Cross-Solution Network Statement: Our Joint Priorities during COVID-19

These are unprecedented times for our nation's postsecondary institutions. With the decision to close campuses and move to deliver instruction and services online amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, institutional leadership, faculty, staff and students are all trying to navigate how to continue to learn and operate within a very different environment.

As Solutions Networks, we are in the unique position of convening and working with some of our field’s leading providers and experts in delivering high-quality technical assistance, content and services to institutions on the topics of holistic advising, developmental education, and digital learning. Over the past few weeks, we have been communicating with our partner organizations and institutions across the country to learn about their most pressing needs, including preparing students and faculty for effective remote learning and planning for the potential financial implications of the pandemic.

Our Priorities

It has been inspiring to see how organizations, institutions, and individuals from across the postsecondary landscape are sharing resources to help navigate these challenging times. We want to leverage our three networks’ positions to gather resources and knowledge to address both the immediate and longer-term needs across the field. Our joint priorities include:

1. **Curating and disseminating credible resources and best practices:** To support immediate needs of institutions, we are curating a list of high-quality supports, webinars, tools and resources developed by our partner organizations who have extensive experience implementing and disseminating best practices within the field. Our collective resources target key questions we are hearing from faculty, staff, administrators and students, such as, “What are the guidelines I should follow as I transition my courses to remote delivery?,” “What are promising practices related to moving advising online?” and “What training and professional development do faculty need to best support the academic goals of students?” See curated lists of resources for digital learning, advising and developmental education.

2. **Maintaining focus on equity:** All three of our networks are committed to improving student success outcomes, with a particular emphasis on ensuring students of color and low-income students are able to thrive in post-secondary settings through enhanced developmental education, holistic advising, and digital learning tools. Maintaining an equity focus is paramount as the transition to a remote learning environment creates additional financial, technological and social-emotional barriers to student success, which disproportionately impact low-income students and students of color. As we seek to meet immediate and longer-term institutional needs within this changing context, our networks continue to prioritize equitable student success within our work, resources and services.

3. **Learning and planning for the long term:** While we emphasize meeting the immediate needs of students, faculty and institutions for the Spring 2020 term, we recognize there are longer-term implications for the postsecondary system. Our networks are examining how our partner organizations can adapt current best practices, resources, and tools to redesign existing postsecondary systems for successful, equitable online student learning experiences in the future.

For additional information including specific priorities for each Network, see below.
Though the pandemic’s duration and long-term impact remains unknown, our networks are committed to supporting our partner organizations, institutions and the field at large by listening to needs, disseminating relevant resources, embedding equity throughout our work, and planning for the long term.

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Who We Are: About Our Solution Networks

Advising Success Network: Formed in 2018, the Advising Success Network (ASN) is a collection of five partner organizations working to transform higher education advising structures and systems to improve graduation rates and advance socioeconomic and racial equity. We advocate for a holistic approach to advising that includes career, financial, and other student supports, putting students at the center and creating a culture of continuous improvement with student success as its objective. Our network partners represent higher education organizations and leaders who work to gather and disseminate best practices across the field of advising in higher education.

The Advising Success Network has a deep understanding of the interconnection between advising, broader institutional goals, and student success. As thought leaders and experts in the field of holistic advising, we are able to provide resources on best practices in the field of advising as well as change management services to the institution more broadly. We believe this will result in new and reviewed structures and systems for advising that were designed to address racial and socioeconomic inequities and contribute positively to institutional goals and student outcomes.

We recognize that there is a large amount of variance in organizational structures, advising models, and student needs among higher education institutions. That is why we begin each engagement by aligning on a shared vision of student success, reviewing existing advising processes, policies and structures, including metrics (e.g. equity) and always with the joint goal of creating more equitable experiences and outcomes for students from low-income backgrounds, as well as Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian/Pacific Islander students.

The Advising Success Network’s five core partners are dedicated to the advancement of the field of holistic advising. Leveraging their collective expertise and existing research and resources, they are well-positioned to provide effective solutions and materials across higher education.

Every Learner Everywhere: Every Learner Everywhere (ELE) is a network of 12 partner organizations that collaborate with higher education institutions to improve student outcomes through innovative digital learning strategies. The emerging evidence base around digital learning shows potential to increase access and engagement, decrease costs, and improve outcomes for students, particularly low-income students and students of color. Our network partners represent leaders and innovators in teaching and learning. We have specific expertise in
the adoption, implementation, and measurement of digital learning curriculum and resources as they’re integrated into pedagogical practices.

The key priorities of Every Learner Everywhere are to provide field leadership and technical assistance to colleges and universities and thought leadership to the broader higher education market as a result of the rapid move to remote teaching and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We plan to accomplish this by engaging in the following:

- By prioritizing, engaging and learning directly from educators, instructional support staff, and students who are experiencing the shift to remote teaching and learning, we can better understand the immediate impact, challenges, opportunities, and support needs.
- By producing, evaluating, curating, and amplifying the best-in-field resources, tools, and methodologies for digital and online learning, and leveraging the individual and collective strengths of our network partners and affiliate members, we can provide equity-centered guidance for scaling what works, particularly for students at risk in a rapidly changing higher education climate.
- By collaborating and partnering with leading experts, innovators, and organizations from practice, research, and policy, who share our sense of purpose and urgency, we can leverage the best of what is known about digital learning now to ensure high-quality teaching and learning for all.
- By continuously monitoring and analyzing evolving field activities, trends, insights, and knowledge emerging from this event, we can help to foster a community of sharing and learning that drives improved digital and online instructional practice and student outcomes.

**Strong Start to Finish:** There is a persistent problem among colleges and universities for students placed in developmental courses like math and English. They are not completing the courses and, in most cases, should not be taking them in the first place. While developmental education outcomes are deeply troubling for state and institutional leaders and practitioners, for low-income students, students of color and returning adults who see college as a path to something greater, our collective failure to adequately support their success is a heavy burden to bear. This is why we exist.

SSTF works to grow a network so that systems will implement actionable, evidence-based policy and practice about student entry to and success in their initial year of college at scale. We engage leaders, practitioners and partners in a network of value focused on working at scale by undertaking the following key initiatives:

- Develop a highly collaborative network. The SSTF Solutions Network depends on the cooperation and support of nationally recognized education organizations and university-based institutes. The network will utilize 2015’s Core Principles for Transforming Remediation within a Comprehensive Student Success Strategy as its principle document to frame the mission of the network, as well as the resources and services to be provided.
- Support asset development, refinement and innovation. The SSTF Solutions Network provides resources and convenings to revisit and/or co-create tools that have a direct impact on scaling best practices around developmental education. Network activities focused on asset development include a revision of the Core Principles for Transforming Remediation and examining opportunities to package services to maximize network partner capacity.
- Serve as a responsive concierge to network partners. As a network, we believe that our organizations working together will be able to positively impact many more students and institutions than we would working separately. The vision of the solution network is to create a dedicated space for the sharing and development of new knowledge and tools to inform best practices and improve the scalability of successful developmental reform efforts.