Student Success: Fostering Equity by Design

Denise Bartell
Associate Vice Provost for Student Success

New Faculty Orientation

August 2021

"EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON WHICH YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD."
-NELSON MANDELA

Student Success (def.)

Equity (def.)

Key Constructs for Equity-Focused Student Success

- Belonging
- Transparency
- Growth Mindset

Conclusions & Next Steps

FRAMING QUESTIONS

Who are our students?

How can a student-centered approach improve the success of all students in our courses?

How do we translate a commitment to student-centeredness into classroom practices that disrupt inequity and advance student success?

DEFINING STUDENT SUCCESS

KEY COMMITMENTS OF STUDENT-CENTERED UNIVERSITIES:

See	Believe	Help	Foster	Maintain
See student success as everyone's business • Understand that all who work on campus have a responsibility to promote student success and develop structures, policies and practices to support that work	**Believe every student can succeed** • Value the assets students bring to campus, have a growth mindset about their capacities, and understand that our job is to support student learning	**Help students navigate college** • Make transparent our expectations of students, provide support for the whole student, and promote conscious understanding of how students learn	**Foster students' well-being and sense of belonging** • Understand the critical connection between well-being, sense of belonging, and retention and student, and work to promote a sense of belonging and well-being for all students	**Maintain an unshakeable focus on equity** • Understand the deep and persistent inequities in education and work tirelessly, at every level of the university, to ensure that all students have an equal chance at success

Higher Education is a Public Good

Critical to the well-being of individuals, families, communities and society

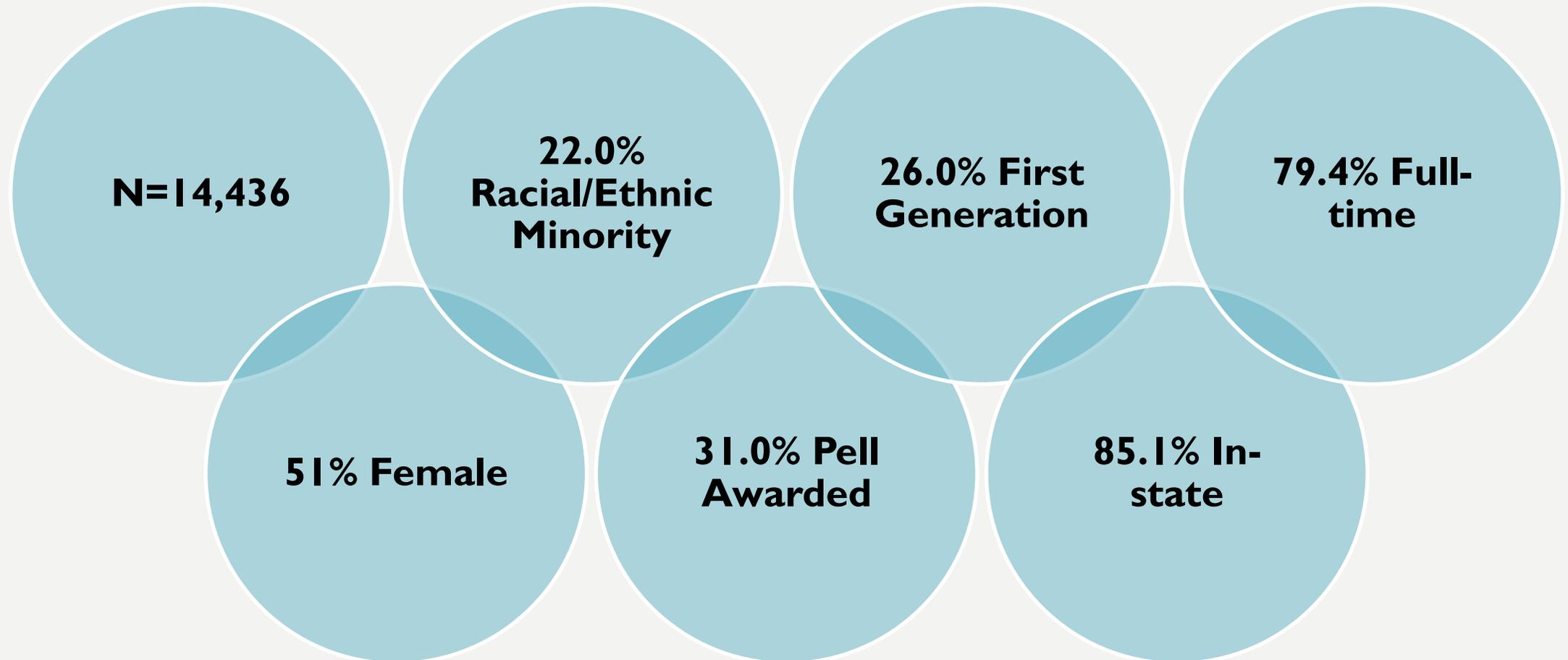Fundamental to building a more just and equitable society
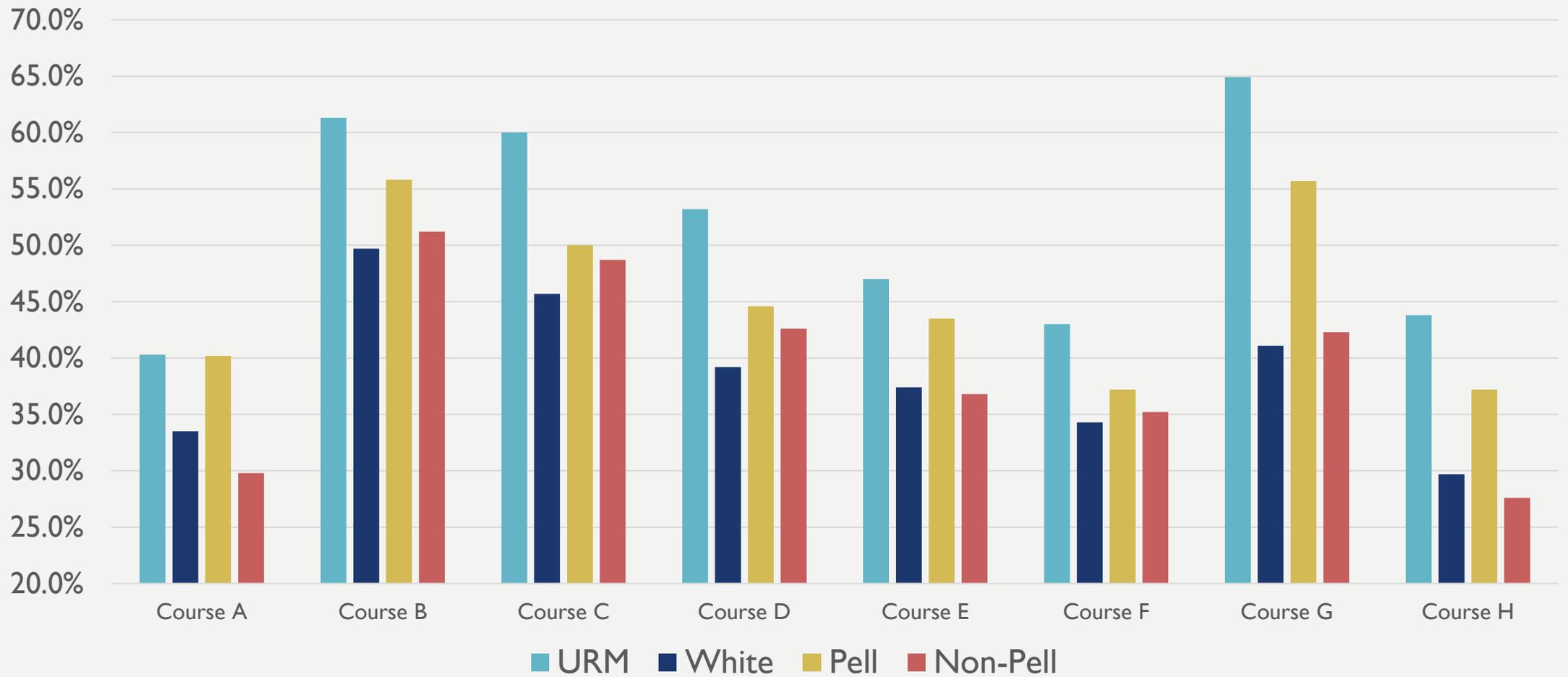
Aspiration vs. Reality

