

PARTNERSHIP FOR COLLEGE COMPLETION

Accelerating action to close the graduation gap

**National Louis University
Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative
EQUITY PLAN**

July 2020

Executive Summary

Introduction

National Louis University's (NLU) Equity Plan is designed to advance the Undergraduate College's vision to be a national leader in driving equity in bachelor's degree attainment and employment. As a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), serving majority low-income (73%), underrepresented minorities (52% Latinx, 21% African-American), and predominantly first-generation college-goers (72%), the Undergraduate College (UGC) was designed to address the barriers to college access and completion. The key tenets of our undergraduate model include: affordability; flexible and convenient scheduling; broad access admissions requirements; clear course pathways to reduce time to degree; active and personalized classroom experiences through a flipped/blended model; holistic, data-informed support with personalized coaching; and embedded career preparation.

Although our model for undergraduate education addresses many of the systemic and institutional factors contributing to the gap in bachelor's degree attainment, we also know that targeted strategies are needed to address the unique needs of individual populations of students. This Equity Plan focuses on specific initiatives beyond our core model to address the gaps in degree completion for African-American, Latinx, and low-income students.

The initial equity planning process involved many college stakeholders. The Office of Institutional Research and UGC's Analytics department analyzed student success data, disaggregated by ethnicity, income, and gender to identify the areas of greatest need. Faculty and staff across the institution completed the Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT), a self-assessment survey developed by Achieving the Dream (ATD). The tool is based on seven capacities determined an institution needs to improve undergraduate student success and build a student-focused culture. Additionally, over 75 individuals participated in an ICAT debrief session to discuss the results and inform the contents of the Equity Plan. In addition, University-wide administration of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion survey through Promise54 to assess the NLU's culture and climate was also used in the development of the Plan.

Current State

Prior to 2015, at the undergraduate level, National Louis University served a predominately transfer student population, where students enroll at NLU with anywhere between a few college credits to an associate's degree. Over the last five years, disparities in 4-year graduation rates between African American, White, and Latinx students for the transfer population have steadily increased. At the same time, disparities in 4-year graduation rates between Pell and Non-Pell students have decreased, with no significant difference in outcomes for our last two cohorts.

In the last few years, as the first-time freshmen student population has grown, we have seen significant disparities in leading indicators, such as first year credit attainment, between both African-American, Latinx, and White students and Pell vs. Non-Pell students.

Future Vision

Based on the strategies outlined in this plan, we have set ambitious goals to not only increase overall bachelor's degree attainment for both our transfer and first-time freshmen populations, but to also narrow or completely eliminate the gap in 6-year bachelor's degree attainment rates between African-American, Latinx, and White students and Pell and Non-Pell students. For our transfer student population, we will continue to see equitable outcomes between Pell and Non-Pell students while raising the overall 6-year graduation rate to 76%. In addition, we have set goals to eliminate the 6-year degree attainment gap between Latinx and White students and narrow the gap between African-American and White students to less than a 2% margin.

For first-time freshmen, we have set goals on leading indicators, such as credit attainment and annual persistence, in the effort to build towards completely eliminating the degree attainment gap between African-American, Latinx, and White students and Pell vs. Non-Pell students with a 6-year bachelor's degree attainment rate of 60% overall and across target populations.

Institutional Strategies

Over the past several years, NLU has implemented several promising initiatives, such as academic support for English Language Learners, peer mentoring support for men of color, and professional development around culturally relevant instruction, that will be expanded in this plan in order to make gains towards closing the degree attainment gap. In addition, NLU will implement new initiatives to address the specific needs of our African-American, Latinx, and low-income students. Targeted strategies are:

- *Empowerment and Community Building for Young Men and Women of Color:* We will expand our peer mentoring program, Eagle Brotherhood, for men of color and create a new female focused program, Exuberance, to promote retention and academic success through community building and mentoring, social-emotional learning and leadership. The initiative will aim to serve over 50% of African-American male and female first-time freshmen and contribute to reduce the gap in first-year credit attainment.
- *Faculty Professional Development on Culturally Responsive Classrooms – Restorative Practices:* We will provide training to faculty on creating culturally responsive classrooms and implementing restorative justice strategies in order to improve relationships between faculty and students of color, create safe classroom spaces, and contribute to improved attendance and academic performance of students.
- *Building a Culture of Inclusion in the Student Experience:* We will strengthen students' sense of belonging at NLU by enhancing the physical space, activities, and experiences

provided for students as a Minority Serving Institution and a Hispanic Serving Institution through the new multi-cultural resource center and Centro de Excelencia at NLU. This will include increasing the representation of students' cultural heritage on campus, meaningful experiences that promote inclusion on campus, and intentional events to promote equity focused dialogue between faculty, staff, and students.

- *Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for Serving English Language Learners:* We will improve our support to English Language Learners through dedicated specialists and curricular improvements to address the unique needs of non-native speakers, contributing to increased success in English Gateway courses and first year retention.
- *Holistic Student Wellness and Basic Needs Insecurities Support:* We will centralize and expand health and wraparound supports for low-income students, including increasing access to mental health counseling, connections to community-based partners offering legal and social services, and supports to address housing/food insecurities. Goals for this initiative include increases to retention for students who are accessing services as basic needs are addressed.
- *Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Process Revision:* We will revise our current practices for students who are at-risk of having their financial aid suspended to reduce the barriers for low-income, first-generation students to successfully access and appeal for aid. Goals for the strategy include increasing the proportion of students who are able to pay for college and continue enrollment.
- *NLU Tuition Completion Program:* We will provide NLU Tuition Completion scholarships for low-income students in their Junior or Senior year who are on-track to graduate but may experience unexpected financial hardship that prevents degree completion. This strategy will contribute to increased persistence and graduation rates across both first-time and transfer students.
- *Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty and Staff:* This is an institutional strategy that will impact all students. NLU will increase efforts to source, attract, hire, and retain diverse candidates to better reflect the community it serves. Strategy includes developing a leadership academy for mid-level managers to create a culture of growth and learning, and improve managers' skills in leading and developing their teams.

Evaluation Plan

NLU has created a comprehensive evaluation plan in order to assess the impact of the strategies outlined above. Each strategy has a set of key metrics or performance indicators representing both implementation and outcome measures and drawing on qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluation plan will assist in tracking our progress on program participation and service utilization in order to evaluate if the strategies were implemented with fidelity. Evaluation data will also be used to measure the impact on the target populations and continuously improve the initiatives each year based on learnings.

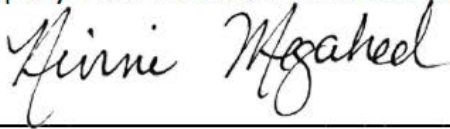
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Signature Page

National Louis University Equity Plan: 2020 - 2025

This Equity Plan has been endorsed by the following members of our University community:



[Date] August 14, 2020

Nivine Megahed, President



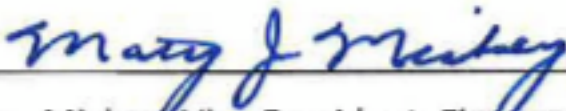
[Date] August 14, 2020

Scott C. Smith, Board of Trustees



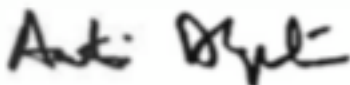
[Date]

Saib Othman, Provost



[Date] 7/20/2020

Marty Mickey, Vice President, Finance



[Date] 07/17/2020

Aarti Dhupelia, Vice President, Undergraduate Education and Dean, Undergraduate College



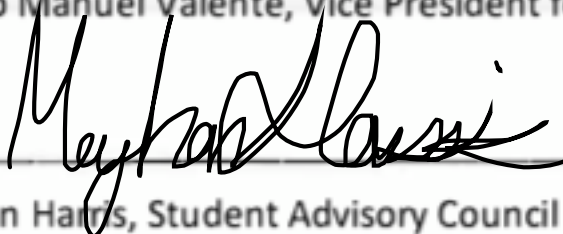
[Date] 07/20/2020

Stephen Neer, Vice Provost of Advising and University Registrar



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[Date] 08/04/2020

Meghan Harris, Student Advisory Council and Student Ambassador

1: Introduction

1a: ILEA Overview

Despite improvements in high school graduation and college matriculation rates for Illinois students, there are wide and persistent gaps in college completion rates especially for low-income, first-generation students, and students of color. The launch of the **Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA)** initiative marks a major step forward for 25 two-year and four-year public and private non-profit colleges and universities from northeastern Illinois and across the state who are committing to eliminate racial and socio-economic achievement gaps by 2025, while aggressively increasing completion rates on their campuses.

ILEA is the signature initiative of the Partnership for College Completion (PCC), a non-profit organization founded in 2016 to catalyze and champion policies, systems, and practices that ensure all students can graduate from college and achieve their career aspirations. With an initial focus on northeastern Illinois, PCC has set a goal to eliminate institutional achievement gaps in college degree completion for low-income, Latinx and African-American students in Illinois by 2025, establishing the region as a national leader in equity in attainment.

Beginning with this initial cohort, PCC will offer direct support and resources to the 25 colleges and universities who have volunteered to be members of ILEA. PCC will work alongside these partner colleges to jointly set commitments, identify appropriate evidence-based strategies to utilize on their campuses, and scale effective practices. PCC will support policy and practice change efforts that have the explicit goal of eliminating racial and socioeconomic degree completion gaps, while increasing institutional college completion rates overall.

By participating in ILEA, partners commit to a core set of principles:

- Colleges are responsible for graduating all of their degree-seeking students as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- All students can graduate with college degrees if they have the right information, tools, and supports.
- Achievement gaps between low-income, Black and Latinx students and their higher-income and White peers are unacceptable and should be eliminated.
- These efforts will be undertaken without sacrificing institutional quality or excellence or increasing admission standards.

The ILEA colleges will conduct a deep analysis of their institutional data, develop equity plans that contain annual growth targets, and report progress toward their goals, which will be shared publicly. The colleges will also work to identify obstacles students face and develop programs and policies that break down unnecessary barriers to college graduation.

The launch of ILEA follows a galvanizing 2017 PCC report, “[Unequal Opportunity in Illinois: A Look at Who Graduates College and Why It Matters](#),” which found that only 33.7 percent of African American students who start at four-year institutions earn bachelor’s degrees within six years – a rate 32.7 percentage points below that of their White peers. For Latinx students, 49.3 percent are earning degrees, a gap of 17.1 percentage points. The completion gap between low-income and wealthier students is also alarming: according to Advance Illinois, only 37 percent of low-income students graduate in six years while 75 percent of wealthier students do.

Increased and more equitable graduation outcomes across the diversity of our state’s higher education institutions benefits students, their families and the state of Illinois. A 3% increase in graduation rates is projected to produce \$1.7B increase in net earnings, \$132M increase in tax revenue, and \$35M in public system savings. The progress of the ILEA member colleges and universities will provide a set of learnings that the Partnership will document and share with practitioners and policymakers across Illinois, the region and the nation, establishing a path forward that will promote equity in college achievement.

