Improving Retention and New Student Conversion During COVID: The Funnel Huddle

Lehman College – City University of New York

Points of Pride

- Widely recognized as a top 5 in the nation engine of social mobility.

- Recipient of a $30mln MacKenzie Scott award in recognition of our efforts.

- College has sustained enrollment growth of 30% over the past six-years driven by improved student retention.

COVID Realities

- Located in the poorest congressional district in the United States and second poorest county in New York State.

- Over 80% of our incoming freshman class is Pell eligible. Approximately 60% of our overall undergraduate student population is Pell eligible

- Undergraduate student population is over 75% transfer.

- Only one online undergraduate program and two online graduate programs.

- The 10468 zip code was among the hardest hit by COVID in the country.

7-day percent positive
2   4   6
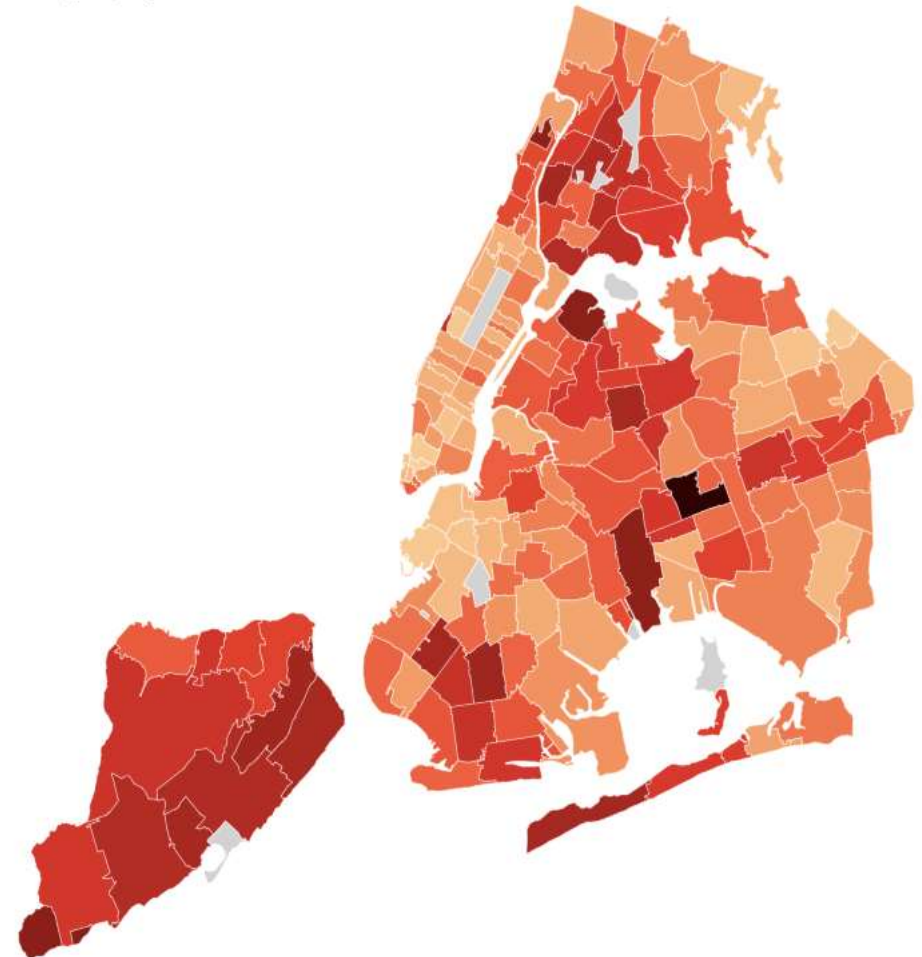
These three dimensions, which maximize the impact of a degree.

Access and Progress
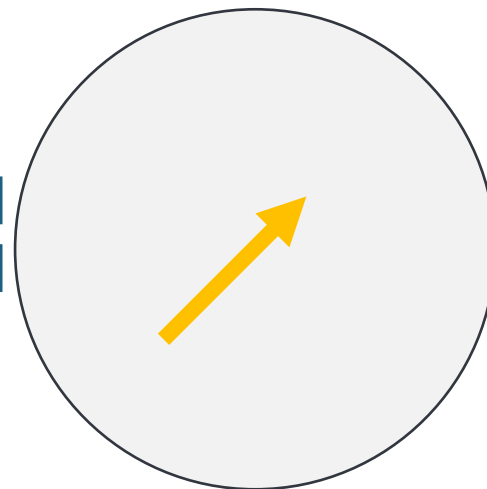
Success

Postgraduate Outcomes

Impact

Generally, the divisions, which maximize the impact of student success, are approached in a siloed nature

