EAB

Modern Student Experience Diagnostic

Modern student expectations are everchanging—can your community college keep up?

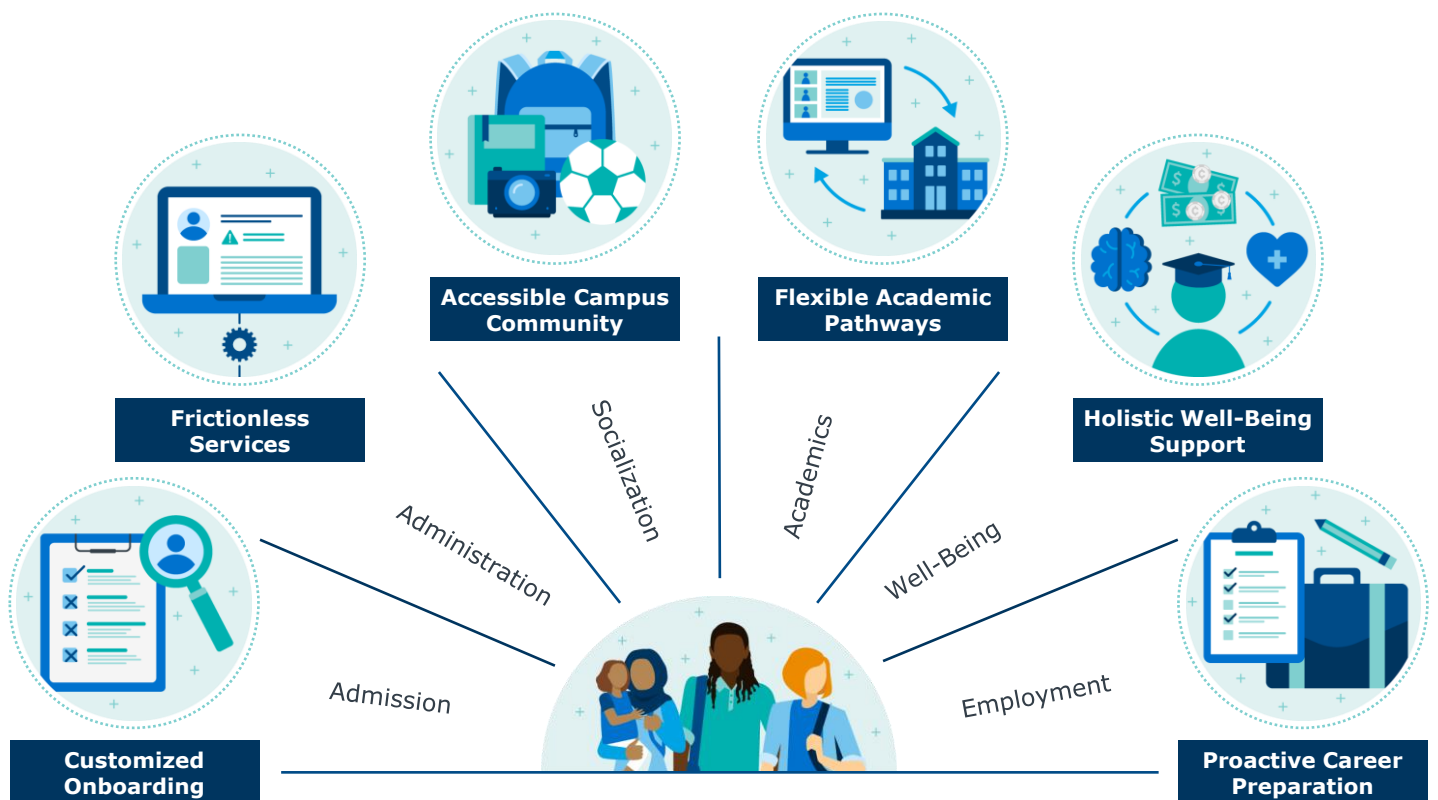# Resetting to Meet Shifting Student Expectations

Executive Summary

In higher education, the student experience continues to become more synonymous with the consumer experience. In fact, higher ed leaders identify "student consumer preferences" as the biggest threat facing the higher ed business model today. Community college student demographics are shifting, nontraditional is the new norm, mental health is in crisis, and learning flexibility is a growing demand. Knowing that consumers want seamless and personalized interactions—and that students are consumers—it's critical for community college leaders to analyze their current student experience through the consumer lens.

