



ASCENDER

Achieving Student Confidence Encouraging New Dreams-Equity Realized.

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Ascender

Ascender is a holistic approach to student, faculty and institutional advancement.

It is a program created to engage faculty and staff in culturally-responsive professional development while they work with cohorts of underserved students, at their home campuses, to ensure their academic success.

Students are intentionally recruited into the program by **designated advisors** who then support students until transfer or graduation.

Why ASCENDER

Over 55 % of Latinos and 51% of black students that go to college go to a community college.

87 % of Latino and Black students in community colleges are placed in Developmental courses.

These classes grant no credit, and use up the student's financial aid.

In Texas, 61% of students entering community college and 42% of students in state colleges and Universities are not college ready based on standardized test

Less than 10% will graduate after 6 years.

The economic future of the state and the nation depends on providing true opportunity to students who have been historically overlooked and disadvantaged.

The Essence of Our Work

Effective college instruction and advising often do not reach all students equally.

CTN's culturally sustaining methodology transforms the capacity of staff so that students can earn more degrees while spending less on their education.



Ascender Pathway to Success



NAVIGATIONAL SUPPORT

- HOLISTIC ADVISING
- LEARNING FRAMEWORK(S) COURSE
- COUNSELING



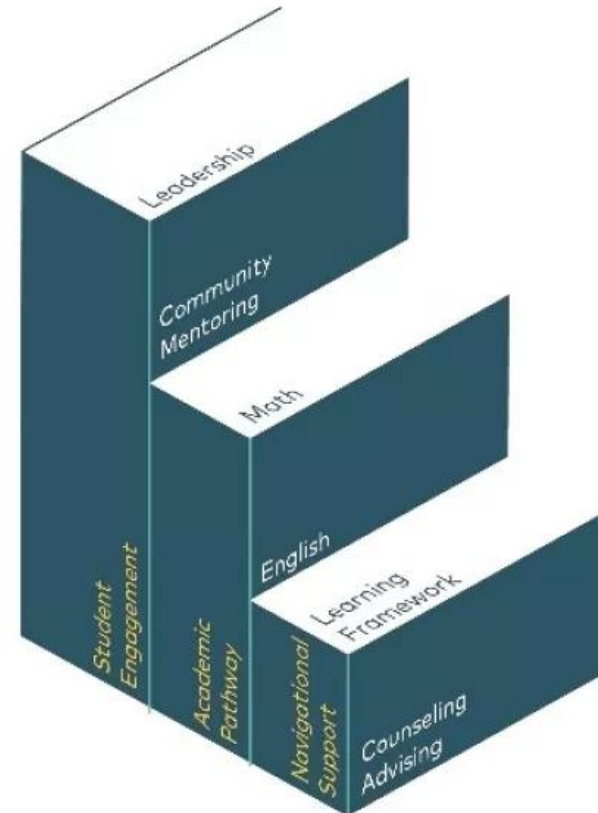
ACADEMIC PATHWAY

- 1-YEAR OF ENGLISH
- ADDITIONAL CORE SUBJECT COURSES



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- COMMUNITY MENTORSHIP
- CULTURAL EVENTS
- UNIVERSITY TOURS
- LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Pillars of First-Year Experience



English, Learning Frameworks, and Mathematics form the central pillars of a student's first-year experience with CTN.

It Takes a Village

Students find continued support from a counselor/advisor and other staff in the college who along with community mentors build social and cultural capital and in gateway courses that strengthen first-year skills.



Family and Community Engagement

CTN engages the entire family in the education of their children. Once a year, families are asked to come to the campus and meet the **mentor** assigned to their child.

