

# 1<sup>ST</sup> NOW:

Forming a Foundational Relationship of  
Support for First-semester, First-year Students

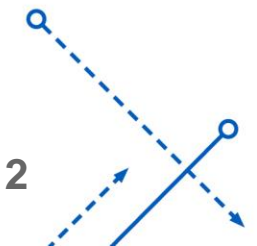
WNY Advising Conference, February 2023

Eric Streeter, Director of Student Success and  
Senior Academic Advisor

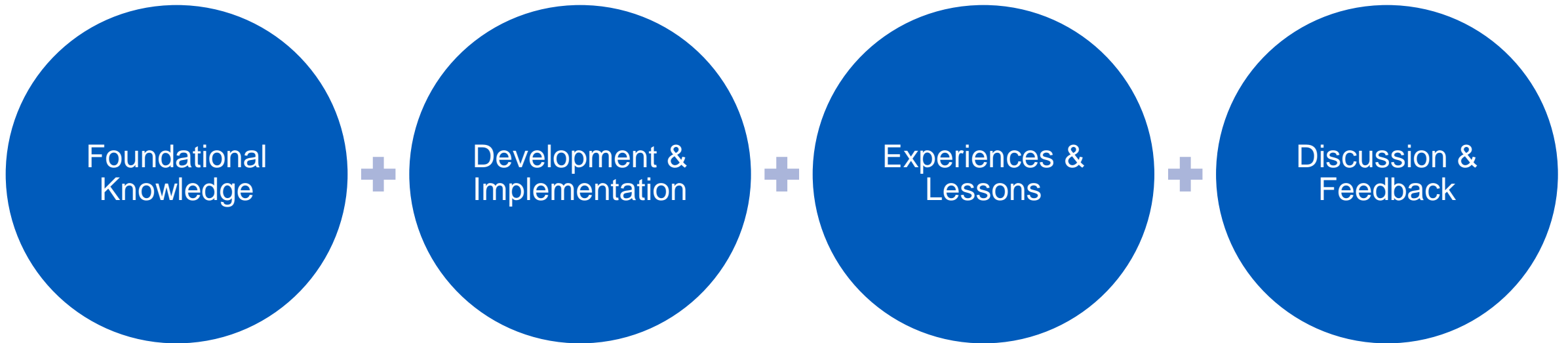
## 1<sup>st</sup> Now Outreach Program

- First-semester
- First-year
- First-generation and underrepresented
- First 5 weeks
- First implementation!

**1<sup>st</sup> Now**



# Outline



# FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

What do we know about first-generation students?

What do we know about underrepresented students?

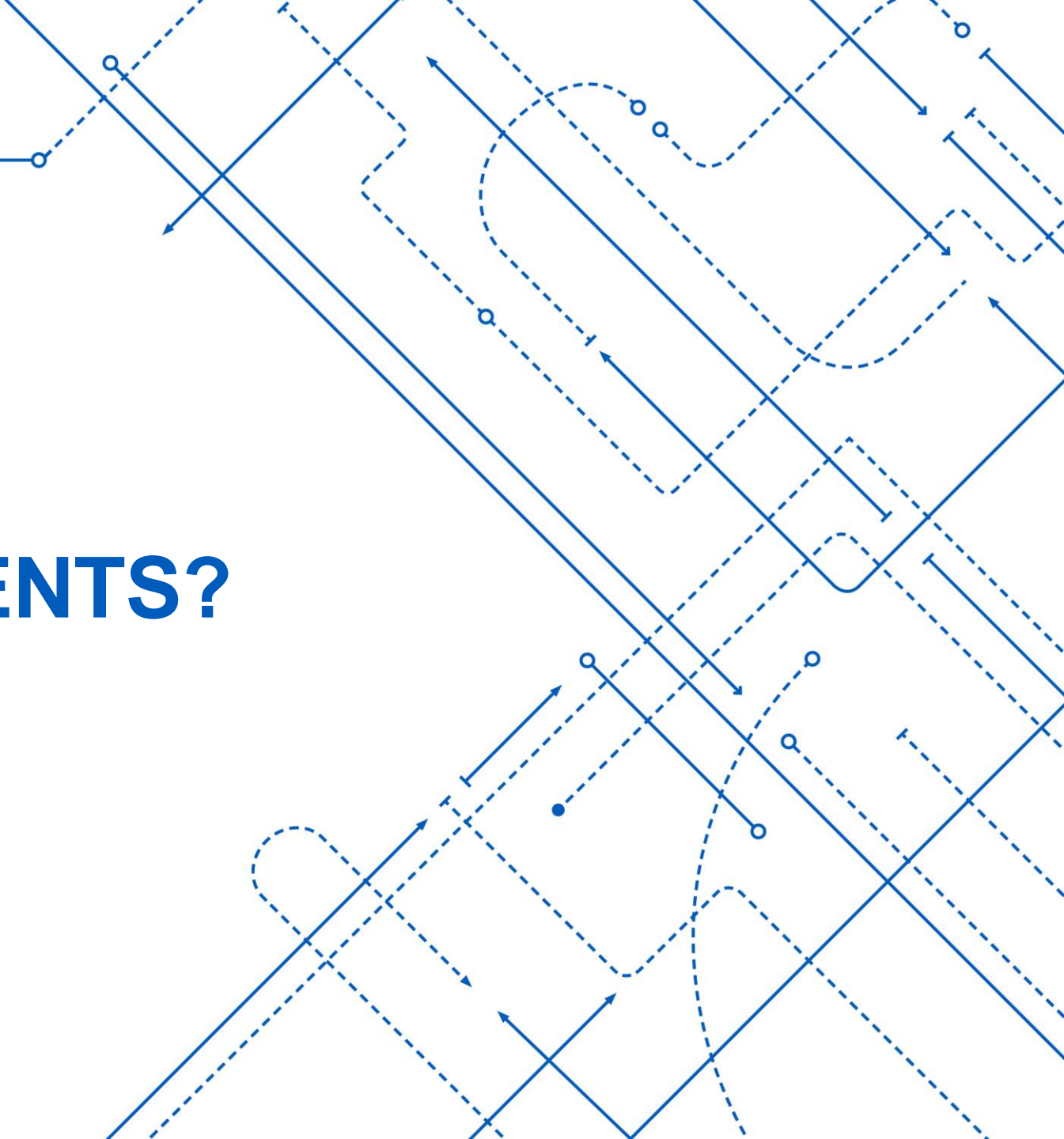
What do we know about proactive advising?

