How Can Student Success Technology Advance Institution Goals?

Module 1.1

Contents

This resource will be most useful for technology procurement teams, institution leadership, technology project managers, student success initiative leaders, and/or steering committees engaged in student success technology strategy

COMPLETE COLLEGE AMERICA

The Ada Center

ADVISING SUCCESS NETWORK

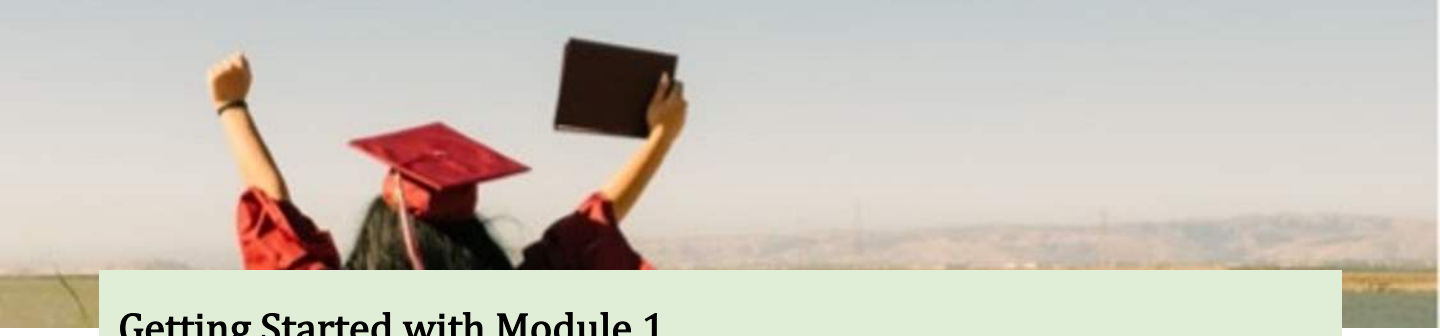
What Are You Reading?

At the time of this writing, higher education institutions across the country continue to engage in rapid and large-scale transformation across all facets of their institutions. Many faculty previously unfamiliar with digital learning technologies now engage with students through new software features. Administrators mobilize to enable student support and campus connection in a far more virtual context. And leadership is reflecting on the significant enrollment headwinds and equity focus that are sure to shape higher education in the years to come. And at this moment, our society is collectively debating how new AI technologies such as ChatGPT might impact our workforce and education institutions.

At the core of much of this transformation is a new appreciation for the role of technology in delivering student success, high-quality learning, and equitable student outcomes for Black, Latino, Native-American, and low-income students. Through The Ada Center's partnership with Complete College America, the Advising Success Network, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we've seen firsthand how institutions with strong IT capacity in the form of effective technology tools, policies, and practices are poised to creatively advance—and potentially accelerate—their student success goals while supporting their communities in a time of crisis.

Yet, despite this importance, there has been comparatively little attention and focus on how to support Minority Serving Institutions with how to deploy student success technologies in service of their unique missions and contexts.

This curriculum series on Student Success Technology is designed for MSI practitioners and their friends. It was compiled with generous funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and was authored by The Ada Center based on six years of insight from The Ada Center's work with hundreds of MSIs and access-focused institutions. The curriculum would not be possible without the thought partnership and support from Complete College America and the Advising Success Network. Our team would also like to thank student artists Ryan De Vera, Isa Saldivar, and Morgan Liu for helping to brighten this resources series.



Getting Started with Module 1

Over the last decade, the student success technology landscape has undergone an immense transformation. New edtech start-ups created an ever-growing suite of new products and features meant to streamline higher education processes and improve student outcomes. Innovations in data analytics and improvements in user interface design stoked excitement about a new age of transformation. And while some institutions have seen incredible gains in student success through technology-enabled efforts, many others feel simply overwhelmed and frustrated in an ever-changing market of products that make big promises and often tout equally big price tags.

Making sense of this landscape is the first step toward ensuring your institution's technology investments align with and support your student success strategies and goals. This module will provide a practical overview of what effective student success technology looks like, how the technology marketplace is organized, and key continuing education resources. Unlike the other four modules in this series, Module 1 is a foundational module light on interactive exercises and more focused on reading and reflecting.

What You'll Learn:
Module 1 Learning Objectives

- What does effective student success technology look like from the student and practitioner perspective?
- What are the categories of student success technology and how do they map to capabilities and products?
- What resources can support my continued learning on the evolving student success technology landscape and experiences of peers?

How You'll Learn:
Module 1 Contents and Resources

Module 1:

1.1: *Read and Reflect*
How Can Student Success Technology Advance Institution Goals?

