

NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Closing the Opportunity Gap: *Transforming the Undergraduate Experience to* *Increase Access and Success*



NLU Background

- **Private nonprofit university based in Chicago**
- **Designated as Hispanic Serving Institution in 2016**
- **Awarded HSI-STEM in 2016 and PPOHA in 2019**
- **Founding values of Access, Innovation, and Excellence**
- **Focused on community impact**
- **65+ undergraduate, master, and doctoral programs**
- **Over 9,000 students and 65,000 living alumni**



The Problem



Postsecondary education is critical for 21st century career and life success (66% of jobs)



The nation is not producing enough college graduates (45% of adults)



Nationally, only 1 out of every 10 low-income, first-generation college students graduate on time



In Chicago Public Schools, 76% of every high school freshmen class aspires to a bachelor's degree, but only 18% go on to earn that degree



Furthermore, research has shown that even among students who have earned their Bachelor's degree, Latinx, African-American, low-income and first generation students face significant gaps in employment and earnings.

Our Solution: Being student-ready

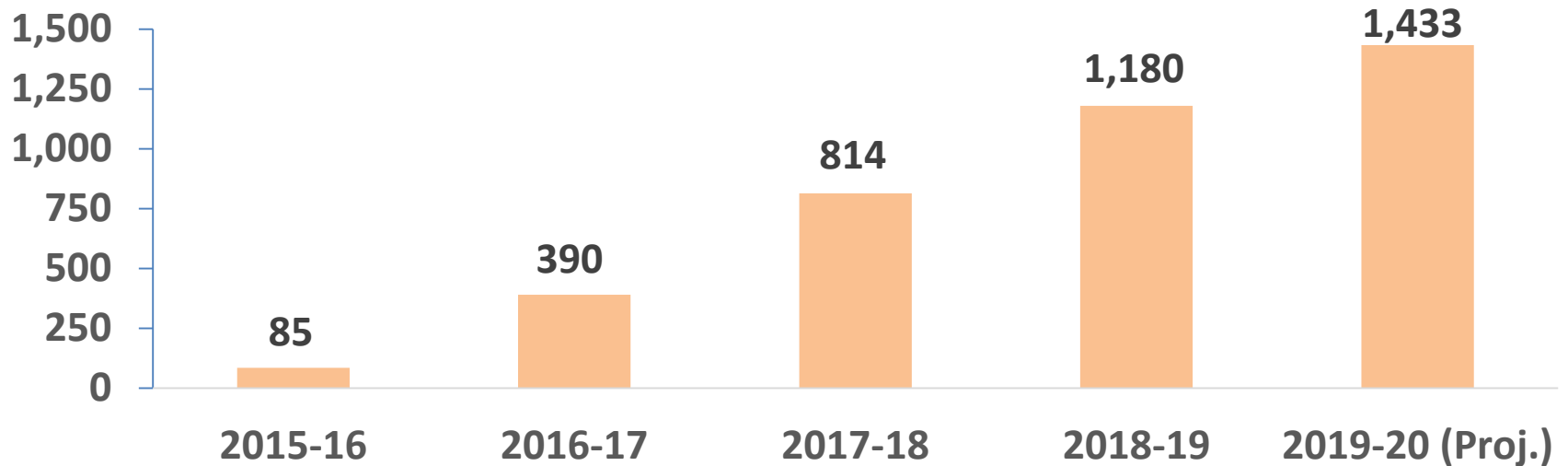


NLU Undergraduate College (UGC) Vision

The Undergraduate College at National Louis University will be a national leader in driving equity in bachelor's degree attainment and employment. Our graduates will possess the knowledge and skills to succeed as professionals and engaged citizens, leading to positive outcomes for themselves, their families, and communities.

Who We Serve

NLU Daytime Undergraduate enrollment growth....



Focused on serving our most underserved students...

- 85% Pell eligible (59% Zero EFC)
- 80% First generation college goers
- 73% Latinx and 19% African American
- 16.5 Average ACT, 870 SAT, 2.7 Average High School GPA
- *NLU is 4th most frequently attended 4-year college by CPS grads, #1 private 4-year institution for serving CPS grads, and ranked #1 nationally in increase in % under-represented minorities served*

The NLU Pathways Approach (for first-time full-time freshmen): *Directly Addressing Barriers To and Through College*

Access

Why Students Don't Access/Succeed in College

- Financial barriers
- Limited quality college options if not a top academic performer
- Need to work or take care of family
- Lack of readiness in terms of academic or non-cognitive skills
- Limited course-taking and career guidance
- Limited academic and personal support, often first-generation

Success

NLU Pathways (Daytime) Program Design

- ✓ Affordable at \$10K/year
- ✓ 2.0+ GPA requirement
- ✓ Flexible and convenient
- ✓ Personalized, flipped, adaptive model, leveraging technology and data-driven support
- ✓ Clear pathway to a degree
- ✓ Career readiness focus
- ✓ High-touch, supportive environment with Success Coach

Financial Model

AFFORDABLE

Tuition is \$10,000 per academic year, making NLU the most affordable bachelor's degree in Illinois.*

With financial aid, you could earn a bachelor's degree with little to no debt.