## First-generation Students

Most common definition: students that come from families where their parents did not complete a four-year college degree

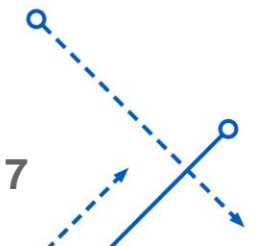


# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT FIRST- GENERATION STUDENTS?



## Fist-generation Students

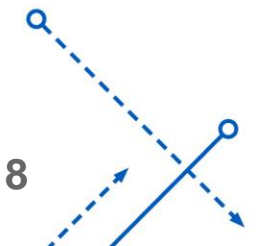
- About 33% of US undergraduate students are first-generation students
- About 25% will leave after the first year
- About 33% will leave within the first 3 years (compared to 14% of continuing generation students)
- About 40% will earn a bachelor's degree within 6 years (compared to 55% of continuing generation students)



## Possible First-generation Student Challenges

- Do not know how the institution works
- Do not understand the jargon
- Unfamiliar with processes
- Unfamiliar with support resources
- Less prepared for college
- Navigating family values and expectations
- And more!

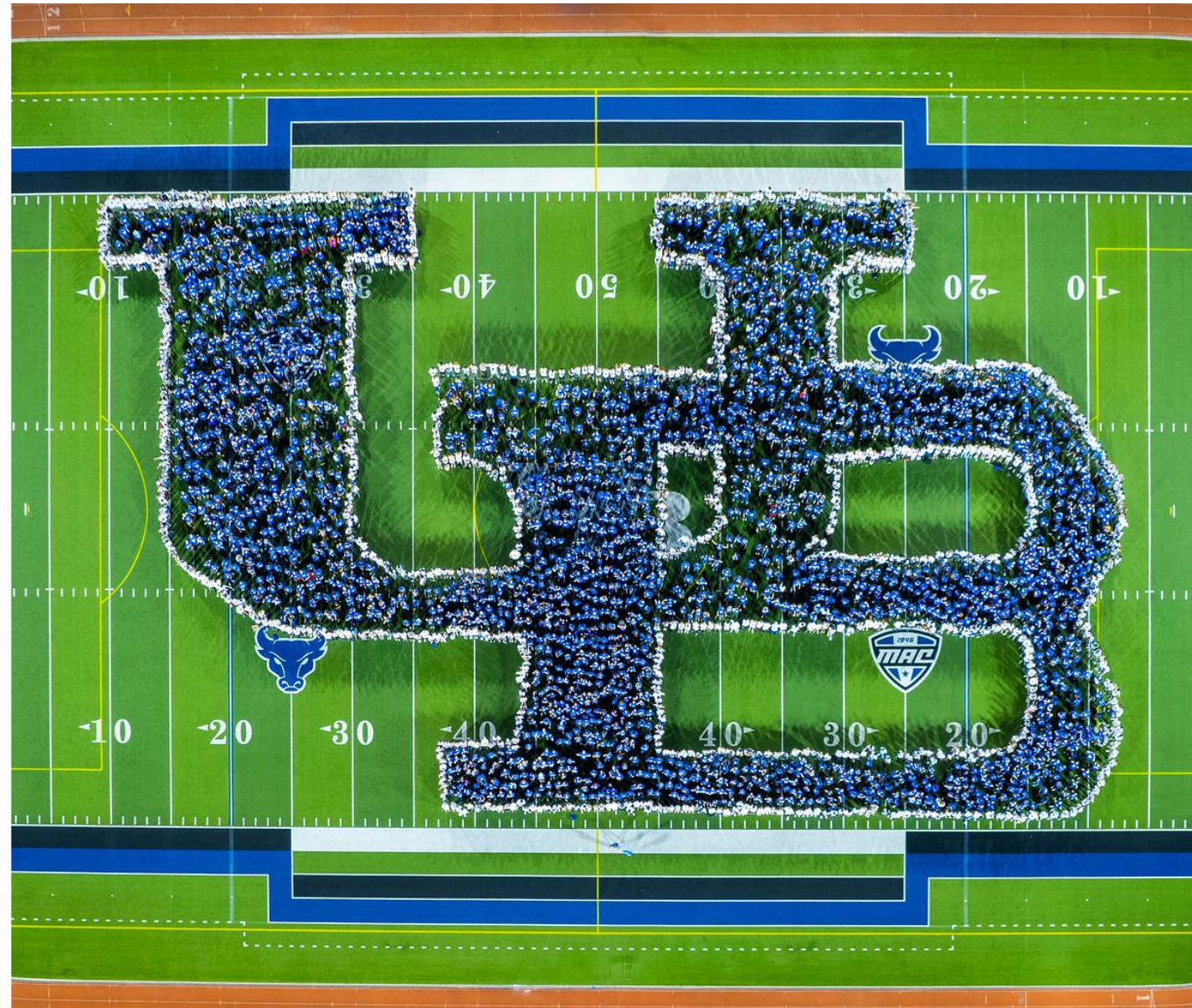
“We must admit that higher education is a culture and we know something about this culture. There are things we know about the journey that we're asking students to take, things that we know from experience, from others' experiences, from our training, from research.” –Terrell Strayhorn (from the NACADA Annual Conference Keynote presented in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on October 9, 2014)