For more information on ILEA, please visit: <http://partnershipfcc.org/ilea>.

1b: Institution Overview

National Louis University (NLU) offers bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees in over 60 fields including education, business, computer science, human services, counseling, culinary arts, and other community-serving and professionally-focused disciplines. NLU offers 19 bachelor’s programs, 30 master’s; 8 postgraduate Education Specialist (Ed.S.); 6 doctoral; and 17 fully online degree programs. In 2019, National Louis University served 9,111 undergraduate (4,146 -46%) and graduate (4,965 – 54%) students. Of those, 50% identified as a minority, 54% of undergraduate students were first in their family to go to college and 66% were Pell eligible. The average age was 28 for undergraduate and 37 for graduate students. Additionally, NLU has over 65,000 living graduates/alumni elevating their professions and communities through its locations in Illinois, in Tampa, Florida, and through online courses.

NLU is built on principles of urban education and accessibility, and the University continues its commitment to personalized instruction, a diverse student body, and learning communities in which students are active participants with faculty. NLU’s mission is to provide access to quality higher education that nurtures opportunity for students through innovative teaching, scholarship, community engagement, and service excellence. The ILEA plan fits quite well with NLU’s mission, vision, and values.

NLU’s mission is accomplished by a committed team of faculty and staff. Our goal is for all NLU students to have an educational experience characterized by academic excellence, one that

prepares/advances professionals – at the undergraduate and graduate levels – who will positively impact their communities.

What sets NLU apart is our clear vision and steadfast commitment to providing equity of access to higher education, driving equity in bachelor's degree attainment and employment, and promoting upward mobility for our graduates, often individuals from underserved populations.

The Pathways program at NLU launched in 2015 as a direct response to equity gaps in degree attainment locally and nationally. After observing the University of Chicago's To & Through report that described only 14% of Chicago Public Schools graduates going on to earn a bachelor's degree, and seeing similar trends nationally, NLU set out on a mission to design a new approach to undergraduate education that, instead of bemoaning so many students not being college-ready, sought to re-imagine our approach as an institution to be more student-ready. The goal was to design from the ground up a model that would directly address underrepresented (African American and Latinx, low income, and first generation) students' most common barriers to college access and completion, resulting in eliminating equity gaps in degree attainment in Chicago and providing a model for other institutions to replicate nationally. The degree program is affordable and broad access, and it provides personalized support to each student in a blended, flipped adaptive learning model, coupled with holistic wraparound supports, and undergirded by systematically data-informed and professionally-focused practices. The model was designed to give students what they need to be successful in academics, career, and personal life. Early outcomes suggest the model has been working, with enrollment growing from 85 students in Year 1 to nearly 1,200 students in Year 4, retention rates outperforming peer benchmarks, and NLU's first class of Pathways graduates achieving strong employment outcomes.

In 2018, NLU established the Undergraduate College (UGC) to extend the Pathways program's academic and student support model from not only serving only our freshmen and sophomore day-time full-time students in their general education courses, but also to reach all of our undergraduate students across their baccalaureate experience at NLU, including our campus-based transfer students.

The Undergraduate College at NLU, inclusive of both first-time and transfer students, continues to reach its target population of students at risk of not completing their bachelor's degree, with 2018-19 enrollment comprised of majority low-income (73%), 52% Latinx and 21% African-American, predominantly first-generation college-goers (72%), and students with an average ACT score of 17 and average high school GPA of 2.7. UGC full-time faculty consist of 11% African-American, 8% Latinx, and 78% White, with 58% female and 42% male ratios. UGC full-

time staff consist of 16% African-American, 31% Latinx, and 42% White, with 80% female and 20% male ratios.

In addition, in 2018, NLU acquired Kendall College, and was approved to offer all five of Kendall's undergraduate degree programs—baking & pastry, business, culinary arts, early childhood education, and hospitality management. Kendall College enrollment is also diverse, comprised of 16% Latinx, 18% African-American, and 18% international students, with 63% of domestic students Pell eligible.

1c: Equity Statement

National Louis University is committed to achieving a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment where every individual is heard, respected, valued and welcomed. Every day, we strive to create a community where everyone is empowered to live their full authentic selves... because we know, we are stronger together.

1d: Purpose of the Equity Plan

The ILEA Equity Plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for outlining how NLU will work toward closing gaps in degree attainment for low-income, first generation, African American, and Latinx students. Due to the persistence and size of equity gaps across colleges and universities in Illinois, this initiative prioritizes urgent action on equitable degree completion outcomes for students across racial and socioeconomic groups. Below, in Section 2 (Current State), please find the degree completion disparities between the following target student groups:

- African-American and White students
- Latinx students and White students
- Students receiving Pell grants and those not receiving Pell grants

The ILEA Equity Plan is intended to complement other institutional efforts to increase equity and degree completion.

1e: Campus Engagement Plan

When joining the Illinois Initiative for Equity in Attainment (ILEA), NLU formed a leadership team, with representation from across the Institution. In addition to guiding the development of the Equity Plan, the leadership team engaged the broader NLU community and additional stakeholders to provide input and feedback into the process. The table below outlines community and stakeholder engagement across the last year during the development of the Equity Plan.

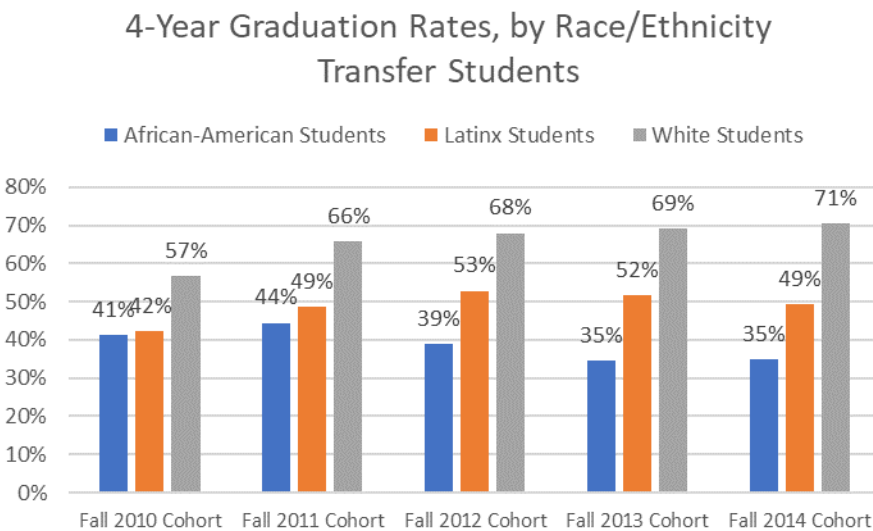
Table 1e: Community Engagement Events

Date	Event	Stakeholder Group	Purpose
February 28, 2019	Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT) Debrief	Representation from across the Institution: faculty (full and part time), staff, and administrators	Review and provide feedback on the ICAT results, including identifying the Institution's strengths, areas to improve, and actions to inform the Equity Plan
March 28, 2019	UGC Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT) Debrief	Entire UGC faculty and staff (success coaches, enrollment, career, data, HSI team, administrators)	Review and provide feedback on the ICAT results, including identifying the College's strengths, areas to improve, and actions to inform the Equity Plan
May 6, 2019 & May 10, 2019	Open Feedback Forum	Entire UGC faculty and staff (success coaches, enrollment, career, data, HSI team, administrators)	Following the debrief, faculty and staff had additional opportunity to comment and weigh in on the outcomes from the debrief session
June 2019	Noel Levitz Survey Administration	All UGC Students, with 23% of the day-time students and 20% of the transfer students responding.	Questions regarding equity were added to the annual Noel Levitz survey to gather feedback on students' experience at NLU in regards to equity
September 2019	Promise54 DEI Survey Administration	417 NLU Faculty and Staff completed the survey resulting in an over 70% response rate.	University-wide survey to assess NLU climate/current state in addressing issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Will be used to inform NLU strategic planning in Fall 2019-Winter 2020
October-November 2019	ILEA Plan collaboration with DEI Council	ILEA Core Team and DEI Council	Share ILEA Plan with University DEI Council to gather feedback in advance of finalizing plan and to collaborate on ideas to amplify efforts
January 2019	Student Focus Groups	All UGC Students, small groups representing 18-20% of each class.	Opportunity to further gather students' feedback on their experience at NLU with an equity lens
January 23, 2019	UGC Strategy Session	Open to all UGC faculty and staff	Share final draft of ILEA Equity Plan with UGC team for final feedback.

2. Current State

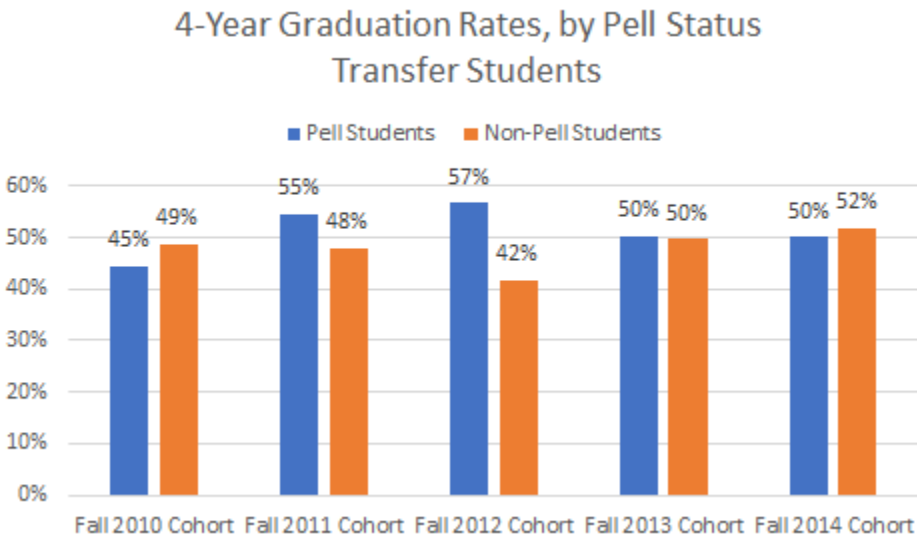
National Louis University is one of the most diverse universities in the Midwest. For the most recent Fall 2018 cohort, undergraduate students were 41% Latinx, 24% African American, and 21% White. 71% of undergraduate students were Pell Eligible and 65% were First-Generation college students. Although our student body is racially diverse, historical success rates across students' race/ethnicity have shown an increasing gap in graduation rates between African-American, Latinx, and White students.

4-Year Graduation Rates, by Race/Ethnicity



Prior to 2015, National Louis University served a predominately transfer student population, where students are transferring in having earned anywhere between a few college credits to an associate's degree from a community college. Over the last five years, the disparities in 4-year graduation rates between African American and White and Latinx students for the transfer population have steadily increased with each year. The gap in 4-year graduation rates between African American and White students more than doubled from 16 percentage points for the Fall 2010 Cohort to 36 percentage points in the most recent graduating class (Fall 2014 Cohort). The Latinx and White gap increased from 15 percentage points for the Fall 2010 Cohort to 22 percentage points for the most recent graduation class (Fall 2014 Cohort).