1.2: *Read and Reflect*
How Can I Make Sense of the Technology Landscape?

1.3: *Read and Plan*
How Can I Continue Learning?

What Does Effective Student Success Technology Look Like?

Before we begin unpacking student success technology categories and frameworks, it's helpful to first have a clear example of what effective technology use can look like. Across the coming pages we'll follow an example student, Natalia, and what her journey might look like when her HSI effectively deploys technology. We'll be mapping Natalia's journey along the following six pillars explained below, borrowed and adapted from the Guided Pathways framework:

Student Journey Pillars

Engage and Prepare Prospective Students
Managing the admissions and matriculation workflow, through student-facing and staff-facing activities, tools, and resources

Clarify the Path to Student End Goals
Articulating the courses and activities students should take and when to meet labor market and continuing education goals

Help Students Choose and Get on a Path
Providing students with accurate and personalized information and guidance to help them select and enter an academic program

Help Students Stay on Their Path
Ensuring that students get the personalized information, support, and services they need when they need them

Support Student Learning
Helping students and faculty supplement and target traditional instruction to improve learning outcomes

Continually Improve the Student Experience
Investigating patterns of student enrollment, engagement, and progress to pinpoint areas in need of refinement

We've created this illustrative technology-enabled journey for Natalia based on research The Ada Center conducted with students and practitioners across 112 MSIs between 2020 – 2023. The journey is not an exhaustive list of all technology capabilities, but rather a realistic depiction of what students, faculty, and staff have articulated as an aspirational yet attainable technology-mediated experience with software tools available today.

What Does Effective Student Success Technology Look Like?

Technology Enables Natalia's Onboarding to be Personalized and Straightforward

Prospective student Natalia expresses interest in the college at a community event and tells the recruiter about her career interests and financial concerns

- Natalia receives a personalized letter encouraging enrollment, a main point of contact at the college to help with onboarding questions, and a personalized task list of key steps to complete
- These steps are continually updated in her student onboarding portal, where she can regularly see which tasks remain

- Natalia's onboarding navigator sends Natalia information about degree programs tailored to her career interests along with financial aid information; when Natalia does not complete FAFSA, the navigator follows up
- Natalia's student portal reflects this conversation and points her toward FAFSA forms

- Natalia enrolls at the college and meets with her advisor during her first semester to build a degree plan; conversations with her onboarding navigator help guide the degree planning conversation
- Her advisor also proactively suggests on-campus employment opportunities, which are already populating in Natalia's student portal

Clarify the Path to Student End Goals

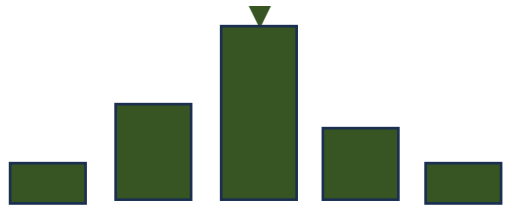
What Does Effective Student Success Technology Look Like?

Natalia can clearly see how college programs map to post-graduate opportunities

Natalia is debating enrollment in the college's chemistry program. Through the college website, she can use a career exploration tool to examine typical careers in the chemistry field, salary ranges for those occupations, and current job opportunities in the nearby metro area.

B.S. Chemistry – Expected Graduation 2027

Salary by Field of Study - Chem



Median Chemist Salary – Entry Level
$64,961

Available Jobs 65 jobs posted in past six months

Careers in Your Area by Field of Study - Chem

Research Assistant
University of Idaho
3.1 miles from your location

Chemist
U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration
6.6 miles from your location

Project Chemist
Ryza International
Remote – Any location within continental U.S.

Natalia can also examine how continuing education programs will impact her career search.

Minimum Education Required – Chem

M.S., Chemistry → Median Salary $60k - $80k

Ph.D., Chemistry → Median Salary $91 - $160k

Help Students Choose and Get on a Path

What Does Effective Student Success Technology Look Like?

Degree Planning and Progress Tracking is Intuitive, Accurate, and Tied to Student Goals

25 Credits Complete!
5 Major Credits

35 Credits Remaining
25 Major Credits

Fall 2020	Spring 2021
PHL 102	ECON 101
MAT 102	MAT 102
EL 234	PHLA 201
CHM 103	CHM 204
CHML 103B	CHML 204B

Natalia and her advisor can regularly view and edit her semester-by-semester degree plan, monitor her progress to degree, and collaborate on changes to her degree plan within a user-friendly, accurate system

Natalia receives consistent communication from the registrar's office, financial aid, advising, career services, and her faculty members about courses required for graduation and continuing education/career success

When Natalia deviates from her degree plan or wants to change majors, her advisor is alerted and can send outreach to Natalia (and other students like her) to inquire about the change of plans and make sure Natalia is on track with her goals

Help Students Stay on Their Path

What Does Effective Student Success Technology Look Like?

