacing patterns that exist across institutions in order to inform both policy and practice. Recommendations for system- and state-level fellowships include the following:

- **Convene a statewide cohort of students** to compare barriers across institutions and identify high-leverage policy/process fixes.
- **Sponsor shared infrastructure** (e.g., common templates, focus group protocols, dissemination channels).
- **Create a cross-institution mentor pool** that can include system-level practitioners.
- **Design research projects tied to state goals** (e.g., transfer, completion, labor market alignment, re-enrollment).
- **Require a short implementation plan from each participating institution** to move from insight to action.

FOR NETWORKS, INTERMEDIARIES, AND PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS

Networks, intermediaries, and philanthropic organizations play a critical role in scaling student insight beyond individual institutions and accelerating the spread of effective, student-centered advising practices. For these organizations, student fellowships can be a field-building strategy, supporting the development of transferable insights and student-centered resources. Recommendations for these organizations include:

- **Inform approaches to mission-driven work and philanthropic giving** by leveraging students as practitioner-researchers.
- **Position Fellows as a structured research-and-development engine** for field-facing resources.
- **Invest in evaluation and process documentation** so the model is replicable beyond a single cohort.
- **Fund student stipends** as a non-negotiable equity practice.
- **Bundle dissemination** (e.g., toolkits, webinars, convenings) so tools reach practitioners quickly.

Across institutions, systems, and networks, the core lesson is consistent: Student fellowships are most powerful when they are designed not as isolated learning experiences but as engines for change. With a clear scope, strong mentorship, equitable compensation, and a commitment to implementation, these programs can translate student insight into actionable tools, strengthening advising practices while cultivating the next generation of leaders in student success.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Students bring deep lived experience to fellowships but may be new to research methods. Scaffolded learning, structured mentorship, and clear expectations are critical to fully support student participants in developing applied research skills without overburdening them.

Readiness to implement student-designed tools will vary across institutions and contexts. Fellowship outputs are most effective when paired with a commitment to piloting at least one tool and using student insight to inform ongoing improvement, even when immediate scaling is not feasible. Making these preparations for sustainability increases the likelihood that student fellowships translate insight into real change.

Student fellowships offer meaningful benefits but do require intentional design. Institutions and organizations implementing this model should recognize the time intensity of the experience for students, particularly those who may be balancing coursework, employment, and/or family responsibilities. Clear scope, pacing, and compensation are essential to ensure participation is engaged and equitable.

Conclusion

The Fall 2025 ASN Student Fellowship program demonstrates the possibility of student fellowships. When students are positioned as experts of their experience, researchers, and true contributors to the field, they provide unique insight into the efficacy of advising practices and challenges within systems. This Fellowship model is designed to also transform that insight into practical solutions — a truly student-centered approach to holistic advising.

For institutions, systems, states, networks, and philanthropic organizations alike, fellowships are a model for student partnership that go beyond traditional feedback mechanisms and toward sustainable change grounded in lived experience and made immediately relevant to advising professionals. Organizations committed to advancing student success through holistic advising can adapt the ASN Student Fellowship model as a pathway to align commitments to equity and student-centered design to everyday practice. Building on this model intentionally and collaboratively, with a commitment to learn alongside students, affirms students as essential partners in shaping the future of advising practice.



Appendix A: Student Fellowship Syllabus At-a-Glance

The Fall 2025 ASN Student Fellowship syllabus was designed to move Fellows from problem identification through data collection and analysis to tool design, culminating in a public presentation, all while building core skills in research, communication, and collaboration.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Formulate research questions and select appropriate methods for real-world advising challenges.
- Collect and analyze data to inform evidence-based conclusions.
- Communicate findings through written and oral formats.
- Produce a pitch for a practical tool for the field.
- Collaborate professionally with peers, facilitators, and mentors.

SUMMARY OF WEEKLY COHORT SESSION TOPICS

- Orientation: Expectations and community norms.
- Problem framing and research questions.
- Data collection design (survey/interview/focus group protocols).
- Analysis and storytelling with data for a defined audience.
- Peer-led focus groups and iterative tool development.
- Peer review and final convening (public pitch).