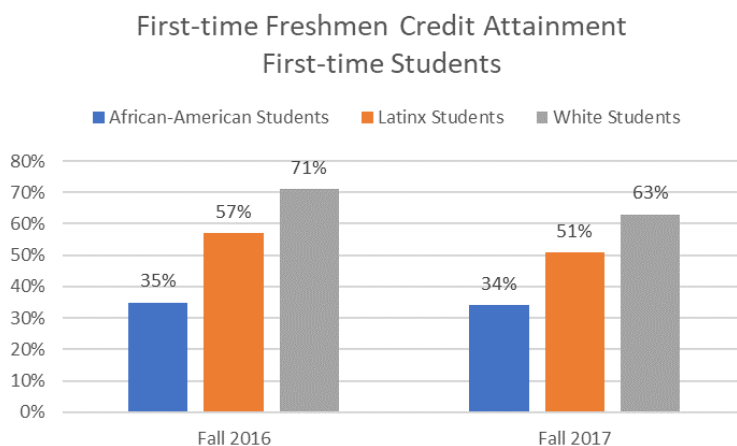
4-Year Graduation Rates, by Pell Status



Although we have seen a widening gap in degree completion across race, we have seen a different trend based on income status. Over the last five years, the disparities in 4-year graduation rates between Pell and Non-Pell students have fluctuated, with Pell Students graduating at equal or higher rates for the Fall 2011, Fall 2012 and Fall 2013 Cohorts. In the most recent graduating class, Non-Pell students had slightly higher 4-year graduation rates at 52% compared to Pell students at 50%.

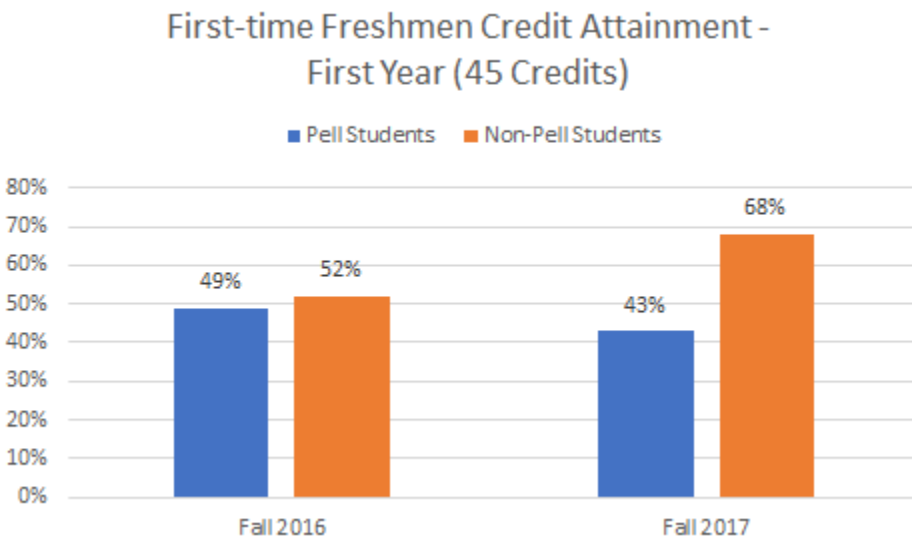
4-Year graduation rates for NLU's non-transfer (first-time, full-time, day-time) student population will not be available until Fall 2019 since the program began in 2015. However, early indicators of credit attainment from students' first and second year show similar gaps between African American, Latinx, and White students.

Credit Attainment Rates, by Race/Ethnicity



For the most recent cohort of freshmen with data (Fall 2017), we see a 29 percentage point gap in first year credit attainment (earning a minimum of 45 credits) between African American and White students and a 12 percentage point gap between Latinx and white students. These gaps are slightly smaller than the previous year's Fall 2016 cohort, showing slight improvement.

Credit Attainment Rates, by Pell Status



Unlike our transfer student population, for the most recent cohort of first-time freshmen with data (Fall 2017), we see a widening of the gap between Pell and Non-Pell Eligible students. There is a 25 percentage point gap in first year credit attainment (earning a minimum of 45 credits) between Pell and Non-Pell Eligible students, an increase from the prior year cohort, which saw only a 3 percentage point gap in credit attainment.

Given the historical and current gaps in degree attainment, NLU has targeted strategies and initiatives to help address the specific needs of these student populations.

Current Strategies

As prefaced in the Introduction, in 2015, NLU strategically designed its undergraduate experience with the goal to get thousands more first-generation, low-income, underrepresented students to and through college. Key components of the Undergraduate College include:

- **Affordability** – Priced at approximately \$10,000/year with course pathways (sequences) designed to lead to graduation in 4 years without spending additional tuition dollars on unnecessary courses;
- **Broad access admissions** – A high school GPA of 2.0 or above is the only admissions criteria; With this GPA level, students have demonstrated the ability to succeed with the right mentorship and support, and this approach maximizes NLU's ability to drive equity

in degree attainment as college enrollment and completion gaps are most significant for students with less than a 3.0 high school GPA. Test scores are intentionally not considered for admissions because research has shown they are not as predictive of college success as high school GPA;

- **Blended, flexible course schedule** – Accommodating the needs of students who must balance job and family commitments with school. Face-to-face attendance in class is required two full days per week. The rest of the coursework is completed online;
- **Utilizes adaptive learning courseware and flipped learning environment** – Offering personalized instruction for students, a majority of whom arrive below “college ready” in their academic preparation by adapting content to each student’s level of learning mastery. Students also experience a small class size (~30) with active classrooms and project-based learning;
- **Student Success Coaches** – Every student is assigned a Success Coach who meets with them regularly serving as their one-stop support system to ensure they are on-track every step of the way – from an academic, personal, and career standpoint. Coaches also assist students in accessing wrap-around supports, including additional tutoring, mental health counseling, and resources to address food and housing insecurity (e.g., the University’s food pantry, emergency funding, partnerships with local non-profit organizations offering student housing, etc.);
- **Embedded Career Preparation** – Provides every student with targeted career readiness training – through required experiential courses, a scaffolded set of career-related experiences (mock interviews/job shadows/etc.), required internships, and coursework focused on career readiness skills;
- **Data-driven/collaborative environment** – Instructional teams made up of faculty and Success Coaches and built around 100-115 student cohorts convene weekly to review student-level data both to recognize/support students’ academic/social gains and to use “early alert” warnings to plan interventions and get students back on-track.

While the very fabric of the College is designed to address barriers to College completion for low-income and underrepresented minorities, we also know that targeted strategies are needed to address the unique needs of individual populations of students. As such, NLU has recently implemented the following strategies.

2a: African-American Students

Eagle Brotherhood

After identifying that first-time freshmen African American males in NLU’s Undergraduate College are persisting at lower rates relative to other students in the program, the College launched the Eagle Brotherhood initiative in Fall 2018 to provide a strong community of peer mentors for young men of color to support their retention and graduation. Internal analysis has indicated lower rates of belonging to the NLU community for African-American students than

Latinx or white students. Furthermore, research has shown that students of color who connect with their campus culture, either through their peers, faculty, or staff have increased engagement and success¹.

As part of the initiative, NLU partnered with Youth Guidance (known for their groundbreaking Becoming a Man (BAM) program work with young men in middle/high school), to develop and launch a pilot program to serve NLU's students' unique needs. Throughout the last year, NLU has been building the program and internal capacity to self-manage the initiative beginning in Fall 2019.

Eagle Brotherhood Initiative Goals:

- Recruit male UGC students (participants) for the Eagle Brotherhood, securing their interest and commitment to participate in the program;
- Create a sense of belonging among the participants, most/all of whom are at risk for not persisting past the first year of college;
- Provide a safe space for participants to voice their questions and frustrations, and their progress and successes regarding their transition from high school to and through college;
- Promote academic achievement, leadership, and retention within the community.

Eagle Brotherhood Outcomes:

- Exceeded participation goal with 35 male participants (vs. goal of 30) in 2018-19;
- 97% Fall – Winter retention of participants;
- 53% average attendance rate for Eagle Brotherhood participants across all scheduled activities;
- Among freshmen and sophomores enrolled in Spring, students participating in Eagle Brotherhood (EB) have significantly lower on-pace rates than their African-American or Latinx male classmates not in EB, suggesting that EB is succeeding in targeting students at higher risk of not persisting;
- Freshman EB participants persisted to end of year at higher rates than their comparison group, suggesting that EB is building a sense of belonging and motivation that supports academic persistence of higher risk students.

2b: Latinx Students

HSI STEM

In 2016, National Louis University became recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). This designation is given to eligible institutions of higher education that have at least 25% Hispanic/Latinx full-time enrollment. As a recognized HSI, NLU prides itself in not only

¹ Museus, S. D. (2011). Generating ethnic minority student success (GEMS): A qualitative analysis of high-performing institutions. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 4*(3), 147-162.

reflecting itself as an HSI through student representation of over 40% Latinx, Hispanic, and Students of Color, but through our practices, policies, and programs.

As an HSI, in 2016, NLU was also awarded a 5-year Title III Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) grant from the Department of Education. The objectives of the HSI STEM program are to increase enrollment, retention and graduation of Latinx and other underrepresented student populations in STEM-related programming through targeted student support such as peer mentoring programs and appreciative advising and coaching models, all evidence-based models to support student success for underrepresented populations². NLU has focused the majority of this grant on incubating, launching, and expanding its new Computer Science and Information Systems (CSIS) bachelor's degree major, including targeted efforts to enroll and support Latinx students in the program.

HSI STEM Program Goals:

- Over the course of 5 years, the HSI STEM grant-supported CSIS major will enroll and serve over 100 students. At least 60 of these students will be NLU students, and the remaining will be at our grant collaborative partner, Morton College;
- The HSI STEM grant will increase year to year retention for Computer Science students to 75%;
- The HSI STEM grant will increase 6-year graduation rates for Computer Science students to 40%;
- Each year the HSI STEM grant will offer culturally relevant pedagogy training for STEM faculty and staff, and increase their understanding of culturally sustaining practices by 20%.

HSI STEM Current Outcomes:

- Developed a B.S. in CSIS articulation agreement with Morton College and City Colleges of Chicago
- Increased culturally relevant library resources
- On-track with enrollment targets with 20 students in the CSIS program in Year 1
- 75% retention rate of CSIS students
- Successfully delivered annual professional development series on culturally relevant teaching and coaching practices

English Language Learner Support

In addition to the HSI STEM program, NLU has also targeted academic support services to address unique needs of the Latinx population. One specific initiative is dedicated academic support for English Language Learners (ELL) based on feedback from faculty that supplemental

²Scrivener, S., & Coghlan, E. (2011). Opening doors to student success: A synthesis of findings from an evaluation at six community colleges (Policy Brief). New York: MDRC. Retrieved on May 23, 2016, from http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/policybrief_27.pdf

support was needed to provide instructional strategies for English learners. In the 2019-20 school year, the UGC employed part-time ELL specialists to work with students on our Wheeling campus on a weekly basis. These specialists participated in student success collaboration meetings with faculty and coaches and implemented interventions with ELL students in reading, writing and comprehension. They also offered embedded support in core English courses, working individually and in groups with students, collaborating seamlessly with the core teacher.