YOUR NET TUITION COULD EQUAL \$0!

\$10,000 Annual Tuition

-\$5,920 Possible Pell Grant maximum

-\$4,720 Possible MAP Grant maximum*

\$0 ANNUAL NET TUITION

* Based on your FAFSA. Please ask your NLU Enrollment Specialist about important deadlines and processes related to financial aid.

- Designed to be self-sustaining on recurring cost basis at scale (Year 5 – current year)
- Fundraising has supported – and continues to support:
 - Building infrastructure that will yield economies of scale over time (Years 1-4)
 - Overhead costs that will be self-sustaining at scale (Years 1-4)
 - Strategic initiatives/innovations to continuously enhance the student experience (currently and beyond Year 5)
 - Our highest-need students (e.g., emergency funds, gap scholarships)

Accessible and personalized instruction and support

Affordable Access to Technology

- Discounted laptop available (\$75/quarter for 2 years)
- \$10/month home internet access if needed
- Adaptive courseware more affordable than textbooks and included in tuition rate

Rigor, Personalization, and Differentiation

- Curriculum aligned to Lumina DQP competencies for rigor
- Personalized student navigation through courseware
- Faculty data views enable differentiated instruction
- Small class sizes enable active, personalized instruction

Data-Driven Early Intervention

- Attendance and grades tracked weekly
- Faculty and Success Coaches meet weekly to discuss student-level data/progress and plan interventions
- Quarterly review of trends drives program-level iteration

...and Relevant Coursework to Engage Students



Examples of Required General Education Coursework

Civics course based in social issues. Students interpret and generate solutions to help society, especially communities in need. Students research and contact local representatives and interview grassroots organizations. **Example topics:**

- Strides for Peace to reduce gun violence
- Planned Parenthood
- Voting rights and accessibility

Sociology course based in today's cultural landscape. Students review past trends, cultural movements, and the constellation of historical issues that have shaped today's society. **Example assignments:**

- Oral histories with family members
- Restorative justice and corporal punishment
- Cultural identity narrative

Success Coaching Model

Each Coach provides social-emotional, academic, and career support to a cohort of 100-125 students.

- 1. Summer melt engagement**
- 2. 1-on-1s for all 4 years**
- 3. Holistic, high-touch, data-driven support**
- 4. Wrap-around support resources**
- 5. Go-to person**



Embedding Career Preparation: The 3-Legged Stool

Ultimate Outcome: Student Career Readiness and Employment



1. Career Development Curriculum

- Required career readiness coursework
- Option to participate in Braven or NLU Career courses in Sophomore year
- Junior year internship prep and Senior year internship courses

3. Employer Engagement & Work-Based Learning

- Employer engagement for work-based learning and jobs
- Internship case management

2. Career Coaching

- Career-Advisor 1on1s and in-class support
- Career Bridge resources and technology

Example Career Bridge Resources

Example On-Campus Resources



Example Employer Partners



Wrap-around Support Resources

- **Counseling**
 - Skylight Counseling partnership
 - Drop-In Center on-campus
 - Full-time Social Worker
- **Summer Credit Recovery**
 - Expanding from 47 students in 2018 pilot to 159 students in Summer 2019 with over 80% pass rate
- **Food Pantry, Emergency Fund, and Gap Funding Scholarships**
 - Continued support of small needs (e.g., CTA pass, 1 week of food, laptop replacement)
 - Gap funding scholarships with philanthropic support (\$500 to \$3K/student)
- **Community Resource Guide**



Targeted Support for Our Latinx Population Pursuing STEM



Title III HSI-STEM grant to encourage and support Latinx and underrepresented student population to pursue careers in STEM through development of Computer Science and Information Systems (CSIS) Program

CSIS Supports:

- One on one **tutoring support** and course embedded **Teaching Assistant**
- **Peer mentoring** program
- **Summer Bridge Program** for students to recover credit and gain leadership opportunities
- **Annual CSIS Symposium** to increase exposure of underrepresented professionals in STEM
- **STEM job fair** to connect students to internships and careers



Targeted Support for Our Young Men of Color

- **The Eagle Brotherhood:** Peer support and mentoring group launched in partnership with Youth Guidance, modeled after Becoming a Man (BAM) program, to increase retention of young men of color
- **Example Sessions:**
 - *Positive Thinking:* Reframing Thoughts, Cognitive Behavioral Techniques
 - *Resiliency:* Understanding Resiliency & Deep Breathing
 - *Emotions:* Male Emotional Funnel, “The Mask You Live In”
 - *Field Trip:* Bulls game!
- **Student Participation:**
 - FY19 – 36 students with positive retention impact
 - FY20 – 43 students currently



Lessons Learned

Student Success Strategies

1. Showing up, i.e., Attendance
2. Doing the work → Time and effort in Courseware
3. Starting strong
4. Non-cognitive skills precede academic success, e.g.,
 - Communicative/Ask for help
 - Time mgmt, starting work early
 - Staying connected to campus
5. Relationship w /1+ person on-campus
6. Note: ACT score NOT predictive

Faculty and Coaches' Top Retention Strategies

1. Team approach, driven by student data
2. Positive, strengths-based encouragement
3. Personalized, flexible engagement
4. Active, relevant classrooms
5. Take care of Maslow's so you can get to Bloom's
6. Cohort model

Promising Results Thus Far, Beating the Odds

Pathways Retention vs. External Benchmarks

In the first three years of Pathways, students were retained from Year 1 to 2 at a higher rate than comparable CPS college enrollees, at the same rate as all CPS college enrollees in recent years, and at a higher rate than < Age 20 college enrollees nation-wide.

