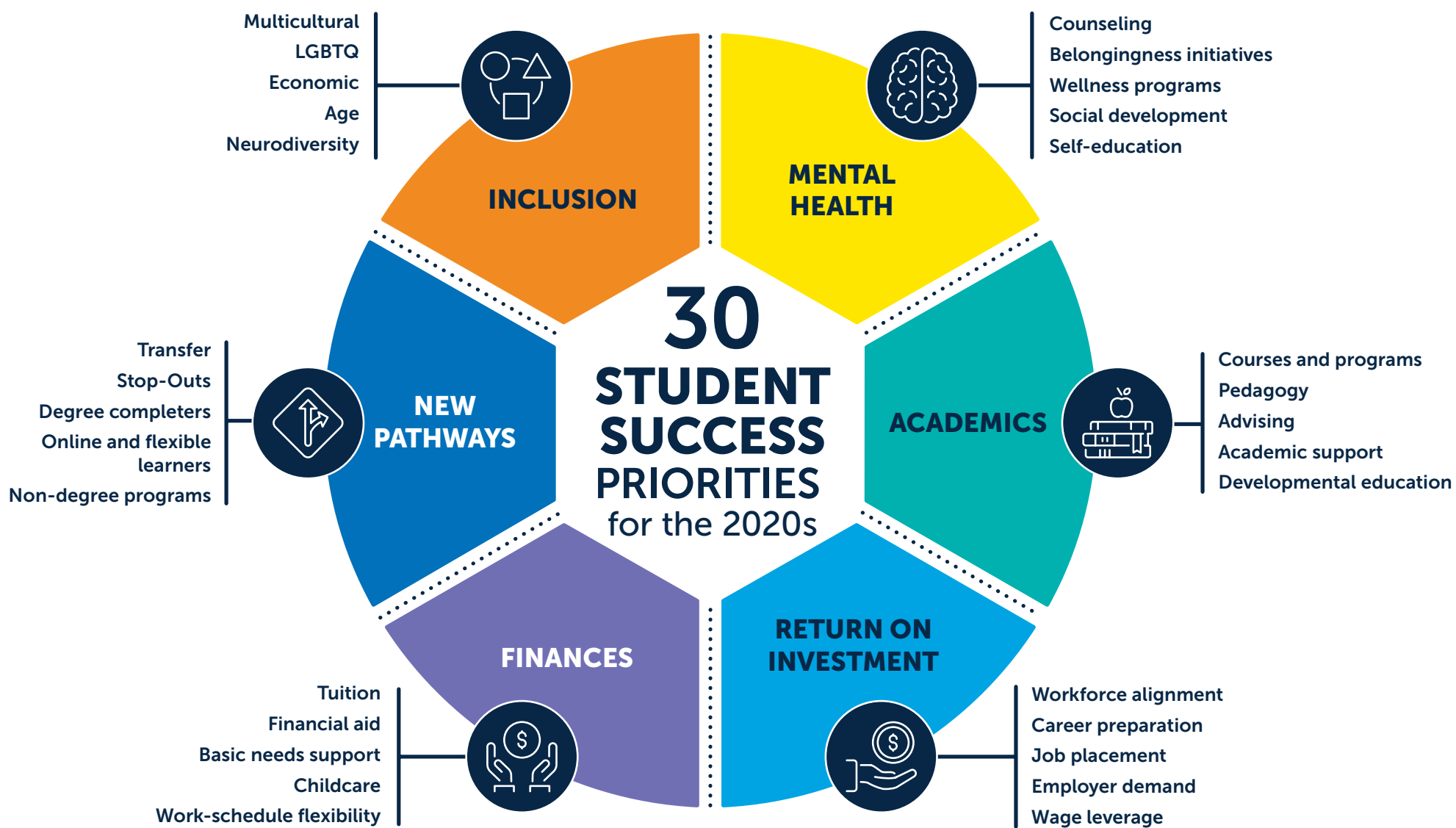


Higher ed's future will be written by how we respond to three trends: the diversification and shrinking of the traditional-age student population, waning public confidence in the value of a degree, and the ripple effects of pandemic-era disrupted K-12 learning. Last fall we spoke with student success leaders across the country about these trends and the decade ahead. We came away with **30 student success priorities for the 2020s**, organized here into six thematic groups. Some of these were expected and some were surprising, and each will be experienced uniquely by different institutions. **Use this list to assess your priorities for the future.**