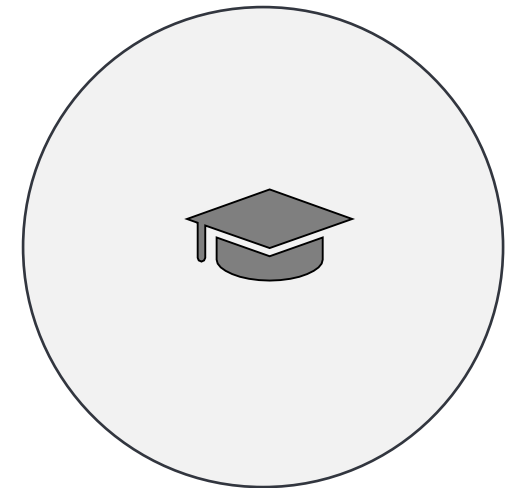**Administration & Finance**

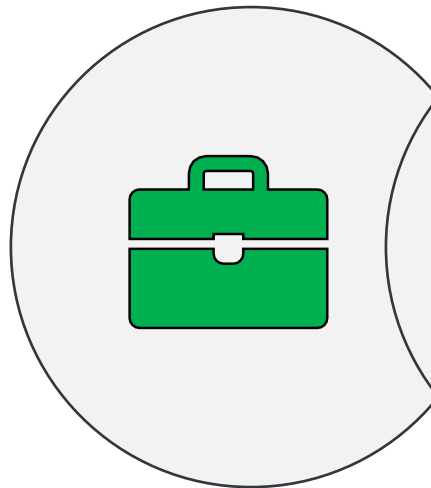**Student Affairs**

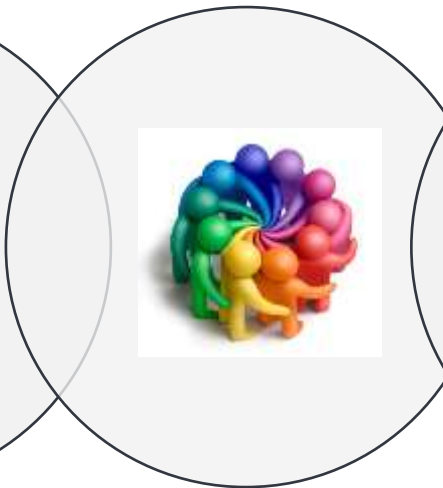**Enrollment Management**

Academic Affairs

The Funnel Huddle: Mobilizing for Student Success

Administration & Finance

Student Affairs

Enrollment Management

Academic Affairs

Information Tecnology
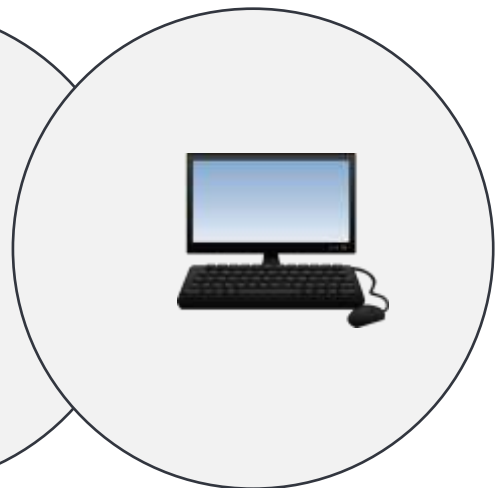
What is the role of the Funnel Huddle?

The Funnel Huddle drives much of the student experience and sits at that intersection of Transitions, Advising, Pedagogy, Technology and Data.

Transitions

Advising

Pedagogy

Technology and Data

COVID Dilemma: How do we reimagine the student experience?