ELL Initiative Goals:

- Provide one-on-one and small group academic support to English Language Learners to increase student success in Gateway English courses.
- Build capacity of faculty to use best practice instructional strategies and interventions to support English Language Learners.

2c: Students Receiving Pell Grants

Given that a large majority of the student population (both first-time freshmen and transfer students) are low-income (Pell eligible), NLU has several initiatives beyond tuition affordability that are targeted at alleviating or reducing the financial burden of college.

Wraparound Support Services

One key component of the UGC is the offering of Wraparound Services, including an emergency fund, food pantry, mental health counseling and an affordable laptop. Students entering the University as first-time freshmen in a daytime sequence are eligible for a variety of services and funds to supplement the financial barriers they may encounter as a student. Students can request emergency funds (typically under \$100, but we have made exceptions), and within 48 hours, a decision is made and, if approved, funded. The most commonly granted funds include UPASS (public transportation card) replacements, laptop chargers, help with bills (car repairs to get to campus, doctor's office or background check for students studying education), school related supplies, laptop payments, etc. The emergency fund has also funded larger requests for students needing tuition if they aren't eligible for federal or state aid for a particular term or for a student needing a DACA renewal.

The food pantry is a "Little Free Pantry" that is open access and located at the Chicago and Wheeling campuses. Students are able to stop by at any time the campus is open and secure staples such as breakfast foods, snacks, pasta, canned goods, and toiletries. Additionally, all Student Success Coaches have a stock of lunch packs containing non-perishable lunch items that students can pick up if they don't have money for lunches on the days they are on campus.

We have found that our students have increasing mental health needs. To address these needs, NLU has partnered with Skylight Counseling Center to offer a variety of counseling resources. NLU students receive up to six (6) sessions at no charge. In addition, the Undergraduate College

has expanded services to offer drop-in counseling sessions. This provides students the ability to see a counselor in-between or after classes without making an appointment.

Another component to our Wraparound Services is providing students with an affordable laptop. Many of our students do not have access to a computer, or may not have sole use of a computer at home. Since our courses are blended, requiring students to complete online coursework, a computer is critical for academic success. We provide students with the option to provide a \$75 deposit for a laptop, and to pay the remaining balance quarterly as part of their tuition bill.

Wraparound Support Goals:

- Increase usage and support provided through the Emergency Fund, with 80% of students utilizing the emergency fund retained 1+ term after distribution.
- Establish self-service food pantry cabinets in Chicago and Wheeling.
- Provide students access to affordable mental health care, with a 75% take-up rate for drop-in counseling hours.
- Less than 5% of students begin the year without a laptop.

Wraparound Support Current Outcomes:

- 100% retention of students utilizing emergency funds for 1+ term after distribution of funds
- 72% of drop-in counseling hours filled at the Chicago campus and 64% at the Wheeling campus.
- Achieved less than 5% of students beginning the year without a laptop.

Last Dollar Scholarships

In order to assist students who are close to degree completion (defined as those within their last 30 quarter hours), NLU established a scholarship fund administered by the Provost Office, referred to as last dollar scholarships. One-time scholarships of up to \$1,000 can be awarded to students that are near graduation and who have a gap between their financial need and available financial aid. Students in this position are often those who have had a long journey towards degree completion, often exhausting their MAP and Pell eligibility, leading to their funding gap. Students are identified by their Success Coach, who collaborates with Student Finance to determine the amount needed to keep the student enrolled, and a scholarship is applied to assist with the balance.

Last Dollar Scholarship Goal:

- Increase retention and completion rates of students in financial need that are near graduation.

Last Dollar Scholarship Outcomes and Future Targets:

- The program, launched in the 2017-18 academic year, has seen 100% of recipients either graduating or remaining enrolled by Spring 2019.
- Maintain serving students through the program who are currently or have been Pell Eligible and at least 80% minority students.

Summary of Current State

Target initiatives to address the gaps between African American, Latinx, and White students and Pell and Non-Pell eligible students have only been implemented fairly recently, within the last several years and some as recently as this academic year. As such, the impacts of these specific strategies on degree completion rates are yet to be determined, although early indicators of success, as identified above for each initiative or program, are promising. Furthermore, given the recent acquisition of Kendall College, additional analysis and needs assessment will be conducted going forward in order to understand attainment trends and possible equity gaps that would need to be strategically addressed for Kendall's undergraduate culinary and hospitality students.

The recent initiatives described above, while having early indicators of success, will not alone eliminate the growing gaps seen in the transfer student population between racial groups and in the first-time freshman student population.

3. Future Vision

Goal

The goal of this equity plan and the Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative is to eliminate disparities in degree completion rates on our campus between African-American and White students, between Latinx and White students, and between low-income and higher income students (as indicated by Pell receipt).

Interim Benchmark Goals

The following tables represent a set of interim benchmark goals to monitor progress towards closing the gaps in degree completion attainment. Each table is disaggregated by African-American, Latinx, and White students, along with Pell and Non-Pell students. Goals were set based on current performance for prior year cohorts with the aim to narrow or close the disparities between sub-groups while meeting overall goals for the metric. All goals are set for the incoming fall cohorts beginning in Fall 2019, but contain at least one year of benchmark data based on the previous cohort(s).

The first interim benchmark metric is first term credit accumulation, defined as the percent of entering first-time freshman students earning at least 15 credits by the end of the term. Across the next five years, the goal is to narrow gaps between all subgroups within a 3% margin. African-American and Latinx students are currently outperforming White students; however, the goal will be to increase performance across all ethnicities.

Table 3a: Credits Accumulated First Fall

Cohort	Credits accumulated first fall					
	Overall	African-American Students	Latinx Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	71%	67%	73%	54%	70%	76%
Fall 2019	73%	69%	75%	60%	72%	77%
Fall 2020	75%	71%	77%	64%	74%	78%
Fall 2021	76%	73%	79%	68%	76%	79%
Fall 2022	78%	75%	81%	72%	78%	80%
Fall 2023	80%	77%	82%	76%	80%	81%
Fall 2024	82%	80%	83%	80%	82%	82%

The next interim benchmark is first year credit accumulation, defined as the percent of entering first-time freshman students earning at least 45 credits by the end of their first year enrolled. Similar to credits accumulated in the first term, we see a wide disparity between Pell and Non-

Pell students with our current Fall 2018 cohort, with the goal to close this gap within a 1% margin for our 2024 cohort. Similar to first-term credit accumulation, African-American and Latinx students are currently outperforming White students. Similar to income gaps, we have set goals for first year credit accumulation decrease the disparity in outcomes between all race/ethnicities within a 2% margin by 2024.

Table 3b: Credits Accumulated 1st Year

Cohort	Credits accumulated first year					
	Overall	African-American Students	Latinx Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	42%	33%	44%	31%	40%	54%
Fall 2019	46%	38%	48%	36%	44%	55%
Fall 2020	50%	43%	51%	41%	48%	56%
Fall 2021	53%	48%	54%	46%	52%	58%
Fall 2022	56%	53%	57%	51%	55%	60%
Fall 2023	59%	58%	60%	56%	59%	62%
Fall 2024	63%	62%	63%	61%	63%	64%

In addition to credit accumulation within the first year, we will also be measuring annual persistence, defined as the percent of entering fall freshman students that persist to the fall of their second year. Projections for the Fall 2018 cohort indicate a 13 percentage point gap between African-American and Latinx students, and a 5 percentage point gap between Pell and Non-Pell students. For the Fall 2024 cohort, the goal will be to narrow the gap between African-American and Latinx students and Pell and Non-Pell students to a 1% margin.

Table 3c: Fall 1 to Fall 2 Persistence

Cohort	Fall 1 to Fall 2 persistence					
	Overall	African-American Students	Latinx Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	62%	52%	65%	55%	61%	66%
Fall 2019	65%	56%	68%	60%	64%	68%
Fall 2020	68%	60%	71%	64%	67%	70%
Fall 2021	70%	64%	73%	68%	70%	72%
Fall 2022	73%	69%	76%	72%	73%	75%
Fall 2023	77%	74%	78%	76%	76%	78%
Fall 2024	79%	79%	80%	80%	79%	80%

After students' first year, we will be measuring credit accumulation by the end of the second year, defined as the percent of entering fall first-time freshman students that earn at least 90 credit hours by the end of their second year. Historical performance indicates large gaps between African-American and White students, African-American and Latinx students, Latinx and White Students, and between Pell and Non-Pell students. For the Fall 2024 cohort, the goal will be to narrow the gap between African-American, Latinx and White students within a 2% margin while increasing overall second year credit attainment to 55%.

Table 3d: Credits Accumulated by end of 2nd Year

Cohort	Credits accumulated by end of second year (at least 90)					
	Overall	African-American Students	Latinx Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	33%	25%	35%	50%	30%	50%
Fall 2019	37%	30%	39%	51%	34%	51%
Fall 2020	40%	35%	42%	52%	38%	52%
Fall 2021	44%	40%	45%	53%	42%	53%
Fall 2022	47%	45%	48%	54%	46%	54%
Fall 2023	51%	50%	51%	55%	50%	55%
Fall 2024	55%	54%	55%	56%	54%	56%

The last interim benchmark measured is the percent of fall first-time freshman students that persist to the fall of their 3rd year. Historical performance from the Fall 2017 cohort show a 22 percentage point gap between African-American and Latinx students, an 14 percentage point gap between Latinx and White Students, and a 22 percentage point gap between Pell and Non-Pell students. For the Fall 2024 cohort, the goal will be to narrow the gap between African-American, Latinx and White students and Pell and Non-Pell students within a 2% margin.

Table 3e: Persistence to Year 3

Cohort	Fall 1 to Fall 3 persistence					
	Overall	African-American Students	Latinx Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	53%	38%	57%	70%	50%	70%
Fall 2019	56%	43%	60%	70%	53%	70%
Fall 2020	59%	48%	62%	70%	56%	70%
Fall 2021	61%	53%	64%	70%	59%	70%
Fall 2022	64%	58%	66%	70%	62%	70%
Fall 2023	66%	63%	68%	70%	65%	70%
Fall 2024	69%	68%	70%	70%	68%	70%

Degree Attainment Goals

At the undergraduate level, National Louis University has historically served a majority transfer student population, and beginning in Fall 2015, the university began to significantly increase its first-time freshmen enrollment. The tables below break out degree attainment goals for our transfer student and first-time freshmen student populations beginning with the fall 2018 cohorts.

Table 3f: Transfer Students Degree in less than 4 years

For transfer students, there has been little disparity historically in degree attainment in less than 4 years between Pell and Non-Pell students. However, we have seen a gap between African-American, Latinx and White Students. With the fall 2024 cohort, we set goals to narrow the gap between African-American and White students to less than a 5% margin and completely eliminate the gap between Latinx and White students while increasing the overall degree attainment rate to 66%.