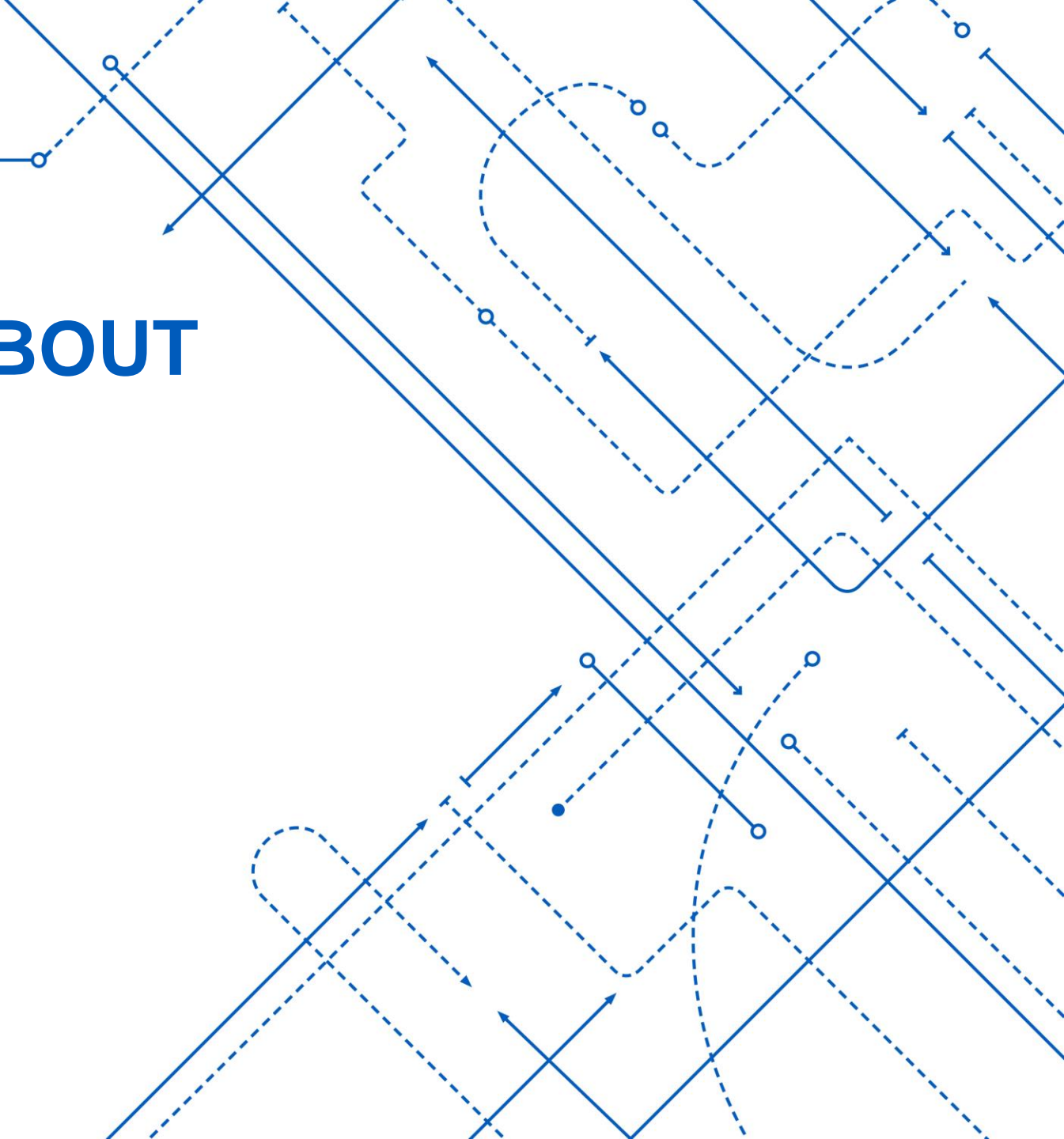


## Underrepresented Students

UB definition: ethnicities included are:  
Black or African American, Other  
Hispanic/Latino, Puerto Rican, Native  
American - American Indian or Alaska  
Native, Central American, Dominican,  
Mexican, South American.



# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS?

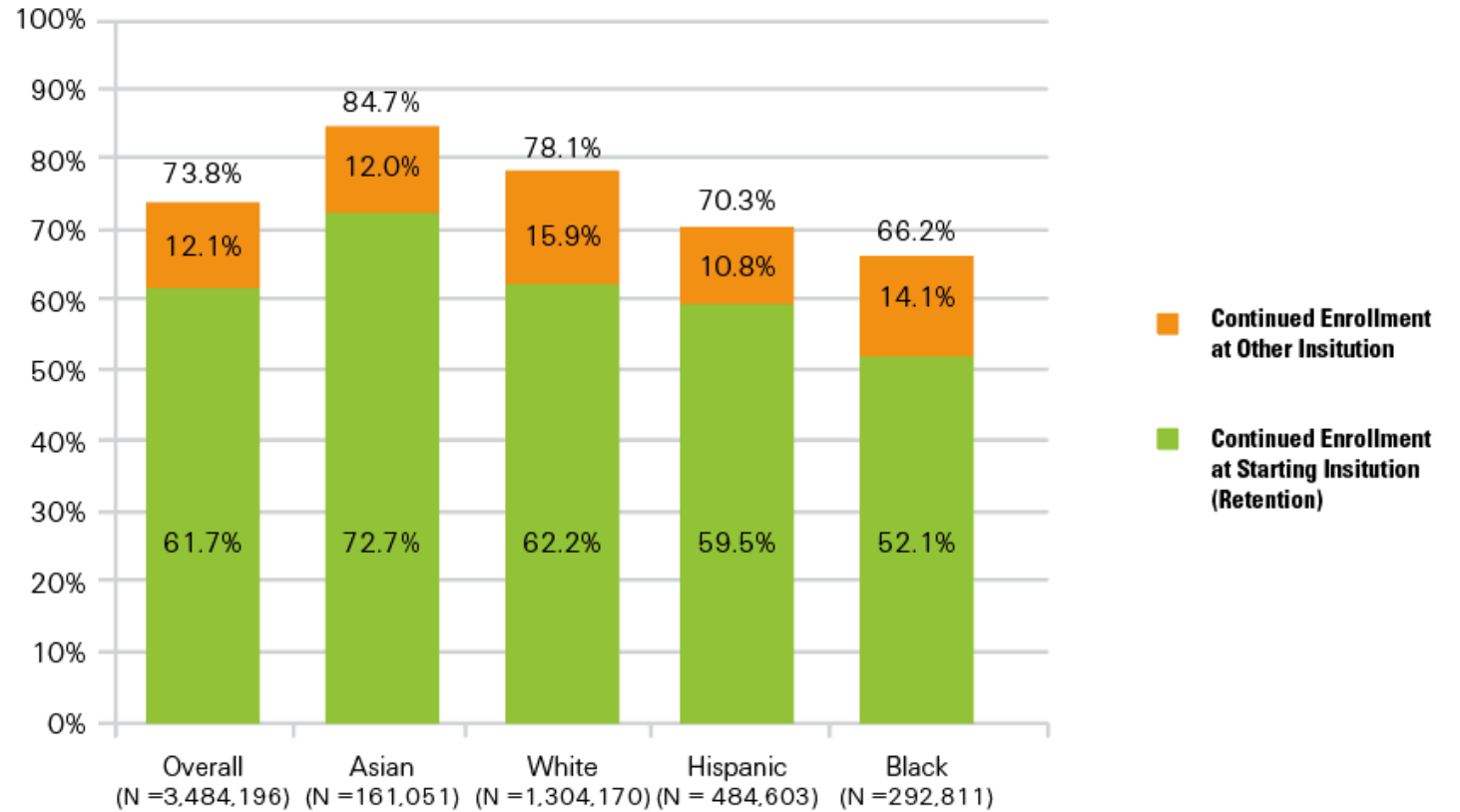


# Persistence and Retention by Race and Ethnicity

From the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

With data current through fall 2018

**Figure 2.** First-Year Persistence and Retention by Race and Ethnicity  
All Institutions, Fall 2017 Entering Cohort

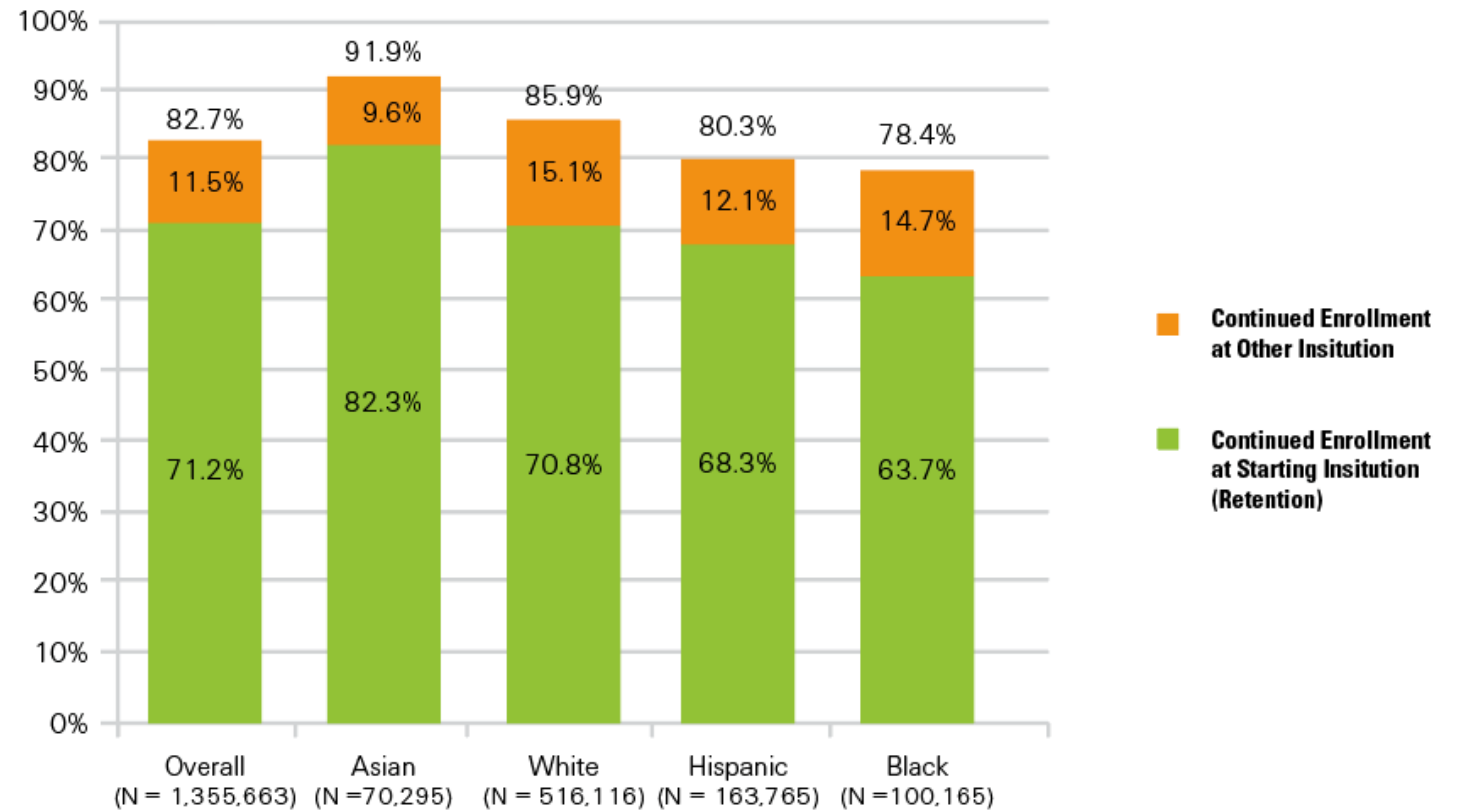


