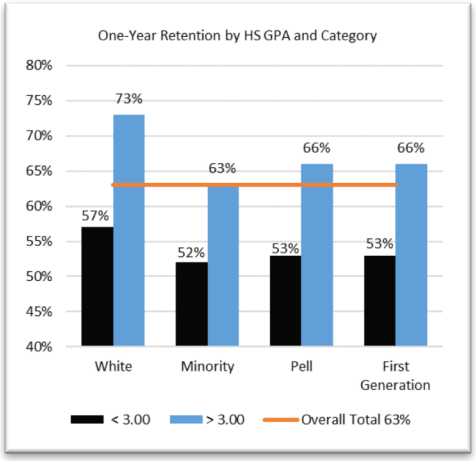
Sycamores Achieve: Scaling to Success

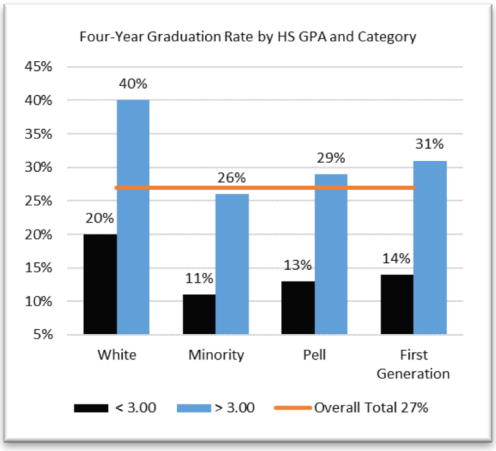
Institutional Challenges:

Indiana State University's mission is to transform the lives of students through a high-quality education that is infused with experiential learning, community engagement, and career-readiness. Indiana State's students succeed within a culture of inclusion and support that provides the skills and knowledge to impact Indiana and beyond.

Every year, Indiana State welcomes a diverse student body, which is primarily composed of first-generation, Pell-eligible, and minority students. The Sycamore community embraces the opportunity to educate and advance the trajectory of its students and their families. Indiana State's number one ranking for social mobility in the state of Indiana[1] and our 99% career placement rate underscore the significant impact of an Indiana State education."[2].

Although Indiana State continues to serve as a preferred destination for many historically under-served students, it has struggled to close achievement gaps across segments of the student body, as have many universities nationally.





[3]

To address this challenge, Indiana State is proposing a bold transformation which is systemic, research-supported and pilot-proven. This institutional change will not only help it to eliminate achievement gaps but also benefit every Indiana State student.

Indiana State's long-term viability and continued contribution to the state of Indiana rest on its ability to graduate successfully its diverse student body. Simply stated, the socio-economic benefit of degree completion for its students and their families remains unrivaled. The Lilly Endowment's further investment in Indiana State will significantly reduce achievement gaps and create positive, ongoing, outcomes for all students, the

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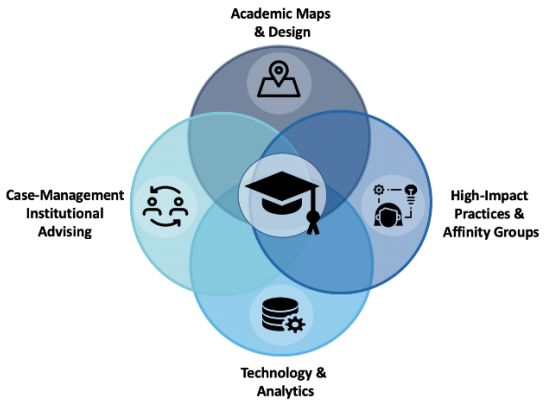
University, and the state of Indiana's workforce (SEE *Reaching Higher in a State of Change*," https://www.in.gov/che/strategic-plan/reaching-higher-in-a-state-of-change/)

Institutional Transformation: **Sycamores Achieve: Scaling to Success**

The framework for Indiana State's institutional transformation is based on leveraging four elements 1) academic maps and curriculum redesign, 2) technology and analytics 3) case-management advising and 4) high impact practices and affinity groups. Although these four elements are currently found in pockets across the University, Indiana State's Sycamores Achieve: Scaling to Success proposal refines, integrates, and scales these institutional elements together to dramatically transform completion rates for students from all backgrounds. Furthermore, we fill compelled to underscore, through this work Indiana State does not intend to change who it serves, but rather through this initiative Indian State will better serves its students.



