PARTNERSHIP FOR COLLEGE COMPLETION
Accelerating action to close the graduation gap

**Illinois Equity in Attainment Plan
2023-2025**

Northeastern Illinois University

Introduction

In alignment to its mission and vision through the Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative, Northeastern Illinois State University (NEIU) is committed to eliminating disparities in degree completion rates of African American, Latinx, and Pell-eligible students. In doing so, NEIU is committed to exploring racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps through an intersectional lens. NEIU has a long and proud history of serving students from all backgrounds by providing broad educational and career opportunities. NEIU remains steadfast in its commitment to access and opportunity for students from underserved populations (e.g., Pell-eligible, students of color, and first-generation) who come to college to achieve their personal and career goals and to make a difference in their families, communities, states, and nations. We are committed to providing not only access, but also to ensure that all NEIU students can succeed academically and personally. The NEIU ILEA Equity Plan will serve as a roadmap for NEIU to close gaps in degree attainment and academic achievement particularly for low-income, first-generation, African American, and Latinx students.

Current State

Our ILEA Equity Plan focuses on eliminating disparities among African American, Latinx, and Pell-eligible students. Currently, gaps continue to exist in retention and graduation rates for African-American and Latinx students compared to their white peers. Retention rates for Pell-eligible students over the past five years indicate the need to analyze and address compounding variables of students' socioeconomic status(es).

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. Degree-completion and achievement disparities are present among African American and white students, Latinx and white students, and Pell-eligible and non-Pell-eligible students. NEIU gathered and analyzed equity data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, race, and Pell eligibility. These equity data track year-to-year persistence rates, and 4- 5-, and 6-year graduation rates.

Future Vision

Northeastern Illinois University is one of 25 institutions committed to eliminating racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps by 2025 and aggressively prioritize increasing completion rates on our campuses. We seek to increase retention rates among African American students, increase enrollment of Latinx students, and support college completion rates for low-income students (as identified by Pell data).

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

Institutional Strategies

In developing our strategies for our Equity Plan, the NEIU team considered the criteria outlined by the Partnership for College Completion, which included: 1) serve a specific student group, 2) reach more than 50% of a student group and 3) achieve a specific intended outcome. As such, NEIU has outlined eight major strategies that include:

1. Scale up credit-bearing co-requisite and stretch models of gateway math and English courses
2. Increase usage and speed up response time of NEIU's early alert system (Starfish)
3. Establish College Equity Teams
4. Invest in an inclusive teaching and learning model that promotes curricular redesign, culturally responsive teaching strategies, and innovative professional development
5. Implement mandatory "Equity-in-Faculty-Hiring" Search and Screen Committee training
6. Establish a Social Service Consortium to develop programs and services for student populations that are disproportionately impacted by basic needs insecurities (food, housing, and financial) and barriers they create towards degree completion
7. Identify and remove barriers for financial aid
8. Participate in ILEA equity academies

Evaluation Plan

Each of the eight institutional strategies will be evaluated every semester in accordance with their associated outcomes and to ensure we are making progress towards the overall goal of eliminating disparities in degree completion rates of African-American, Latinx, and Pell-eligible students.

NEIU has established a plan to evaluate each institutional strategy. Objectives, evaluation methods, and specific outcomes (targets) have been developed with specific personnel responsible for each objective.

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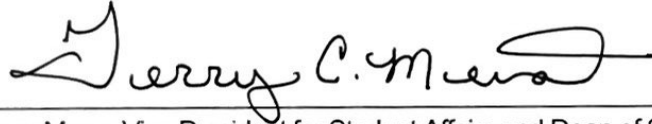
Northeastern Illinois University Equity Plan: 2023-2025

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

Date: 2/1/23

Gloria Gibson, President

Date: 2/1/23

Andrea Evans, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Date: 2/1/23

Kimberley Buster-Williams, Vice President for Enrollment Management

Date: 2/1/2023

Terry Mena, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

Date: 2/1/2023

Shireen Roshanravan, Executive Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Date: 2/1/2023

Sandra Beyda-Lorie, Executive Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning

Date: 2/1/2023

Sandy Vue, Director of Institutional Research

1a: ILEA Overview

High school graduation for Illinois students have maintained consistent rates between 85.4-86 between 2014-2018; however, wide and persistent gaps in high school completion rates during the same time period for low-income (76.7-79.4) and students of color (Black 74.6-78.9; Hispanic 80.7-83.5) have accurately predicted widening gaps for college matriculation. The launch of Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA) 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 champion policies, systems, and practices that ensure all students can graduate from college and achieve their career aspirations. With an initial focus on northern Illinois, PCC has set a goal to eliminate institutional achievement gaps in college degree completion for low-income, Latina/x/o 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 support.
- Achievement gaps between low-income, Black and Latina/x/o students and their higher-income, 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. Through analyses of institutional data, these colleges will 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 Latina/x/o, 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 PCC 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.

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)** marks a major step forward for 25 two-year and four-year public and private non-profit colleges and universities from the northeast region and across Illinois who are committing to eliminate racial and socio-economic achievement gaps by 2025 while aggressively increasing completion rates on their campuses.

1b: Institution Overview

Community Context

Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) is a master's comprehensive, public, state-supported University serving Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. Founded in September 1867 in Blue Island as Cook County's first teacher training school, the institution has evolved into the comprehensive university that it is today. Its campus at 5500 N. St. Louis Avenue opened in 1961 with a total enrollment of 1,348 students pursuing a bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree. Throughout the 1960s, enrollment increased, programs were expanded, and the institution's mission broadened. In 1971, with a total enrollment of approximately 7,000, the college became Northeastern Illinois University.

NEIU's mission is to "prepare a diverse community of students for leadership and service in our region and in a dynamic multicultural world." As of Fall 2021, we serve 6,425 full and part-time students, the majority of whom identify as commuter students. The University has three academic colleges (Arts and Sciences, Business and Technology, and the Goodwin College of Education), as well as two Nontraditional Degree Programs (University Without Walls and Interdisciplinary Studies) that provide more than 70 undergraduate and graduate programs and offer a total of 45 undergraduate degrees and 2 undergraduate certificate programs.

In 1997, Northeastern Illinois University became a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and Minority Serving Institution (MSI), making it the longest standing four-year public HSI in the Midwest. A majority of our undergraduate students are Pell-eligible (often from the least funded Chicago public school systems), commuters returning to pursue university degrees after having families, and working multiple jobs while taking classes.

NEIU is proud to be the oldest and one of two four-year public Hispanic/Minority Serving Institutions in the Midwest. Situated in Illinois where Latina/x/os constitute the fifth largest Latina/x/o population in the country, Latina/x/o students make up 37% of the NEIU student body. Regionally, Latina/x/os constitute 23% of the population and 29% in Chicago. NEIU serves a significant low-income population, with 56% of undergraduate students eligible for Pell grants.

Additionally, we serve large numbers of transfer students, admitting 769 in fall 2021 as opposed to 330 first-time, full-time students. Recognizing the historical marginalization of students of color in schools, the El Centro and Jacob Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies campus sites were founded in the 1970s to provide Latina/x/o, and Black students access to culturally responsive higher education in surrounding communities. Proyecto Pa'lante and Project Success are historic programs on NEIU's north campus, also established in the 1970s and charged with increasing Latina/x/o and African American student access and success. The El Centro Scholars and Proyecto Pa'lante programs incorporate holistic and culturally-sustaining approaches to student learning and advising as they transition from high school to college. In addition, NEIU has an African and African American Studies program that offers a minor and a Latina/x/o and Latin American Studies program, which offers both a major and a minor.

NEIU is also proud to be a welcoming university to undocumented students—a significant number who identify as Latina/x/o—and proud to lead the State of Illinois in creating the first Director of Undocumented Student Resources (URS) position in a public institution of higher education in 2014. URS ensures undocumented students have the tools and resources to succeed by providing training for faculty and staff, disseminating scholarship information, and conducting ongoing assessments of NEIU policies for disparate impacts on undocumented students. Beginning the 2022-2023 academic year, all two-year and four-year public institutions in the State must have a liaison for undocumented students.