# Starting at Four-Year Public Institutions

From the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center

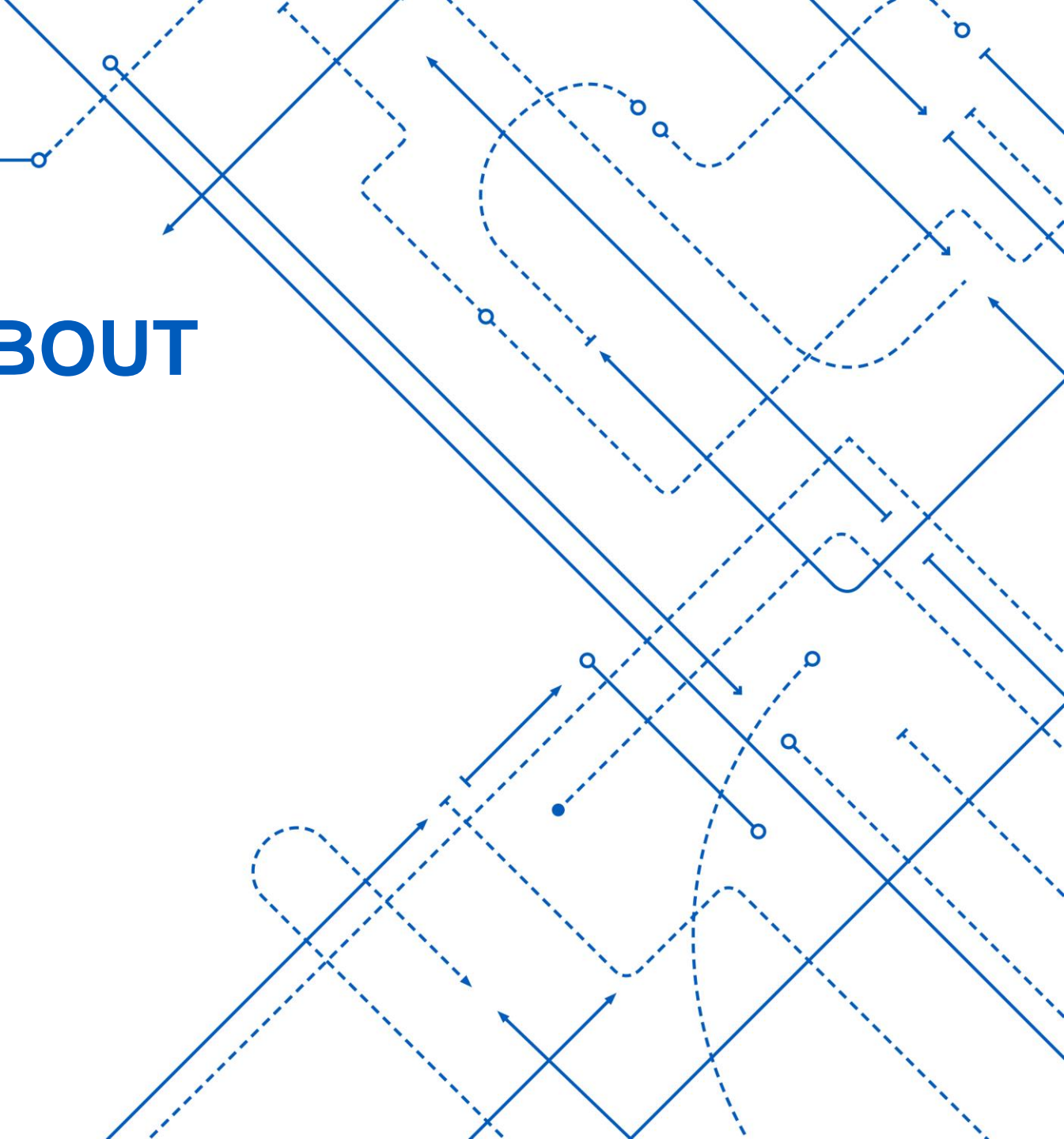
With data current through fall 2018

**Figure 5.** First-Year Persistence and Retention by Race and Ethnicity  
Four-Year Public Institutions, Fall 2017 Entering Cohort



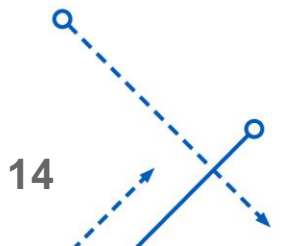
# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS?

Specifically in STEM majors