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

RE-CREATING SELF-EFFICACY

TECHNOLOGY BUILDOUT

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

LEHMAN COLLEGE

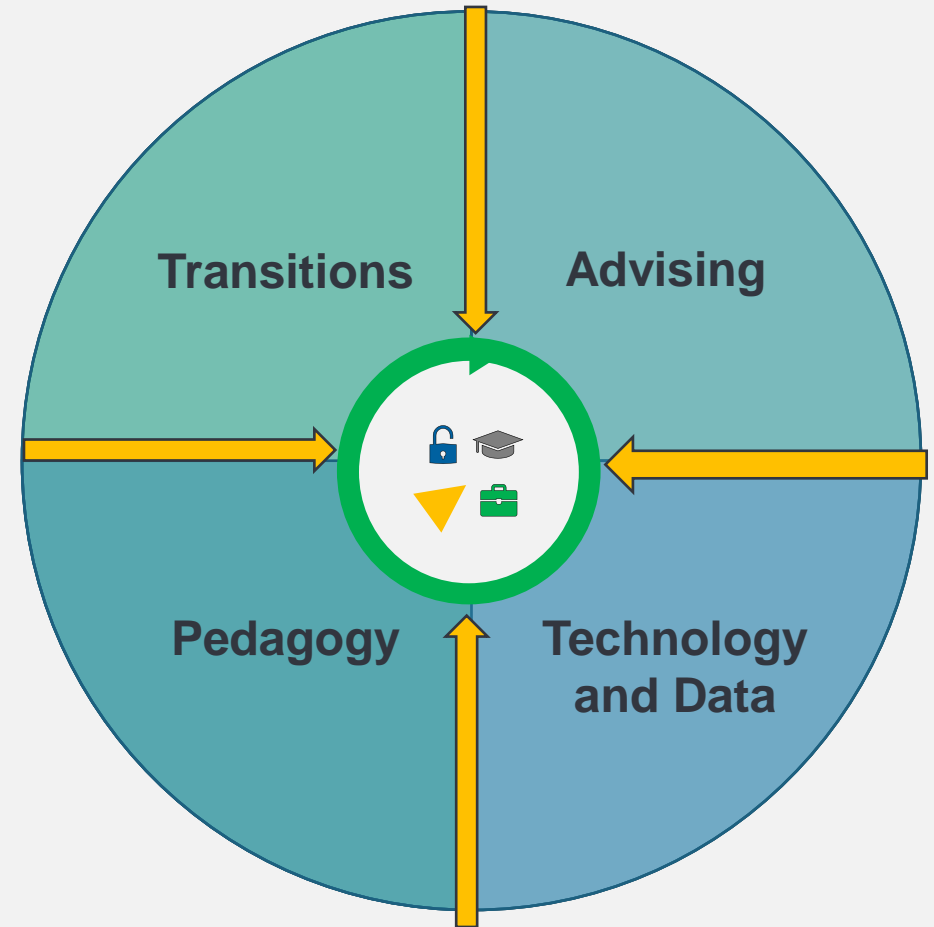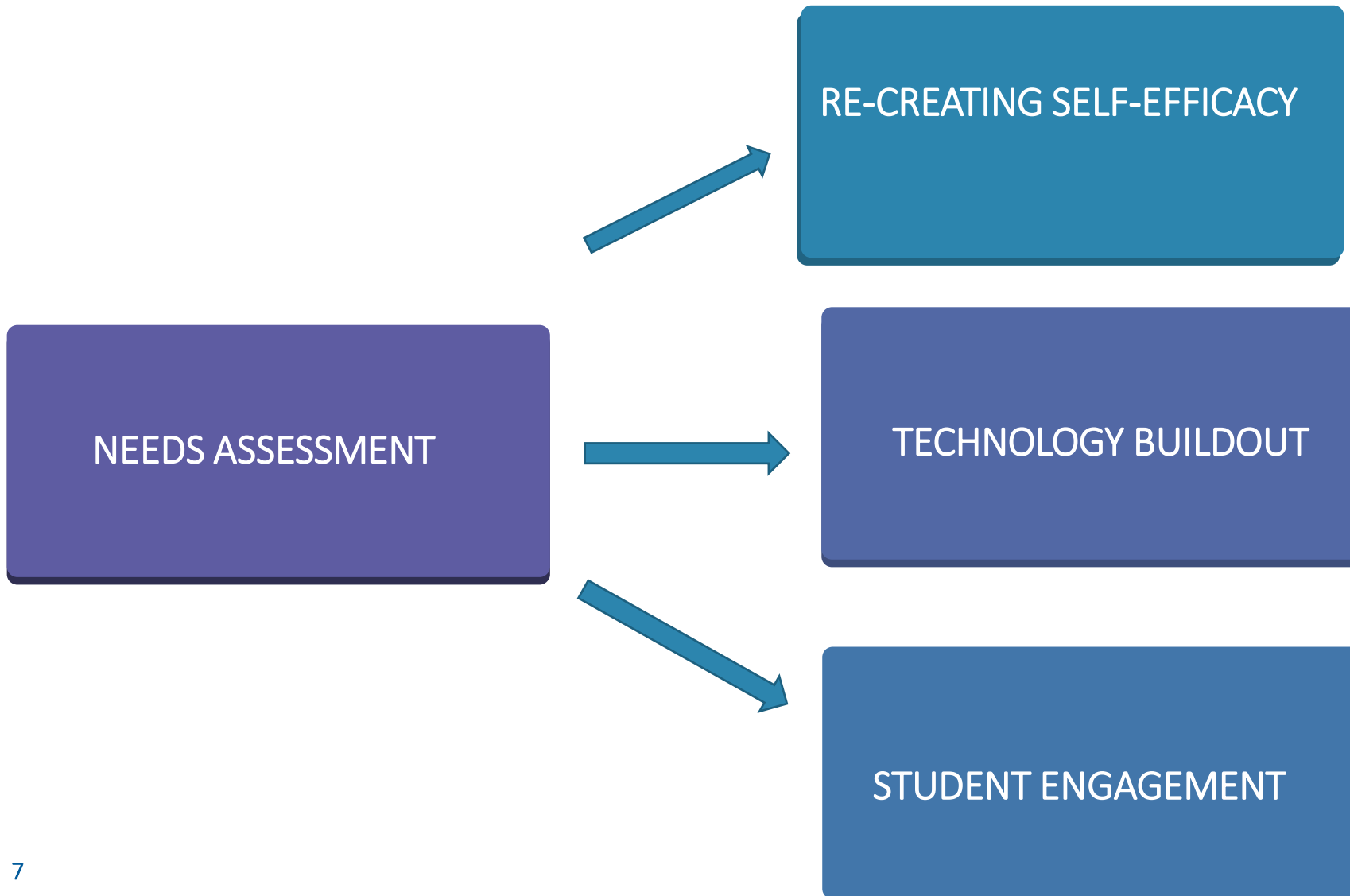# Conduct a Needs Assessment

