



HBCU

HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

Symposium

An initiative of the Advising Success Network and the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience® and Students in Transition

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Amplifying the Voices of HBCUs in the Dialogue on Advising as a Tool for Equity and Student Success

This is the first issue in a newsletter series that will serve as a report and thematic summary of content shared in the National Resource Center's multi-pronged engagement of HBCUs in their work with the Advising Success Network. The series will run from January through May of 2022.

In 2019, the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition was invited to be one of five core partners in a grant-funded initiative called the Advising Success Network (ASN). The ASN was established with the mission "to help institutions build a culture of student success, with a focus on students from low-income backgrounds and Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islander students, by identifying, building, and scaling equitable and holistic advising solutions that support all facets of the student experience" (Advising Success Network, 2021, para. 2). The National Resource Center developed an agenda of work to achieve the mission and goals

of the ASN through research, creation of resources, and the development and delivery of services to support colleges, universities, and institutional systems to "support educational change and improved student outcomes through a holistic approach to" advising as a tool for equity and student success (Advising Success Network, 2021, para. 1).

Early on, the National Resource Center recognized the need to amplify certain voices in the fields of higher education, student transition and success, and advising to reach the desired outcomes of the ASN and to ensure true transformation and sustainability on

Institutions Participating in the HBCU 2020-2021 Professional Learning Community and 2021 Symposium

campuses and in higher education overall. The Center immediately identified HBCUs as spaces where some of the most innovative and effective work is being done to improve student success outcomes and advance equity, especially for the populations of particular interest to ASN (e.g., Black, Latino/a, and low-income students). Yet, too often, the work at these institutions is not part of the larger dialogue about advising redesign and student success and, thus, the positive impact of their efforts was not fully shared, celebrated, and modeled. The Center was committed to engaging HBCUs as critical partners in our ASN activities and created several dedicated channels for their involvement.

Participants

An invitation for participation was sent to higher education professionals at HBCUs with a focus on academic, career, and financial advising as well as a professional portfolio that included student retention and success. The invitations included an outline of involvement in a 15-month professional learning community, a one-day symposium, and other professional development opportunities. Further, given the nature of the HBCU engagement as a space for idea sharing, model development, and thought leadership, participants were asked to contribute to the programming and resources of the grant-funded engagement. Options included submission of an institutional case study, contributing a roundtable session to the Symposium program, interviews with executive leadership from their respective institutions, and consideration of any other opportunities to showcase assessed institutional initiatives on academic, career, and financial advising as tools for equity and student success in the HBCU context. The selection process was competitive and resulted in the inclusion of 26 campuses of varying size, type, control, and mission within the HBCU landscape (see full listing of participating institutions in the sidebar). This diversity of institutions added to the richness of PLC and Symposium discussions and allowed for participants to learn from different campus-based perspectives.

- Albany State University
- Allen University
- Appalachian State University
- Benedict College
- Central State University
- Clayton University
- Clark Atlanta University
- Delaware State University
- Dillard University
- Elizabeth City State University
- Fayetteville State University
- Florida State University
- Grambling State University
- Harris Stowe State University
- Johnson C. Smith University
- Lincoln University
- Miles College
- North Carolina A&T State University
- Philander Smith College
- Saint Augustine's University
- Spelman College
- Talladega College
- Tuskegee University
- Xavier University of Louisiana

Engagements

Three primary channels for involvement comprised the HBCU engagements in the Advising Success Network. All opportunities for involvement were sponsored and hosted by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and delivered by the Center and its affiliates. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all of the engagements were delivered via virtual platforms. Most were viewed live, but content was recorded for participants to view if they missed the initial offering or to revisit for the duration of their involvement.

Professional Learning Community

The first opportunity for involvement was a 15-month professional learning community (PLC). The purpose of this engagement was to both disseminate content and facilitate dialogue around topics, trends, issues, and data related to advising and its connection to and impact on student development, retention, and success as well as the advancement of equity in higher education. After recruitment of participants was complete, the Center sponsored six sessions as part of the PLC programming:

- In October of 2020, four orientation sessions were delivered by staff of the National Resource Center to articulate the purpose, goals, activities, and expectations of the PLC and the Advising Success Network; to address any questions from PLC participants; and to forge community and connection among colleagues in the PLC.
- In November of 2020, Amy Gatto, Senior Manager of Higher Ed & Evaluation with Active Minds, facilitated a presentation titled “Creating a Culture of Caring: Supporting Student Mental Health at Historically Black Colleges and Universities.” This session featured original research and a discussion of promising practices related to supporting mental health and emotional well-being among undergraduates with a particular emphasis on students at HBCUs.
- In December 2020, we shared a recording of a session presented at the 2020 National Conference on Students in Transition (hosted by the National Resource Center) that featured HBCUs with PLC

participants. It was titled “The Heavy LIFT: An Approach to Retention for HBCUs and MSIs” and presented by Dr. Jamila Lyn and Dr. James Winfield from Benedict College.