WHY FOCUS ON EQUITY?

UNDERGRADUATE FACTS AT A GLANCE

2020 Cohort

N=14,436

22.0% Racial/Ethnic Minority

26.0% First Generation

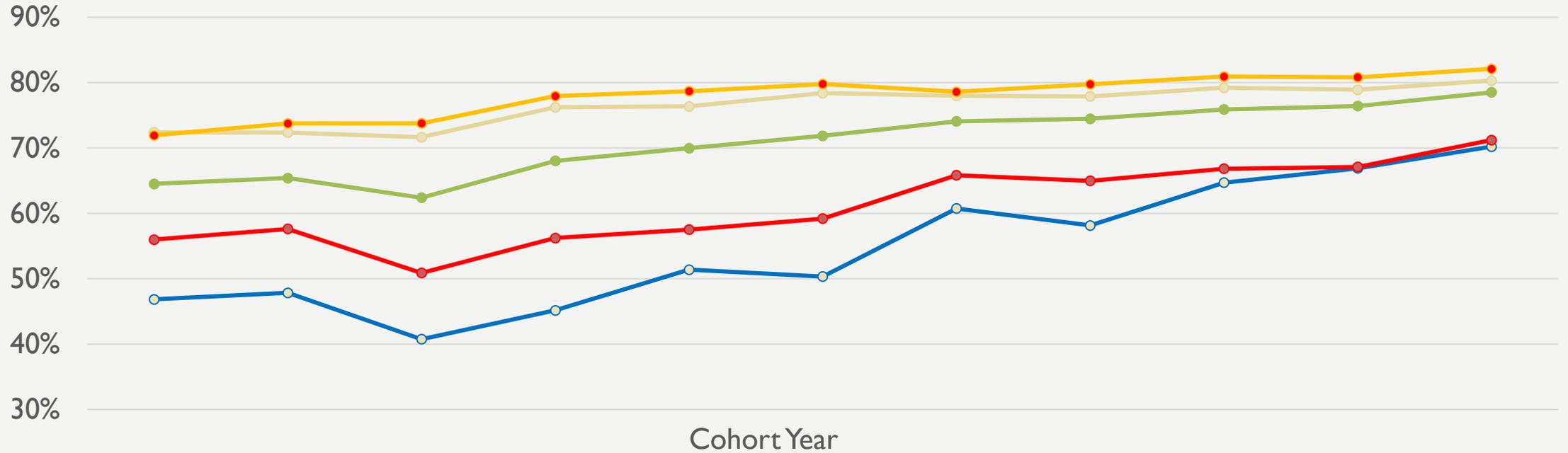79.4% Full-time

51% Female

31.0% Pell Awarded

85.1% In-state

Source: UToledo Office of Institutional Research
Facts At a Glance Dashboard

DISAGGREGATED DFW RATES FOR GATEWAY/INTRO COURSES

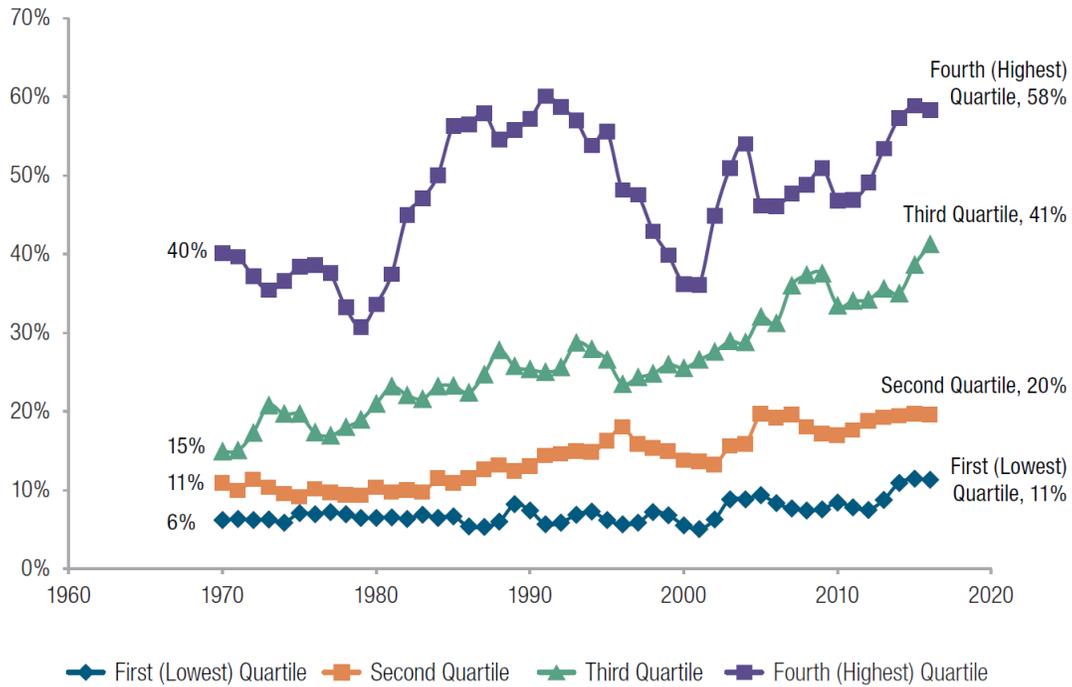# First-Year Retention 2009-2019 Cohorts

Cohort Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
URM	46.84%	47.84%	40.75%	45.16%	51.38%	50.34%	60.75%	58.15%	64.70%	66.90%	70.20%
White	72.39%	72.36%	71.65%	76.22%	76.35%	78.38%	77.99%	77.89%	79.20%	78.90%	80.30%
Overall	64.50%	65.40%	62.39%	68.03%	69.97%	71.85%	74.07%	74.46%	75.90%	76.40%	78.50%
Pell	55.99%	57.62%	50.89%	56.22%	57.52%	59.20%	65.82%	64.97%	66.83%	67.10%	71.20%