Cohort	Degree in less than 4 years					
	Transfer students					
	Overall	African-American Students	Latinx Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	47%	35%	44%	67%	46%	48%
Fall 2019	50%	40%	48%	67%	49%	50%
Fall 2020	53%	45%	52%	68%	52%	53%
Fall 2021	56%	50%	56%	69%	56%	56%
Fall 2022	60%	55%	60%	70%	60%	60%
Fall 2023	63%	60%	65%	70%	63%	63%
Fall 2024	66%	65%	70%	70%	66%	66%

Table 3g: Transfer Student 4 Year Grad Rate

Historically we have seen an increasing gap between African-American, Latinx and White students in 4-year graduation rates. With the fall 2024 cohort, we have set goals to eliminate the disparities between Latinx and White students while increasing the overall 4-year degree attainment rate to 75%. Similar to degree attainment in less than 4 years, there has historically been little disparity in 4-year graduation rates between Pell and Non-Pell students.

Cohort	Degree in 4 years					
	Transfer students					
	Overall	African-American Students	Latinx Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	58%	51%	57%	72%	58%	58%
Fall 2019	60%	55%	59%	73%	60%	60%
Fall 2020	62%	59%	62%	73%	62%	62%
Fall 2021	65%	63%	65%	74%	65%	65%
Fall 2022	68%	67%	68%	74%	68%	68%
Fall 2023	72%	71%	72%	75%	72%	72%
Fall 2024	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%

Table 3h: Transfer Student 5 Year Grad Rate

Historical data shows approximately a 2% increase between our transfer student 4-year graduation rates and 5 year rates across all subgroups. Building off of our goals for the 4-year Graduation Rates, by the fall 2024 cohort, we have set goals to eliminate the disparities between Latinx and White students while increasing the overall 5-year degree attainment rate to 77%. When reviewing historical data, we have seen little to no increase for our transfer students between the 5 year and 6-year graduation rates.

Cohort	Degree in 5 years					
	Transfer students					
	Overall	African-American Students	Latinx Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	60%	53%	59%	74%	60%	60%
Fall 2019	62%	57%	61%	75%	62%	62%
Fall 2020	64%	61%	64%	75%	64%	64%
Fall 2021	67%	65%	67%	76%	67%	67%
Fall 2022	70%	69%	70%	76%	70%	70%
Fall 2023	74%	73%	74%	77%	74%	74%
Fall 2024	77%	77%	77%	77%	77%	77%

Table 3i: First-time Freshmen 4 Year Grad Rate

The first cohort of NLU's freshman population, from Fall 2015, graduated in the Spring of 2019, so there is little historical data available to compare trends for this population. We are projecting the 4-year graduation rate based on credit attainment for future cohorts, with little to no gap between African-American and Latinx students for our first class; however, we are projecting over a 20 percentage point gap between Pell and Non-Pell students for our first class. From preliminary credit attainment data, we do project disparities in 4-year graduation

rates between African-American, Latinx, and White students increasing in our currently enrolled cohorts (Fall 2016, Fall 2017, and Fall 2018) and the Pell vs. Non-Pell disparity decreasing.

Through efforts described within this plan, we are setting goals to decrease these disparities across the subsequent incoming cohorts to less than a 2% margin between African-American, Latinx and White Students and the gap between Pell and Non-Pell students to a 1% margin.

Cohort	Degree in 4 years					
	First-time students					
	Overall	African-American Students	Latinx Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	26%	18%	28%	34%	26%	29%
Fall 2019	30%	23%	31%	35%	30%	31%
Fall 2020	34%	28%	36%	39%	34%	35%
Fall 2021	38%	33%	39%	42%	38%	39%
Fall 2022	42%	38%	42%	45%	41%	43%
Fall 2023	45%	43%	46%	48%	45%	47%
Fall 2024	49%	48%	50%	50%	49%	50%

The following two tables (Table 3j: First-time Freshmen 5 Year Grad Rate and Table 3k: First-time Freshmen 6 Year Grad Rate) detail our 5- and 6- year graduation rate goals for cohorts through 2024. Current projections for enrolled cohorts indicate only slight increases between 5- and 6- year graduation rates. Goals are set to increase our 6-year graduation rate to 60% while eliminating all disparities between African-American, Latinx and White Students as well as Pell and Non-Pell Students.

Table 3j: First-time Freshmen 5 Year Grad Rate

Cohort	Degree in 5 years					
	First-time students					
	Overall	African-American Students	Latinx Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	39%	26%	44%	50%	38%	44%
Fall 2019	42%	31%	47%	52%	41%	46%
Fall 2020	45%	36%	50%	54%	44%	48%
Fall 2021	48%	41%	53%	55%	47%	50%
Fall 2022	51%	46%	55%	56%	50%	52%
Fall 2023	54%	51%	57%	57%	54%	55%
Fall 2024	58%	56%	59%	59%	58%	58%

Table 3k: First-time Freshmen 6 Year Grad Rate

Cohort	Degree in 6 years					
	First-time students					
	Overall	African-American Students	Latinx Students	White Students	Pell Students	Non-Pell Students
Fall 2018	41%	28%	44%	53%	40%	46%
Fall 2019	44%	35%	47%	54%	43%	49%
Fall 2020	48%	40%	50%	55%	47%	52%
Fall 2021	51%	45%	53%	56%	51%	55%
Fall 2022	54%	50%	56%	57%	54%	57%
Fall 2023	57%	55%	58%	58%	57%	59%
Fall 2024	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%

4. Institutional Strategies

As identified in the current state, several promising initiatives, such as academic support for English Language Learners, peer mentoring support for men of color, and professional development around culturally relevant strategies, have been implemented in recent years that NLU will expand upon in the next five years in order to make gains towards closing the degree attainment gap. In addition, NLU will implement new initiatives to remove barriers for college completion, including additional programming targeted toward developing students' cultural identity and sense of belonging, increasing access to health services, and revising institutional policies and practices that negatively impact Pell-Eligible students.

4a: African American Students

Strategy 1: Eagle Brotherhood (Expansion of Existing Strategy) and Exuberance (New Strategy)

Purpose: The Eagle Brotherhood is a peer mentoring program designed to promote retention and success of men of color through community building and mentoring, and social-emotional learning within the lens of masculinity. EXUBERANCE is an intentional sisterhood created to provide a brave space for female-identifying students at National Louis University, to improve school culture, climate, and performance within the female-identifying population.

Rationale: Research has shown that students of color who connect with their campus culture, either through their peers, faculty, or staff have increased engagement and success³. The Eagle Brotherhood initiative builds upon early successes of the pilot launched in 2018-19 by expanding membership to reach more men of color and programming offered to build stronger connections and sense of community.

Intended Impact: NLU will increase the community and belonging for men and women of color on campus, providing the relationships and professional growth to be successful in college and career. This strategy is projected to serve 54% of the African American male 1st Year students and 30% of the African American female 1st Year students.

The following goals have been set for the Eagle Brotherhood initiative:

- Increase participation from 35 male participants in 2018-19 to 45 male participants in the program during FY19-20 and 60 in subsequent years with a focus on recruiting first year (freshman) students.

³ Museus, S. D. (2011). Generating ethnic minority student success (GEMS): A qualitative analysis of high-performing institutions. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 4(3), 147-162.

- Eliminate Term to Term and Annual Retention gap for participants, maintaining above 90% Fall – Winter retention of participants and meeting or exceeding average class goals for annual retention.
- Reduce gap in credit attainment with participants on pace to graduate in 4 years meeting overall class goals each year.
- Continued engagement throughout the initiative with 55% average attendance rate for Eagle Brotherhood participants across all scheduled activities.

The following goals have been set for the EXUBERANCE Initiative:

- Increase participation from 35 female participants in 2019-20, with 10 additional students each year in the program with a focus on recruiting first year (freshman) students.
- Eliminate Term to Term and Annual Retention gap for participants, maintaining above 90% Fall – Winter retention of participants and meeting or exceeding average class goals for annual retention.
- Reduce gap in credit attainment with participants on pace to graduate in 4 years meeting overall class goals each year.
- 55% average attendance rate for EXUBERANCE participants across all scheduled activities.

Strategy 2: Faculty Development on Culturally Responsive Classrooms – Restorative Practices (Expansion of Existing Strategy)

Purpose: In order to create safe and inclusive classrooms, faculty will participate in a professional learning series in which they will engage with concepts and models of creating culturally responsive classrooms and implementing restorative justice strategies. Faculty will attend additional training focused on race and schools to build foundational knowledge of how racism and white supremacy have shaped the mainstream American educational model. This strategy will improve relationships between faculty and students; deepen trust and understanding; and ultimately create safe classrooms for students to feel comfortable in their identities and with their instructors.

Rationale: Through internal analysis, African American students were disproportionately likely to be identified as having a classroom behavior concern. While only 21% of Undergraduate day-time students are African American, 62% of students who were identified for classroom behavior concerns were African American. Generally, restorative justice in higher education settings has been used successfully in disciplinary proceedings (student misconduct, academic dishonesty, etc.). Research further supports the benefits of these practices on the relationships

between teachers and diverse students⁴. Applied to culturally responsive pedagogy, the following themes that accompany Restorative Justice practices would benefit faculty as they work to improve learning and implement restorative and supportive academic and classroom behavioral interventions:

- Building a classroom community culture based on relationships.
- Identifying biases and triggers.
- Use of social-emotional learning opportunities.
- Supporting self-esteem and the development of positive academic mindset.
- Creating access and equity, responsive to the different ways that students see and operate in the world.
- Recognizing the role that students' sociopolitical contexts, non-cognitive factors and personal situations play out in their academic performance and behavior.

Intended Impact: This strategy will have a positive impact on classroom culture and faculty-student relationships in order to reduce barriers to student success. Once implemented, this strategy has the potential to impact the entire student population, though we anticipate a stronger impact on African American students. The following goals have been identified for faculty development on Culturally Responsive Classrooms – Restorative Practices:

- Increase in faculty utilizing community building and restorative practices, especially when faced with classroom challenges.
- 90%+ full-time faculty attendance at four required culturally responsive classrooms / restorative practice trainings.
- 90% faculty satisfaction in required culturally responsive classrooms / restorative practice trainings.
- 85% of African American students report a positive, supportive, and inclusive classroom environment as measured in our annual student survey.

