

# ***Getting to Know Our Students: Using Personas to Support Student Needs***

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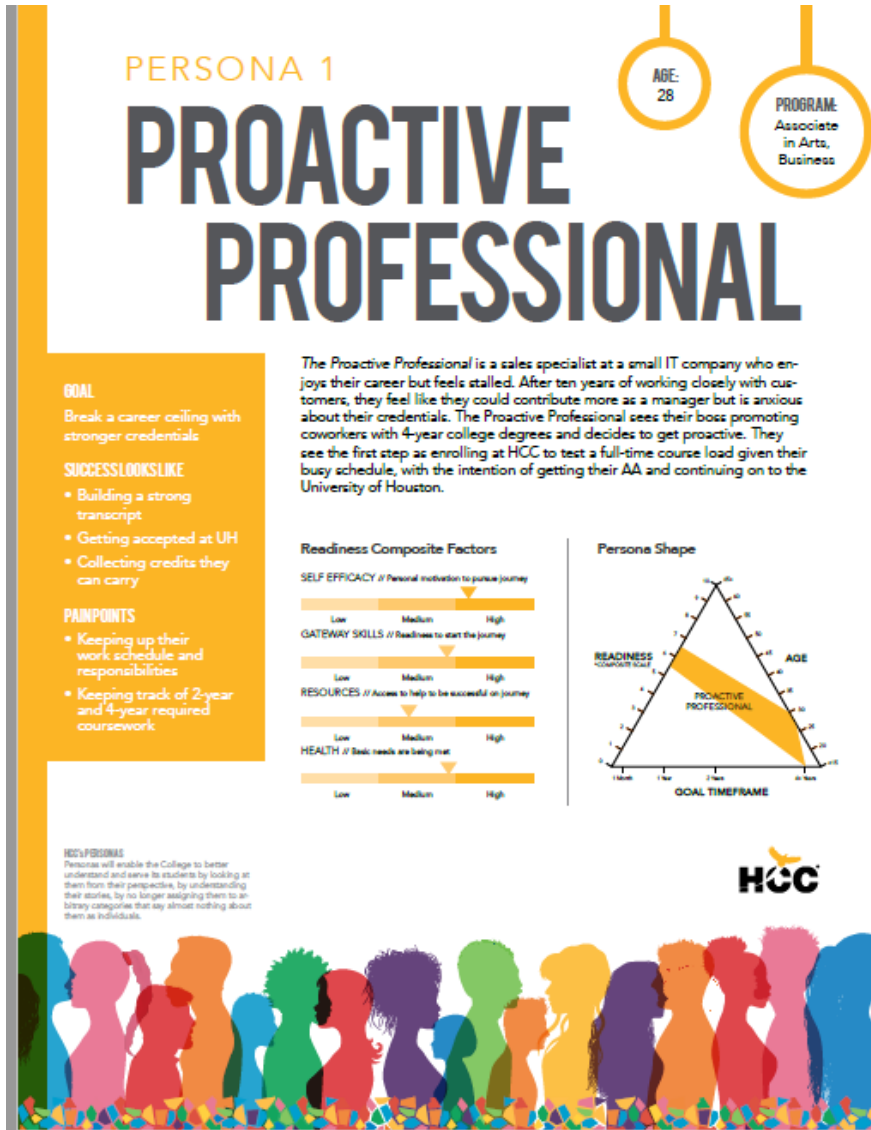
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**Texas Pathways Institute – April 7, 2022**

# What are Personas?

- Persona are fictional profiles of students that capture similarities in backgrounds, goals, challenges, and assets that students share.
- They are archetypes, not stereotypes
  - Real students are a mix of personas

# Components of the Persona



- Motivation (Story)
- Goals
- Success Looks Like
- Pain Points
- Readiness Factors

# Motivation (Story)

*The Proactive Professional* is a sales specialist at a small IT company who enjoys their career but feels stalled. After ten years of working closely with customers, they feel like they could contribute more as a manager but is anxious about their credentials. The Proactive Professional sees their boss promoting coworkers with 4-year college degrees and decides to get proactive. They see the first step as enrolling at HCC to test a full-time course load given their busy schedule, with the intention of getting their AA and continuing on to the University of Houston.