Non-Pell	71.93%	73.74%	73.77%	77.94%	78.67%	79.77%	78.59%	79.74%	80.92%	80.80%	82.10%

UT Six-Year Graduation 2008-2015 Cohorts
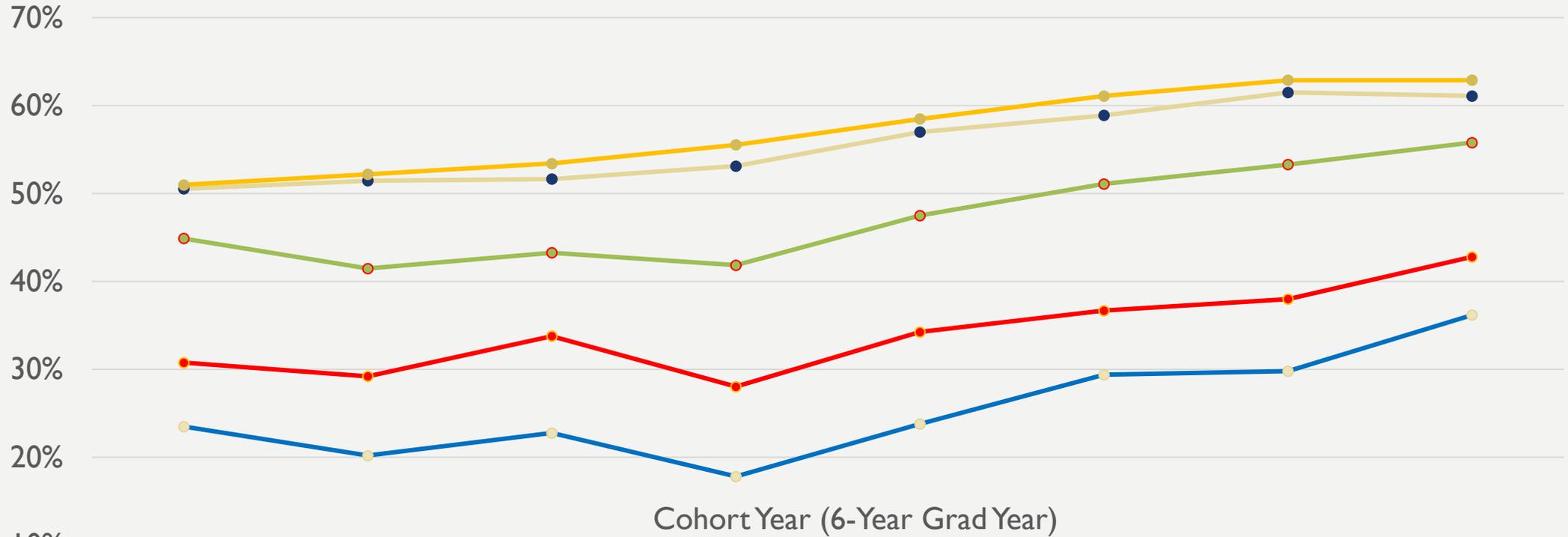
	2008 (2014)	2009 (2015)	2010 (2016)	2011 (2017)	2012 (2018)	2013 (2019)	2014 (2020)	2015 (2021)
URM	23.50%	20.21%	22.77%	17.83%	23.80%	29.40%	29.80%	36.20%
White	50.55%	51.46%	51.65%	53.12%	57.00%	58.90%	61.50%	61.10%
Overall	44.90%	41.48%	43.27%	41.86%	47.50%	51.10%	53.30%	55.80%
Pell	30.77%	29.22%	33.79%	28.04%	34.26%	36.70%	38.00%	42.80%
Non-Pell	50.99%	52.20%	53.42%	55.55%	58.49%	61.10%	62.90%	62.90%

Cohort Year (6-Year Grad Year)

DEGREE ATTAINMENT NATIONALLY

Equity Indicator 5a: Estimated bachelor's degree attainment rate by age 24 for dependent family members by family income quartile: 1970 to 2016