Use this diagnostic to help you begin thinking holistically about how your community college can improve student outcomes by providing a more efficient, customized, and supportive path through the academic journey.

What Do Today's Students Expect, and How Can You Deliver It?

Six hallmarks of a modern student experience

Accessible Campus Community

Flexible Academic Pathways

Frictionless Services

Holistic Well-Being Support

Socialization

Academics

Administration

Well-Being

Admission

Employment

Customized Onboarding

Proactive Career Preparation

How to Use the Modern Student Experience Diagnostic

Across the next three pages, assess and respond to the statements about each of the six hallmarks depicted above. On page six, tally your responses and see where your school has the most room for growth, and where to prioritize your efforts. Then, use the library of resources on pages 7-8 to get started.

Source: EAB Business Transformation Survey, 2021

Assess Your Student Experience

Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

I. Customized Onboarding

	Check one:		
	No	Partially	Yes
1. Applicants can easily find out all the required steps to apply and enroll at our school	☐	☐	☐
2. Applicants receive nudges throughout the onboarding process reminding them of key deadlines	☐	☐	☐
3. We can easily collect important interest and preference data each time we interact with a prospective student and share it with relevant campus staff	☐	☐	☐
4. Our website offers tools and resources to help undecided students explore majors and find best-fit options	☐	☐	☐
5. We send targeted outreach to prospects, applicants and current students using multi-modal communication (e.g., email, text, mobile app)	☐	☐	☐
6. We can search our records for applicants who may be struggling to complete their application and quickly get them back on track	☐	☐	☐
7. We use web-to-lead ("request for information") forms to collect prospective student information on our website	☐	☐	☐
8. Students can make appointments with advising and support services staff using an online system	☐	☐	☐
9. We're able to analyze prospective and current student enrollment KPIs from one centralized, easy-to-interpret dashboard	☐	☐	☐
Total "No," "Partially," and "Yes" responses:			

II. Frictionless Services

	Check one:		
	No	Partially	Yes
1. A student's administrative tasks are user-friendly and digital-first; they can complete almost all their procedural to-dos within one online system	☐	☐	☐
2. If a student has a hold on their account, they receive automatic alerts and timely follow-up from a staff member until the hold is resolved	☐	☐	☐
3. Students can fill out information online without having to rekey the same information multiple times on a variety of forms	☐	☐	☐
4. If a student has a question during the enrollment or registration process, they can easily connect with a person via chat or phone during regular business hours	☐	☐	☐
5. When completing state or federal student reporting, we pull our student data from one central database	☐	☐	☐
6. Students can access on-demand financial planning resources and tools that provide a personalized cost estimate	☐	☐	☐
7. Students know exactly who the members of their assigned support team are and how to contact them	☐	☐	☐
Total "No," "Partially," and "Yes" responses:			

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Assess Your Student Experience

Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

III. Accessible Campus Community

	Check one:		
	No	Partially	Yes
1. Students can easily find information online about our campus organizations broken down by interest	☐	☐	☐
2. We can generate automated reports on specific student populations and track retention and academic trends with predictive analytics	☐	☐	☐
3. We regularly perform student satisfaction surveys, and our students report feeling welcomed and included on campus	☐	☐	☐
4. Advisors and faculty know about our student clubs and refer students to appropriate groups or facilitate an introduction to a member of the group	☐	☐	☐
5. We use student-facing technology to connect our students with study groups, social activities, and other peer networks	☐	☐	☐
6. Our clubs and student programs are welcoming and represent a variety of interests	☐	☐	☐
7. We track usage of student-centered facilities, student programming, and leadership opportunities	☐	☐	☐
8. Students can easily report safety-related incidents on campus through an app, website, or other on-demand point of contact	☐	☐	☐
Total "No," "Partially," and "Yes" responses:			