According to the 2022 edition of U.S. News & World Report's annual "Best Colleges" publication, Northeastern Illinois University graduates its students with the least amount of

student debt among Midwest regional universities and ranks in three other categories among Midwest regional universities: ethnic diversity, economic diversity and social mobility. Northeastern also ranked 11th in the state (tie) for undergraduate computer science programs and 12th in the state (tie) for undergraduate business programs.

The six-year completion rate for all students is 21%, 18% for Latina/x/o students, 6% for African American students, and 21% for Pell-eligible students. These data points represent part-time enrollment patterns and multiple social and institutional factors and require multi-pronged solutions. In addition, the six-year completion rate highlights the fact that some students transfer and complete their degree elsewhere. Embodying an asset-based approach, and like any good educational entity, NEIU accepts our responsibility to meet students where they are and commits to their success. We continue to build institutional capacity to meet the needs of Latina/x/o, African American, and Pell-eligible students and all students. We have much to be proud of, and we understand significant work remains.

1c: Equity Statement

Guided by its core values, Northeastern Illinois University invests in student success through a commitment to mentoring and a deliberate university focus on student achievement of academic, professional and personal goals. Our strategic goals have action items that compel us to integrate culturally relevant pedagogy, increase civic engagement, and address equity gaps across racial and socioeconomic differences. Through a demonstration of inclusiveness and diversity, NEIU encourages acceptance of wide-ranging perspectives among students, staff, faculty, and members of the broader community. The most important facets of the University's mission are to offer high quality, affordable undergraduate and graduate programs to a broad spectrum of students and to foster student growth and development. To these ends, the University attaches primary importance to excellence in teaching.

The Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California defines "Equity-Mindedness" as the "perspective or mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes." Further, equity-mindedness moves practitioners "to take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students, and critically reassess their own practices" by placing success outcomes for students of color at the center. The intersection of NEIU's values of student success, inclusiveness, and diversity sets a framework for achieving equity in student outcomes as a central focus for advancing our mission and vision.

As a Minority Serving Institution, NEIU is committed to achieving equity and inclusive excellence by building our internal capacity to address inequities in student outcomes, eliminate equity gaps, and implement evidence-based interventions for improving student learning and success.
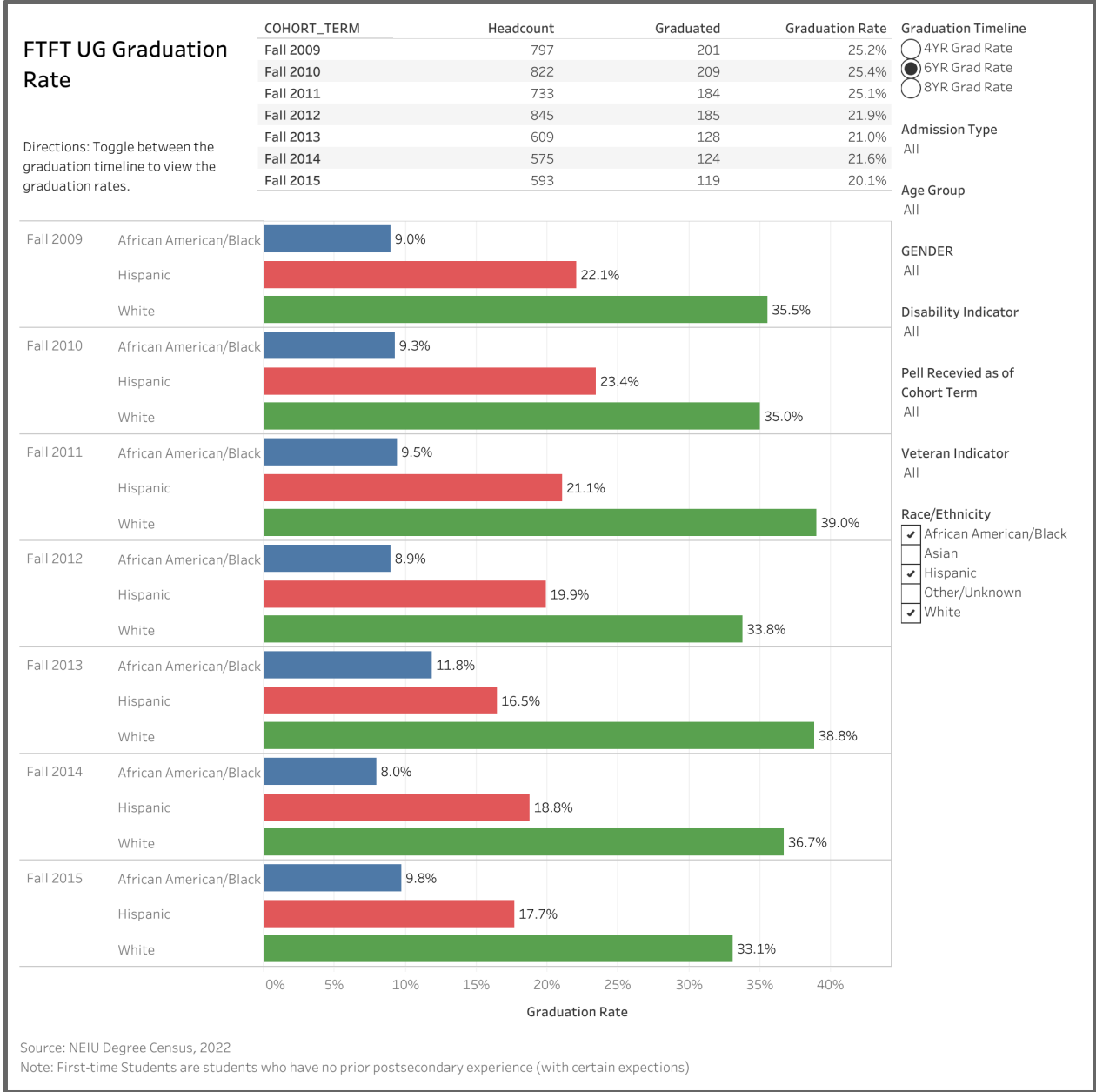
1d: Purpose of the Equity Plan

Northeastern Illinois University continues to compass and affirm our advancement of equity, diversity, and inclusion in support of students, employees, and the greater NEIU community. To date, the University has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to Equity, Diversity, and

Inclusion. *US News and World Report* has ranked NEIU among the most diverse universities in the Midwest for 8 consecutive years. In this spirit, we are embarking on the development of an institutional Strategic Plan to both inform and further deepen our commitment to the advancement of our EDI efforts within our NEIU community.

Moving into 2022, the citywide challenges with regard to persistence and retention are significantly impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the diverse composition of Chicago's K-12 district demography, and in service to closing postsecondary equity gaps, we are now prepared to set the path moving forward, while amplifying the experiences of our student community and beyond.

Six-Year Graduation Rates for FTFT Undergraduates from Fall 2009-Fall 2015

FTFT UG Graduation Rate

Directions: Toggle between the graduation timeline to view the graduation rates.