MEETINGS BEYOND WEEKLY COHORT SESSIONS

- Mentor–Fellow team meetings (monthly or biweekly): Structured check-ins focused on research design, sensemaking, and translating insights into practical tools.
- Project team working sessions (weekly): Student-led meetings to advance research, synthesize findings, iterate on tools, and prepare deliverables.
- Optional facilitator office hours (as needed): Open support sessions for troubleshooting challenges, clarifying expectations, and receiving targeted feedback on drafts and presentations.

PROGRAM INFRASTRUCTURE

- Core tools: Zoom, Google Drive/Docs/Slides, Padlet, Slack.
- Accessibility and accommodations supported throughout.
- Responsible AI use allowed with transparent citation.

Appendix B: Student Fellowship Bios

The Fall 2025 ASN Student Fellows included:

Lenora Argomaniz

Hello! My name is Lenora Argomaniz and I'm from Yuma, Arizona. I completed my undergraduate studies at Northern Arizona University, where I earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Management with a minor in Law, Rights, and Justice. Currently, I am pursuing a Master's degree in Educational Leadership, with an emphasis in Community College and Higher Education at Northern Arizona University. My academic and professional interests are centered around student success, leadership in higher education, and policy development. Upon completing my M.Ed., I plan to attend law school and am passionate about deepening my understanding of the legal field and its impact on education and society.

Michelle Bautista

Greetings! My name is Michelle Bautista. I was born in Queens but currently reside in the Bronx, New York. I am an upper senior at the City College of New York, earning my Bachelor's and Master's in Psychology with a concentration in CASAC. Being born and raised in the city, there were several resources and opportunities available for those who were made aware of them. It showed me that accessibility to essential information can change the quality of life, whether it be through social, economic, or educational means. I strive to ensure equal access to resources for all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic or legal status, and to give them the space to dream big.

Mercedes Bright

My name is Mercedes Bright and I am from the Bronx, New York. I am currently a second-year student at the illustrious Black Ivy League, Hampton University, where I'm majoring in Elementary Education with a minor in Business. My passion for education drives me to work with children in grades K-5, and I aspire to become a principal after graduation. I love working with the younger generation because of the deep connection I share with them and the rewarding feeling I get from inspiring young minds. Throughout my journey, I strive to break society's stereotypes that "black women can't withhold high-level positions". I am determined to fulfill the principal role and eventually pursue my Doctorate Degree.

Keyerra Buckley

Keyerrá Buckley is a Certified Pharmacy Technician working in EdTech as a Pharmacy Technician Program Director and Associate Product Manager. She discovered her passion for education as a Pharmacy Technology Assistant through Federal Work-Study and later served as Vice President of the Campus Activities Board and President of the Student Government Association at Vincennes University. With academic backgrounds in Pharmacy Technology and Healthcare Administration, she is dedicated to creating accessible pathways in allied health education that bridge certification and higher learning. Through the Advising Success Network Fellowship, Keyerrá aims to strengthen her ability to design equitable advising and learning experiences that empower students to achieve academic success, job security, and financial freedom.

Keyshuna Cole

Keyshuna Cole is a U.S. Army veteran from Mississippi and a graduate of a Business Management program, now advancing into the field of Industrial and Organizational Psychology in her graduate studies. She currently works in employee engagement and workforce development, supporting military-connected communities and women professionals in building clarity, confidence, and career growth. A proud mom of three and a serial crafter, Keyshuna brings creativity and empathy to both her personal and professional life. She is fascinated by personality frameworks, particularly the DISC assessment, and how they can be used to strengthen relationships and team performance. Her long-term goal is to serve as an organizational psychologist, designing strategies that foster inclusive, high-performing environments where individuals and organizations can thrive. Through the ASN Fellowship, she is eager to apply research methods that elevate student voice, address equity in advising, and strengthen pathways to student success.