Academic Maps & Curriculum Redesign

As Indiana State has sought to reduce achievement gaps, the University has focused its efforts on the development and use of four-year academic maps. The importance of leveraging these academic maps to support proactive advising is well-documented and researched within higher education. Additionally, *Complete College America* strongly endorses intentional mapping, milestone identification, corequisite support, and flexible academic pathways as tested methods to accelerate time to graduation, ensure predictable schedules, and give non-traditional students credit for prior-learning opportunities.[4]

Degree Works is the technology Indiana State employs to map academic degrees. The full integration of *Degree Works* will allow the institution to 1) map out student pathways from first-day to graduation, 2) monitor progress and identification of alternative routes for timely degree completion, 3) provide clarity on credit transfer, and 4) assist the institution in predicting course demand and scheduling. Indiana State will use Phase III funds for full implementation, which will provide accurate and flexible academic maps, robust reporting and data analysis functionality, and support for academic advising and interventions.

Degree maps, however, are only as good as the design of the curriculum they represent. With Phase III funding, Indiana State will initiate a university-wide curriculum redesign, grounded in best practices, informed by the work of the institution's Strategic Enrollment Management Council, and now central to the University's new strategic plan. This initiative will focus on examining how the design of Indiana State's current academic

structure impacts student progression and completion. Indiana State will examine the utilization of flexible academic pathways or meta-majors, academic gateway courses and milestones, smart schedules, academic learning communities and stackable credentials (SEE "How Meta Majors Guide Students Towards On-Time Graduation," https://eab.com/insights/daily-briefing/student-success/how-meta-majors-guide-students-toward-on-time-graduation/).

Technology & Analytics

Systemically leveraged technology and data analytics have powerfully aided other institutions in successfully closing achievement gaps. In the *Project Success 2020* Phase II proposal, Indiana State identified the need to expand these capabilities through a student success platform which will provide critical point-in-time information about students allowing for timely intervention by advisors, instructors and student success staff.

With this student success technology, Indiana State will move the needle on closing Indiana State's achievement gap. However, truly meaningful outcomes, benefitting all Indiana State students, will only happen when Indiana State integrates, maintains and updates the multiple technologies it currently uses to support student progression and degree completion. [5] By integrating these systems, Indiana State will conduct the type of data analysis and deep data mining that allows for the ongoing refinement of case-management advising, academic maps, and curriculum design.

Case-Management Advising

Currently, Indiana State's advising model is "quasi-centralized." First-time, first year students are advised by professional advisors in the University College (UC), who utilize the case-management approach.[6] After completing two semesters, advisees' transition from the UC to their academic colleges.[5] The academic colleges employ different approaches to academic advising—some continue to utilize professional advisors, at least in the sophomore year, and others shift students immediately to faculty advisors.

While many students receive quality advising under both approaches, this "quasi-centralized" model often leads to inconsistency, a lack of quality control, challenges with tracking student data, and inconsistent communication with students. Moreover, the retention and graduation gaps referenced above widen after the first year.

In Phase III, Indiana State will scale up the UC's innovative case-management method.[6] This approach uses as its foundation NACADA's best practices of proactive, holistic, and developmental advising. The case-management approach moves away from transactional advising for the sole purpose of registration to holistic advising where the advisor addresses financial literacy, student success habits, and general well-being. Proactive advisors meet monthly with their advisees and maintain regular contact with advisees through texts, emails, phone calls, and mailings, reporting all contacts in MySAM notes and case management logs.

The case management model addresses students' unique risk factors by providing scaffolding, strengthening the students' sense of agency and efficacy, as well as helping students hone their metacognition and problem-solving skills. Indiana State has already piloted this approach, which has improved the fall-to-fall retention rates from 58.0% to 68.83%.