COHORT_TERM	Headcount	Graduated	Graduation Rate
Fall 2009	797	201	25.2%
Fall 2010	822	209	25.4%
Fall 2011	733	184	25.1%
Fall 2012	845	185	21.9%
Fall 2013	609	128	21.0%
Fall 2014	575	124	21.6%
Fall 2015	593	119	20.1%

Graduation Timeline
- ○ 4YR Grad Rate
- ● 6YR Grad Rate
- ○ 8YR Grad Rate

Admission Type
All

Age Group
All

GENDER
All

Disability Indicator
All

Pell Recevied as of Cohort Term
All

Veteran Indicator
All

Race/Ethnicity
- ☑ African American/Black
- ☐ Asian
- ☑ Hispanic
- ☐ Other/Unknown
- ☑ White

		Graduation Rate
Fall 2009	African American/Black	9.0%
	Hispanic	22.1%
	White	35.5%
Fall 2010	African American/Black	9.3%
	Hispanic	23.4%
	White	35.0%
Fall 2011	African American/Black	9.5%
	Hispanic	21.1%
	White	39.0%
Fall 2012	African American/Black	8.9%
	Hispanic	19.9%
	White	33.8%
Fall 2013	African American/Black	11.8%
	Hispanic	16.5%
	White	38.8%
Fall 2014	African American/Black	8.0%
	Hispanic	18.8%
	White	36.7%
Fall 2015	African American/Black	9.8%
	Hispanic	17.7%
	White	33.1%

Source: NEIU Degree Census, 2022
Note: First-time Students are students who have no prior postsecondary experience (with certain expections)

1e: Campus Engagement Plan

As a Minority-Serving Institution, Northeastern Illinois University upholds the mission to provide opportunity and access to a first-class public education for the residents of our surrounding communities and those traditionally underserved by higher education. We embrace diversity among students, staff, and faculty as well as members of the broader community, encouraging acceptance of wide-ranging perspectives. Our mission calls for us to engage our campus community in the identification of areas for growth and develop an equity plan to address these areas.

The development, implementation, and assessment of an equity plan can potentially transform our regional institution. The NEIU community relies on several stakeholders for its success: faculty senate, faculty committees, Student Government Association, Civil Service and Administrative Professional Councils, University Diversity Council, University Advisory Council, University Planning and Budget Committee, student clubs and organizations, student services, administration, community colleges, local schools, among others.

A presence at regularly-scheduled meetings (Faculty Senate, University Diversity Council, University Planning and Budget Council, Student Government Association, University Diversity Council, Civil Service and Administrative Professional Councils, program/department/division) will provide ILEA team members the opportunities to report on the various initiative functions (gathering data, charting themes, researching resources) and ask for feedback.

Further, a communication strategy to inform and engage both internal and external audiences will be employed to disseminate the creation and implementation of the University's equity plan. This strategy will include the following: 1) Presentations to the President's cabinet (with the expectation that VPs will take up institutional strategies and goals to implement as appropriate in their divisions), the Dean's Council, the Administrative Team, the Strategic Enrollment Management planning team, Admissions and Onboarding teams, and the Student Government Association, as well as our various shared governance councils, including the University Advisory Council, University Diversity Council, Faculty Senate, University Planning and Budget Council, Administrative Professional Council, Civil Service Council, 2) Campus Emails - University and Targeted Announcements 3) College Equity Teams, and 4) a strong University website presence with a Dashboard that allows the NEIU community to track goals, benchmarks and progress.

2. Current State

Northeastern Illinois University Enrollments
In fall 2021, the total undergraduate student headcount at Northeastern Illinois University was 4,595, a 35% decline from the 7,092 number of enrolled undergraduate students in 2017. Both Northeastern Illinois and several Illinois public peer institutions have suffered from declining enrollments and shrinking entering classes due demographic changes and out-of-state college going enrollment patterns. Since 2017, the number of Illinois High School graduates attending 4-year institutions outside of the state of Illinois has been consistently between 29,000 and 32,000 students, comprising 48% or more of the total Illinois High School graduates attending 4-year Universities. Illinois consistently has the second highest net college-bound out-migration rate of any state in the nation.
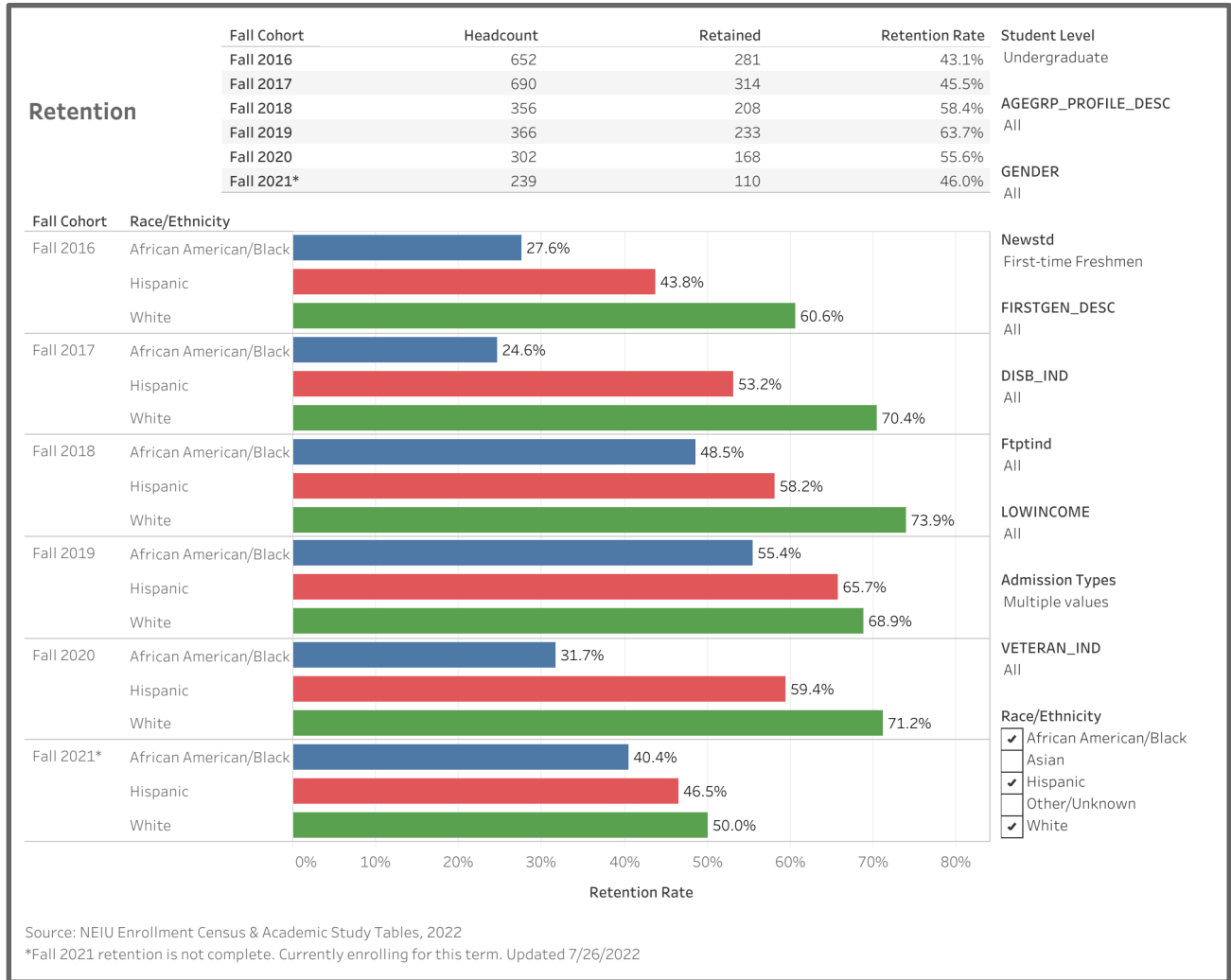
2a: African American Students
African-American undergraduate student enrollments at Northeastern Illinois University have steadily declined between 2017 and 2021, with a sharp 18% drop between 2017 and 2018.

Between fall 2018 and fall 2021, the percentage decline of undergraduate African American enrollment decreases proportionally with the decline in overall undergraduate enrollment, remaining near 10% of total undergraduate enrollment. In fall 2021, African-American undergraduate students constituted 10% of total NEIU undergraduate enrollment (493 of 4,595).

Retention rates demonstrate a pattern of stark disparity for African-American students compared to their White peers. This pattern persists for both students entering into their first undergraduate academic year and for transfer students. **Since 2016, first-time full-time African-American students have been retained to their second year at an average rate of 37.3% compared to an average rate of 68.7% of first-time full-time White students.** While differences in retention rates exist for transfer students, their overall retention rate is lower. African-American transfer students have been retained at an average rate of 62.8% compared to 75.3% for White transfer students.