Dillon Cook

My name is Dillon Cook and I am a graduate of The University of Alabama where I completed a triple-bachelor's degree in Communication Studies, Human Environmental Sciences, and Criminal Justice with a triple minor in Women's Studies, Global & Cultural Perspectives, and Public Policy. I am a current graduate student at the University of Georgia studying three master's degrees in School Counseling, Workforce Education, and Communication Studies with intentions of pursuing a career in educational advocacy. A majority of my research has been focused on rural student and first-generation barriers and support. In my free time, I enjoy running and spending time with my friends. I am thrilled to be a member of this fellowship.

Jaxon Farmer

Hello! My name is Jaxon Farmer, and I'm currently a Junior at Georgetown University. Before coming to D.C. I grew up in a small town in Northeast Ohio. At Georgetown, I'm majoring in American Studies with minors in English and Sociology. I've developed a keen interest in pedagogy through my work as a tutor at Georgetown's Writing Center. I'm particularly interested in epistemic justice, collective memory/historiography, and popular culture. I hope to be able to meld those passions through museum work in the future, central to my goal of bolstering public pathways to knowledge creation. In my free time, I love exploring new albums (I'm always reachable for a recommendation) and photo editing while I listen!

Assata Gui'Chard

My name is Assata Gui'Chard, and I am a second-year Master of Public Health (MPH) student at Touro University California, concentrating in Community Action for Health. I am originally from San Francisco, CA, and a proud Spelman College alumna. My academic and professional interests center on advancing health and education equity through research, community partnerships, and policy development. As a first-generation college graduate, I am deeply committed to creating pathways that help underrepresented students and families access the resources and opportunities they deserve.

Fiona King

Hi, my name is Fiona, and I am from Los Angeles, California. I currently live in Santa Barbara, where I am in my senior year at UC Santa Barbara as a sociology major with a minor in Applied Psychology. As a proud first-generation daughter and transfer student, I am grateful for the opportunity to work alongside others who share my passion for student success and for fostering inclusive, supportive spaces where students from all cultural backgrounds feel empowered to engage in self-advocacy. In addition to my studies, I serve as a College Success Coach and Financial Aid Coordinator with Santa Barbara Cal-SOAP, where I work with underserved high school students and guide them through the college process, including admissions and financial aid advising. I also work as an Academic Programs Assistant with the Office of Summer Sessions at UCSB, where I support pre-college research programs for high-achieving high school students and bridge programs for incoming freshmen and transfer students. In this role, I engage in peer mentorship, program planning, and event coordination to help students feel supported as they begin their academic journeys. Looking ahead, I aspire to be the kind of reliable and resourceful mentor that I once wished I had—someone who can empower students to thrive academically, personally, and professionally.

Sophia Ma

Hello! My name is Sophia Ma, and I am pursuing a Master's in School Counseling at CSU Long Beach. I earned my Bachelor's in Criminology and Psychology from UC Irvine. Currently, I am a school counseling intern at an elementary and high school, supporting students from underserved communities. I am also a FACTSS Fellow, where I collaborate with education specialists to provide culturally responsive transition supports for students with disabilities. Previously, I have worked as an academic advisor, college aide, and researcher. I am passionate about educational equity as well as trauma-informed and culturally sustainable counseling practices. My goal is to become a high school counselor focused on college access, breaking down systemic barriers, and ensuring all students have the resources and support to succeed.

Eugene Mafah

Eugene Mafah is a soldier in the U.S. Army National Guard and the first person in his family to go to college. He is studying Cybersecurity at Blinn College and plans to get an M.S. in Management & Leadership from the University of Houston. Eugene is an Ivorian child of immigrants who uses his cultural background and military training to fight for student success, sustainability, and fairness in education. He used to be a sustainability intern for the City of Atlanta and Georgia Tech, where he looked at waste management data to encourage environmental responsibility and make institutions work better. Eugene wants to make college more open and accessible to students from backgrounds that aren't well represented. Through the ASN Fellowship, he wants to study fair advising models that give students the tools they need to get around systemic problems. He wants to keep working at the crossroads of education, leadership, and policy to create a culture of opportunity and belonging on all campuses.