- In February 2021, Dr. Dhanfu Elston, Chief of Staff & Senior Vice President for Strategy with Complete College America (CCA), and Dr. Nia Haydel, Vice President for Alliance Engagement & Institutional Transformation with CCA, facilitated a session titled “At the Table or On the Menu: Navigating the Political Landscape to Elevate HBCUs” to provide tips on creating conditions for HBCUs to showcase their successes and position themselves to “be at the table” for current and future conversations on the state of higher education policy and practice.
- In April 2021, Dr. Laurie Schreiner, Professor and Chair of the Department of Higher Education at Azusa Pacific University, facilitated a book club discussion on the volume she edited with Michelle C. Louis and Denise D. Nelson titled *Thriving in Transitions: A Research-Based Approach to College Student Success* (2nd edition). Copies of this book were provided to all PLC participants and particular themes and content of the book related to thriving among students of color were the primary focus of the book club session.
- In July of 2021, staff of the National Resource Center hosted a session to provide support and guidance to PLC participants regarding the development of their resources for the engagement.

The PLC also included an online platform that served as a content management system and repository for materials and recordings from the above-mentioned sessions. However, perhaps a more important purpose of the online platform was to create a space for ongoing and asynchronous communication and connection among participants in the PLC. Staff and affiliates of the National Resource Center created prompts for discussion board activity and networking and support among the participants was ongoing in the online platform throughout the PLC engagement.

Symposium

The second engagement for the HBCU involvement in the Center's Advising Success Network activities was a one-day Symposium delivered live on October 2, 2021, via a virtual conference platform. The Symposium served as a culminating event for the PLC engagement and the program represented a mix of plenary content delivered by invited speakers and interactive content proposed and presented by PLC participants.

Invited speakers included:

- Dr. Brandy Bryson & Dr. Will Sheppard from Appalachian State University presented a session titled "Black Male Brilliance: Strengths of High-Achieving Black Male Students" that featured original research data from focus groups of 26 high-achieving first-year Black male students at five HBCUs in North Carolina.
- Dr. Verna Orr from the National Institute from Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) delivered a session titled "Assessment, Accountability, and Student Success: HBCUs Leading on Learning" that highlighted the evolution and distinction of HBCUs as experts in teaching and learning, particularly for Black students.
- Dr. Jamila Lyn, Senior Fellow at Acadeum facilitated a session titled "Integrating Online Course Sharing at HBCUs to Increase Student Success," which addressed the effective use of technology-supported advising and student success initiatives as a high-impact strategy with an emphasis on course sharing.

Roundtable sessions from PLC participants were also on the program, including sessions from:

- Dr. Alayna Blash & Dr. DeKimberlen Neely from Spelman College presenting "Huddle Up: Collaborative Advising Efforts for Academically At-Risk Students."
- Dr. Teresa Thompson-Pinckney from Fayetteville State University presenting "Peer Coaching."

- Tiffany Alexander & Charmaine Whyte from Delaware State University facilitating a roundtable titled "Implications of the Pandemic: Reimagining Academic Support Services."
- Dr. Twaina Harris from Claflin University facilitating a roundtable titled "Ace Academic Advisor."

Program content also included opening and closing sessions delivered by staff of the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

Other Professional Development

The third engagement represented additional professional development and an opportunity to connect the themes, topics, and issues discussed in the PLC and at the Symposium with a larger audience. Participants in the PLC and Symposium were eligible for waived registration fees to the 2021 National Conference on Students in Transition (SIT), a virtual conference sponsored by the National Resource Center from October 11-13, 2021. Many participants took advantage of this fee waiver and participated in the SIT Conference, which further expanded the reach, scope, and impact of the community and discussions that arose through the HBCU PLC and Symposium.

Resources and Future Directions

The National Resource Center continues to maintain connections and communication with the HBCU network that was forged as part of the PLC and Symposium. As a result of those engagements, the Center is crafting a series of resources that will represent a toolkit of resources for the HBCU PLC and Symposium participants; larger HBCU community of professionals; ASN core partners, funder, collaborators, and intermediaries; and the larger first-year experience and students in transition network. These resources will be released from December 2021 through May 2022 and include:

- A newsletter series that will serve as a report and thematic summary of content shared in the National Resource Center's multi-pronged engagement of

HBCUs in their work with the Advising Success Network (this issue represents the first installment the series).