IV. Flexible Academic Pathways

	Check one:		
	No	Partially	Yes
1. Our required courses have at least one section offered in a hybrid or fully online format	☐	☐	☐
2. Our transfer pathways are easy to understand and clearly defined on our website and/or student-facing mobile app	☐	☐	☐
3. We partner with at least one four-year school to provide seamless pathways for our students	☐	☐	☐
4. Using shared institutional data with our four-year partner(s), we know where the gaps are in our transfer pathways and are working to correct them	☐	☐	☐
5. Advisors can drill down to see which students have excess or wrong-fit credits based on their major and send them a nudge to schedule a meeting	☐	☐	☐
6. Students can collaborate with their advisor to create customized, multi-term academic plans based on their individual academic and career goals	☐	☐	☐
7. Advising staff and student success leaders can use dashboards to understand the effectiveness and impact of their interventions	☐	☐	☐
Total "No," "Partially," and "Yes" responses:			

Assess Your Student Experience

Indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

V. Holistic Well-Being Support

	Check one:		
	No	Partially	Yes
1. We have systems in place for our students to self-identify if they are currently experiencing housing or food insecurity and need assistance	☐	☐	☐
2. Our holistic campus support resources are easy to find; we routinely remind students what they are and how to access them	☐	☐	☐
3. It is easy for students to access need-based services on campus (i.e., food pantry, textbook and technology rental programs, medical services, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
4. We have partnerships with local nonprofit organizations where we direct students in need of additional support	☐	☐	☐
5. We offer no- or low-cost mental health services to students in both in-person and virtual formats	☐	☐	☐
6. Our campus provides access to free financial literacy courses or resources, and we send nudges to encourage students to use them	☐	☐	☐
7. We use nudging technology such as quick polls to proactively check in with students about their mental health and other needs	☐	☐	☐
8. Our staff understands the impact that mental, physical, and financial health challenges have on student success; they know how to identify key indicators and can easily share specific concerns with a student's care team	☐	☐	☐
Total "No," "Partially," and "Yes" responses:			

VI. Proactive Career Preparation

	Check one:		
	No	Partially	Yes
1. Our staff and faculty take an active interest in providing students with professional development and career guidance	☐	☐	☐
2. Our career center regularly organizes both in-person and virtual events across a wide variety of industries and promotes them to all students	☐	☐	☐
3. We have strong ties with our alumni and offer opportunities for current students to connect with them through internship and mentor programs	☐	☐	☐
4. We use technology to offer career resources like on-demand webinars, career assessment quizzes, and one-on-one virtual career advising	☐	☐	☐
5. Career development competencies are integrated into our curriculum; some of them may be mandatory for students to complete a particular course	☐	☐	☐
6. Our career services are equitable and accessible for all students	☐	☐	☐
7. We use polls to capture students' professional goals so we can guide them toward the right career resources	☐	☐	☐
Total "No," "Partially," and "Yes" responses:			

Analyze Your Results

The bar is now set by consumer industries, and it's up to community college leaders to bring their institution up to modern standards. Total your responses from the previous pages and identify the categories where your institution has the greatest gaps. Then, browse our resources on the next page to begin making enhancements.

Assessment Categories	"No"	"Partially"	Total "No" and "Partially"
I. Customized Onboarding			
II. Frictionless Services			
III. Accessible Campus Community			
IV. Flexible Academic Pathways			
V. Holistic Well-Being Support			
VI. Proactive Career Preparation			
Total your "No" and Partially" responses and read the corresponding result below.			

How Does Your School Stack Up?