4b: Latinx Students

Strategy 1: Building a Culture of Inclusion in the Student Experience (New Strategy)

Purpose: Intentional integration of a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens into NLU's physical space, student experience/student life events, and academic support services will support student identity development, academic success, and retention while building students' sense of belonging on campus. Integrating a DEI lens will ensure culturally relevant workshops, trainings, events, resources, and academic support services for students. To that end, NLU will launch a multi-cultural resource center at NLU to recognize and celebrate NLU as a Minority Serving Institution (MSI), and this center will also complement the Centro de Excelencia at NLU

⁴ Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., and Gerewitz, J. (2013) " The Promise of Restorative Practices to Transform Teacher-Student Relationships and Achieve Equity in School Discipline," *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*: Vol. 26 : Iss. 4 , Pages 325-353.

which will deliver our Title V grant objectives and advance our distinctive role as an exemplary career and community focused Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). The MSI resource center will sponsor programs and resources promoting Latinx and African American student success, such as the Black Student Union and the First-Generation Honor Society (Alpha Alpha Alpha). The Centro de Excelencia will house both the HSI Undergraduate STEM program, as described above, and our new CLAVE Graduate Student Institute, a support center for graduate students funded through Department of Education's Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans grant program. Finally, the multi-cultural resource center will sponsor additional initiatives to build a culture of inclusion, such as a hub of information about all diverse cultural events on campus, and student and employee learning opportunities such as NLU's new Social Justice Institute.

Rationale: As an MSI and HSI, it is important to NLU that Latinx and African American students see themselves and their cultures represented in the environment, activities, and supports offered through the University. Research has shown the positive impact of having physical space that reflects the cultural backgrounds of students, showing that dedicated spaces can reduce isolation among students of color⁵ and that the uniformity of many campus buildings with neutral colors or even the display of College Presidential portraits can “reinforce feelings of exclusion”⁶. In addition, recent NLU data has shown lower on-campus class attendance for undergraduate African-American students, highlighting the need for NLU to build a more welcoming environment and a stronger sense of community for African American students. Drawing upon student feedback, research, and case studies from other institutions, NLU's multi-cultural resource center will develop and implement recommendations to ensure NLU's campuses are inclusive and foster a welcoming environment. This will include looking at the impact of signage, artwork, and dedicated student spaces on students' sense of belonging.

In addition to physical space, research has also shown that organizations focused on the cultural identity of students also positively support the engagement of students of color in co-curricular activities. Ensuring DEI is woven into the fabric of the college, the multi-cultural resource center will be able to create a collaborative environment that provides opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to engage in responsible discourse, action, and education through community events, trainings, conferences and facilitated discussions. Examples may include faculty and staff trainings on equity-minded language, cultural humility, etc., and relevant speaker series, events and activities to improve cultural experiences for students, etc. Furthermore, having services designed to meet the unique academic and personal/social needs

⁵ McClain, Kevin S. and Perry, April (2017) "Where Did They Go: Retention Rates for Students of Color at Predominantly White Institutions," *College Student Affairs Leadership*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 3. Available at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/csal/vol4/iss1/3>

⁶ Clauson, Caitlyn and McKnight, John (2019) "Planning for Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity," *Planning for Diversity, Inclusion and Equity*: Vol. 47: Iss. 1. Available at: <https://www.scup.org/resource/welcome-to-campus/>

of underrepresented students will strengthen Latinx and African-American students' sense of belonging to the NLU community (e.g., through multi-lingual writing workshops, or mentoring provided by staff sharing the cultural backgrounds of the students they serve).

Intended Impact: Through offering culturally relevant programming and academic support services, this strategy has the potential to impact the entire student population, though we anticipate a stronger impact on Latinx and African American students. The following goals have been identified for DEI integration into the student experience and academic supports:

- 20% increase in student engagement on campus annually across targeted populations.
- 85% of students, and specifically Latinx and African American students, report the campus is a safe and welcoming environment.
- 85% of students, and specifically Latinx and African American students, report that NLU offers programming that is reflective of students' cultural backgrounds.
- Students participating in student experience activities and/or academic supports are retained at or above average class goals.

Strategy 2: Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for Serving English Language Learners (Existing Strategy)

Purpose: Currently, NLU employs an English Language Learner (ELL) Specialist to work with over 100 ELL students regularly to provide reading and writing support during their Freshman year. To strengthen this support, NLU will provide instructors and the ELL Specialist with training to build their understanding of evidence-based supports for English Learners. NLU will also contract with an ELL consultant to review curriculum, instructional model, support and assessment and provide suggested improvements to each area. This is a multi-pronged approach to determine needs and provide differentiated academic support to sub-groups of multilingual students. The continued work on curriculum and instructional strategies for serving English learners is a strengths based approach that views multilingualism as an asset.

Rationale: A sampling of our incoming class from Fall 2018 shows that 64% regularly used a second language with varying needs in the development of academic reading and writing skills in English. Thirty percent of students who identified as multilingual also indicated on the survey they were "not good" at academic writing. Given the heterogeneous makeup of our multilingual students, our approach to support must be multi-faceted, accepting of difference and strengths based. Research has shown that when instructors utilize instructional strategies related to language attitudes, teaching grammar, teaching reading, and metacognition for

multilingual students, students and instructors report a positive classroom environment and an increase in student fluency ⁷.

Intended Impact: This strategy will provide support for multilingual students in academics as it encompasses the holistic view of the student inside and outside of the classroom. Once implemented, this strategy will impact 100% of English learners through curriculum revisions. The following goals have been identified for increased ELL academic support:

- 60% of students receive a B or Better in the English Gateway Course (ENG 101).
- 85% of students pass the English Gateway Course (ENG 101).
- 75% of full-time faculty will feel confident in implementing strategies to support English Language Learners.
- 80% of students who are referred to the ELL specialist will receive language or writing support.

4c: Pell Recipients

Strategy 1: Holistic Student Wellness and Basic Needs Insecurities Support (New Strategy)

Purpose: NLU will create holistic student wellness supports by centralizing nonacademic supports, expanding the programs and services offered by our wraparound support model, and empowering students to develop more intentional healthy lifestyles. In order to succeed, students need additional support to address mental health issues, housing/food insecurities, financial issues/emergencies, legal issues, and access to social service resources to determine if they qualify for/can access public benefits programs (subsidized food/housing/child care).

By consolidating existing resources, NLU will be able launch a Counseling and Wellness Center that will provide campus based students in Illinois with in-person mental health counseling, but also leverage tele-health for students in our Florida campus and online students throughout the country. Tele-health will provide counseling services to students outside of Illinois without restrictions due to state licensure requirements. It is our intent to pursue tele-health services that include diagnostic assessment, ongoing counseling, e-prescribing, and care coordination that addresses depression and anxiety, substance use, child behavior, family counseling, PTSD and trauma, and stress management. National Louis University currently does not provide medical health services despite serving students who likely do not have adequate medical coverage. By pursuing tele-health options, basic medical health provisions could be addressed in addition to expanding behavioral health support. In Fall 2020, NLU will convene a Counseling

⁷ Elder, C. L., & Davila, B. (2017). Stretch and Studio Composition Practicum: Creating a Culture of Support and Success for Developing Writers at a Hispanic-Serving Institution. *Composition Studies*, 45(2), 167–179. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.nl.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=125991885&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

and Wellness Working Group with the charge to plan and launch expanded and new services in Fall 2021.

In addition, NLU will expand its current food pantry to be an innovative and distinctive Food Pantry and THRIVE Resource Center that provides the resources our students need to be academically and personally successful. Through leveraging the creativity and resources of our community, particularly through a strategic partnership with our Kendall College of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management, and additional key community partnerships, we will build a culture of care, remove stigma related to seeking help/support and provide NLU with the resources our students need to thrive. While starting virtually, the Center will eventually be a single point of contact experience, the epicenter of an ecosystem addressing basic needs insecurities - by sponsoring programs and services (such as emergency funds, a book exchange, pro bono legal advice, and social services referrals), and curating and leveraging community resources in key domains such as housing and food insecurities, financial literacy, employment, and childcare/support for student parents.

Rationale: Many students marginalized by inequity, poverty, and oppression often struggle to simply survive to meet their basic needs and consequently are unable to achieve their true potential. NLU believes our students can THRIVE through the advocacy and support of an inclusive campus and community; where low-income students feel a sense of belonging and empowerment to not only be academically successful but thrive personally, academically and professionally.

Basic needs (financial, housing and food) insecurities are a barrier for degree completion for the students who can most benefit from the social mobility a college degree provides. The current coronavirus pandemic magnifies the basic needs insecurities our students are facing, and makes it more urgent that institutions address these barriers with a comprehensive and systemic approach and an innovative delivery model. Over the last year, NLU conducted an internal analysis on factors contributing to students' dropping out. Based on the analysis, NLU student success coaches reported that for withdrawn students, 42.4% of students experienced "financial concerns" and 40.8% experienced "family or personal struggles", which were identified as the most influential reasons for leaving college. Qualitatively, the need for additional mental health and wrap around support services has been raised by Student Success coaches, faculty, and students. In addition, a growing number of colleges and universities have seen success in implementing collaborative, holistic approaches to raising awareness and increasing access to health and wellness services, which positively impact persistence and graduation rates among student populations.^{8,9}

⁸ Baldwin, D. R., Towler, K., Oliver, M. D., & Datta, S. (2017). An examination of college student wellness: A research and liberal arts perspective. *Health Psychology Open*, 4(2), 205510291771956. doi: 10.1177/2055102917719563

⁹ Watts, P. (2017, October 16). A New Model for Campus Health: Integrating Well-Being into Campus Life. Retrieved from <https://www.naspa.org/about/blog/a-new-model-for-campus-health-integrating-well-being-into-campus-life>

Intended Impact: By offering proactive and reactive assistance through the wellness supports, in addition to what is already built into our programmatic model with Student Success Coaches and faculty, NLU will be providing students with access to basic needs through holistic wraparound support. The following goals have been identified to evaluate the impact of the holistic wellness supports:

- 85% of students will be aware of services offered through THRIVE and the Counseling and Wellness Center.
- 40% of first-year students will utilize wraparound support or wellness services.
- Students who utilize wraparound support and wellness services will persist at or above average class goal.
- 75% of students will report satisfaction with services provided through THRIVE and the Counseling and Wellness Center.

Strategy 2: Revise SAP Appeal Process (New Strategy)

Purpose: For our first-time college students, NLU's tuition and fees are set to closely align with the federal and state aid amounts so that low-income students have minimal out of pocket expenses. A student who falls below the standards for satisfactory academic progress (SAP) in a given term is at risk of losing aid, making it difficult for them to continue due to their family's high financial need. NLU will review the process by which students enter into and appeal their academic status, developing a new and more representative SAP appeal committee, in order to ensure NLU's policies and practices related to academic progress are equitable.

Rationale: Based on an internal analysis, during a single term in 2018-19, 16% of our first time freshman students fell into the category of SAP suspension and had their aid suspended. Of those, only 17% were able to successfully appeal their suspension and regain their financial aid for the subsequent term. Although limited research is available on the impact of SAP on long term student outcomes, research has indicated that low-income students are "not served equitably" by satisfactory academic progress policies¹⁰. Review and revision of the SAP Appeal Process is needed in order to provide students with comprehensive guidance and ensure practices are equitable (reducing bias) and aligned with best practices at other institutions.