Students

- Technology Needs
- Wifi Connectivity
- General Technical Skills
- Food Security
- Housing
- Financial
- Mental Health
- Physical Health

Staff

- Technology Needs
- Wifi and Phone Connectivity
- General Office Supplies
- Mail Delivery
- Work/Life Balance
- Mental Health
- Physical Health

Technology Buildout

Are You READY?
A CUNY Online Learning Resource

- Creating a phone/zoom based advising model
- Buildout of a Virtual Student Center
- Creation of multiple academic department advising websites
- Implemented "Lehman Support Center"
- Launched Live Agent Technology
- Leveraged MS Forms and Power Automate to both capture and push information to students.

- Accessed and leveraged Blackboard and DegreeWorks student data
- Developed automated workflows
- Implemented decision trees to assist students in basic policy decision making
- Implemented document imaging and electronic signature tools
- Enhanced texting and email platforms
- Rolled out Schedule Builder software tool

Student Engagement: Lehman Cares

Lehman ♥ CARES

- Leveraged forms for students to seek assistance in connecting with a department, settling their account, or registering for a course.

- Created flexible options for students not able to secure admissions documents, sit for exams, etc.

- Call and Text campaigns to serve as check-ins with students.

- Identified near completers and provided low or no cost pathways to degree completion

- Developed nudges to encourage course engagement throughout the semester

- Enhanced new student communications, additional opportunities to engage virtually with admissions and advising staff.

- Developed approach to accounts receivable allowing us to capture student intentions while also capturing need

THE CAMPAIGN FOR LEHMAN COLLEGE

Lehman ♥ CARES

Creating Self-Efficacy

Students

- Improved access to training and support on: Blackboard, Degree Works, Schedule Builder, and other technologies.

- Deeper understanding of course offerings by modality.

- Encouraged students to seek out support regardless of type.

Staff

- OK to fail culture contributed to calculated risk taking

- Ongoing group and 1:1 training provided to ensure proficiency in all technologies

Outcomes

New Organizational Best Practices/Realities

- Live agent technology has been widely embraced by student and staff.
- Use Blackboard usage data to nudge students who stop participating in a course triggers positive responses.
- Traditional "early alerts" now include a "student cannot pass course" intervention.
- DegreeWorks course data being used to trigger student specific general education, major/minor, and elective nudges.
- Leveraging MS Forms allows us to address concerns on evenings, weekends, and holidays with minimal staffing.
- All processes will remain paperless.
- Calling campaigns are our single most effective way to engage students.
- Free and low-cost credit accumulation strategies will continue to evolve and grow.

Improved Enrollment and Retention

- Summer Enrollment increased by 23%
- Fall Enrollment increased by 4.5%
- Enrolled our largest freshman class
- Increased graduate enrollment
- Impacted average credits enrolled
- Improved retention

Next Steps

New Ways to Collaborate

- Prepare to return to campus
- Focus on students who postponed or delayed enrollment
- Engage our students who have stopped out and plan their return
- Reimagine the financial aid experience
- Maximize CARES and MSI resources to students