High-Impact Practices

High-impact practices (HIPs) are curricular and co-curricular experiences, which promote "deep" learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. [7] While HIPS benefit all students, recent scholarship indicates underserved student populations have the least access to HIPs, but receive the most benefit from participating in them. While Indiana State has a strong, long held, commitment to and has been nationally recognized for affording its students meaningful community engagement and experiential learning opportunities, in its recently awarded Phase II grant, Indiana State emphasized the importance of increasing access to HIPs (e.g., study abroad, undergraduate research, internships, problem-based inquiry, etc.). Indiana State will use Phase III funding to provide mini grants for students to participate in meaningful HIP experiences.

Affinity Groups

Students who develop an authentic sense of belonging to their institution, as well as increase their agency and efficacy, perform better academically and are more likely to persist.[8] To this end, Indiana State proposes to use Phase III funding to offer mini grants to affinity groups and Student Affairs organizations to develop co-curricular experiences that promote belonging, efficacy, and agency.

Project Success 2020 (2.0)

In addition to transformational institutional change, the Phase III proposal builds upon its recently awarded *Charting the Future,* Phase II grant—*Project Success 2020*, which was designed to serve 200 new Sycamores over a 4-year period.

Phase III exponentially increases the influence of the strategic leveraging of resources in Phase II by increasing the number of participants in each cohort to 800 first-time, full-time degree seeking students. Monies from the Phase III grant will afford participants the same opportunities as described in the Phase II grant, including but not limited to, a designated *Project Success* advisor until graduation, a faculty guide from their academic discipline, a peer mentor, access to affinity groups and career readiness programming. Additionally, a summer bridge program, learning communities[9], high-impact practices, enhanced aid opportunities, and a new student success technology platform will promote better academic performance.

Project Success 2020 (2.0) Program Goals:

1. **Increase *Project Success 2020* participation rates by 60 percent to 800 per cohort.**
2. **Increase *Project Success 2020* 1st to 2nd, 2nd to 3rd, and 3rd to 4th retention rates by 10 percentage points.**
3. **Increase *Project Success 2020* 4-year graduation rate by 7 percent points.**

Collaboration with Ivy Tech (Terre Haute): Pathway to Blue 2021

By offering new pathways for prospective students to enter the institution, Indiana State will improve its recruitment as well as its retention and graduation rates. With Phase III funding, Indiana State will strengthen its new partnership with Ivy Tech (Terre Haute) by expanding non-traditional pathways towards degree completion. In year four, Indiana State will expand the partnership beyond the local Ivy Tech to additional Ivy Tech partners.

Indiana State and Ivy Tech (Terre Haute) launched the *Pathway to Blue* pilot in fall. This one-year program allowed students, who were not directly admitted to Indiana State, to apply to *Pathway to Blue*. Successful applicants participated in a pre-semester academic preparation program at Ivy Tech and lived on Indiana State's campus while participating in a dual-enrolled curriculum. Indiana State will directly admit participants once they complete their Statewide General Education Core (STGEC) at Ivy Tech.

Indiana State and Ivy Tech will use Phase III funds to expand *Pathway to Blue's* capacity. This collaborative approach will best serve students whose high school academic records indicate they have risk factors which require increased and heavily leveraged scaffolding that mirrors what *Project Success 2020* offers regular admit students, but also includes special programming and one-to-one interactions offered by specially trained faculty and staff affiliated with Ivy Tech.

Based upon lessons learned from the pilot, Indiana State and Ivy Tech have modified the program in the following ways:

1. Students will take Ivy Tech courses taught by Ivy Tech instructors on Indiana State's s campus. This change to the pilot is intended reduce transportation issues that resulted.
2. *A Pathway to Blue* coordinator will oversee the program and make sure the services provided by each institution are properly aligned with the participant's unique needs.
3. Participants will be advised in concert by an Ivy Tech advisor and a UC advisor, both of whom will utilize the UC's case management approach to advising, which is proactive, holistic and developmental. Its overarching goal is to strengthen the advisees' sense of agency and efficacy and to hone their problem-solving skills.
4. Participants will be assigned a peer mentor and will serve as a peer mentor if they are successful and transition to Indiana State.
5. Participants may choose to work with a metacognition coach (a Student Affairs Graduate Student), who will help them to "learn how to learn," through modeling, reflection and practice. https://theelearningcoach.com/learning/metacognition-and-learning/. This type of coaching was piloted with Phase 1 funding in fall 2020, as part of the *Mastering Success* initiative.
6. Participants successfully complete their STGEC will transition to *Project Success 2020* as sophomores.