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS AGED TWENTY-FIVE AND OVER WITH A BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER DEGREE, BY RACE/ETHNICITY
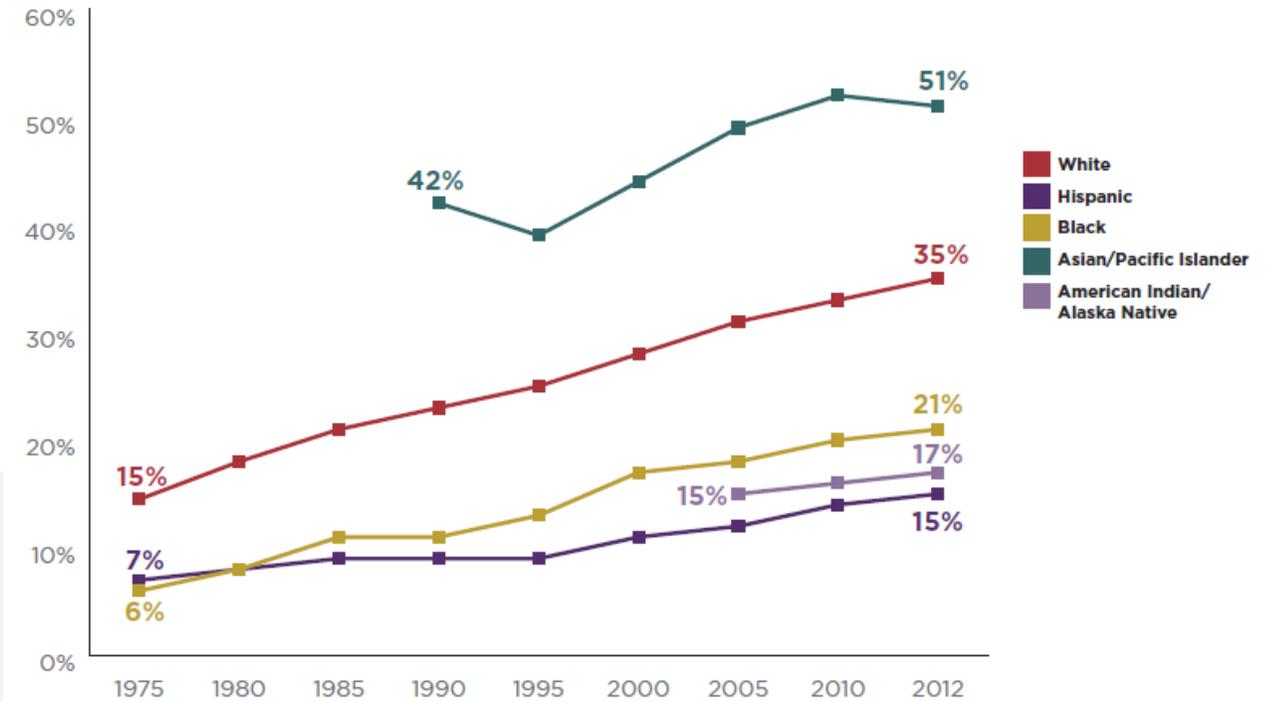
Source: Pell Institute – *Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States,* 2015 & 2018 Reports

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Digest of Education Statistics: 2012," Table 8, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/tables/dt12_008.asp?referrer=report.

Note: Data are not available until 1989 for Asian/Pacific Islanders and until 2003 for American Indian/Alaska Natives.

- What does it say about our system of higher education when…
  - Minoritized students of color who begin college are half as likely to graduate as their white peers?
  - The schools with the most privileged students have the most resources?
  - The greatest mark of institutional quality is selectivity?
  - We assign grades by level of student knowledge, and not by amount of learning or growth?

SYSTEMS ARE PERFECTLY DESIGNED FOR THE OUTCOMES THEY ACHIEVE

Resource: Alexander Astin – *Are You Smart Enough?*

What conclusions can we draw about the goals of our system from the outcomes it's achieving?
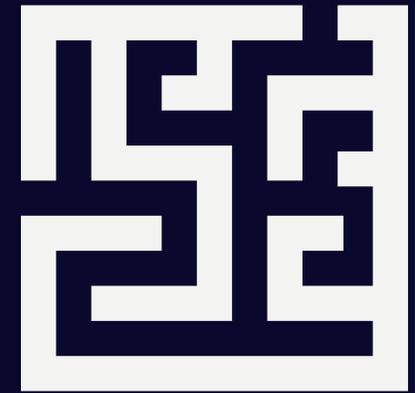
REFLECTION OPPORTUNITY #1
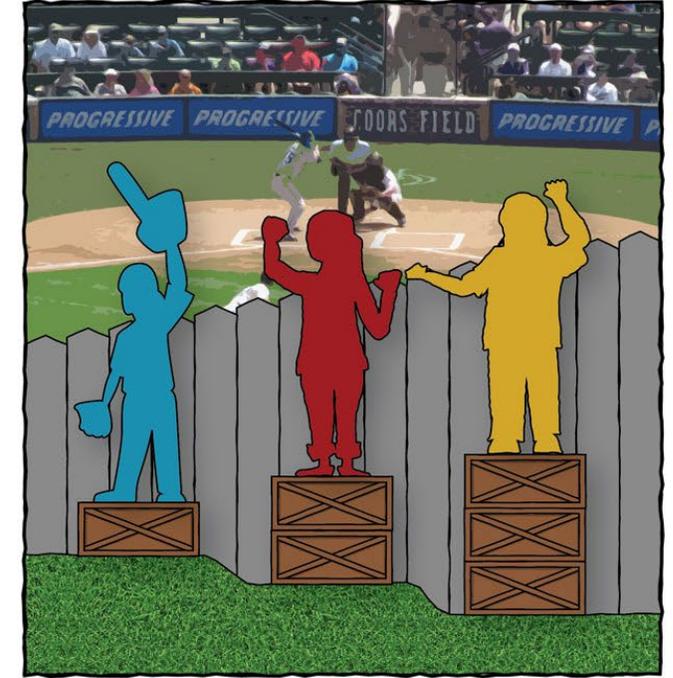
EQUITY (DEF.)

Dismantling the structures, practices and policies that create barriers for some students and privilege others.

Equal access to and opportunity to succeed in, college.