## Underrepresented Students in STEM

- 40% of black STEM students switch majors
- 37% of Latino/a/x STEM students switch majors
- For comparison, 29% of white STEM students switch majors
  
- 26% of black STEM students leave college
- 20% of Latino/a/x STEM students leave college
- For comparison, 13% white STEM students leave college



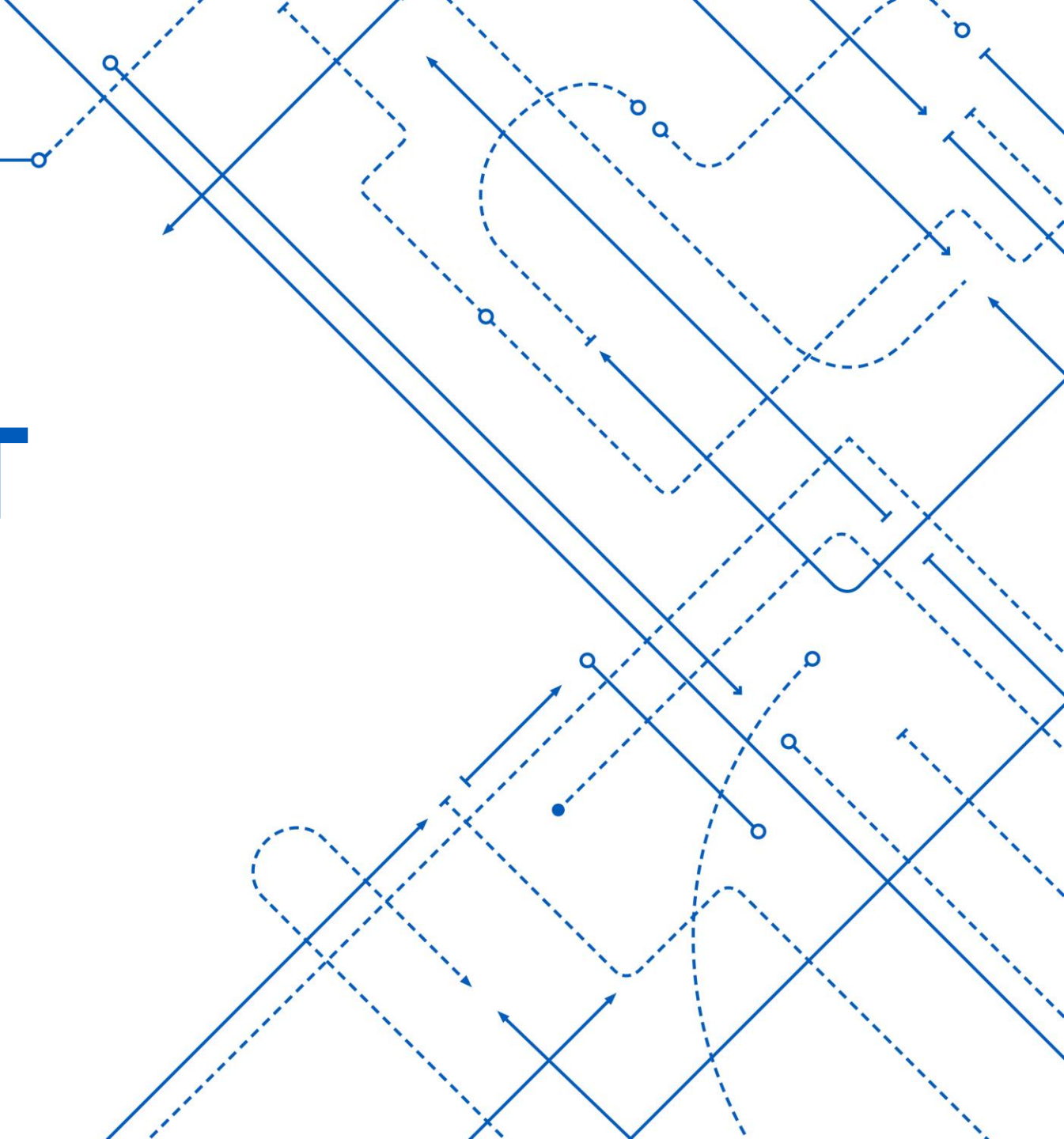
## Possible Underrepresented Student Challenges in STEM

