



National Louis University (NLU) Undergraduate College & Accelerate U

*Pathways to Adult Success
Student Support Systems for
Postsecondary Persistence and Success*

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Formerly:

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NLU Overview

An institution committed to serving diverse students....

- Non-profit university founded 135 years ago to educate Chicago's immigrants
- 10K students served, incl. 4K undergrads
- 71% Pell-eligible, 65% First-Gen, 54% Black & Latinx; 40% essential workers; Average undergrad age of 29
- 70 programs across 5 colleges
- *Recognitions:* Top 25 Most Diverse Universities, Top 10 Colleges that Make the World a Better Place, #2 Best Bang for Buck in Midwest, #1 Private 4-Year Institution Destination of CPS Graduates

...and now serving the continuum of undergraduates to create multiple paths to economic mobility

Three Models, One Mission: Economic Mobility

- **Pathways at NLU** – driving equity in bachelor's degree attainment and sustainable employment for *traditional-aged first-time undergraduates*.
- **Accelerate U at NLU** – driving rapid employment through short-term, credit-bearing, stackable credentials for *un- or underemployed adults and recent high school graduates*.
- **Direct to Success at NLU** – driving equity in bachelor's degree attainment and sustainable employment for *students directly transferring associate's degrees* from community colleges.

WHOM WE SERVE

Three distinct student populations, all high potential students with unique strengths and experiences



JAIRO
Business major

- First-Time Freshman
- First-gen college-goer
- Working multiple jobs
- Thought college was not an option
- Graduated in 2019, currently a law clerk, & enrolled in law school



AZAREEL
Education Major

- Direct Transfer with Associate Degree from community college
- Assistant Director of Day Care Center
- Worked full-time while in school and parenting



EISHA
Medical Assistant

- Returning adult student
- Now credentialed as a RMA to continue career at Lurie
- Raising two sons
- Working part-time as AU Alumni Coach & getting BA in Healthcare Leadership at NLU

NLU's Pathways (First-time Freshmen) program

The Vision: *Driving equity in bachelor's degree attainment and employment for traditional-aged first-time undergraduates*

1

Equity of access for all students through affordability (\$10K/year for first-time freshmen, lowest in IL), convenient blended and online schedules so students can balance school with work and family (no more than 2 days/week on-campus), and broad access admissions (2.0+ GPA, no SAT/ACT requirement)

2

Clear and well-rounded course pathways to degree completion – with every student having access to general education coursework and a major, minor, and concentration – to minimize time to graduation and maximize student readiness for a broad range of careers

3

Active, experiential, rigorous, and personalized classroom experience – led by dedicated, expert faculty with real-world experience and utilizing flipped design, adaptive curriculum technologies, and data-informed, student-centered instruction – to drive student engagement and learning

4

Holistic, data-informed support with personalized success coaching, integrated non-cognitive skills building and co-requisite developmental education, wrap-around supports to meet life needs, and collaboration between faculty and staff to facilitate student persistence and success

5

Embedded career preparation – including credit-bearing career readiness curriculum, career coaching, and access to employer partners and work-based learning inclusive of an internship requirement – to help students cross the bridge from college graduation to career success

NLU's Direct to Success (D2S) program



The Vision: *By 2025, NLU will be the top broad access 4-year institution for local community college transfer students.*

1

Great Value: 25% scholarship to students who transfer within one year of completing an associate's degree at NLU partner colleges, and complete their bachelor's degree at NLU within 3 years; <\$15K/year full-time, the most affordable private school in the Chicagoland area.

2

Generous Credit Transferability & Seamless Transfer Experience: Early NLU presence on partner campus to support student persistence and transfer, generous acceptance of transfer credits aligned with Illinois Articulation Initiative, broad access admissions (2.0+ GPA), and streamlined admissions with rapid transfer credit evaluation and early award estimates.

3

Convenient, Predictable Schedule: Schedule tailored to working adult students, and blending campus-based and online instruction, with day-time, evening, weekend, and online course options, and full-time students never required to be on-campus more than 2 days per week.

4

Career Acceleration: Integrated career development starting in first quarter at NLU, including a dedicated Career Advisor, the opportunity to participate in the nationally-recognized Braven Career Accelerator, and intensive job placement support to graduate with a job offer in-hand.

5

Support to Succeed: Small class sizes fueled by active learning and taught by expert faculty. A structured, co-curricular Third Year Experience, and a Transfer Student Support Hub offering academic and wraparound support with day-time, evening, and virtual hours.

6

Inclusive Community: A diverse and transfer-receptive school community dedicated to social belonging, racial equity, and empowering student voice through engagement.

NLU's Accelerate U (AU) program



The Vision: A Pathbreaking “Job-First Higher Education” Model with Certificates in Medical Assisting, Registered Behavior Technicians, and Technology (coming Fall 2023).

Bridge to a great job	We build our training with employers who are eager to hire students in 7-8 months!
Real world clinical experiences	Students spend 4-6 weeks in a field-based Externship, learning how to do the job.
Expert faculty & coaches	Each cohort has an instructor and a coach who know the field and work together to support students.
Industry credentials + college credit	Students earn 30 NLU college credits and a nationally-recognized Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) cert.
A positive learning community	Students move through the program as a cohort – getting to know and learning from peers.
Affordable	Our program costs \$7,000. If you're full Pell/MAP eligible, you'll pay \$0 out of pocket and leave with no debt.



Discussion:

How can we best support students in deciding how to start or continue their post-secondary path?

How do we know if a certificate program, 2-year Associates, or 4-year Bachelor's degree is the right first step?

Partnerships to Support Student Success

Examples

- ❖ **K-12 Partnerships:** Conversations and convening with High School counselors, sharing high level data; Dual credit models
- ❖ **Non-profit Partnerships:** Meetings with local program staff, sharing student-level (with consent) and cohort data, with referrals for support
- ❖ **Employer Partnerships:** At AU, tracks are launched based on market demand; revisions to course content based on employer feedback on student readiness, which leads to a continuous cycle of innovation.

Successes and Challenges

- ❖ Opportunity to develop relationships between entities, make connections and leverage resources
- ❖ Feedback loops on what is working and what is not (ex., first cohorts from OneGoal)
- ❖ Individual and relationship intensive, as personnel transition, relationships ebb and flow
- ❖ Focused on transition and 1st year of college, but after persisting to 2nd year collaboration falls short



Your turn:

- In groups, please discuss ways in which your organizations have built partnerships to support student success.
- What makes this work challenging?

Be ready to share out.

Lessons Learned and the Path Forward