Program Evaluation & Sustainability:

Indiana State will use the linked spreadsheet [11] to measure progress towards its retention and graduation goals. The spreadsheets also show when the program is financially sustainable.

Instructions on how to utilize the spreadsheet are below.

- Total headcount, cumulative new revenue, and the number of advisors per students are calculated for five years by entering student counts and retention rates in the blue highlighted cells.

- The spreadsheet reads from left to right, starting with the yellow box of the **Current Rate**. In the **Students/Years** section, the count of new students is entered on row 7 for each of the five years. The headcount is multiplied by the retention rate. Although the retention rates can be adjusted, it is currently based on similar historical student cohorts. Row 12 provides the total headcount of students per year. In the **Revenue/Years** section, the revenue is a simple approximation by taking the full-time residential tuition rate from the prior year and multiplying it by the total headcount. The section of **Advisors to Student Ratio** provides three different counts of the number of advisors needed for the number of students.

- The **Sycamores Achieve – Four Year Expansion** area in orange, uses the same template as the Current Rate. However, the retention rates have been adjusted in anticipation of the impact of the new program. The **Budget/Years** section provides the projected new expenses for the program by year, which is then deducted from the Revenue/Years total to determine the **Cumulative New Revenue** by year.

- On the far-right side of the spreadsheet, in the red **Projected Difference**, the count of students by year is the difference between the Current Rate and the *Project Success 2020* program In the **Revenue/Years** section, the Total New Revenue provides the amount of revenue generated by the difference in the student counts. With the **Budget/Years** section showing the projected new expenses, the **Cumulative New Review** shows at what year the program would become sustainable. The total **Advisors to Students Ratio** provides the cumulative number of advisors necessary for the total number of students (both in the Current Rate and in the *Project Success* program).

The table below identifies the new revenue created by a 10 percent increase in year-over-year student retention. This Phase III investment in *Project Success 2020* is financially sustainable by the end of Year 3.

Revenue/Years	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
Average Revenue per Student	$9,036	$ 9,036	$ 9,036	$ 9,036	$ 9,036
Total New Revenue	$ -	$722,880	$1,445,760	$2,168,640	$2,602,368

Average Revenue based on 2019-2020 tuition rate for fall and spring semesters combined, for full-time Indiana resident.

Indiana State University will evaluate each individual component of the program, starting with baseline measures in year 1:

- Quality of advising: Satisfaction surveys, advisor knowledge assessment, assessment of advising learning objectives, evaluation of number and quality interaction
- Effect of high impact practices: Measure of critical thinking capacity, measure of problem-solving capacity, and student reflections
- Degree of belonging, cultural, competency, efficacy, and agency: psychometric measures and student reflections
- Benefits of the *Pathway to Blue* pipeline: compare persistence, retention and graduation rates to those of students conditionally admitted to Indiana State

- Impact of fully operational technologies: Earlier interventions (e.g., before interim grades are posted), increase in the ability to respond to individual risk factors, rather than assumed group risk factors, increase in the effectiveness of interventions (registration holds, mental health, etc.), increased persistence, retention and graduation rates.

Potential Obstacles: COVID-19

In fall 2021, institutions may still be grappling with issues created by COVID-19. However, the fall 2020 semester demonstrated to us that although not ideal much of the programming related to *Project Success 2020* could be successfully implemented. This is underscored by the fact that the persistence rate for the fall 2020 cohort of *Project Success*—even in the semester of the pandemic— is higher than the entire cohort's persistence rate. If we must continue to physically distance in fall 2021, Indiana State is confident it can offer both programs described and meet their objectives and our projected outcomes.