Ensuring that each student receives what they need to be successful through the intentional design of the college experience.
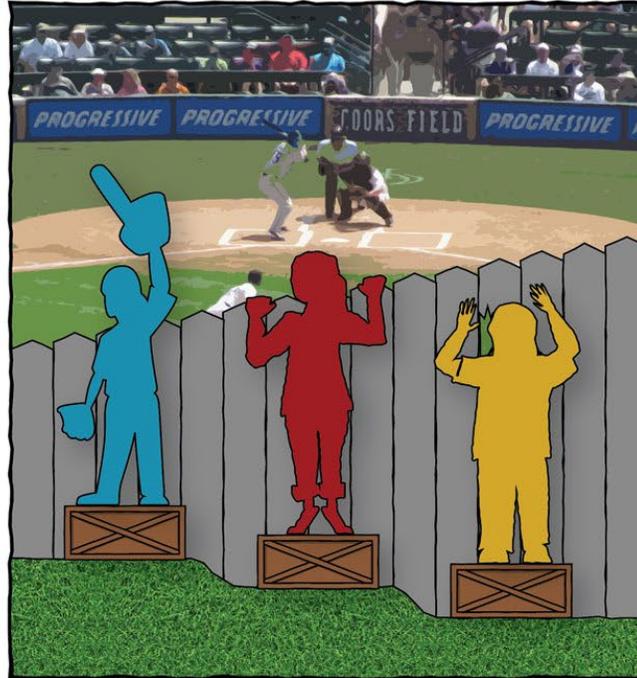
EQUALITY   EQUITY

Source: Culturalorganizing.org

EQUITABLE OR INEQUITABLE?

➢ Who, by race or ethnicity, socio-economic status, or first-generation status will benefit most from this policy or practice?

➢ In what ways could this policy or practice disadvantage historically underserved students?

1. Instructor Q is concerned that students aren't reading the required materials for class. To help ensure they do so, she asks students to line up and show their textbooks to her at the end of class.

2. Instructor Y requires that students provide written documentation from a doctor to be able to make-up an exam.

3. Academic program Z, concerned that they have too many applicants relative to the number of spaces in each cohort, increases the ACT score requirement for admission to their program.

What opportunities do you see for creating structures and practices to enhance equity of outcomes in your classes?

REFLECTION OPPORTUNITY #2
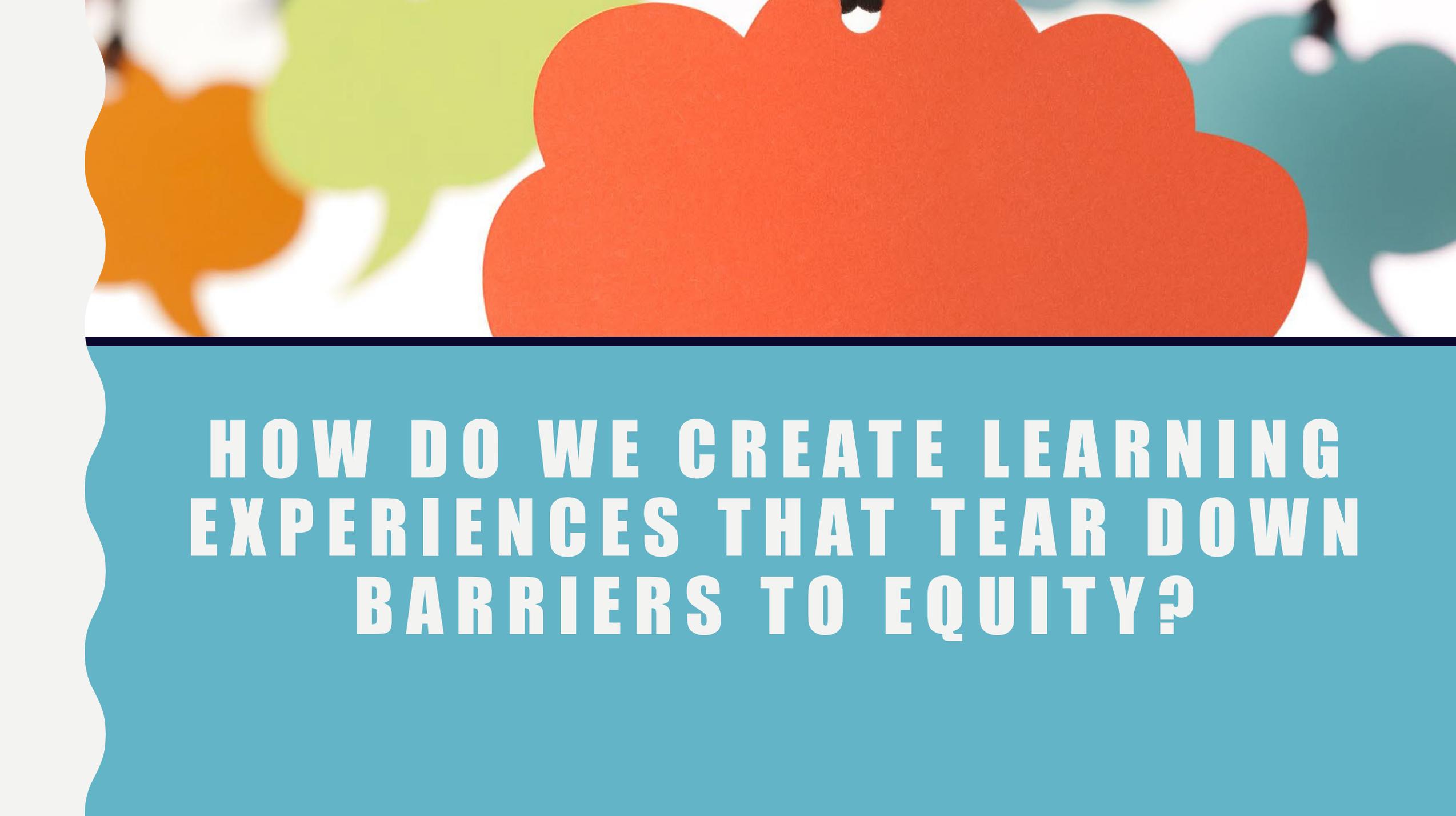
HOW DO WE CREATE LEARNING EXPERIENCES THAT TEAR DOWN BARRIERS TO EQUITY?

CREATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND BELONGING IN YOUR CLASS

Belonging (def): The experience of mattering or feeling cared about, respected, valued by and important to the campus community or specific people on campus (Strayhorn, 2012).