NEIU Fall-to-Fall Retention Rates 2016-2021

Fall Cohort	Headcount	Retained	Retention Rate
Fall 2016	652	281	43.1%
Fall 2017	690	314	45.5%
Fall 2018	356	208	58.4%
Fall 2019	366	233	63.7%
Fall 2020	302	168	55.6%
Fall 2021*	239	110	46.0%

Retention

Fall Cohort	Race/Ethnicity	Retention Rate
Fall 2016	African American/Black	27.6%
	Hispanic	43.8%
	White	60.6%
Fall 2017	African American/Black	24.6%
	Hispanic	53.2%
	White	70.4%
Fall 2018	African American/Black	48.5%
	Hispanic	58.2%
	White	73.9%
Fall 2019	African American/Black	55.4%
	Hispanic	65.7%
	White	68.9%
Fall 2020	African American/Black	31.7%
	Hispanic	59.4%
	White	71.2%
Fall 2021*	African American/Black	40.4%
	Hispanic	46.5%
	White	50.0%

Retention Rate (x-axis: 0% – 80%)

Student Level — Undergraduate

AGEGRP_PROFILE_DESC — All

GENDER — All

Newstd — First-time Freshmen

FIRSTGEN_DESC — All

DISB_IND — All

Ftptind — All

LOWINCOME — All

Admission Types — Multiple values

VETERAN_IND — All

Race/Ethnicity
- ✔ African American/Black
- ☐ Asian
- ✔ Hispanic
- ☐ Other/Unknown
- ✔ White

Source: NEIU Enrollment Census & Academic Study Tables, 2022
*Fall 2021 retention is not complete. Currently enrolling for this term. Updated 7/26/2022

The average 4-year graduation rate for first-time full-time **African American students between 2011 and 2017 is less than 2%** compared to 15% for their White counterparts. The average 6-year graduation rate for **African American students between 2009 and 2015 is 9%** compared to 35% for White students. The average 8-year graduation rate for **African American students between 2008 and 2015 is 11%** compared to 40% for white students. As Northeastern Illinois University is a Minority Serving Institution with African-American students representing, on average, 10% of its total undergraduate population, addressing these alarming equity gaps is critical for student success.

2b: Latina/x/o Students

Overall, Latina/x/o undergraduate students were retained at an average rate of 58% from 2016-2020 compared to an average 56% retention rate for their White peers. The highest year-to-year retention rate for full-time Latina/x/o undergraduate students was 66% from 2018-2019, and the lowest was 58% from 2015-2016.

Fall 2019-2020 persistence rates for first-time full-time Latina/x/o students was 62% compared to 69% for all White first-time full-time students. The Latina/x/o transfer student persistence rate for the same year was 76% compared to 81% for their White counterparts. While Latina/x/os were retained at an average rate of 66.2% compared to an average rate of 38% for African American full-time undergraduate students, they were nonetheless retained from year 1 to year 2 at lower rates than their White peers.

The average 4-year graduation rate for first-time full-time Latina/x/o students between 2011 and 2017 was less than 4% compared to 15% for their White counterparts. The average 6-year graduation rate for Latina/x/o students between 2009 and 2015 was 26% compared to 35% for White students. The average 8-year graduation rate for Latina/x/o students between 2008 and 2015 was 11% compared to 40% for White students.

2c: Pell-Eligible Students

For the purposes of this initiative, Pell-eligibility guidelines were the criteria for determining socioeconomic status for students attending NEIU from 2017 through 2021.

Between 2017 and 2021, Pell-eligible students constituted a majority of total undergraduate enrolled students at NEIU. The 57% fall-to-fall retention rate for Pell-eligible students in 2021 was higher than for non-Pell-eligible students at 52%. More analysis needs to be done to assess the reasons for this outcome; however, the 5% higher retention rate for Pell-eligible students suggests that financial assistance awareness and financial aid programs are not meeting the needs of students who may not qualify for Pell grants yet still have significant unmet socioeconomic needs to address in order for them to persist at NEIU. Though the percentage of total Pell-eligible undergraduate students has remained relatively steady at an average of 55% with an average retention rate of 59% between 2017-2020, the average 4- and 6-year graduation rates of Pell-eligible students has struggled to rise above 7% and 26%, respectively.

The challenge is to address the specific needs faced by this growing population so they can maintain their degree-seeking progress. The fall semester of 2017 began with 4,060 Pell-eligible students, and 2,341 (57.7%) of those students were retained in the fall of 2018. The fall semester of 2018 began with 3,527 Pell-eligible students, and 2,087 (59.2%) students were retained in the fall of 2019. The fall of 2019 began with 3,145 Pell-eligible students, of which only 1,941 (61.7%) were retained in the fall of 2020.

NEIU's 4- and 6-year completion rates for the past five years indicate the need to analyze and address intersectionality in students' socioeconomic status(es). In 2021, of the 56% Pell-eligible students, 56% are 23 years or older and identify as Black/African American or Latina/x/o. The majority of this subgroup are female-identified. This indicates that a majority of Pell-eligible undergraduates are women of color beyond the traditional 18–21-year-old first-time full-time college student. Discerning the impact of each of these variables will be one area for data analysis and program implementation to increase completion rates for our Pell-eligible students.

The equity gaps among African Americans, Latina/x/os, and Pell-eligible students highlight the critical need for a university-wide commitment and specific actions to eliminate academic equity gaps and to achieve equal outcomes for all NEIU students.

3. Future Vision

Goal

The goal of Northeastern Illinois University, in alignment to its mission and vision and through the Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative, is to eliminate disparities in degree completion rates between African-American and White students, between Latina/x/o and White students, and between low-income students (as identified by Pell data) and non-Pell-eligible students.

4. Institutional Strategies

1. **Scale up corequisite and stretch Math and English gateway courses**
   National research reveals that developmental coursework, particularly in math, at both 2- and 4-year institutions are not adequately preparing students to be successful in college courses. **In Fall 2019, 40% of Pell-eligible African American students were enrolled in all developmental coursework**, making it imperative that NEIU reconsider the continuation of non-credit-bearing developmental Math, English and Reading coursework. **Given the alarmingly low rate of 4- and 6-year retention and graduation rates for African American students relative to both their white and Latina/x/o counterparts, their disproportionate presence in non-credit-bearing developmental coursework when NEIU has developed credit-bearing alternatives is a site for concern.**

   A short-term strategy for increasing retention and graduation rates for African American and Latina/x/o students is to scale up and increase enrollment in our stretch and corequisite developmental Math and English gateway courses for students who test into developmental math/reading and English coursework. Current data on corequisite and stretch developmental models indicate better completion rates and thereby an increase in persistence to graduation.

2. **Increase usage and speed up response time in NEIU's early-alert system**
   NEIU recognizes that a critical component to retention is early intervention when students are in need of support. Increasing usage, oversight, reporting and turn-around time on early alerts for students in need of early intervention will allow students to receive support services in time for them to get back on track. Utilizing this system to be proactive in offering support to students will address research that shows underrepresented students are less likely to ask for help when needed. Centralizing oversight and charging academic and student affairs leadership with reporting usage and response times of the early-alert system will allow for greater collective accountability.

3. **College Equity Teams**
   Establish or use existing committees to facilitate College Equity Teams reporting directly to the Deans of the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business and Technology and College of Education. These teams will provide input and recommendations on all facets of equity work within each college, including the development of strategies to increase completion rates in the areas of low course completion and high Drop/Withdraw/Fail rates for African American, Latina/x/o and Pell-eligible students. These teams will work with Institutional Research to ensure receipt of data reports on DWF rates across courses offered each semester, with extra attention paid to courses that qualify as general education requirements. Each team will analyze the data report, identify courses with high DWF rates, and submit to the College Dean an annual report identifying recommended strategies and

initiatives to establish collectively-agreed upon goals and strategies to increase completion rates in the identified courses over a 3-year period.