Budget and Budget Narrative

	4-year total
Personnel	
18 Academic Advisors	$2,700,000
Pathway to Blue Program Director	$220,000
Project Success Development Director	$267,752
Total Personnel	**$3,187,752**
Fringe Benefits	
See budget narrative for details	**$1,618,075**
Scholarships	
Study Abroad Scholarships	$120,000
Total Scholarships	**$120,000**
Belonging/Agency	
Mini Grants	$200,000
Total Belonging/Agency	**$200,000**
Infrastructure Development	
Upgrading Degree Works	$400,000
Student Success Technology	$1,000,000
Total Infrastructure Development	**$1,400,000**
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**$6,525,827**

Budget Narrative

Academic Advisors: Academic Advisors (18 FTEs) will be hired to work full-time on the project, at 100% effort. The Academic Advisors will guide advisees for the entirety of their college experience using a holistic case-management approach. The advisors will work with advisees to address financial literacy, student success

habits, and general well-being, meeting monthly and maintaining regular contact with advisees through text, emails, phone calls, and mailings. These positions will be hired in year one of the project at a starting salary of approximately $37,500; cost of living increases are included for their salary; they will work during each year of the project.

Pathway to Blue Program Director**:** A full-time program director (1 FTE) will be hired to lead and support the Pathway to Blue Program. This position will be hired by Ivy Tech and stationed at Indiana State's campus. The program director will serve as a primary contact and advocate for elements of the Pathway to Blue program including: recruitment and selection, onboarding and transitional programs, financial aid and student accounts, residential life, academic design and support services, and student activities and services.

Fringe Benefits: Funds to provide for fringe benefits for each of the staff noted above are included in the budget. Fringe benefits are estimated at 40% of salaries for staff making over $50,000 a year and at 45% of salaries for staff making less than $50,000 a year. Fringe benefits costs include FICA, workers' compensation, unemployment, retirement, health, dental, life, and disability insurance and other benefits.

Development Director: A full-time development director (1 FTE) will be hired to work on the project at 100% effort. The Development Director will work to secure funds to scale up *Project Success 2020,* including, but not limited to, support for high impact practices (e.g., study abroad and undergraduate research) as well as bridge the gap funding to assist students with financial need. This position will begin in year one of the project at a starting salary of approximately $64,000; cost of living increases are included for their salary; they will work during each year of the project.

Fringe Benefits: Funds to provide for fringe benefits for each of the staff noted above are included in the budget. Fringe benefits are estimated at 40% of salaries for staff making over $50,000 a year and at 45% of salaries for staff making less than $50,000 a year. Fringe benefits costs include FICA, workers' compensation, unemployment, retirement, health, dental, life, and disability insurance and other benefits. The total amount requested for fringe benefits for the four-year project is $1,618,075.

Scholarships: Study Abroad Scholarships: Funds are budgeted to provide Study Abroad Scholarships or undergraduate research scholarships so that students who would otherwise not be able to engage in such experiences may participate in these high impact practices. Each year, 20 scholarships of $1,500 each will be awarded. The total cost for these scholarships is $30,000 per year, and for the four-year project is $120,000. Belonging/Agency Grants: Mini grants will be offered to affinity groups, learning communities and transition courses that provide experiences for students that enhance their sense of belonging, agency, and efficacy, which will lead to retention, academic achievement, and active citizenship in a variety of settings. Groups will be required to develop a plan for a program that increases student belonging/engagement, agency, or efficacy. These groups must include a pre-experience assessment (to develop a baseline) and a post-experience assessment (to measure if the program increased belonging, engagement, agency, or efficacy.) Each year, $50,000 is requested for mini grants. The total cost for mini grants for the four-year project is $200,000.

Infrastructure Development: Upgrade Degree Works Each year funds of $100,000 are requested to fully implement the Degree Works system. Full implementation of Degree Works will provide accurate and flexible academic maps, robust reporting and data analysis functionality, and support for academic advising and interventions. The total cost for Degree Works for the four-year project is $400,000.