- Many of these students are also first generation students
- Do not feel like they belong and experience bias
- Higher education has a culture and students may be unfamiliar with it
- Navigating cultural expectations

“When they talked about leaving majors, they talked about the people as much as they did the academics” (Economist Jamin Speer, in The Washington Post, March 2019)



# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT PROACTIVE ADVISING?





## Reasons Proactive Advising is a Good Fit for “At-risk” Students

- Relationship building
- Active concern for student well-being and success
- Anticipating challenges
- Helping students navigate the institution and culture

# DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

For whom

What

Why

& How

## School Overview

- UB: over 32,000 students, over 21,000 undergraduates
- Architecture & Planning: about 700 students, about 500 undergraduates
- 2 undergraduate advisors
- 2 undergraduate majors and minors (Architecture and Environmental Design)
- Historic UB South Campus



## For whom:

Fall 2022	UB	Architecture & Planning
First-year	4094	108
First-generation	808 (20%)	24 (22%)
Underrepresented	892 (22%)	26 (24%)
<i>Both</i>	<i>239 (6%)</i>	<i>12 (11%)</i>



## What:

- Navigate Appointment Campaign for first-year, first-semester, first-generation and underrepresented students
- 30 minute coaching session with one of two advisors, within the first 5 weeks of school (4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> week)
- Focus on NOW more than what has happened in the past

The 1<sup>st</sup> Now program is designed to help students identify:

- 1) Academic strategies that support their success at UB.
- 2) People and places that serve as part of the support system for success at UB.
- 3) Specific steps they can take early in the semester to support their own success

## Why:

Proactive outreach given our knowledge of this population

- ARC 101 grade policy
- Group advisement is not personal
- Midterm grades are communicated in the 8<sup>th</sup> week
- Resign deadline or finishing a bad semester can be too late (Course sequencing)
- Retakes can be costly

## Why:

UB Retention for 6 cohorts (Fall 2016-Fall 2021)	All UB	Architecture & Planning retention
All students	85.3%	87.3%
First-Generation	83.2%	83.6%
Black or African American	83.8%	83.8%
Hispanic/Latino	79.6%	86.3%

## How:

- Reflect on initial experiences at UB
- Identify immediate concerns
- Semester exam and assignment planning
- Weekly time management conversation
- Identify support network (academic, personal, other)
- Task to support success (what, why, when, & how)



# EXPERIENCE & LESSONS



## Student participation

- 13 students participated (34% of target)
  - 7 first-generation
  - 9 underrepresented
  - 3 *first-generation & underrepresented*

Biggest challenge to participation:

- The windows of time these students are willing to see us in person adds up to about 5 hours a week



## Appointment observations

- Could not cover everything in 30 minutes – needed to prioritize based on what was important to student
- Most students recognized time management as their most prominent concern
- The syllabi activity was already done in seminar class – and they all recognized week 10 as an important week, but were not planning for it
- Some students had more concerns about social adjustment and connections
- Except for their TAs, students would not generally identify people other than friends and family as part of the support network
- Most had little to no knowledge or awareness of support services like tutoring or health services.