Objectives:
- Identify indicators and data points to be used to assess student performance and identify equity gaps across demographic groups.
- Create IR data reports that track DWF rates across courses offered in each College per semester.
- Identify and recommend strategies for implementation to address equity gaps

Methods:
- Review baseline data (course-level, program-level, college level) to identify whether equity gaps in performance and/or outcomes exist. Also, collect additional data to determine possible explanations for equity gaps.
- Review information/best practices on content or academic discipline-specific indicators of achievement and performance to identify several indicators to be used for equity review. Also identify sources of information/benchmarks to be used for data analysis (course level, program level, college level, etc.)
- Collect data on indicators beginning Fall 2023 and each semester through spring 2025.
- Use data to inform recommendations and strategies to be considered and shared out at the course, programs, and/or college level.
- Identify one or two strategies to implement and review the semester and/or next year

Expected Result:
- Identification of several indicators to be used across disciplines and/or college.
- Identification and implementation of strategies to remedy equity gaps
- Plan data collection to review strategy outcomes; revise and implement as needed

4. **Initiate a "Diversity Champions" faculty/Department Award** to incentivize Faculty professional development to increase utilization of best practices in culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogy.

   The award would reward faculty participation in the following Center for Teaching and Learning and other EDI programming and training initiatives:
   - Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) trainings focused on EDI (e.g., Liquid Syllabus, UDL, un-grading)
   - Office of EDI initiatives, challenges, shared readings and trainings (e.g., reading groups, CARE Lecture Series, Safe Zone Trainings, Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge, sponsored lectures, and other programming)
   - Pedroso Center Heritage Month programming and trainings (e.g., trans* students, etc.)

- Equity Ally trainings (e.g., undocumented students, Disability Justice, Bystander Intervention)
- President's Inclusive Excellence and Diversity Awards
- Service on the University Diversity Council

5. **Implement a mandatory Equity-in-Faculty Hiring Training to remove implicit bias** in hiring processes and close the representational gaps between our Latina/x/o and African American faculty and our Latina/x/o and African American students. The Center for Urban Education "Equity-in-Faculty-hiring" toolkit cites numerous studies that students of color are more likely to approach faculty of color for assistance and feel a greater sense of belonging in the classroom. This could go a long way toward increasing course completions and thus retention and graduation rates.

   Included in this training is instruction on
   - **Increasing the diverse sourcing plan for faculty/staff job advertisements**
   - **Tracking self-identified Latina/x/o and African American applicants** at each stage of the hiring process (submission, round 1 interviews, campus interview, final selection).

6. **Identify and remove barriers that hinder access to financial aid**
   Given that Northeastern Illinois consistently serves a majority of Pell-eligible students and students who may not qualify for Pell grants yet carry significant financial need, examining financial aid processes, communication, customer service, and other protocols could help identify hidden barriers to retention and completion rates. The increase in required verifications that require students to provide evidence that the information on the financial aid application is accurate often prevent many students from accessing the aid necessary to enroll and stay enrolled at NEIU.

   About half of students who are eligible for income-based federal Pell Grants are asked for verification every year compared with the one-third of all FAFSA applicants, according to the National College Access Network (NCAN), a nonprofit that advocates for ways to improve college completion rates (Rosato, 2019). As noted in a recent *Inside Higher Education* article, "the National College Access Network found that only 56 percent of low-income students selected for verification go on to receive a Pell Grant, compared to 78 percent of students not selected for verification" ("A Policy that Harms the Neediest Students;" Megahed 2019). Yet, as the article also notes, 95% of flagged students see no change in their family income contribution (2019). Those flagged for verifications are often students with the greatest socioeconomic hardship who must now navigate a bureaucracy that can involve paying more money to prove they submitted accurate information. Implementing best practices for student-centered communication on these verifications to ensure flagged students feel cared for and supported in moving through the compliance process could be a significant strategy for retention. With the FAFSA Simplification Act on the horizon, revisiting several aspects of NEIU's Financial Aid operations is appropriate.

FAFSA Simplification Act-anticipated implementation 2024-2025:

As shared in *Pell Grants- A Guide to Coming Changes*, the Maximum and Minimum Pell Grants will be separated from the student's FAFSA analysis of family income and assets and will instead be determined in the following ways:

Maximum Pell Grants will automatically be awarded to:

- Dependent students whose parents are non-tax filers
- Independent students who are non-tax filers
- Dependent or independent students under the age of 33 whose parent or guardian died in the line of duty serving as a member of the Armed Forces post-9/11 or died in the line of duty while performing as a public safety officer

Other students will qualify for the Maximum or Minimum Pell Grants based on:

- Family size
- Family type (single parent, two-parent, non-parent independent student)
- Prior-prior year adjusted gross income (AGI) as a percentage of the prior-prior year's Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

Lastly, in his book, *The Privileged Poor How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students*, author Anthony Abraham Jack states that the students who need our help the most, we need to better understand the path they took to get to our campuses and what they face once they're here (Jack, 2019). It is imperative that we examine the assumptions we make when we create policies and practices intended to help them.

7. **Launch an Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services as a "single-point of contact" model to create a campus culture of care and support**
Data suggests that our Pell-eligible students at NEIU tend to be primarily female-identified students of color (African American or Latina/x/o) who are 23 years or older. Understanding their specific needs course can help guide targeted strategies to aid their persistence to graduation. Establishing an Advocacy & Resource Center for social services that readily connects these students with affordable childcare, emergency aid, healthy food options, transportation, and housing can facilitate their persistence to graduation.

The social services ecosystem would help students navigate on-campus and off-campus programs and services.

The following three areas of evaluation outline how NEIU can evaluate the program's success and measure successful implementation and program effectiveness.

Awareness and Utilization of Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services Consortium: The initial measures will focus on awareness of the ARC by faculty, staff, and

students. Beyond awareness, the second measure will be the utilization of case management services and participation in outreach and educational programs that address basic needs and insecurities.

Impact on Student Success Metrics: It is the vision that the work of the center will mitigate (ideally, eliminate) the impact of basic needs insecurities on key student success metrics such as academic performance, academic progress (reduction in stop-outs), credits completed (reduction in course withdrawals), degree completion, and transfer outcomes (at partner community colleges).

Participation in Advocacy Program: To increase the visibility of the center, programs, and services to empower faculty, staff and students who serve as critical referrals, and to eliminate the stigma of utilizing these resources, we will launch an advocacy training program. Measures for this goal include 1) faculty, staff and student participation, 2) assessment of learning by attendees, and 3) whether participants refer students to the ARC.

8. **Participate in ILEA sponsored Equity Academies**

All campus community members will be invited and supported to attend Equity Academies and other workshops sponsored by the Illinois Equity in Attainment (ILEA) Initiative. Importantly, the ILEA team will coordinate with the Center for Teaching and Learning to ensure that faculty from the three colleges, Nontraditional Degree Programs and all ranks who have expertise in areas of equity, cultural responsiveness, and mindfulness training are invited to facilitate sessions.