# Goals, Success, & Pain Points

## GOAL

Break a career ceiling with stronger credentials

## SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Building a strong transcript
- Getting accepted at UH
- Collecting credits they can carry

## PAINPOINTS

- Keeping up their work schedule and responsibilities
- Keeping track of 2-year and 4-year required coursework

# Readiness Factors

## Readiness Composite Factors

SELF EFFICACY // Personal motivation to pursue journey



GATEWAY SKILLS // Readiness to start the journey



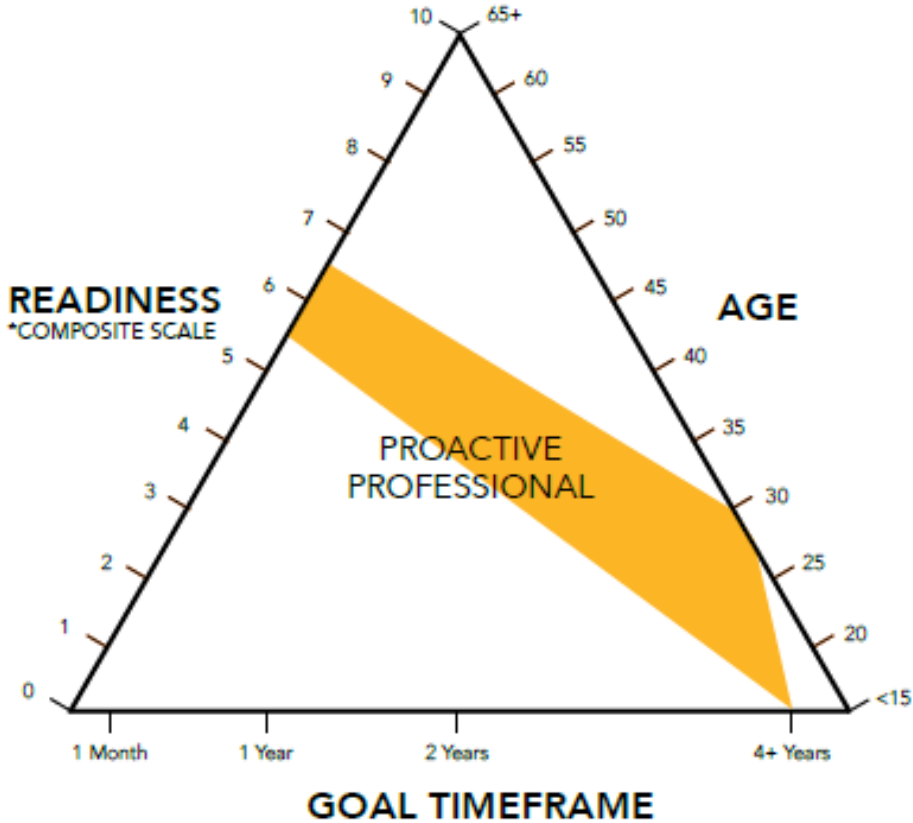
RESOURCES // Access to help to be successful on journey