41–46

Stuck in the Stone Age

Your student experience is behind the times. It's difficult for your students to connect with you, and they may complain about onboarding confusion, limited accessibility, or lack of access to campus resources. Your data infrastructure is very manual, and if the person who created the system left the college, you'd be in a tough spot. You know it's time to modernize but need guidance on where to start.

31–40

Still Snoozing Your System Upgrade

You see many of the gaps in your student experience and data, and your leadership team has a loose plan to tackle them. But there is still a lot of confusion about which gaps to prioritize and who is responsible for which initiative. You are working on building a more strategic plan to make improvements, but it keeps getting deprioritized for other campus needs.

21–30

Your Upgrade Is Scheduled

Your student experience is basically in the 1990s—a great decade, but not exactly modern or efficient. Students can muddle through onboarding and locate available resources, but this still requires quite a bit of manual effort or trips to campus. You can see your data in dashboards developed by your IR team, but it's challenging to connect the dots and get a cohesive picture of your students' success.

11–20

Living in Modern-ish Times

Your website has been redesigned; it's mobile-optimized and responsive; you can track important student success data (and even some prospective student data) through a series of connected dashboards. Much of your workflows are automated, so your team can respond to inquiries and current student needs with ease. You're living in the 21st century, but there is still room to grow.

0–10

Modern Experience, Modern Data Infrastructure

Your student experience is so seamless, students can apply and register for classes on their phones. Your support programs, transfer pathways, and career development opportunities are structured, easy to follow and responsive to changing needs and labor demands. Your data infrastructure is solid, and your leadership team can glean insights into the enrollment funnel and student success journey with ease. We can help you stay ahead of those ever-shifting student expectations.

••••••••• **Explore Related Resources** •••••••➤

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Explore Related Resources

Now that you've assessed your performance, here are some EAB resources to help guide you on your transformation. Whether your results indicated that your student experience is highly modernized or that it still needs work, we have the resources to support you.

Customized Onboarding ····►

Ensure your students' onboarding experience is seamless, supportive, and personalized.

- The Modern Student Experience *(resource center)*
- How to Optimize Your Student Communications Strategy *(toolkit)*

Frictionless Services ··············►

Streamline your services and meet the needs of your students more intentionally.

- How to Build a Student-Centric Community College *(video)*
- Are Your Early Alerts Helping or Triggering? *(podcast)*

Accessible Campus Community ···········►

Ensure your campus is a radically inclusive and welcoming place for all your students.

- Missed Connections: Improving Equity-based Communications *(white paper)*
- The Seven Hallmarks of an Anti-racist Institution *(infographic)*

Flexible Academic Pathways ·················►

Empower students to customize their academic journey with guidance and well-articulated degree paths based on their interests and career goals.

- The Impact of Academic Planning *(blog)*
- Student Success Advising Office of the Future *(on-demand webinar)*

Holistic Well-Being Support ···················►

Your students need more than academics from you. Make sure you're prepared to support a full range of basic needs so your students can thrive.

- Building a Holistic Student Support Infrastructure *(video)*
- Everyone Has a Role to Play in Student Mental Health *(blog)*

Proactive Career Preparation ·················►

Foster skill development beyond the student life-cycle and view the success outcome as a fulfilling career rather than degree attainment.

- Connecting Employers and Students in a Virtual Career Services World *(on-demand webinar)*
- Integrating Academic and Career Development *(infographic)*

## BONUS CATEGORY: Functional Data For Your Campus ···············►

Empower your campus with a data infrastructure you trust.