## Student feedback

100% agreed that the 1<sup>st</sup> Now appointment helped them identify strategies they can utilize to be successful at UB

100% agreed that the 1<sup>st</sup> Now appointment helped them identify a support network they can turn to as needed

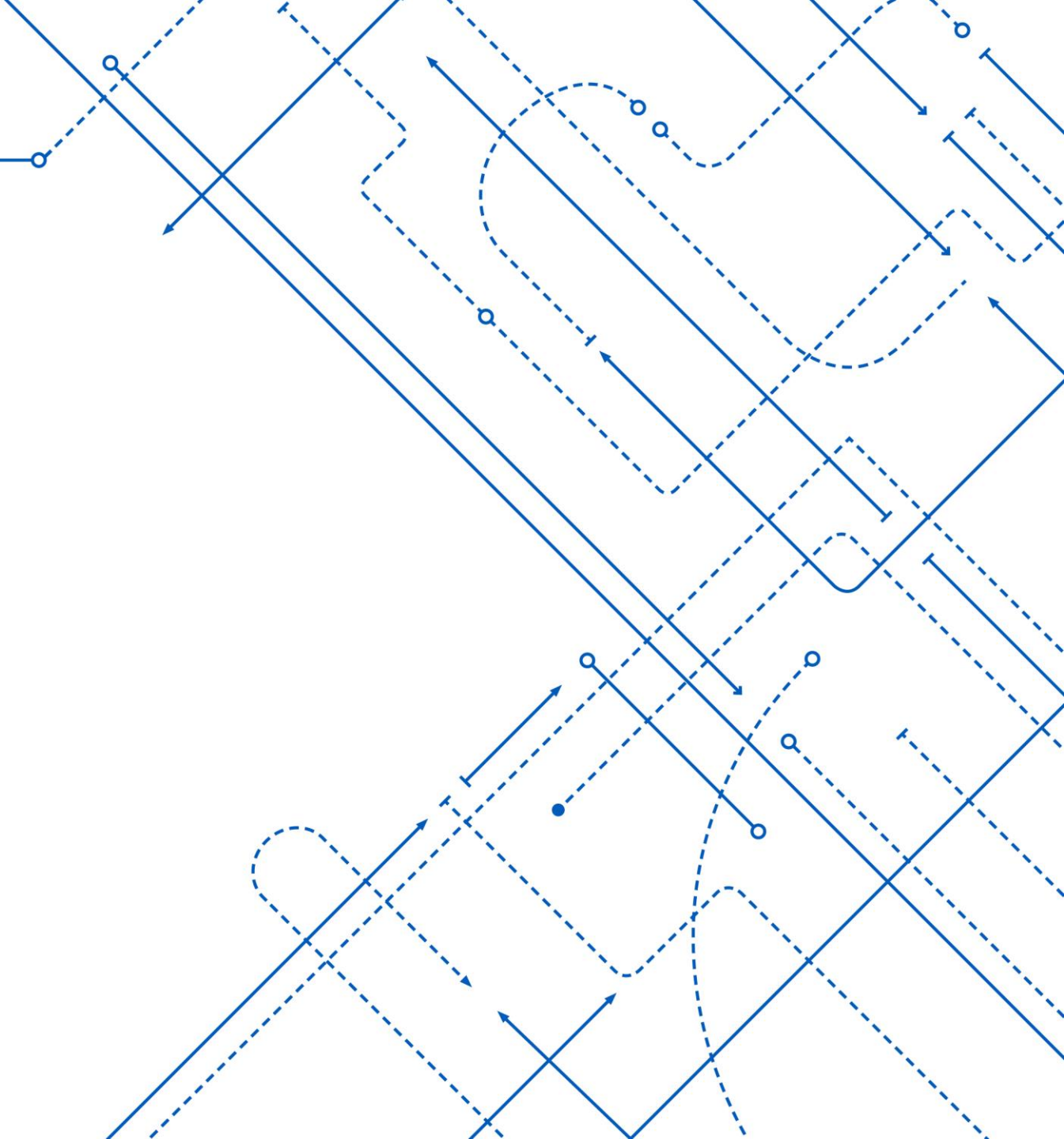


## Lessons learned

- We should start earlier to try to get more students (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week)
- Try to partner with living learning community leaders to encourage participation
- Consider longer appointment times or find ways to be more strategic about prioritizing
- Relationships were built that laid a foundation for future conversations



# STORIES



## The Friendless Student

- First-generation, Asian female, from downstate, English is not first language
- “Lonely”
- Focused on ways to get involved and counseling services
- Not in good standing with major GPA (1.778 in major), so we should be meeting again soon

## The Honors Student

- African American male, from downstate
- No initial concern
- 3 weeks later, in my office, flagged for ARC 101 attendance concerns (3 or more late arrivals)
- Learned how to better use alarms
- Ultimately did very well. B in ARC 101, 3.647 GPA



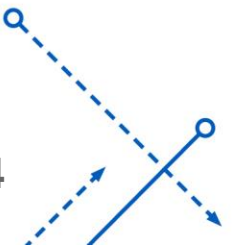
## The Spanish Speaking Student

- First-generation, female of South American decent, from down state, English is not first language
- Reported bullying based on language barrier
- Had 4 more follow-up advising sessions
  - Difficulty with classes due to language issues
  - Financial aid concerns
  - Connect with counseling center
- Finished all courses for the semester with 3.177

## Comparison

	Participated	Did not Participate
Total:	13	25
Average Semester GPA	2.98	2.32
Average Completed Credits	15.85	14
Average Credit Completion	93%	84%
Enrolled for Spring	13	22

1<sup>st</sup> Now



# DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK



## Discussion and Feedback

Questions

Suggestions

- Helping students identify support network
- Encouraging students to utilize resources



## Resources

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