5. Evaluation Plan

<table>
<tr>
<td colspan="5" align="center">Strategy 1.
Eliminate non-credit bearing developmental courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Method(s)</th>
<th>Expected Result (Target)</th>
<th>Responsible Personnel</th>
<th>Goal(s) Addressed</th>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale up non-credit bearing developmental Math and English gateway courses</td>
<td>Identify best practices for scaling up current credit-bearing models at NEIU

Research and connect with colleges and universities that have successfully implemented alternatives to non-credit bearing developmental Math/English gateway courses.</td>
<td>Identification of exemplars and best practices in developmental education that avoids use of non-credit bearing courses.</td>
<td>Provost/VP Academic Affairs, Associate provosts</td>
<td>Phase out non-credit bearing developmental courses in Math/English gateway courses as barrier to persistence and graduation for African American, Latinx and Pell-eligible students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collect and analyze disaggregated data on NEIU students (2018-2023) who enrolled in developmental courses, both credit bearing and non-credit bearing pathways.</td>
<td>Provide comprehensive data on the impact and outcomes of current developmental educational practices at NEIU.</td>
<td>College of Arts and Sciences leadership; department chairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</table>

	Track course completion, matriculation to other math/English courses, retention, selection of majors. Develop a report and submit these findings to Academic Affairs.			
	In collaboration with Math, ELP, summer bridge, advising programs, determine academic support and funding implications for developmental education reform recommendation	Identify financial resources needed to support new/different advising outcomes, staff training, tutoring programs, and other potential outcomes of dev ed reform recommendations.	Academic Affairs; VP enrollment management	
	Create math and English taskforce with HS Math and English partners to foster better articulation between the university and high school programs, courses, curriculum	To foster better understanding and curriculum alignment in math and English as part of the transition from high school to college.	Academic Affairs with math and English faculty	
	Create a proposal with criteria and	Ability to implement a new approach to	College of Arts and Sciences	

	benchmarks for NEIU to eliminate non-credit bearing developmental courses from English and Math pathways with a timeline no later than 2025. Submit to Academic Affairs.	developmental education in math and English that eliminates the use of non-credit-bearing courses.	leadership; department chairs.	
	Determine any new curricula, training, resources needed to implement new approaches to replace math and English developmental courses.	Implementation of a plan for revised approach to math and English pathways that eliminates non-credit bearing developmental courses by 2025.	College of Arts and Sciences leadership; department chairs; Academic Affairs.	

Strategy 2. Increase usage and speed up response-time of early alerts (Starfish)				
Objective	**Method(s)**	**Expected Result (Target)**	**Responsible Personnel**	**Goal(s) Addressed**
Centralize the approach to monitoring student-raised flags in Starfish	Appoint the VPEM as the person monitoring student-raised flags.	Streamline oversight on Starfish usage and increase coordination for effective responses	VP of Enrollment Management (VPEM)	Increase usage and coordinated responses to student-raised flags in Starfish
Respond to all student-raised	VPs of EM, Student Affairs	90% 24-hour response rate on	VPs of Enrollment Management,	Increase timely response to

flags within 24 hours following a business day.	and Academic Affairs charged with generating, implementing and assessing a roadmap for responding to specific supports requested by student-raised flags in Starfish	all student-raised flags.	Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs	student-raised flags in Starfish
Use data to assess best practices for leveraging Starfish as retention tool for Black/Latinx students	Generate weekly report that disaggregates total African American and Latinx student-raised flags and those that remain raised 24-hours after one business day	Acquire sufficient data of Black/Latinx usage, response-time, and retention rate.	VPEM, AVP Student Success and Retention, and Lead tech on Starfish	Identify solutions to barriers for timely response to student-raised flags and assess overall utility Starfish as an effective retention tool for Black/Latinx Students
Implement ongoing Starfish trainings for faculty and staff throughout the year and by appointment	Starfish Tech Lead and Director of Advising will coordinate/offer a series of trainings on how to use Starfish as a retention tool in the summer, fall and spring semesters; and by appointment	Increase faculty/staff familiarity, awareness and capacity to effectively utilize Starfish to raise flags for student support services	VPEM, AVP Student Success and Retention	Increased faculty and staff awareness and usage of Starfish

Strategy 3. Establish College Equity Teams				
Objective	**Method(s)**	**Expected Result (Target)**	**Responsible Personnel**	**Goal(s) Addressed**

Identify indicators and data points to be used to assess student performance and identify gaps across demographic groups.	Survey faculty and admins for information to determine types of indicators that can be used to assess student performance	Identification of several indicators to be used across disciplines and/or college.	Equity team leader and team members	Establish an Equity team which will provide input on all facets of equity work within college.
Generate IR reports for College courses, especially general education courses to track DWF rates	Each equity team will meet with IR Director each semester to identify the necessary data pulls to generate reports	Each college will have access to accurate DWF rates for courses offered per semester	IR Director Equity team leaders College Deans	Identification of courses with high DWF rates for intervention
Identify indicators and data points to be used to assess student performance and identify gaps across demographic groups.	Review baseline data (course-level, program-level, college-level) to identify whether equity gaps in performance and/or outcomes exist. Collect data to determine possible explanations for equity gaps.	Identification of several indicators to be used across disciplines and/or college.	Equity team leader and team members	Establish an Equity team which will provide input on all facets of equity work within college.
Identify indicators and data points to be used to assess student performance and identify gaps across demographic groups.	Review information/best practices on content or academic discipline-specific indicators of achievement and performance to identify several indicators to be used for equity	Identification of several indicators to be used across disciplines and/or college.	Equity team leader and team members	Establish an Equity team which will provide input on all facets of equity work within college.

	review. Also identify sources of information/benchmarks to be used for data analysis (course-level, program-level, college-level).			
Identify indicators and data points to be used to assess student performance and identify gaps across demographic groups.	Collect data on indicators beginning Fall 2023 and each semester through spring 2025.	Identification of several indicators to be used across disciplines and/or college.	Faculty, instructors, college administrators	Establish an Equity team which will provide input on all facets of equity work within college.
Identify and recommend strategies for implementation to address equity gaps.	Use data to inform recommendations and strategies to be considered and shared out at the course, program, college levels.	Identification and implementation of strategies to remedy equity gaps.	Equity team leader and team members.	Establish an Equity team which will provide input on all facets of equity work within college.
Identify and recommend strategies for implementation to address equity gaps.	Identify one or two strategies to implement and review the next semester and/or next year.	Close equity gaps in performance by demographic groups	Department, program faculty; college administrators.	Establish an Equity team which will provide input on all facets of equity work within college.

Strategy 4. Reward inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy and professional development				
Objective	**Method(s)**	**Expected Result (Target)**	**Responsible Personnel**	**Goal(s) Addressed**

Provide sample evaluation instruments and metrics to share with faculty, staff, administrators.	Establish an evaluation committee that will investigate best practices in faculty evaluation and staff evaluation of inclusive practices and culturally relevant practices.	Identification of best practices in faculty/staff evaluation of inclusive and culturally relevant practices.	Provost/VP Academic Affairs; Associate provosts Exec. Dir. EDI Exec Dir. CTL	Increase participation in and utilization of inclusive and culturally relevant pedagogy and professional development. Increase Black/Latinx persistence and course completion
Ensure that faculty/staff receive training, professional development, support in inclusive and culturally relevant pedagogy.	Establish a program of professional development for faculty and staff of inclusive practices and culturally relevant practices.	Knowledge and awareness of inclusive and culturally relevant practices.	Academic affairs; Exec. Dir. CTL Equity Team Leaders Exec. Dir. EDI Exec Dir. CTL	Implement faculty and staff performance evaluation metrics that reward participation in and utilization of inclusive and culturally relevant pedagogy and professional development.
	Committee will identify key themes, concepts, practices that reflect equity-minded approaches to teaching, curricula, pedagogy, service, etc., and use those themes to create evaluation items for consideration by faculty, staff, administrators.	Knowledge and awareness of inclusive and culturally relevant practices.	Evaluation committee	

	Based on recommendations of the committee, colleges and departments consider evaluation items and metrics to be included in faculty and staff evaluation guides.	Knowledge and awareness of inclusive and culturally relevant practices.	College Deans, department chairs, faculty committees.	Implement faculty and staff performance evaluation metrics that reward participation in and utilization of inclusive and culturally relevant pedagogy and professional development.
	Colleges and departments revise evaluation materials to reflect best practices in the evaluation of inclusive practices and culturally relevant practices, consistent with parameters outlined within collective bargaining agreements.	Creation of new evaluation materials that include assessment of knowledge and utilization of inclusive and culturally relevant practices in teaching, research, service and other areas.	College and department leaders; personnel committees.	Implement faculty and staff performance evaluation metrics that reward participation in and utilization of inclusive and culturally relevant pedagogy and professional development.