- Four Warning Signs Your Data Strategy Needs Attention *(blog)*
- Bringing a Multi-Dimensional Approach to Student Support and Attrition Analysis *(partner success story)*

Modernize Your Campus with Navigate

## The Leading Student CRM for Community Colleges

Built on a decade of research, Navigate, higher education's leading Student CRM, helps 275+ community colleges improve recruitment, onboarding, enrollment, and retention for more than 4.4 million students. Navigate unites administrators, faculty, staff, and students into a collaborative network to measurably improve student outcomes.
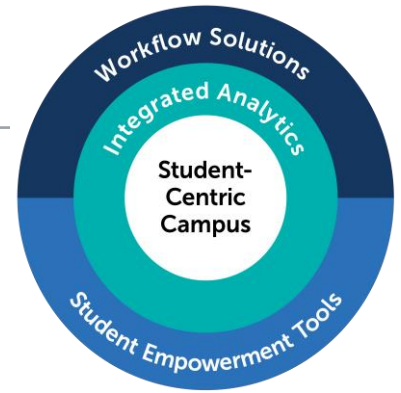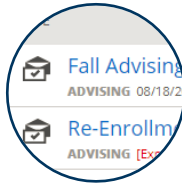

Workflow Solutions

Smart Student Profile
Actionable academic, financial, and behavioral data to support holistic coordinated care
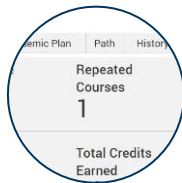
Campaign Management
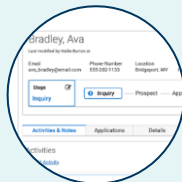Mass outreach and multi-modal communication at scale

Appointment Scheduling
Flexible timetable for students to schedule within the availability of faculty and staff
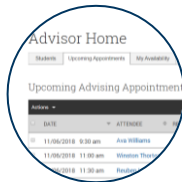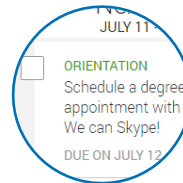
NEW: Recruitment Management
Reach and engage prospective students and applicants through campaigns, analytics, and list management
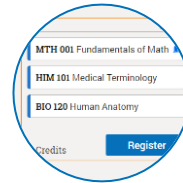
Student Empowerment Tools

Pivotal Moments Path
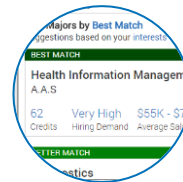In-app onboarding and ongoing guidance organized by due date

Collaborative Academic Planner
Degree maps, course catalog, requirements, and credit tracking with advisor oversight
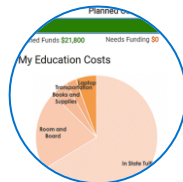
Student Surveys
Interactive surveys and polls for new student intake, exploring majors, sharing needs and interests, and more
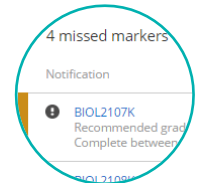
Financial Planner
Help students discover likely expenses and identify funding to mitigate excess debt
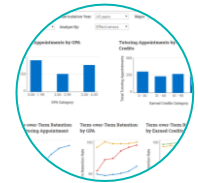
Integrated Analytics

Predictive Analytics
Identify and prioritize student interventions based on likely need for support

Effectiveness Analytics
Impact assessment of interventions across student groups

Population Health Analytics
Key academic progress and performance indicators identify and assess interventions

Historical Trend Analytics
Analyze historical data to support institution-level and program-level decision-making

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Our Partners

275+
Community college partner institutions

4.4M+
Students served

Our Impact

3.5%
Typical improvement in graduation rate

5:1
ROI based on 500 partner value stories

Your Next Steps

Schedule a student experience consultation by contacting **eab2yrcommunications@eab.com** or visit us online at **eab.com**

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ABOUT EAB

At EAB, our mission is to make education smarter and our communities stronger. We work with thousands of institutions to drive transformative change through data-driven insights and best-in-class capabilities. From kindergarten to college to career, EAB partners with leaders and practitioners to accelerate progress and drive results across five major areas: enrollment, student success, institutional strategy, data analytics, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We work with each partner differently, tailoring our portfolio of research, technology, and marketing and enrollment solutions to meet the unique needs of every leadership team, as well as the students and employees they serve. Learn more at eab.com.