Intended Impact: This strategy will focus on the review and revision of the accepted extenuating circumstances for SAP appeals, the launch of a SAP Appeal Review Committee made up of representatives across the University, and creation of new guidance provided to students who need to appeal. Through these efforts, this strategy will ensure that first-generation, Pell-eligible students are not treated inequitably through the SAP appeal process, increasing the proportion of students who are able to successfully appeal, keep their aid, and

¹⁰ McNaire, E., & Taylor, S. (1988). Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards: Jeopardizing Efforts Toward Educational Equity?. *The Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 18(1).

continue enrollment. The following goals have been identified for the revision of the SAP Appeal Process:

- 0% point racial or income gap in appeal approvals
- 25% of students who successfully appeal remain enrolled in the subsequent academic year
- 50% of appeals are processed by week 5 of the term in which they enter into Suspension.

Strategy 3: Gap Merit Scholarships (New/Expansion and modification of current strategy)

Purpose: The NLU Completion Tuition Program will be a gap merit scholarship for juniors and seniors in good academic standing who face a one-time financial emergency/barrier that threatens their ability to persist and graduate. The gap merit scholarship would range between \$500 to \$3500 per student, which would enable students to stay enrolled even if faced with a financial hardship that prohibits them from affording their tuition bill. Funding for the scholarship will be determined each year based on projected need.

Rationale: The cost of college is well-known as a top barrier to low-income students' ability to enroll in and/or complete college.¹¹ Some students, even after enrolled and performing well academically, may hit short-term points in time when they are faced with a financial challenge that, while small relative to their entire four-year expenses, is large enough to cause them to withdraw because they are unable to pay their bill that term. This could be due, for example, to a personal health condition, a car accident, or any other family financial emergency that draws on the money that they would normally pay toward the cost of college.

Georgia State University has tested a similar model since 2011, awarding \$13,000 in grants since then, with 86.5% of students receiving grants graduating. Georgia State's model offered scholarships with a maximum amount of \$1500 credited towards students' accounts automatically, but limited it to senior year.

NLU has piloted a small gap merit scholarship since 2017-18 for transfer students within their final year (within 30 quarter hours) prior to graduation. NLU has awarded a maximum of \$1,000 for students facing a hold that will prevent them from graduating. This strategy has yielded positive outcomes, with 96% of the 42 recipients having either graduated or continuing enrollment at NLU.

Intended Impact: In addition to closing the equity gaps in retention and degree attainment for Pell students and increasing graduation rates for NLU, this would create a return on investment for the institution if the students have more than one term left, as the students would stay

¹¹ Lee, J. (2019, March 4). College Affordability Creates Hurdles for Many Students. Retrieved from <https://gbpi.org/2019/college-affordability-creates-hurdles/>

enrolled and pay future tuition bills. Once implemented, the following goals have been identified for the Gap Merit Scholarships:

- 40+ students awarded NLU Tuition Completion scholarships per year
- 1 percentage point increase in junior annual retention per year
- 1 percentage point increase in 4-year graduation rates
- 80% positive return on investment (tuition received after awarding scholarship is greater than dollar amount of scholarship for 80% of recipients)

4d: Institution-Wide Strategy

Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty and Staff

Purpose: NLU will increase efforts to attract, hire, develop, and retain diverse employees to better reflect the communities it serves. NLU will also grow and develop internal employees to be able to better lead their teams through an internal leadership academy. The academy will aim to create a culture of growth and learning, improve managers' skills in leading and developing their teams, and provide improved collaboration between departments in an effort to increase employee engagement towards our institutional goals and employee retention.

Rationale: While the undergraduate student population is 52% Latinx and 21% African-American, only 11% of UGC full-time faculty are African-American and 8% Latinx. Similarly, only 16% of UGC full-time staff are African-American and 31% Latinx. Research shows that there is a positive impact on retention and minority students feel there is a positive impact on their education when they are taught by minority faculty. Furthermore, in surveys conducted by the PhD Project, students felt they were better prepared for their career after being taught by diverse faculty.¹²

Intended Impact: This strategy will be updated with specific outcomes and intended impact based on the finalization of our 2030 Strategic Plan, specifically related to NLU's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion priorities in June 2020. Initial measures for this strategy are as follows:

- Increase in diversity of faculty applicant pool/hires
- Increase in retention of diverse faculty
- Increase in retention of diverse staff
- Satisfaction in the NLU Leadership Academy

¹² Young, J. (2018, March 9). The 3 Most Powerful Benefits of a Diverse Faculty. Retrieved from <https://everfi.com/insights/blog/the-3-most-powerful-benefits-of-a-diverse-faculty/>.

5. Evaluation Plan

In order to assess the impact of the institutional strategies outlined in this plan, NLU will develop and execute a comprehensive evaluation plan composed of both qualitative and quantitative measures. The metrics outlined in the table below will assist in tracking our progress, both in how the strategies were implemented, including program participation and service utilization, and how the strategies affected the target population, including credit accumulation and retention.

The Undergraduate Data Analytics team will be responsible for executing on the data collection methods, including creating and administering surveys, analyzing data, and reporting outcomes to stakeholders.

Table 5a: Evaluation Measures and Data Collection

Measure	Data Collection Methods	Timeline	Targets
Strategy 4.a.1: Eagle Brotherhood			
Eagle Brotherhood Participation	Participation recorded in Presence, NLU's student life data system	Participation recorded on an on-going basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FY20: 45 participants FY21 & Beyond: 60 participants
Program Attendance	Event attendance recorded in Presence	Attendance recorded and analyzed at each event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 55% average attendance rate at Eagle Brotherhood events
Retention of Program Participants	Enrollment recorded in NLU's Student Information System (Banner), each term of the academic year	Retention analyzed each term and annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90%+ Fall to Winter Retention yearly Annual retention meets/exceeds class average goals
Credit Attainment of Program Participants	Credits attempted and earned recorded in Banner each term of the academic year	Credits analyzed each term and annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5% increase in program participants on-pace to graduate annually

Measure	Data Collection Methods	Timeline	Targets
Strategy 4.a.2: Faculty Development on Culturally Responsive Classrooms – Restorative Practices			
Faculty utilization of Restorative Practices	Faculty observations conducted across Fall, Winter, and Spring terms	Observation data analyzed each term	75% of full-time faculty observed utilizing strategies
Faculty satisfaction with trainings	Surveys conducted at each restorative justice training session	Survey data analyzed after each training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90%+ attendance • 90%+ satisfaction
Perception of Classroom Environment	Students surveyed annually on classroom environment	Survey data analyzed annually in June	85% of students, across race/ethnicity, report a positive, supportive and inclusive classroom
Strategy 4.b.1: Building a Culture of Inclusion in the Student Experience			
Student Engagement on Campus	Student attendance at events recorded in Presence	Event attendance analyzed each term and annually	2% increase in student attendance at campus events across target populations
Perception of Campus Environment	Students surveyed annually on campus environment	Survey data analyzed annually in June	85% of students, specifically Latinx students, report the campus is a safe and welcoming environment
Perception of NLU programming	Students surveyed annually on campus programming	Survey data analyzed annually in June	85% of students, and specifically Latinx students, report that NLU offers programming that is reflective of students' cultural backgrounds.
Student retention	Enrollment recorded in NLU's Student Information System (Banner), each term of the academic year	Retention analyzed each term and annually	Students participating in student experience activities and/or academic supports are retained at or above average class goals.

Measure	Data Collection Methods	Timeline	Targets
Strategy 4.b.2: Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for Serving English Language Learners			
Student performance in English	Student grades entered in Banner at end of term	Grades analyzed each term and annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% of students receive a B or Better by 2021

Gateway Course			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85% of students pass the English Gateway Course by 2021
Faculty confidence from training	Faculty will be surveyed pre- and post- training	Survey results will be analyzed after training	75% of faculty will feel confident in implementing strategies to support English Language Learners
Students receiving ELL support	Referrals and Specialist appointments will be tracked in EAB, NLU's student success platform	Referrals and Appointments are tracked on an on-going basis and analyzed each term, and annually	80% of students who are referred to the ELL specialist will receive language or writing support
Strategy 4.c.1: Holistic Student Wellness and Basic Needs Supports			
Awareness of services	Students surveyed annually on campus services	Survey data analyzed annually in June	85% of students will be aware of services offered through THRIVE and Counseling and Wellness Center
Satisfaction with services	Students surveyed after completing service	Survey data analyzed each term and annually	75% of students will report satisfaction with services provided through THRIVE and the Counseling and Wellness Center
Service utilization	Utilization of services (appointments, event attendance) will be tracked in Presence	Utilization data will be analyzed each term and annually	40% of first-year students will utilize wraparound support or wellness services
Student Retention	Enrollment recorded in NLU's Student Information System (Banner), each term of the academic year	Retention analyzed each term and annually	Students who utilize wraparound support and wellness services will persist at or above average class goal

Measure	Data Collection Methods	Timeline	Targets
Strategy 4.c.2: Revise Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal Process			
Equitable outcomes	SAP status and Appeal data recorded in Banner	Appeal data analyzed each term	0% point racial or income gap in appeal approvals
Time to process Appeals	SAP status and Appeal data recorded in Banner	Appeal data analyzed each term	50% of appeals are processed by week 5 of the term in which they enter into Suspension.
Student Retention	Enrollment recorded in NLU's Student Information System (Banner), each term of the academic year	Retention analyzed each term and annually	25% of students who successfully appeal remain enrolled in the subsequent academic year
Strategy 4.c.3: Gap Merit Scholarships			
Annual Retention	Enrollment recorded in NLU's Student Information System (Banner), each term of the academic year	Retention analyzed each term and annually	1% increase in Junior Annual Retention
Graduation Rates	Student graduation status housed in Banner	Graduation analyzed annually	1% increase in 4-year Graduation Rates 1% increase in 6-year Graduation Rates
Return on Investment	Student tuition and payment information housed in Banner	Scholarship and tuition payments analyzed annually	80% Positive Return on Investment (Tuition received after awarding scholarship is greater than dollar amount of scholarship for 80% of recipients)
Strategy 4.d.1: Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty and Staff			
Increase in diverse applicants	Job applicants housed in HR data system	Applicant data analyzed each term	Increase in diverse applicants
Increase in retention	Employee status housed in Banner	Retention analyzed each term and annually	Increase in retention of diverse faculty and staff
Academy Satisfaction	Participants complete survey	Data analyzed after each meeting	Satisfaction with Leadership Academy

6. Budget

In order to realize the vision set forth in our Equity Plan, NLU has outlined the funding and ongoing sustainability of each of the identified strategies. Funding sources include both external grant funding and allocation of existing resources. For all Year 1 activities, funding has been secured in the form of existing grants awarded to NLU and the allocation of the Undergraduate College professional development funds. For Year 2 and beyond, new investments will need to be solicited to realize full implementation of the strategies.