➢A basic human need

➢A significant motivator of human behavior

# SIGNIFICANT PREDICTOR OF STUDENT PERSISTENCE AND GRADUATION
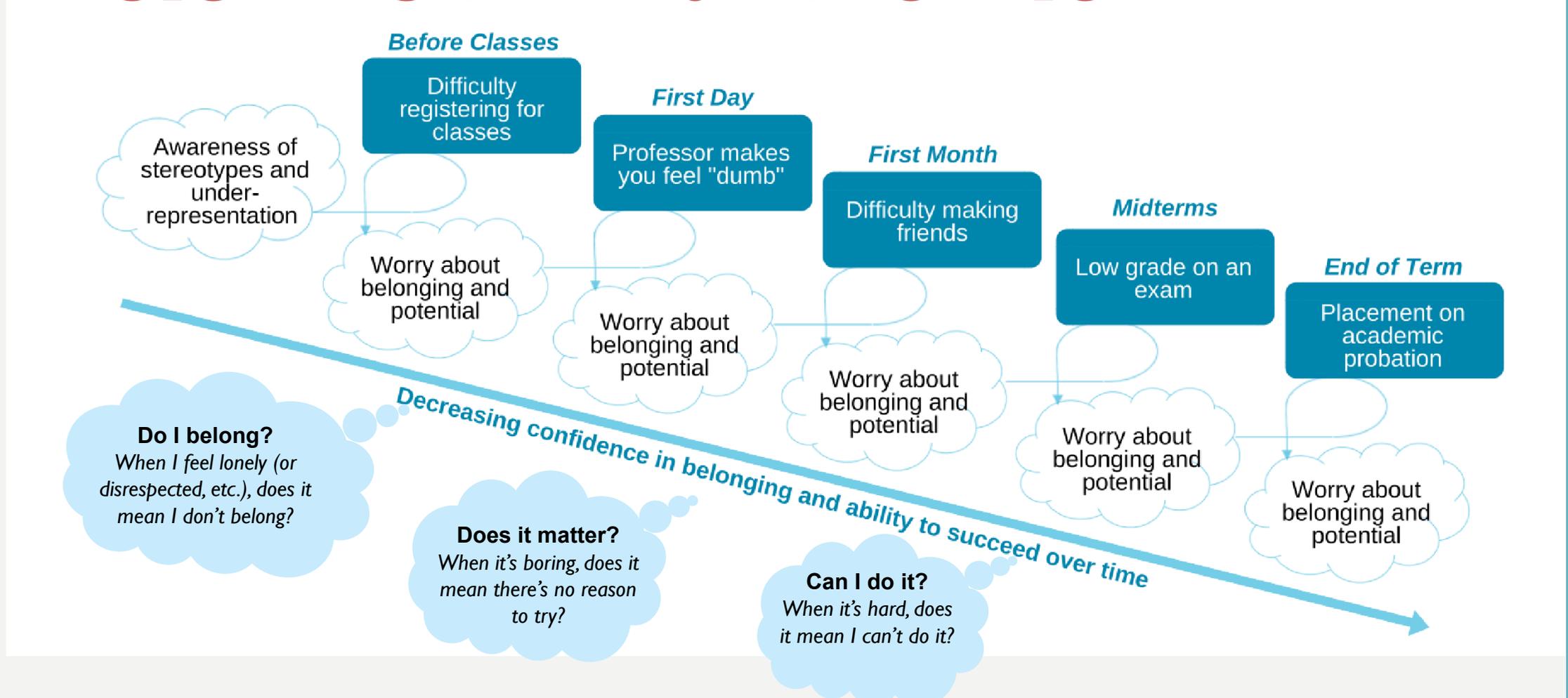
Source: Murphy, Yeager, Walton, & Logel. (2017). Mapping the Role of Psychological Friction on College Students' Worries About Belonging and Potential Throughout their Academic Trajectory.

BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT YOUR EXPECTATIONS AND THE REASONS FOR THEM

Transparency → Navigational Capital

- Navigational Capital (def): The knowledge, skills and habits of mind required to effectively navigate the complex expectations and culture of college

- College privileges students whose backgrounds align with white, western, middle and upper-class culture in many invisible and visible ways

- Students whose cultures of origin do not include significant experience with the culture of college benefit from cultural navigators – faculty, staff and peers who serve as translators, allies and advocates
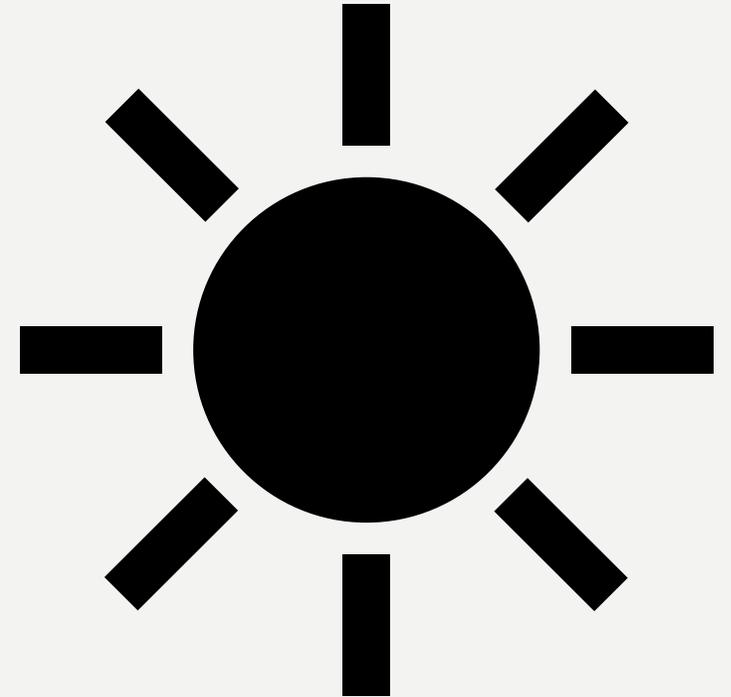
Winkelmes, 2017

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPARENCY IN THE FIRST WEEKS

- On the first day, explain how the course will work – when and how students are expected to engage (face to face and online)
  - Make sure to explain **_why_** (e.g., video share during synchronous online classes)
- Walk students through any tech that you will require them to use
  - e.g., Collaborate Ultra; Microsoft teams breakout rooms or notes pages
- Pay special attention to transparency in first year and gateway courses