Michael Munroe

Hello, my name is Michael Munroe, I am an undergraduate from the University of South Florida in Tampa, FL studying Biomedical Sciences and Economics, with a focus on Economic Problems & Policy (ECP). Some of my most notable involvements include working with Feeding Tampa Bay as a Student Ambassador, serving in various executive roles including 2024-25 President of the student organization Motivating Black Students into Medicine, and being a 2 year finalist of the Bob Graham Center's Future of Florida Summit. In combining my interests, lived experiences, and future goals; I love being able to intricately evaluate problems and bridge gaps between them to find solutions. I am thrilled to be a part of the Fall 2025 ASN cohort, and am eager to learn from others' diverse perspectives, maintaining a commitment to advancing scholarship to have a meaningful impact.

Hao Nguyen

Hao Phu Nguyen is a Marketing Fellow and Student Advocate passionate about leveraging digital storytelling to advance inclusion, creativity, and student success in higher education. She currently serves as a Fellow for Adobe's Marketers Creative Skills Academy and the Advising Success Network (ASN), where she leads equity-centered research to improve advising frameworks for diverse student populations. Hao is also the Founder of UNIGLOW: Multicultural Beauty Initiative, an educational platform promoting cultural awareness in beauty practices through data-driven content and cross-cultural dialogue. An Honors student at Lone Star College–Kingwood, Hao is pursuing an Associate of Arts in Business and Marketing and has been recognized with the Chancellor's Scholarship, the Gilman Scholarship, and the Cody Award for Student of the Year. Her academic and professional goals are to transfer to a top university in marketing or creative visuals, continue studying global beauty and fashion branding, and eventually become a creative director in the fashion industry. Hao believes the ASN Fellowship provides an invaluable opportunity to amplify diverse student voices while contributing to innovative, research-informed solutions that foster belonging and academic achievement.

Martin Orea

Martin Orea (he/him) is a second-year Public Policy and Communications student at Santa Monica College from Orange County, California. His experiences across state and federal government and youth-led nonprofits have shaped his interest in using research to inform equitable higher education policy. Martin is particularly focused on how advising, communications, and policy intersect to improve student success for first-generation, low-income, and marginalized students. He hopes to contribute to research that uplifts student voices and reimagines institutional systems through an equity-driven lens.

Carlos Rodriguez

Hello everyone! My name is Carlos Rodriguez and I am from Porterville CA. I am currently an undergraduate at UCLA majoring in Economics and Sociology. I am the youngest of five, but I am the only in my family, including my parents, to have graduated from high school. Education has been the most empowering and freeing experience of my life, so I want to make it as accessible to as many people as possible. I am grateful for this opportunity to research an issue area in advising to find out how marginalized students can be served better in higher education. After UCLA, I hope to go to school for social work/public policy.

Ja'Miya Scott

Ja'Miya Scott is a senior at the University of North Texas majoring in Industrial Distribution, graduating in Spring 2026. Her professional journey has been shaped by a passion for continuous improvement and leadership development. Ja'Miya has interned with companies like Tetra Pak and Climate Pros, where she strengthened her skills in process optimization and project management. On campus, she serves as President of both the Black Student Union and the Project Management Student Chapter, leading initiatives that foster community, growth, and professional excellence. As an Advising Success Network Fellow, Ja'Miya aims to continue advocating for student success and equitable access to opportunity in higher education.

Brianna Spruill

Hi, my name is Brianna Marie, and I call North Carolina my home with a few roots in Austin, Texas. I consider myself a student of life and always love to learn. I also enjoy spending time with my family, traveling, and creating new things whether that be through painting, music, or poetry. I received my Bachelors of Science Degree in Psychology from North Carolina Central University. I'm currently obtaining my Masters of Education in Adult Education with a Concentration in Higher Education and Student Affairs from East Carolina University. I also serve as a Study Abroad Admissions Advisor which gives me a fun chance to see the world of advising each day. I hope to continue working with students of all ages as they navigate life as well as become a professor/educator.