Table 6a: Budget and Sustainability Plan

Institutional Strategy	Budget Implications	Revenue Source (New/Existing)	Sustainability Plan
Strategy 4.a.1: Eagle Brotherhood	Funding secured in Y1; partial funding secured in Y2 & Y3, with supplemental funding required and full funding required in Y4 and beyond.	Existing grant funding supplemented by NLU student experience and wraparound support budget	Continue to allocate portion of NLU student experience and wraparound support budget to Eagle Brotherhood while soliciting new grant funding as needed
Strategy 4.a.2: Faculty Development on Culturally Responsive Classrooms – Restorative Practices	Funding secured in Y1 & Y2; additional funding required in Y3 and beyond	Existing grant funding in Y1 & Y2; redirect existing faculty PD funding for Restorative Practices	Utilize NLU faculty PD funding as needed in Y3 and beyond
Strategy 4.b.1: Building a Culture of Inclusion in the Student Experience	Funding or utilization of existing resources required to audit student experience services and activities, developing plan/recommendations for new programming	New grant funding or reallocation of existing resources; portion of existing Student Experience and/or Learning Support budget to supplement	Solicit grant funding; reallocate portion of Student Experience and/or Learning Support budget to cover events/services

Institutional Strategy	Budget Implications	Revenue Source (New/Existing)	Sustainability Plan
Strategy 4.b.2: Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for Serving English Language Learners	Funding secured for Y1 PD and ELL Consultant	Existing grant funding; redirect existing NLU faculty PD funding for training on ELL Instructional Strategies	Utilize faculty PD funding as needed in Y2 and beyond
Strategy 4.c.1: Holistic Student Wellness and Basic Needs Supports	Funding required to cover development and implementation	Consolidation of current human and fiscal resources; New grant funding	Solicit grant funding; reallocate portion of Student Experience & UGC Wraparound budget to supplement services
Strategy 4.c.2: Revise Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Review Process	No budget implications	Utilize internal personnel	N/A
Strategy 4.c.3: Gap Merit Scholarships	Partial funding secured for Y1-Y3; additional funding needed to supplement and for Y4 and beyond	Existing grant funding; New grant funding	Solicit grant funding; analyze ROI to determine potential University funding streams
Strategy 4.d.1: Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty and Staff	Funding secured for Y1 and build into budget process for Y2-Y5.	Current philanthropic support and utilization of current funding	Utilize current budget

7. Timeline

Across the next five years, NLU will implement and evaluate each of the strategies outlined in the Equity Plan. The following table outlines the annual implementation milestones and evaluation activities.

Table 7a: Implementation and Evaluation Timeline

Strategy	Annual Milestones
Strategy 4.a.1: Eagle Brotherhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit program participants • (Y1-Y2) Assess need and opportunity for growth at Wheeling campus • (Y1-Y2) Determine management approach at program scale • Plan and execute 15 bi-weekly meetings on topics to build community • Plan and execute 6 social activities, including summer leadership retreat • Collect, analyze, and report evaluation findings quarterly
Strategy 4.a.2: Faculty Development on Culturally Responsive Classrooms – Restorative Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Y1) Contract with vendor to facilitate Restorative Justice Training across Fall (Part 1) and Winter (Part 2) terms • (Y2-Y5) Review offerings to determine need and process for new faculty to receive training in subsequent years • Collect, analyze, and report evaluation findings fall and winter terms in Y1; as needed in Y2-Y5
Strategy 4.b.1: Building a Culture of Inclusion in the Student Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Y1-Y2) Plan and secure funding/resources for audit • (Y2) Audit student experience services and activities, develop plan/recommendations for facility enhancements and new programming • (Y2-Y4) Execute on audit recommendations for facilities and programming • (Y3-Y5) Host 5-10 workshops for students, 1-3 culturally relevant professional development trainings, and execute on academic support services • (Y3-Y5) Collect, analyze and report evaluation findings quarterly
Strategy 4.b.2: Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for Serving English Language Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Y1) Hire curriculum consultant and ELL specialist • (Y1-Y2) Review consultant report and pilot strategies • (Y1-Y2) Implement Spanish lessons for faculty and staff • (Y1-Y2) Build grammatical support library • (Y2) Implement intake survey for students to self-identify as English Language Learners • (Y2-Y3) Continue and expand implementation of effective strategies based on findings • Collect, analyze, and report evaluation findings annually
Strategy 4.c.1: Holistic Student Wellness and Basic Needs Insecurities Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Y1) Gather research and visit at least 3 similar concepts at other institutions • (Y1) Conduct Needs Assessments of services/stakeholders • (Y1) Plan out space configuration, and include in budget for 2020-21 • (Y2) Appoint an Advisory Board (AB) – NLU community members, students, alumni, and community partners. AB will meet quarterly throughout the planning and implementation phase. • (Y2) Begin drafting Policies and Procedures to guide the work. • (Y2-Y3) Begin implementation of services offered; launch Centers • (Y3) Finalize Policies and Procedures • (Y3-Y5) Continue/expand implementation of THRIVE and Wellness services • (Y2–Y5) Collect, analyze, and report evaluation findings quarterly

Strategy	Annual Milestones
Strategy 4.c.2: Revise Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Appeal Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Y1) Revise SAP appeal form to improve student usability and focus on important components of the personal statement • (Y1) Form new committee to launch in Fall 2019 • (Y1) Revise SAP procedure guidance on website, including annual committee meeting calendar • (Y1) Train committee and coaches on new process and expectations • (Y2) Revise Committee process and procedures based on Y1 learnings • (Y2) Develop tools for coaches to automate GPA and pace calculations of the academic plan in order to decrease current challenges. • (Y3) Continue to review data from new process and progress towards improved retention goals and adjust SAP committee approach as needed. • Collect, analyze, and report evaluation findings quarterly
Strategy 4.c.3: Gap Merit Scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Y1) Raise grant funds to support current year of estimated scholarship needs • (Y1) Design application, selection, and award process in partnership with Student Finance • (Y1) Begin offering scholarship • (Y1) Gather staff and possibly student feedback on any potential changes needed • (Y2-Y5) Continue to raise funds to support scholarship needs • (Y2-Y5) Continue to implement scholarship • (Y2-Y5) Review and Refine process as needed • (Y3-Y5) If effective, report on impact publicly (funders, case studies, conferences, etc.) • Collect, analyze, and report evaluation findings annually
Strategy 4.d.1: Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Y1) Add diversity focused KPIs to track and report on diversity applicants and hires • (Y1) Research additional recruiting sources for diverse candidates • (Y1) Develop recruiting and interview workshops and resources for managers to curb biases in the interview process and focus on competency based hiring • (Y1) Evaluate exit interviews to look for any markers of exclusivity and/or patterns of bias that may have led to voluntary resignations • (Y1) Collaborate with consultant to build out Leadership Academy curriculum; Launch Academy • (Y2-Y5) Plan and deliver workshops on diversity, inclusivity, recruiting best practices and biases • (Y2-Y5) Build external partnerships with diverse populations and resources to aid in recruitment • (Y2-Y5) Evaluate year over year metrics to find opportunities to increase effectiveness • (Y2-Y5) Continue to refine and offer Leadership Academy based on pilot findings

8. ILEA Team

ILEA Core Team

Aarti Dhupelia	Vice President, Undergraduate Education and Dean, Undergraduate College
Tracy Templin	Executive Director, Strategy and Operations
Melanie Flores	Director of HSI Programs
Aurélio Manuel Valente	Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
Jennifer Robin	Director, Undergraduate Student Success

ILEA Leadership Team

Nivine Megahed	President
Aarti Dhupelia	Vice President, Undergraduate Education and Dean, Undergraduate College
Aurélio Manuel Valente	Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
Tracy Templin	Executive Director, Strategy and Operations
Jennifer Robin	Director, Undergraduate Student Success
Steve Neer	Vice Provost, Advising and University Registrar
Stephanie Poczos	Associate Dean, General Education and Pathways
Serah Fatani	Director, Enrollment and Strategic Growth
Aurora Flores Garcia	Associate Director, Undergraduate Student Success
Melanie Flores	Director of HSI Programs
Jon Oelke	Assistant Professor, Psychology, and Wheeling Academic Lead
Wytress Richardson	Assistant Professor, Applied Behavioral Sciences

Key Campus Leaders Consulted for Equity Plan Development

Brigid Callahan	Executive Director, Student Finance
Danielle Laban	Director, Student Experience

9. Glossary

Cohort – A way of grouping students to compare across a number of access, performance, persistence, and completion indicators. In the Excel file that accompanies these documents and is used to set disaggregated early momentum and degree completion targets in service of eliminating gaps among target student groups, cohort refers to when students entered the college/university (e.g. Fall 2019 cohort is the student group that entered the institution in the fall of 2019). Secondly, we also refer to the ILEA cohort as the group of 25 member colleges and universities.

Completion Gap – The difference in college completion rates between student groups at the same college or university. ILEA is focused on the completion gap between African-American and White students, Latinx, and White students, and low-income and higher income students (as indicated by Pell receipt).

Equity – A campus culture and environment in which every student receives the supports they need to complete their degree equitably and in a timely manner when compared to their peer in other racial or socioeconomic groups. PCC is interested in supporting ILEA cohort members as they refine how they support African-American, Latinx, and low-income students on their campuses. This can include redesigning existing supports, creating new supports and eliminating seen and unseen barriers for student success.

Equity Plan – A roadmap that outlines how each ILEA cohort member plans to close gaps in degree attainment for low-income, African American, and Latinx students. The ILEA Equity Plan will describe how each cohort member plans to close gaps in degree attainment for the target student groups.

Graduation Rate – The percentage of students that complete their degree. For students enrolled in community college, completing their degree in 2 years is 100% time and completing their degree in 3 years is 150% time. For students enrolled in a four-year institution, completing their degree in 4 years is 100% time and completing their degree in 6 years is 150% time. There are specific time to degree periods for analysis, goal setting, and reporting within the Equity Plan for different target populations (e.g. entering freshmen, transfer students, part-time students).

Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA) – A Partnership for College Completion (PCC) initiative that aims to close gaps in degree attainment among different racial and socioeconomic groups at 25 two-year and four-year public and private non-profit colleges and universities in the state of Illinois. We aim to accomplish this goal by supporting, convening, and providing targeted resources, training, and support to the 25 ILEA cohort members, and facilitating the process of developing and executing on a campus-wide equity plan.

Lagging Indicator – A metric that represents the measurement of a specific output over time. For ILEA, an example of a lagging indicator is a graduation rate, by time to degree and particular student population. Graduation rates are our ultimate goal

Leading Indicator – A metric that has evidence of being a predictor of a specific outcome. A leading indicator is often referred to as an early momentum indicator. We are interested in tracking a set of metrics that have evidence of predicting degree completion and measuring progress toward that goal. For community colleges, these metrics include: credits accumulated first fall, credits accumulated first year, gateway course completion, and fall 1 to fall 2 persistence. For 4-year universities, these metrics include: credits accumulated

first fall, credits accumulated first year, gateway course completion in year 1, fall 1 to fall 2 persistence, credits accumulated by end of second year, and fall 2 to fall 3 persistence.

Institutional Strategy – A reform strategy that affects at least 50% of the total targeted student population that it aims to serve. For ILEA, we are interested in implementing institutional strategies we believe have the requisite scale to significantly impact equity in degree completion.

150% Time – Refers to students' time to degree. 150% time refers to the percentage of students that complete their degree within three years for associate degree seekers and within six years for bachelor's degree seekers.