STUDENT FIXED VS. GROWTH MINDSET AND THE IMPACT ON LEARNING

See: Student Experience Research Network
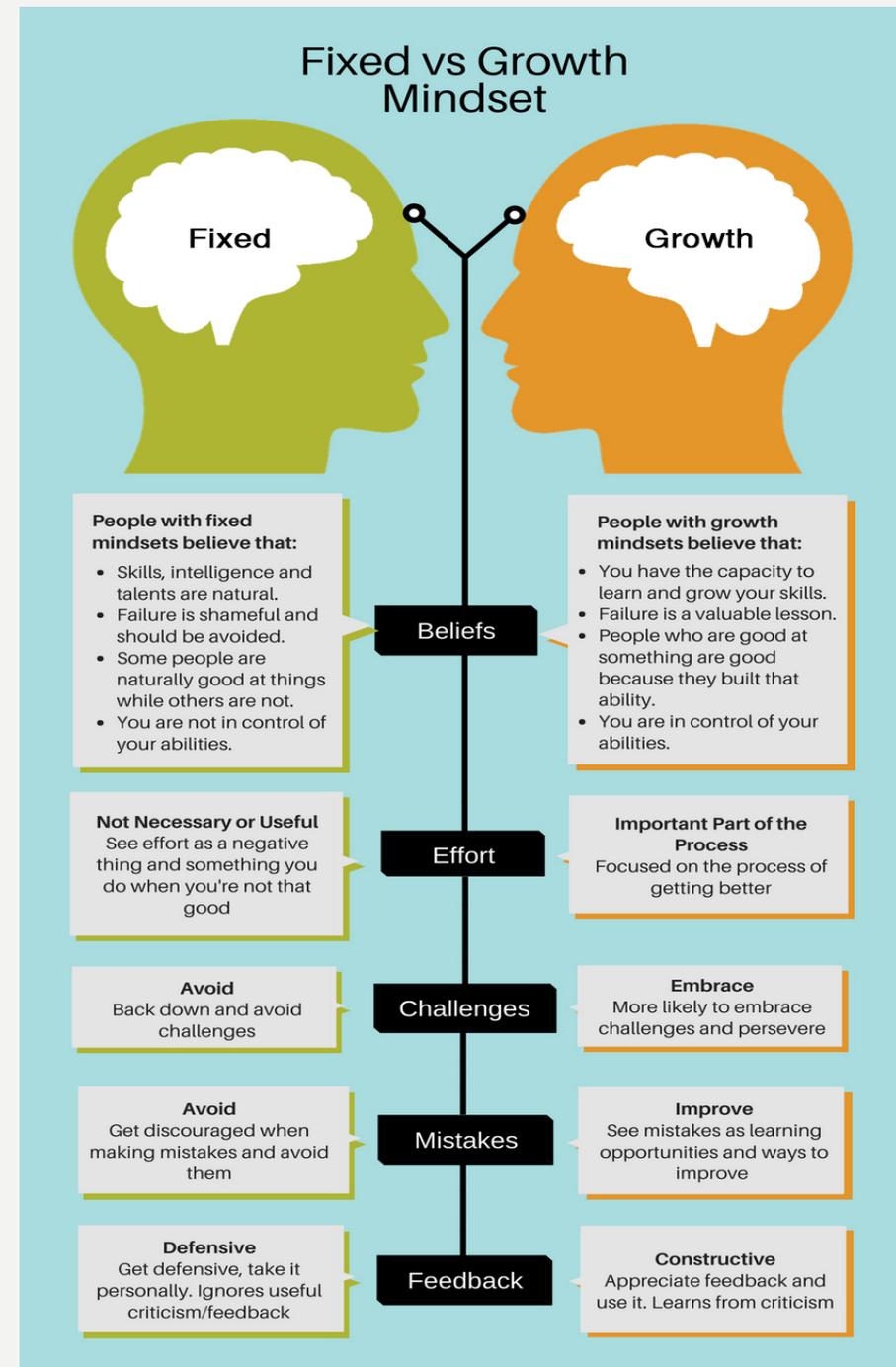
INSTRUCTOR GROWTH VS. FIXED MINDSET

When an instructor has a more fixed mindset about students' capacities to succeed:

- Overall course grades are lower
- Racial achievement gaps are <u>twice as high</u>
- Students report more negative experiences in the class, and more negative impact of instructor on motivation to succeed

Instructor mindset is a **stronger predictor of student achievement** than instructor: *level of teaching experience, tenure status, age, gender, race/ethnicity*

Canning, Muenks, Green & Murphy, 2019

CULTIVATE A GROWTH MINDSET ABOUT YOUR STUDENTS

1. Acknowledge the impact of systemic and institutional biases, and our own blind spots

2. Recognize that all students come to college with strengths that can support success

3. Take a growth-focused perspective on teaching and learning

   - ✓ Believe that success is the product of effort and appropriate resources supporting learning
   - ✓ Look to build on student assets, as opposed to remedy deficits
   - ✓ Continuously message your growth mindset to students

E.G., PROVIDE FREQUENT, FORMATIVE, AND WISE FEEDBACK TO PROMOTE SENSE OF BELONGING, GROWTH MINDSET & TRANSPARENCY

- Students benefit from feedback that provides:
  - Frequent, low stakes assessments that provide information on current performance and reflects tasks required in higher-stakes assessments
  - Concrete suggestions for improvement
- Goal: Give students valid and reliable data on current state, that predicts future outcomes if current trajectory maintained, and provides feedback that supports growth
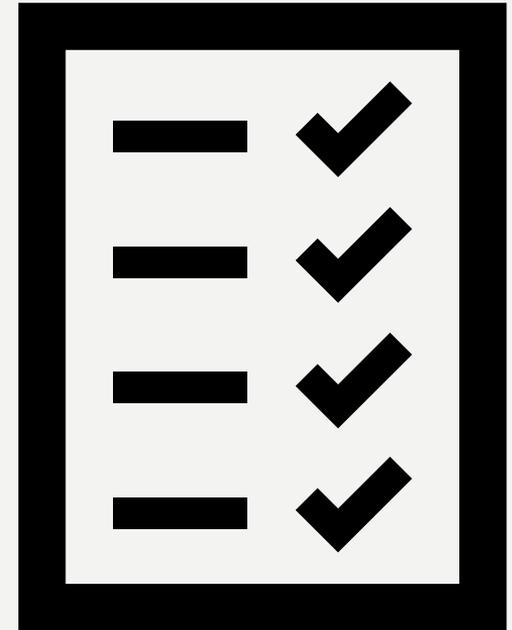
E.G., CRITICALLY INTERROGATE YOUR DATA

