

# The Ideal Student Journey To and Through College

**This journey map** was developed by 3 students from different institutions with different intersecting identities and college experiences. The reason we developed this map is because through our different and shared experiences we believe that higher education advising needs to be reevaluated. The current state of higher education advising is falling short of students' needs. Through collaboration, we created the ideal advising experience model. This journey map may not represent all students and their needs, but it was designed to be adapted to the individual.



## Goal and Process of Creating the Journey Map

The journey map is meant to be an aid in holistic advising for students and advisors alike. The intention for this map is to allow the student a visual aid to see the projection of potential pathways in their academic future. For advisors, this map can be used as a tool to adapt their advising to the individual student no matter the major. At our separate institutions we gathered qualitative interview research from peers and faculty. This research allowed us to incorporate multiple views, ideals, and opinions. The information we compiled is important to the future of advising and student success because this is a way to understand the intersectionality of experience of each student. We believe that holistic advising cannot be complete without all needs of a student, academic or otherwise, being met. This map allows for students and advisors to identify their unique needs and critical time periods during their post-secondary journey.



## Themes

Throughout our experience gathering information and developing this map we were able to identify consistent gaps in current post-secondary advising that affect student success. Firstly, we noticed that institutions are set up for students coming from high school but our ideal would be support for students coming from any situation. It is important for advisors to understand that there is broad diversity in student starting points. That diversity in experiences continues throughout their entire higher education journey. Another recurring theme is that institutions do not account for the variety of non-traditional students within their student body. Without recognizing the diversity it is impossible to identify the needs of all students which ultimately deters student success.

## How to use the map

This map is valuable to any advisor or student. Everyone has unique journeys and this map allows a student/advisor to prepare as best as they can. As you review this map keep in mind where your role fits. Think about if there is anything missing, what you would add, what doesn't apply. Think of any systems or processes within your institution that already exist and could be improved.

**Review the questions to ask yourself as you work across the journey map. This should take about 15 minutes.**

- What ideas does this map provide for improving advising?
- How does this journey map help inform redesign of advising at your institution?
- In what ways does your institution recognize the unique journeys of students?
- How does your institution support these unique journeys?
- How can you better support student access and success?



## Reflection

Throughout the process of creating this journey map we have come across multiple areas in institutions that we feel require some restructuring. One recurring issue we learned with input from faculty interviews is that professors/lecturers/instructors lack pedagogical training. The how to teach and what to teach seems to be lost on some of the instructors. Although that doesn't directly correlate to the holistic advising experience we believe that this issue ultimately lowers student success. Having professors who are exceptional teachers makes a difference. Having teachers who understand how to teach can also alter the equity within the classroom. There are best practices when it comes to everything, but when you become a teacher best practices can change person to person. It is critical to student development.

We discovered that there is a large demand for more information regarding individual classes. Students would like to be able to see the basic syllabus for classes that they are interested in without having to enroll in the class. The

basic syllabus would provide information regarding the general expectations of the class and homework/classwork load. This will allow students the opportunity to plan their semesters more efficiently and realistically. This is less of an issue that needs to be fixed, but an idea to make the current process better.

We also think that having a continuous survey that students can fill out to communicate their needs would help aid in the connection between advisor and student. This survey can range from "are you happy with your classes this year?" to "Have there been any significant changes in your personal life that has affected your academic life?"

And most importantly, the responsibility of a student's well being academically or personally does not fall on advisors alone. The responsibility should be shared between all faculty within the institution. There needs to be support in place for everyone so we can all help keep each other motivated and successful.