Santianna Yellow Horse

Hello! My name is Santianna Yellow Horse. I am a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and am currently attending Oglala Lakota College, where I am pursuing my degree in Nursing. I am also a mother of two wonderful little girls who are the light of my world. I am extremely passionate about Indigenous representation in the healthcare field and believe that Indigenous healthcare workers offer a unique and needed perspective to the field. I hope to go on in my medical career and eventually hope to pursue my Nurse Practitioners license or something of the like so I can further my advocacy of Indigenous patients.

Appendix C: Mentor Bios

The Fall 2025 ASN Student Fellowship mentors included:

Bawaajigekwe Boulley

Bawaajigekwe Boulley is the founder of Dream Circle Consulting, where she mentors and coaches educators and fellows, supporting research projects that center Indigenous knowledge and foster equitable outcomes for students. A proud member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, she brings nearly 20 years of experience across public, tribal, charter, and Indigenous language immersion schools. Grounded in her cultural roots and shaped by a family legacy in education and justice, Bawaajigekwe guides teams in reimagining educational systems, cultivating inclusive learning environments, and empowering educators to grow professionally and personally. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education, a master's in special education, and is pursuing a doctorate in Indigenous education at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, with research focused on creating conditions that promote Indigenous student success.

Lynneah Brown

Dr. Lynneah Ciera Brown is the director of policy research for Young Invincibles. Lynneah leads the organization's research portfolios on policy issues affecting young adults in the areas of higher education, health care, and workforce policy and financial health. Lynneah comes to Young Invincibles from the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO), where she worked on projects, such as state performance funding, state funding equity audits, college closures, college completion, direct admissions, free college, free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) simplification, and the SHEEO membership report. Through these projects she either conducted qualitative and quantitative analysis, such as gaining experience using large-scale datasets (e.g., Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and the National Student Clearinghouse data); developed descriptive statistics; used and analyzed survey data; conducted, transcribed, and developed key themes from interviews from participants; assisted with convenings with state leaders; gained experience working with grant funders; and/or produced various publications. In addition to her experience at SHEEO, Lynneah has participated in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Data Institute where she worked with the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B: 08/18) data, using these data with a group of scholars to analyze student loan debt and the effects on adulthood. Prior to SHEEO and the NCES Data Institute, Lynneah was a graduate research assistant at The Pennsylvania State University (PSU), where she gathered data from the 1990s to 2021 regarding performance funding policies for the InformEd States project. The project was funded by the William T. Grant Foundation, Arnold Ventures, and the Joyce Foundation and resulted in multiple co-authored policy briefs and academic research papers. While at PSU, Lynneah was awarded the American Educational Research Association – National Science Foundation (AERA-NSF) Grant to support her dissertation entitled, "Impacts of Tennessee's Performance-Based Funding Policy on STEM Degree Production at Four-Year Universities: A Longitudinal Analysis Using Difference-in-Differences Design." Outside of work, Lynneah loves to spend time with her son, family, and friends. She loves to travel and binge watch TV series. Lynneah is originally from Elmira, New York and raised in Miami, Florida. She attended Florida State University where she obtained a bachelor's degree in English Literature; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she earned a master's degree in Higher Education; and PSU where she obtained a Doctor of Philosophy in Higher Education.

Renee Faulkner

Renee Faulkner has 20 years' experience in direct student services, program management, and partnership development across the education spectrum. She has served in roles at highly selective liberal arts colleges, national non-profit organizations, and state and federal government agencies. Her professional experiences have focused on smoothing the transitions between high school, postsecondary education, and the workforce, particularly for underrepresented learners and workers. Renee most recently served as a director in the division of student life at Carleton College (Northfield, MN) where she designed strategic programs centered on the BIPOC student experience. She also worked cross-functionally to inform institutional-level DEI policy. Prior to Carleton, Renee was an associate director at Jobs for the Future, a national non-profit focused on improving education and workforce systems. In that role, she coached leaders of school systems, county offices of education, and community colleges on developing initiatives, networks, and partnerships that promote economic advancement. Renee holds a bachelor's degree in public policy from Pomona College and a master's degree in higher education from Harvard University.