Natalia can get support that is proactive, tailored, and easy to access.

Technology and process infrastructure can seamlessly collect key student information, enable quick logging of student interactions, and display vital information for role-appropriate faculty and staff.

Swipe card data

Application information

Support team notes and files

Natalia Lopez
B.S. Chemistry
101056179

Message

Academic Advisor: Jane Goodall
Success Factors
Attendance
Notes
Referrals and Appointments
GPA and Course Grades
Documents (e.g., Degree Plan)
Communication History and Preferences
Tags: First Generation; Student Employee

- Natalia's advisor and broader support team personalize conversations with Natalia based on her interests and experiences; advising appointments are no longer consumed by her advisor navigating across multiple systems and screens trying to find key information
- Natalia only has to "tell her story" once; the college supports her even as she transitions majors and moves across departments

Support Student Learning

What Does Effective Student Success Technology Look Like?

Students are Taught How to Use Learning Technologies and Their Use is Consistent Across Courses

Natalia's biology professor and writing instructor have enabled use of the LMS calendar, assignments, and discussion boards and use them consistently

The student portal, LMS, degree planning tool, and student mobile app show consistent information across apps and devices

Natalia can build her learning community and connect with classmates through the college's interactive messaging tool

Natalia's professor begins her biology course with an introduction to the LMS and remote lab tool along with expectations for their use

Natalia gets a tutorial of the remote exam proctoring software before taking the biology exam, so she knows what to expect

Continually Improve the Student Experience

What Does Effective Student Success Technology Look Like?

Natalia and her peers benefit from data-enabled decisions about everything from course offering to math tutoring approaches

Technology and process infrastructure is structured such that core data systems contain clean, intelligible information (e.g., there is only one way to denote a student is first-generation and everyone that uses these systems knows what that is); those that interact with students can quickly log those interactions in a single interface; all practitioners have regular access to role-appropriate and intuitive data/analytics that empower them to continually improve the student experience.

Natalia Lopez
B.S. Chemistry
101056179

Message

Academic Advisor: Jane Goodall
Success/Risk Factors
Attendance
Notes
Referrals and Appointments
GPA and Course Grades
Documents (e.g., Degree Plan)
Communication History and Preferences
Tags: First Generation; Student Employee

- College leadership can analyze the activities and experiences of students like Natalia to understand the interactions most closely tied to positive outcomes for different student populations
- These analytics can also be used to guide personalized outreach and support to students like Natalia, such that Natalia and her peers don't fall through the cracks
- Disaggregating data by race, financial aid status, zip code, and other attributes enables investments and policy changes that can address equity gaps

Reflection Questions

Which aspects of Natalia's journey align with experiences that students are already having at your institution?

What components of the journey feel the most different from the current student experience at your institution?

Are there other aspects of a student's journey not covered here that feel especially important given the unique mission and goals of your institution?

Next Steps

This module is designed to create a shared foundation of student success technology knowledge. By the end of this module, you should have a framework for what effective student success technology can look like, how the software marketplace is organized, and what resources might help you continuously advance your technology knowledge. The next resource is Module 1.2 How Can I Make Sense of the Technology Landscape?

- [x] *Read and Reflect* Module 1.1 How Can Student Success Technology Advance Institution Goals?
  ⧖ 1 hour
- [ ] *Read and Reflect* Module 1.2 How Can I Make Sense of the Technology Landscape?
  ⧖ 2 - 3 hours
- [ ] *Read and Plan* Module 1.3 How Can I Continue Learning?
  ⧖ <1 hour

Module 1.1 Continuing Reflection:

1) What goals do you have from your engagement in this curricular material?
2) Who at your institution might benefit from being brought into your thinking about student success technology?

About This Series

This five-part instructional series on Student Success Technology is designed for minority serving institutions (MSIs) and their friends. Taken together, these instructional resources aim to provide practitioners with the tools to establish and maintain a technology ecosystem that effectively supports the institution's broader student success and equity goals. The exercises and resources within these modules are also widely applicable across the higher education field.

This resource was compiled with generous funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and was authored by The Ada Center based on six years of insight from The Ada Center's work with hundreds of MSIs and access-focused institutions. The curriculum would not be possible without the thought partnership and support from Complete College America and the Advising Success Network.

For additional curriculum modules, please visit:
www.completecollege.org/navigating-student-success-technology

For questions about this resource, or to explore additional higher education technology research and tools, please visit www.theadacenter.org/resources.

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