Strategy 5. Mandatory Equity-in-Faculty Hiring Training				
Objective	**Method(s)**	**Expected Result (Target)**	**Responsible Personnel**	**Goal(s) Addressed**
Remove implicit bias in hiring processes and promote equity-minded hiring practices	Require all faculty on search committees to complete both an online and in-person training on compliance, implicit bias, and	Increase in underrepresented applicants making it to the final round of interviews and selection	Department Chairs Executive Director of EDI Title IX/EO Director	Close the representational gap between our traditionally underrepresented students and faculty.

	equity-minded practices in faculty hiring Track how many underrepresented applicants make it to the second and third rounds of the selection process. Increase diverse sourcing for faculty			Increase retention and course completion for traditionally underrepresented students by increasing their sense of belonging
Increase diverse sourcing for faculty job postings	Create a bank of universities, listservs, associations, websites and other networks with high membership of job-seeking Latinx and African American students	Increase in underrepresented applicants	Executive Director of EDI	Close the representational gap between our traditionally underrepresented students and faculty

Strategy 6. Identify and remove barriers to financial aid				
Objective	**Method(s)**	**Expected Result (Target)**	**Responsible Personnel**	**Goal(s) Addressed**
Complete Financial Aid Packaging	Annual application via FAFSA or State Alternative Application	Increase number of applications received between October and February by 5% Increase number of packages of first year students by 3% and continuing students by 5%	Maureen Amos, Director	Provide students with the right information, tools, and supports to increase retention and graduation rates.

	Acceptance of verification documents in multiple formats	Decrease number of incomplete verification files by 5%	Maureen Amos, Director	Solutions and resources exist to close the equity gaps in higher education
Promote Cost of Attendance Components	Individualized budget in student portal

Budget worksheet for students residing on campus

Advising sessions for new loan borrowers | Understanding of direct vs. indirect costs

Access to borrowing history

Understanding relationship to accounts receivable | Maureen Amos, Director | Provide students with the right information, tools, and supports |
| Promote Student Employment Opportunities | On Campus Job Fairs

Promotional tables | Increase number of student employees by 3%

Remain compliant with community services FWSP requirement | Associate Director of Admissions | Increase student persistence via engagement and sense of belonging |
| Maintaining Eligibility | Academic progress status in student portal

Notification mailing at end of each term | Increase awareness that financial aid is 'earned' and how to maintain eligibility

Provide guidance via faculty and academic advising | Maureen Amos, Director | Provide students with the right information, tools, and supports |

Strategy 7. An Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services as a "single-point of contact" model to create a campus culture of care and support				
Objective	**Method(s)**	**Expected Result (Target)**	**Responsible Personnel**	**Goal(s) Addressed**
Create an inventory survey to assess the social services	Facilitate student survey for each specific population	Student response rate at 30% for each designated population	Vice President and Dean of Students, Student Affairs	Learn the specific needs for students to ensure timely support services

and resource needs to help guide targeted strategies for students, specifically for African American/Black, Latino/x/a, and Pell-eligible students	Display on NEIU website, NEIUStar, NEIUPort & Social Media	Year 1 (2022-2023)	Assistant Dean of Students NEIU Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services	and increase Black/Latinx student retention Assist with Black/Latinx student persistence to graduation
Create a NEIU Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services and off-campus programs and services	Identify essential staff, offices and agencies Resource coordination Implementation strategies learned through assessment student needs Support ARC social service members to get certified poverty coaches training	Establish a formal representative of students, staff and community agencies which meets on a regular basis Year 1 (2022-2023)	Vice President and Dean of Students, Student Affairs Assistant Dean of Students NEIU Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services	Connects students with affordable childcare, emergency aid, healthy food options, housing, transportation, and other social services to facilitate their persistence to graduation
Develop an ecosystem framework and approach on serving students	Meetings Focus groups Public input	Set of values, goals, learning outcomes and student engagement/ success rates which will guide NEIU's approach to supporting students with basic needs Year 1 (2022-2023)	NEIU Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services Office of Institutional Research and Assessment Vice President and Dean of Students, Student Affairs Assistant Dean of Students	Vision and Strategics Service delivery Mitigate or eliminate impact of basic needs/insecurities/ on key student success metrics such as academic performance, academic progress (reduction in stop-outs), credits completed (reduction in course withdrawals), degree completion, and

				transfer outcomes (at partner community colleges).
Provide public benefit awareness & support fair for students	Partnership with social services agencies & on-campus programs and services for full participation	On-campus support for students to apply for benefits (Children care, Housing/SNAP/ Medicaid, transportation, emergency aid, and other support services) Agencies and on-campus resources participation by 50% each year Increase student participation by 10% for each year Year 2 (2023-2024)	NEIU Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services	Resource on campus Referrals Service delivery
Peer to Peer Mentorship Program	Utilize intake and social gatherings with various affinity-focused students, staff and faculty to foster systemic mentorship programming, awareness, education, and support Establish a Vice President and Dean of Students Office as a social worker internship and graduate assistant/aid site in partnership with Social Work program	Students increase a sense of belonging by Faculty, staff and student opportunity to serve and be connected with current student realities, needs, & aspirations Year 2 (2023-2024)	NEIU Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services Social Work Program Vice President and Dean of Students	Belonging Resource delivery Student persistence Affinity/identity affirmation

Awareness and Utilization of NEIU Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services and off-campus programs and services	Create consistent awareness campaign and referral system targeted to students, faculty and staff Advocate Training for faculty, staff and students	Increase faculty, staff & student awareness by 10% per year Increase student participation in programs & services by 10% per year Year 2 (2023-2024) Year 3 (2024-2025)	NEIU Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services	Awareness Case management services Outreach and educational programs Eliminate the stigma of utilizing these resources

Strategy 8. Participate in ILEA sponsored Equity Academies				
Objective	**Method(s)**	**Expected Result (Target)**	**Responsible Personnel**	**Goal(s) Addressed**
Increase professional development on equity-minded practices across the university	Fund attendance of faculty and staff at ILEA Equity Symposia	Increased faculty/staff awareness and shared language on equity-minded practices to close equity-gaps among our Latinx, African American and Pell-eligible students	Executive Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	Increased retention and completion rates for African American, Latinx and Pell-eligible students

6. Budget Implications

Budget		
Budget Implications	**Revenue Source (New/Existing)**	**Sustainability Plan**
Social Services Consortium- Approximately $125,000 first-year and $75,000 annually	New funds or repurpose of current funds will be needed, seeking support from federal, state or private grant (i.e., Kresge Grants) opportunities in partnership with the following offices: Institutional Advancement, Research and Sponsored Projects, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Enrollment Management	NEIU committed to sustaining efforts through internal resources and supported by grants.
Scaling up co-requisite and stretch college-level Math and English gateway courses - funding developmental supports that accompany the stretch/corequisite models.	Explore aligning the Student Learning Center Math/English tutoring with developmental Math/English curriculum and offer their services as a required component for students enrolled in the stretch/corequisite courses. Apply for STEM grants to pilot/explore options that can become institutionalized.	Depends on the structure for scaling up stretch and corequisite models. Sustainability will be part of the exploratory dimension of the scaling up process.
Attend Equity Academies	Utilize OEDI and Strategic Development and Planning Funds to pay for registration and attendance.	

7. Timeline

Strategy 1: Scale up credit-bearing developmental Math/English Gateway Courses			
Year	**Spring**	**Summer**	**Fall**
2023	Research the alternative approaches/best practices and report on the outcomes of those alternatives at those colleges/universities, and the possibilities for remedial education at NEIU.	Collect and analyze data on NEIU students (2018 through 2023) who enrolled in remedial courses, both credit bearing and non-credit bearing courses. Disaggregate by race and gender. Track course completion, grades, matriculation to other math or English courses, retention, selection of majors. Develop report on these findings and submit to Academic Affairs	Create proposal for NEIU to eliminate non-credit-bearing remedial (developmental) courses from English and math pathways with a timeline no later than 2025. Submit to Academic Affairs
2024	Create proposal for NEIU to eliminate non-credit-bearing remedial (developmental) courses from English and math pathways with timeline no later than 2025. Submit to Academic Affairs	Determine any new curriculum needed, training, resources needed to implement new approaches to math and English developmental courses	Curriculum approval process as needed
2025	Curriculum approval process as needed	Implement faculty training	Implementation of new curriculum; collect data on implementation and student performance and outcomes

Strategy 2: Establish Equity Teams			
Year	**Spring**	**Summer**	**Fall**
2023	Establish guidelines for equity teams and establish equity teams for each college	Review baseline course-level, program-level and/or college-level data to determine where/whether equity gaps in performance, outcomes exist. Identify indicators for analysis. Review information/best practices on content or academic discipline-specific indicators of achievement and	Collect data on indicators

Year	Spring	Summer	Fall
		performance. Identify sources of information/benchmarks to be used for data analysis (course level, program level, college level, etc.)	
2024	Collect data on indicators	Conduct data analysis on FY24 data and compare/contrast with FY23 data. · Use data to inform recommendations and strategies to be considered and shared out at the course, programs, and/or college level.	Identify one or two strategies to implement and review the semester and/or next year
2025	Identify one or two strategies to implement and review the semester and/or next year	Conduct data analysis on FY25 data and compare/contrast with FY23 and FY24 data. · Use data to inform recommendations and strategies to be considered and shared out at the course, programs, and/or college level.	