Year 1-2 Student Retention – NLU Pathways vs. Benchmarks

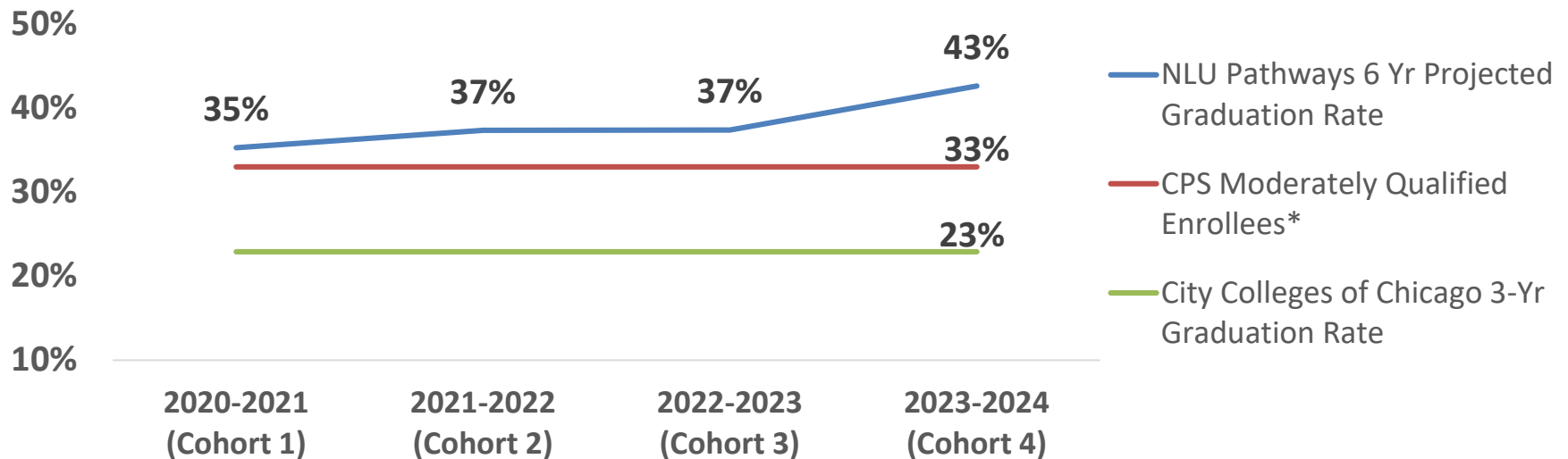
	NLU Pathways	CPS Comparable College Enrollees*	CPS All College Enrollees*	Nationwide All College Enrollees < Age 20
Retention	66%	53%	70%	63%

*Note: NLU and National benchmark reflect Retention metric, which is defined as continuing enrollment at the same institution, whereas the CPS metrics reflect Persistence, which includes retention at the same institution or continuing higher education at another institution (i.e., the CPS persistence metrics shown here are by definition higher than what CPS retention would be).

Early Results & 6-Year Grad Rate Projections

66% Year 1-2 retention rates for the first three cohorts outperforming the 53% retention rate of Chicago Public Schools students with similar academic profiles at other colleges. 6 Year Graduation Rates projected to exceed benchmarks and continue to increase.

NLU Pathways – Projected 6 Year Graduation Rates



- NLU graduation rate projections are based on current credit attainment rates for each cohort and historical year-over-year retention and on-pace trends
- First cohort of students is projected to outperform graduation rate benchmarks
- Growth in credit attainment levels over time supports projections of increasing 6-year graduation rates over time
- Verification impacts are seen in stagnant 6-year graduation rates from Cohort 2 to Cohort 3

What our students are saying....

“Everyone on campus cares about all the students here. The instructors are always there for us as well as our coaches.”

*“The way the classes are designed to help us with our major so that **we do not take unnecessary classes.**”*

*“The most satisfying experience I have at NLU is having the **confidence to talk to my coach about anything.**”*

*“...I feel like I **belong** and can **be my authentic self.** Also, I feel like the environment is refreshing and very comfortable.”*

*“I really enjoy how **supportive** everyone around me is starting with my peers, professors, and coaches. I feel **comfortable** with everyone around me and I strongly believe that I belong here.”*

QUESTIONS?

Tracy Templin
Executive Director, Strategy and Operations
National Louis University
ttemplin1@nl.edu

Melanie Flores
Director, HSI Programs
National Louis University
mflores36@nl.edu