NEW PATHWAYS

- 1. Transfers:** Building pathways to transfer sources and receivers while improving the speed and quality of the [credit articulation process](#)
- 2. Stop-Outs:** [Recovering lost students](#) through a combination of special outreach and dedicated re-onboarding support
- 3. Degree completers:** Recruiting “some college and no degree” students who earned credits at other institutions and want to complete
- 4. Online and flexible learners:** Embracing innovations that came from pandemic online learning and supporting faculty in this transition
- 5. Non-degree programs:** Supporting students in shorter programs or single courses, often with a focus on upskilling workers

FINANCES

- 6. Tuition:** Controlling net tuition increases and using large endowments to [eliminate tuition](#) for some students and families
- 7. Financial aid:** Continuing to innovate with small [emergency and completion grants](#) to assist with temporary financial distress
- 8. Basic needs support:** Expanding [food pantries and related programs](#) to support with minimal financial resources
- 9. Childcare:** Covering a [major expense and barrier](#) to enrollment for parents, especially single mothers
- 10. Work-schedule flexibility:** Making support services available to working students taking classes outside of normal business hours

INCLUSION

- 11. Multicultural:** Supporting the diverse needs of students from [different racial, ethnic, and international backgrounds](#)
- 12. LGBTQ:** Recognizing the needs and experiences of [different sexual identities](#), with a special focus on supporting nonbinary and trans students
- 13. Economic:** Creating a welcoming and supporting environment for students from [lower-income backgrounds](#), especially at selective institutions
- 14. Age:** Rethinking support for [older and working students](#) with different needs, learning styles, and work-life challenges
- 15. Neurodiversity:** Building new support structures for students with different learning and social needs stemming from their neuro-architecture

MENTAL HEALTH

- 16. Counseling:** Ensuring that [providers](#) can support your students’ diverse identities and that capacity keeps up with demand
- 17. Belongingness initiatives:** Helping all students [feel at home at your school](#) and connected to a community in which they feel accepted
- 18. Wellness programs:** Supporting the “[Eight Dimensions of Wellness](#)” by encouraging healthy behaviors and mindsets
- 19. Social development:** Helping students develop the social skills that may have been delayed during pandemic isolation
- 20. Self-education:** Encouraging students to explore their mental health through self-assessments and educational modules

ACADEMICS

- 21. Courses and programs:** Integrating career preparation and civic engagement into curricula without losing the [liberal arts ethos](#)
- 22. Pedagogy:** Keeping pace with virtual and hyflex learning innovations to better meet students where they already are
- 23. Advising:** Adopting [tandem advising models](#) that provide each student with a support team of advisors, faculty, and student services
- 24. Academic support:** Preparing for the [increase in demand for math tutoring](#) and academic support later in the decade
- 25. Developmental education:** Replacing noncredit remedial courses with credit-bearing [supplemental instruction](#)

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- 26. Workforce alignment:** Aligning course skills development to emerging workforce needs, such as artificial intelligence
- 27. Career preparation:** Embracing [career development](#) as a student outcome and hardwiring career training into curricula
- 28. Job placement:** Building out connections with employers to provide students with clear pathways into the workforce
- 29. Employer demand:** Communicating with local employers to showcase institutional strengths and encourage them to hire more graduates
- 30. Wage leverage:** Competing with high hourly wages by showing students a clear ROI on their investment of time and money