Strategy 3: Increase Starfish Usage and Response-Time for Student-Raised Flags			
Year	**Spring**	**Summer**	**Fall**
2023	Complete faculty Starfish training on product features	Create new Starfish reports that will be used to monitor student initiated flags.	Begin monitoring student initiated flags in Starfish
2024	Analyze data and adjust internal operations as needed. Provide training to new staff (ongoing)	Host Retention Summit. Develop Starfish Community Engagement Plan.	Launch Starfish Community Engagement Plan
2025	Analyze data and adjust internal operations as needed. Assess and adjust training of new staff as needed.	Host Retention Summit. Explore Navigate tool. (Note: Starfish contract ends in 2025)	Analyze the 2-year data pattern to identify impact.

Strategy 4: Inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy and professional dev.

Year	Spring	Summer	Fall
2023	Establish a committee that will investigate best practices in faculty evaluation and staff evaluation of inclusive practices and culturally relevant practices.	Establish program of professional development for faculty and for staff of inclusive practices and of culturally relevant practices.	Committee will identify key themes, concepts, practices that reflect equity-minded approaches to teaching, curricula, pedagogy, service, etc. and use those themes to create evaluation items for consideration by faculty, staff, and administrators.
2024	Information sharing on equity minded approaches to be considered for evaluations. · Based on the recommendations of the committee, colleges and departments consider evaluation items and metrics to be included in faculty and staff evaluation guides.		Colleges and departmental revise evaluation materials to reflect these best practices in the evaluation of inclusive practices and culturally relevant practices.
2025	Colleges and departmental revise evaluation materials to reflect these best practices in the evaluation of inclusive practices and culturally relevant practices.		Implementation of new evaluation materials that include inclusive and culturally relevant practices.

Strategy 5: Mandatory Equity-in-Faculty Hiring Training		
Year	**Spring**	**Summer**	**Fall**
2023	Complete accessibility digital standards for online training modules	Upload online training to D2L and resolve any lingering accessibility and tech issues Identify in-person Q/A session schedule w/ EO/Title IX officers	Announce the online training models as new standard and requisite completion timeline for committee participation Identify tracking methods to measure impact
2024	Collect feedback on how to improve training and tracking methods	Assess and adjust training based on feedback/data	Assess and adjust training based on feedback/data

	Generate report on demographic diversity of hires made since implementing training.		
2025	Assess and adjust training. Report on representational gap of underrepresented faculty-to-student	Analyze the 2-year data pattern to identify training impact on representation gap between underrepresented students and faculty.	Convene open zoom sessions to report on the training's impact and next steps.

Strategy 6: Identify and Remove Barriers to Financial Aid			
Year	**Spring**	**Summer**	**Fall**
2023	Create marketing plan in an effort to increase number of applications received between October and February by 5%	Analyze marketing efforts. Conduct review of data– pre/post tactic implementation	Create a plan to decrease number of incomplete verification files by 5%
2024	**Create plan to increase number of student employees by 3%**	Review strategies and outcomes outlined in our plan Conduct review of data– pre/post tactic implementation	**Create a plan to increase awareness that financial aid is 'earned' and how to maintain eligibility. Provide guidance via faculty and academic advisin**g
2025	Assess awareness efforts via meetings and focus groups. Create plan to increase number of packages of first year students by 3% and continuing students by 5%	Review strategies and outcomes outlined in our plan. Conduct review of data– pre/post tactic implementation.	Evaluate outcomes from goals established in the 2024 and 2023 Summer Summits, respectively

Strategy 7: Establish Single Point of Contact Social Service Center			
Year	**Spring**	**Summer**	**Fall**

2023	Create an inventory survey to assess the social services and resource needs to help guide targeted strategies for students, specifically for African American/Black, Latino/x/a, and Pell-eligible students Facilitate student survey for each specific populations Display on NEIU website, NEIUStar, NEIUPort & Social Media	Create a NEIU Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services and off-campus programs and services for all campuses Identify essential staff, offices and agencies Resource coordination Implementation strategies learned through assessment student needs	Develop an ecosystem framework and approach on serving students Provide public benefit awareness & support fair for students Support ARC social service members to get certified poverty coaches training Meetings Focus groups Public input
2024	Provide public benefit awareness & support fair for students Partnership with social services agencies & on-campus programs and services for full participation Advocate Training for faculty, staff and students	Develop and implement a Peer-to-Peer Mentorship Program Utilize intake and social gatherings with various affinity-focused students, staff and faculty to foster systemic mentorship programming, awareness, education, and support	Establish a Vice President and Dean of Students Office as a social worker internship and graduate assistant/aid site in partnership with Social Work program
2025	Awareness and Utilization of NEIU Advocacy & Resource Center (ARC) for Social Services and off-campus programs and services Advocate Training for faculty, staff and students	Create consistent awareness campaign and referral system targeted to students, faculty and staff	Analyze the two-year data pattern to identify any gaps, training impact, and resources between underrepresented students.

Strategy 8: Participate in ILEA Sponsored Equity Academies			
Year	Spring	Summer	Fall
2023	Increase senior leadership presentation at ILEA equity academies Establish a routine report-out to campus community of strategies and tools learned at Equity academies	Review and collate materials circulated from ILEA Equity Academies and cross-check strategies with NEIU ILEA plan Create webpage to archive materials provided at academies for access to	Identify 2023-2024 ILEA leads across college who will attend Academies or send substitute in their absence. Register max number of participants to all

		campus community	scheduled academies
2024	Register max number of participants to all scheduled academies Build network with at least 2 ILEA peers to support progress on NEIU ILEA plan	…	Register max number of participants to all scheduled academies Identify ways to contribute to academies based on our ILEA strategic plan lessons
2025	Assess how campus participation in ILEA academies has improved equity planning and implementation	Identify funding to continue sending leaders to equity academies to ensure continued access to best practices	

8. ILEA Team

ILEA Core Team	
Dr. Shireen Roshanravan	Executive Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Dr. Sandra Beyda-Lorie	Executive Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning
Brittany Pines	Director of HSI Title 3 STEM
Amie Jatta	Director of TRIO Programs
Kimberley Buster-Williams	Vice President of Enrollment Management
Sandy Vue	Director of Institutional Research
ILEA Leadership Team	
Shireen Roshanravan	Executive Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Kimberley Buster-Williams	VP of Enrollment Management
Terry Mena	VP of Student Affairs and Dean of Students
Andrea Evans	Provost and VP of Academic Affairs
Sandra Beyda-Lorie	Executive Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning
Key Campus Leaders Consulted for Equity Plan Development	
Edwin Medina	President, Student Government Association
Katrina Bell-Jordan	Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
Tom Phillion	Dean of the Goodwin College of Education
Michael Bedell	Dean of the College of Business and Technology
University Advisory Council	

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). Secondarily, 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, Latino/a, 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, Latino/a, 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 Latino/a 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 is 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 the graduation rate by time to degree and the particular student population. Increase 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 they 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.

References

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