- Edited content from the PLC and Symposium sessions that will be released as a playlist on the National Resource Center's YouTube channel.
- A resource collection featuring empirical based information and research studies focused on advising, student success, retention, and equity issues in the HBCU context.

We look forward to sharing the outcomes and learning from these engagements via these resources. However, in many ways, the National Resource Center views the HBCU engagements with the ASN as parts of an ongoing dialogue on advising, student success, and equity. We look forward to continuing our engagement with the community of HBCU educators and advocates who participated in our recent efforts and to welcoming new voices to the conversation as we pursue the missions of the Advising Success Network and the National Resource Center.

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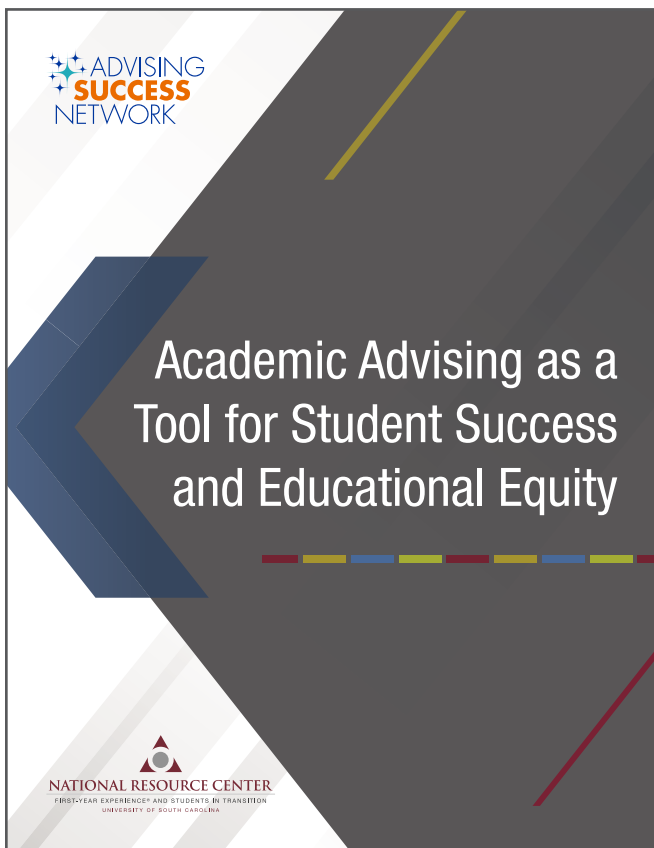
NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Building upon its history of excellence as the founder and leader of the first-year experience movement, the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition serves education professionals by supporting and advancing efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education. We achieve this mission by providing opportunities for the exchange of practical and scholarly information as well as the discussion of trends and issues in our field through the convening of conferences and other professional development events such as institutes, workshops, and online learning opportunities; publication of scholarly practice books, research reports, a peer-reviewed journal, electronic newsletters, and guides; generating, supporting, and disseminating research and scholarship; hosting visiting scholars; and maintaining several online channels for resource sharing and communication, including a dynamic website, listservs, and social media outlets.



[The Advising Success Network \(ASN\)](#) is a dynamic network of five organizations partnering to engage institutions in holistic advising redesign to advance success for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islander students and students from low-income backgrounds. The network develops services and resources to guide institutions in implementing evidence-based advising practices to advance a more equitable student experience to achieve our vision of a higher education landscape that has eliminated race and income as predictors of student success. The ASN is coordinated by [NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education](#), and includes [Achieving the Dream](#), the [American Association of State Colleges and Universities](#), [EDUCAUSE](#), [NACADA](#), [The Global Community for Academic Advising](#), and the [National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition](#).



ADVISING SUCCESS NETWORK CASE STUDIES

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, a core partner in the Advising Success Network (ASN), is excited to share the first two of a three-part series of case studies concerned with demonstrating innovation, institutional transformation, and advising initiatives focused on advancing equity. The first features institutional practices and examples dedicated to academic advising and the second highlights campus initiatives for career advising.

Read more about the academic advising case study collection [here](#).

Read more about the career advising case study collection [here](#).

A full collection of work centered on holistic advising, trends in the field, relevant resources, and promising practices is available as open-access resources through the [Advising Success Network](#).