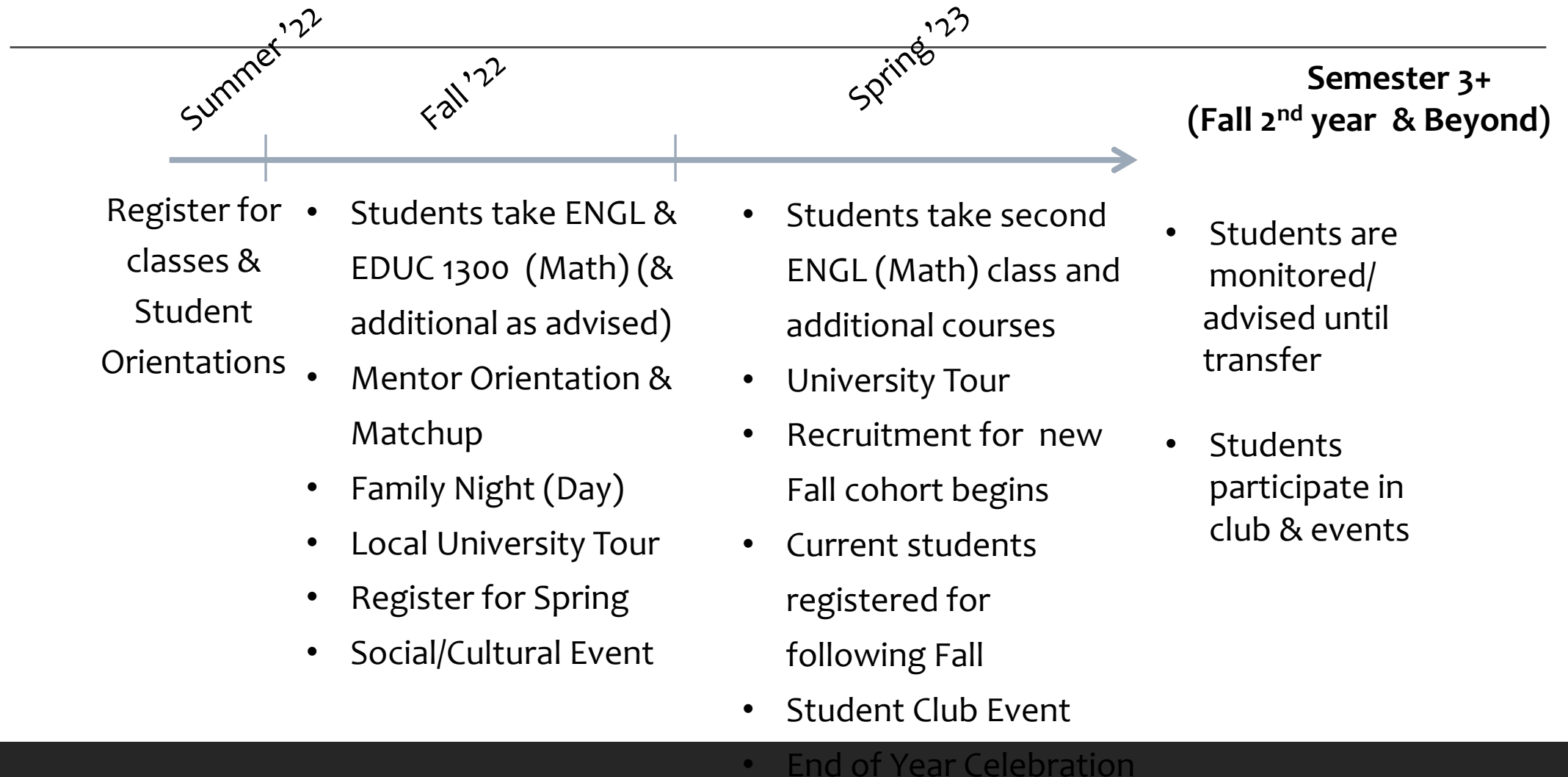


Student Transfer Motivational Conference

CTN sponsors a Transfer Motivational Conference at UT Austin once a year for students to experience living in a dorm and eating dining hall food. They also learn about the admissions process, financial aid, and housing. CTN colleges conduct site visits to University campuses to promote transfer.



Student First Year (and Beyond)



TERC Longitudinal Study 2019

" As one of the clearest finding from this analysis, our results show that exposure to treatment (Ascender courses) increases the average student's odds of obtaining a bachelor's certificate by 1.24 ($p < .001$). "

"We also find that compared to students in the control group we can expect Ascender takers to earn more certificates (0.02, $p < .001$) in the semesters following exposure to the treatment. "Although these coefficients are small, they indicate an important positive and statistically significant relationship between enrollment in Ascender course and credential attainment. "



Less Student Debt



The study also found that CTN Ascender students accumulate one third of student loan debt compared to the control group.

The study also found that our students on average get awarded 30% of the total awarded amount of aid awarded to an average per student annually (THECB, 2017.)

When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A time for reflection and
Discussion



Sample Unit: Career Planning & Major Selection

Objective: To help CTN students explore career choices through a culturally-responsive lens

Class: Learning Frameworks/Personal Development

Unit: Career Planning & Major Selection

Instructional Methods: Movie Clip (visual), discussion – small and large group (auditory), writing reflection/drawing (kinesthetic).

Materials: “Good Daughter” (Caroline Hwang)



Discussion Coco

(Big Group or in *familias*)

- A dilemma is a problem that offers two possibilities. What are the two possibilities for Miguel? Why does he feel so torn?
- What would you do if you were in Miguel's shoes?
- Do you know anyone who has faced a similar dilemma? What did they do to resolve this issue?

“The Good Daughter” by Caroline Hwang

Read for understanding by using popcorn/strong lines



Reading Response: “The Good Daughter”

Share strong lines

What is the dilemma
in the reading?
(discuss with your
partner/*familias*)

Quick write: **what
advice would you
give the writer?**

Selecting a Career Pathway



Choosing a Major or being on the appropriate pathway is everyone's job, not just the advisors.



The career exploration process requires teamwork.



Awards

The John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education awarded Catch the Next to the Edge Commendation for Innovation in Education. October 22, 2021.

Catch the Next's Ascender Program was recognized as an Example of Excellence Finalist, October 28, 2021. The program has been listed on Excelencia's Programs that Work Database since 2017.

The Texas Higher Education has recognized CTN in the Journal of Developmental Education in 2014 and through a video in 2016.

Catch the Next is the winner of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's challenge: What is Next in Higher Education? For advising, mentoring and breaking down institutional silos. 2013

For more information go to:



<https://www.catchthenext.org>



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Handouts: Professional
Development Sequence