Student Success Technology: Each year, funds of $250,000 are requested to upgrade and implement a student success platform. The Student Success Technology platform will connect advisors, academic progress, faculty and staff, and support services to identify and provide critical point-in-time outreach and intervention. The total cost for Student Success Technology for the four-year project is $1,000,000**.**

Implementation Timeline:

1. The implementation timeline for Phase III: Project Success 2020 expands the cohort size from 125 to 800 students for fall 2021. The program's infrastructure including the addition of an initial wave of new advisors during spring 2021. As new cohorts of 800 new students are added annually, it is estimated the *Project Success* program will grow to serve over 2,100 active students by fall 2025. Additional waves of new advisors will be hired in correlation to program growth and scale.

Students/Years	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
New Students	800	800	800	800	800
Retained to second year		520	520	520	520
Retained to third year			400	400	400
Retained to fourth year				360	360
Retained to fifth year					80
Total Headcount	800	1,320	1,720	2,080	2,160

***Proposed retention rates for Phase III PS 2020 are more conservative vs. Phase II based on increased cohort size.*

Alternative Scenario

	4-year total
Personnel	
10 Academic Advisors	$1,500,000
Pathway to Blue Program Director	$220,000
Total Personnel	**$1,720,000**
Fringe Benefits	
See budget narrative for detail on fringe benefits.	**$1,089,000**
Scholarships	
Study Abroad Scholarships	$120,000
Total Scholarships	**$120,000**
Belonging/Agency	
Mini Grants	$200,000
Total Belonging/Agency	**$200,000**
Infrastructure Development	
Upgrading Degree Works	$400,000
Student Success Technology	$1,000,000
Total Infrastructure Development	**$1,400,000**
TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	**$4,529,000**

Alternative Scenario Program Impact

The alternative scenario reduces the number of academic advisors from eighteen to ten. This scenario impacts Indiana State's successful case-management model, which maintains an advisee ratio of 1:12512. The alternative scenario may limit the frequency of proactive student outreach by increasing the advisee ratio to 1:216. In addition, the alternative scenario eliminates the Project Success Development Director position. This position is critical in developing a sustainable source of funding for access to high impact practices (e.g. study abroad and undergraduate research) as well as bridge the gap funding (need-based aid to reduce students' financial barriers).

End Notes:

[1]Indiana State ranks first in the state on the CollegeNet Social Mobility Index, socialmobilityindex.org
[2]Class of 2019 Graduate Placement Survey, indstate.edu/outcomes
[3] Office of Enrollment Management Lilly Grant Report: 2013, 2014, 2015 student cohorts not including conditional and honors (n=6,419)
[4]Complete College America's recommended strategies to improve completion, completecollege.org/completion-roadmap
[5]Georgia State University's strategic approach to GPS advising, https://success.gsu.edu/initiatives/gps-advising/
[6] This reconceptualization of academic advising does not exclude faculty members, but shifts their role from advisor to coach. A professional relationship with a faculty member in the student's area of study is critical for their success. Faculty members are the disciplinary and content experts; they have professional and academic connections; they can facilitate internship and undergraduate-research opportunities.
[7] Finley, A. and McNair, T (2013). Assessing Underserved Students; Engagement in High-Impact Practices
[8] Davis, G.M., Hanzsek-Brill, M.B., Petzold, M.C. & Robinson, D.H. (2019). Students' sense of belonging: The Development of a predictive retention model. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning 19*(1). Special issue: Reimagining the first-year experience. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14434/josotl.v19i1.26779; Kuh, G., Cruce,
[9] Kern, B. and Kingsbury, T. (2019). Curricular learning communities and retention. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning 19*(1). Special issue: Reimagining the first-year experience. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14434/josotl.v19i1.26779;
[10]T.M., Shoup, R., Kinzie, J. & Gonyea, R.M. (2016). Unmasking the effects of student engagement on first year college grades and persistence. *The Journal of Higher Education 79*(5), 540-563.
[11] Lilly Phase III Sustainability Model, https://www.dropbox.com/s/gapp26dzysc93d4/Lilly%20Grant%20Proposal%20data%208.11.2020%20v.2.xlsx?dl=0
[12] https://nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advisor-Load.aspx