- Disaggregate your DFW rates
- Use frequent, anonymous feedback on student learning and experiences in the class
- Examine grades on individual assignments – who is completing, doing well on, quizzes vs. exams vs. essays vs. homework?
  - E.g., Are some students earning lower grades on homework to be completed over weekends vs. during the week?
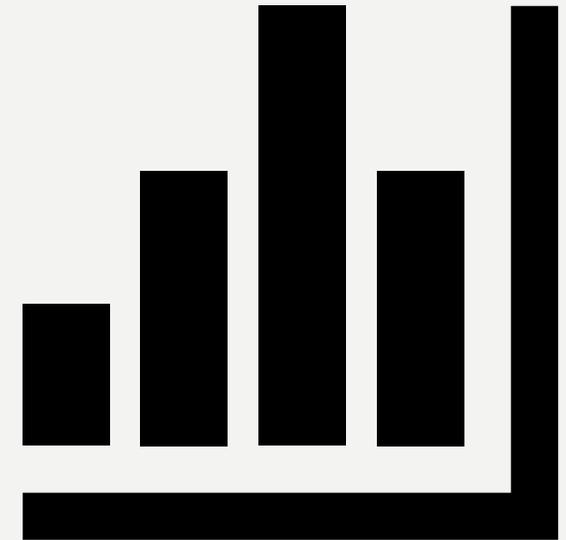
E.G., CRITICALLY INTERROGATE YOUR POLICIES & PRACTICES

For EVERY course policy, practice or assignment under consideration, ask these questions:

➤ Who, by race or ethnicity, socio-economic status, or first-generation status will benefit most from this policy or practice?

➤ In what ways could this policy or practice disadvantage historically underserved students?

E.G., CRITICALLY EXAMINE THE MESSAGES YOU COMMUNICATE

➢In your syllabus

➢In your assignments

➢In your email communications

➢In your Blackboard course shell

EXAMINE YOUR COURSE FOR MESSAGES ABOUT THE VALUE OF STUDENTS' RACIAL/ETHNIC, SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS

- Does your syllabus acknowledge the value of the background and experiences that all students bring to the learning experience?

- Does your course include readings, activities and assignments that are culturally relevant and inclusive (e.g., incorporate issues of race, gender, language, sexuality, disability) to show a diversity of perspectives and lived experiences?

- Does your course include assignments or discussion topics that allow students to share and draw upon their experiential knowledge and/or knowledge of their communities?

- Does your course include topics and assignments on the real-world problems and issues facing the communities or cultural groups from which students come?
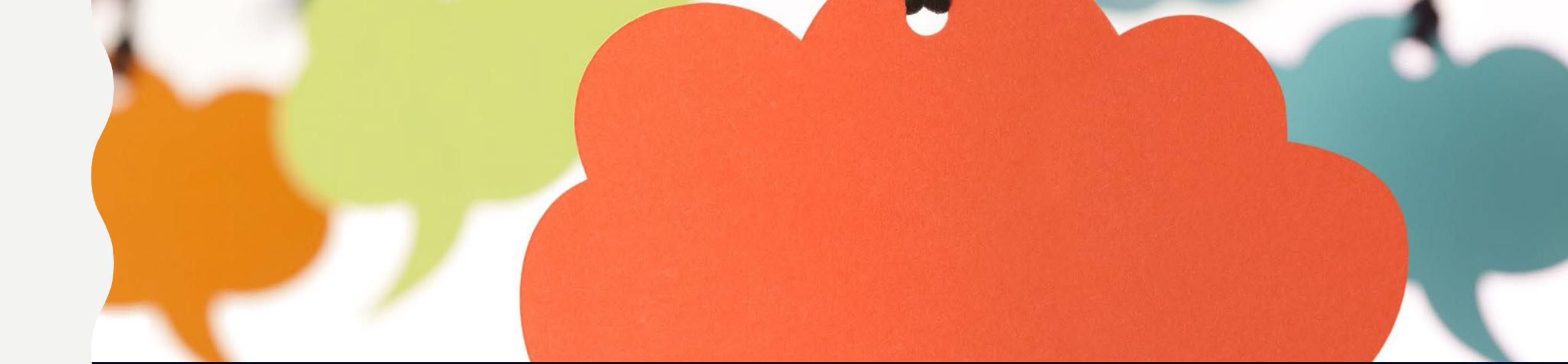
KNOW YOUR RESOURCES

STUDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES

Center for Success Coaching

Learning Enhancement Center

Rocket Solution Central - one-stop service location for assistance with financial aid, student account and registration questions

Food Pantries

Rocket Emergency Aid

Rocket Care Report – to report concerns about a student's safety or well-being

Student Disability Services

Student "How-To" Page - https://www.utoledo.edu/success/how-to/

EARLY ALERT TOOLS

Attendance Tracking

- Completed by Census date
- Must respond for each student, or will be recorded as not-attending
- For more info: https://www.utoledo.edu/offices/provost/docs/FAQs-Particpation_Attendnace-Tracker_FINAL_18May2021.pdf

Starfish Early Alert

- Report on high academic course concerns or outstanding performance kudos in early weeks of term
- Can raise Flags or Referrals at any point in the term
- For more info: https://www.utoledo.edu/offices/provost/starfish/faculty.html

Midterm Grade Reports

- Completed between weeks 6 and 8 of term, in Banner (same process as recording final grades)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF TEACHING

For additional resources in support of your teaching, visit the Teaching Center website

To learn more about equity-minded teaching, consider participating in the Equity Champions community of practice

To read more about the topics covered in this workshop, view this Resource List

What one idea will you try in your fall classes and why?

What questions has this webinar raised for you? What will you next do to learn more?

How can we help?

FINAL REFLECTION OPPORTUNITY

Contact me!

Denise Bartell, PhD

Associate Vice Provost for Student Success

University Hall 5080

419-530-8264

Denise.Bartell@utoledo.edu