Adrian K. Haugabrook

Dr. Adrian K. Haugabrook is a strategic advisor, systems thinker, and equity-driven innovator with over three decades of executive leadership in higher education, nonprofit, and social impact sectors. He has committed his career to expanding access, equity, and opportunity by leading innovative initiatives that align vision, strategy, and measurable impact. He brings a rare blend of organizational insight, strategic foresight, and a deep commitment to transforming organizations to be more inclusive, future-ready, and mission-aligned. Dr. Haugabrook is a nationally recognized leader in strategy, growth, policy, and transformational change across global higher education and the nonprofit sector. Throughout his career, Dr. Haugabrook has held senior roles at nationally recognized institutions and organizations, leading enterprise-level strategy, equity-centered change initiatives, and strategic partnerships. He is the Founder and Principal of Quinta Essentia Ventures, a consultancy dedicated to equipping social sector organizations with the tools and strategies needed to achieve meaningful impact, optimize performance, and build long-term capacity. Previously, Dr. Haugabrook served as Executive Vice President and Managing Director for Social Impact at Southern New Hampshire University, where he led initiatives that advanced equity and social mobility through innovations such as competency-based education, technology-enhanced learning, and cross-sector collaboration. A frequent speaker and thought leader on topics related to educational equity, systems change, innovation, and institutional resilience, Dr. Haugabrook was featured at TED 2021, where his talk, "3 Ways to Lower the Barriers to Higher Education," received over one million views within its first six weeks of its release. Dr. Haugabrook currently serves on the board of directors of Upswing International, an education technology company, and Complete College America, including its Equitable Artificial Intelligence National Advisory Council. His past leadership includes board roles with the Postsecondary National Policy Institute and Ascend at the Aspen Institute, and he was selected into the inaugural cohort as Designer in Residence with the Education Design Lab (2021–2022). In addition to his professional commitments, he is a devoted husband, father of two, grandfather, and Life Member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Haugabrook holds an Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration from the University of Massachusetts Boston, M.S. in Social Administration from Georgia Southwestern University, and B.S. in Criminal Justice from the University of West Georgia.

Madeline Vitek Memenza

Madeline Vitek Memenza is the Director for Mission Engagement, Main Campus, Retreat Design Specialist and Special Advisor to the Vice President for Student Affairs at Georgetown University. In this role, she works closely with the Residential Ministry and ESCAPE First-Year Retreat programs, the Division of Student Affairs, and advises the institution's religious student organizations. Originally from the Pacific Northwest, Madeline studied Political Science and Nonprofit Leadership at Seattle University (another Jesuit institution), before heading to Ohio to earn an M.S. in Student Affairs and Higher Education from Miami University. At Georgetown University since 2010, Madeline has worked in Student Affairs and Campus Ministry and enjoys connecting around the following things: coffee, Catholic Social Teaching, Seattle, belonging at Georgetown, race and racial justice, and LGBTQ faith journeys. She is most excited to talk to students who are loving college so far, who are struggling with some aspects of being at Georgetown, and everyone in between.

Kylah Torre

Dr. Kylah Torre is the Senior Director, Policy & Research at StrategyForward Advisors. Prior to that, she served as Senior Director of Digital Learning at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the state agency charged with oversight of universities and community colleges. With over 15 years of experience in education, she has led initiatives such as the creation of OERTX, a digital library of open educational resources that attracted over 500,000 users worldwide and was recognized by OE Global and the 88th Texas Legislature. Dr. Torre also has experience in educational research and teaching at the K-12 and postsecondary levels. She has received numerous accolades for her work, including Texas Digital Learning Association's 2021 Outstanding Commitment to Excellence in Distance Learning Award and the 2024 Sally M. Johnstone Award for thought leadership from WCET. She holds a Ph.D. in Urban Education from the City University of New York Graduate Center and a B.A. in International Development from McGill University.



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