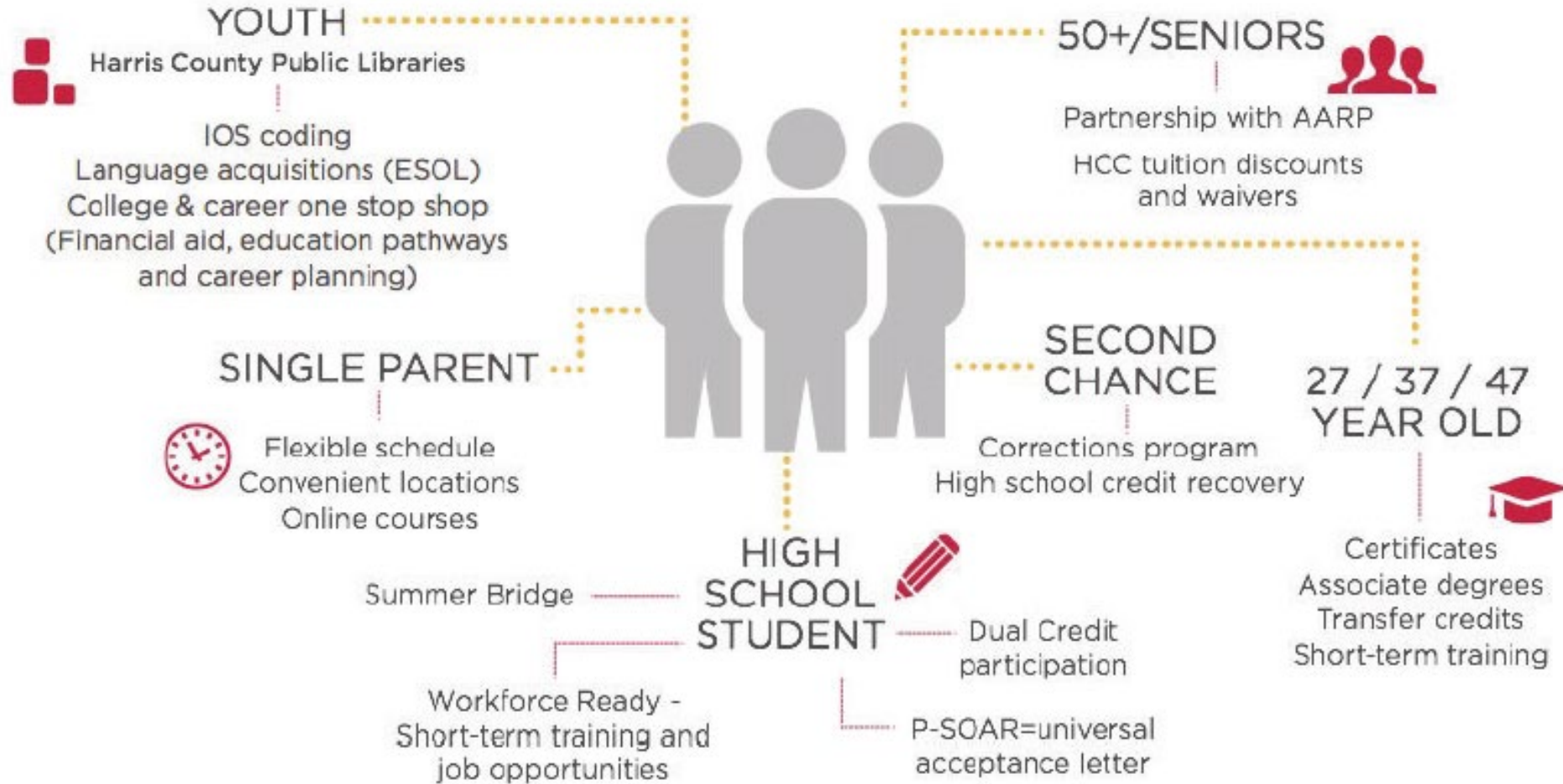
HEALTH // Basic needs are being met



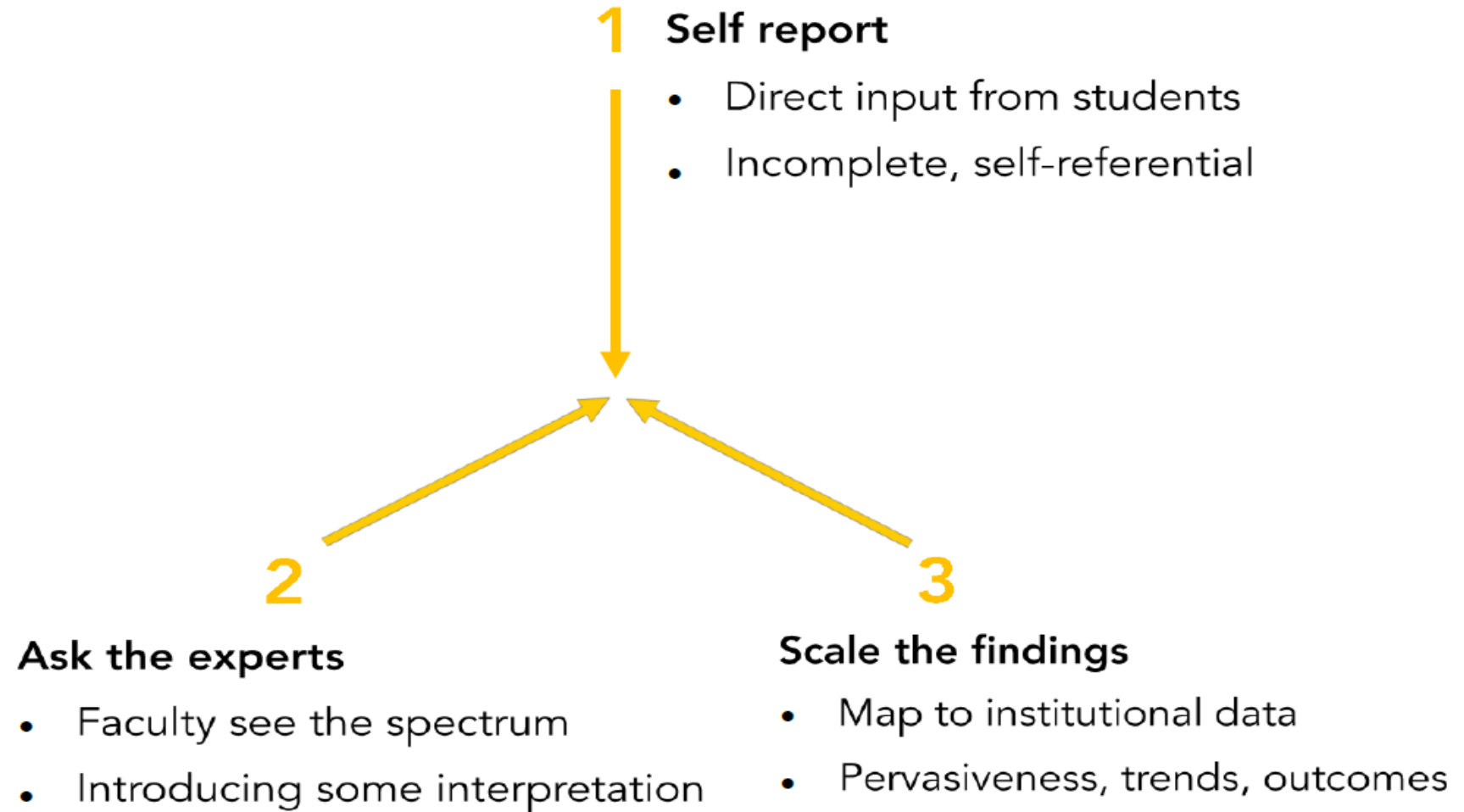
## Persona Shape



# Constructing Personas



# METHODOLOGY





# TIMELINE



"Tell us who you are."



4 initial personas

"Who are we missing?"



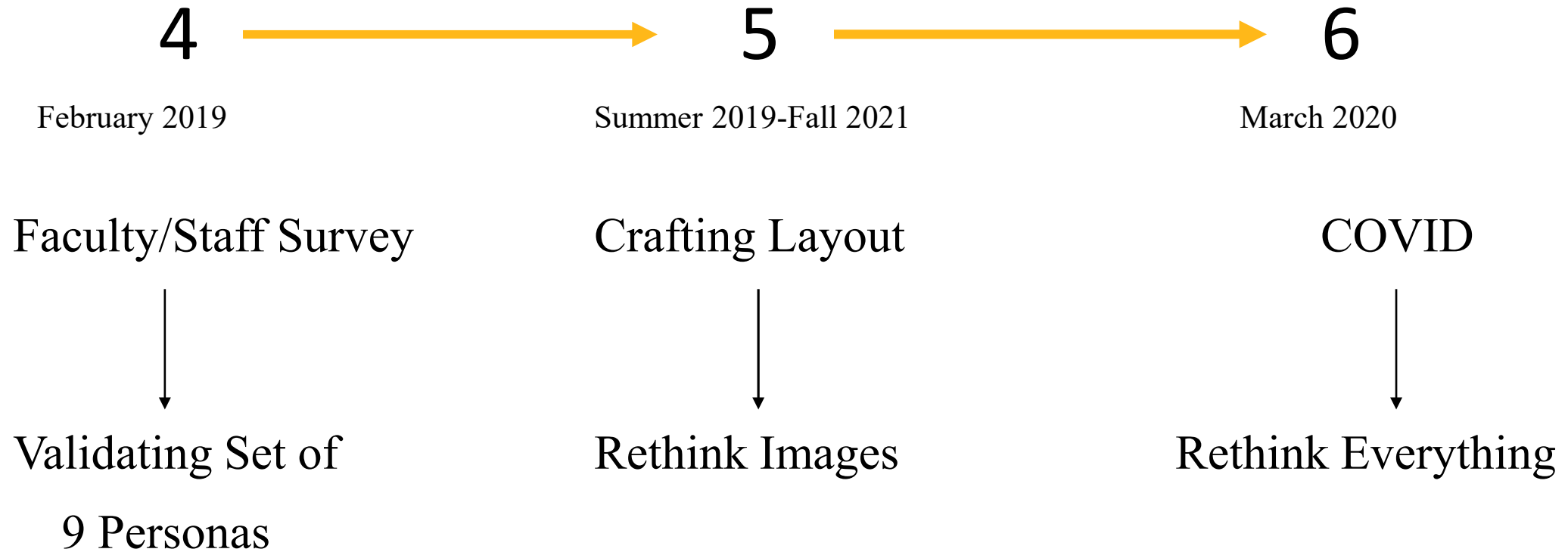
Set of comprehensive personas

"How does this map?"



Scale, frequency,  
outcomes for each

# Timeline Continued



# Hearing Student Voices: Qualitative Focus Groups

**Student  
Engagement &  
Success**

*If Nothing Changes...  
nothing changes*

**Co-Requisite  
Courses**

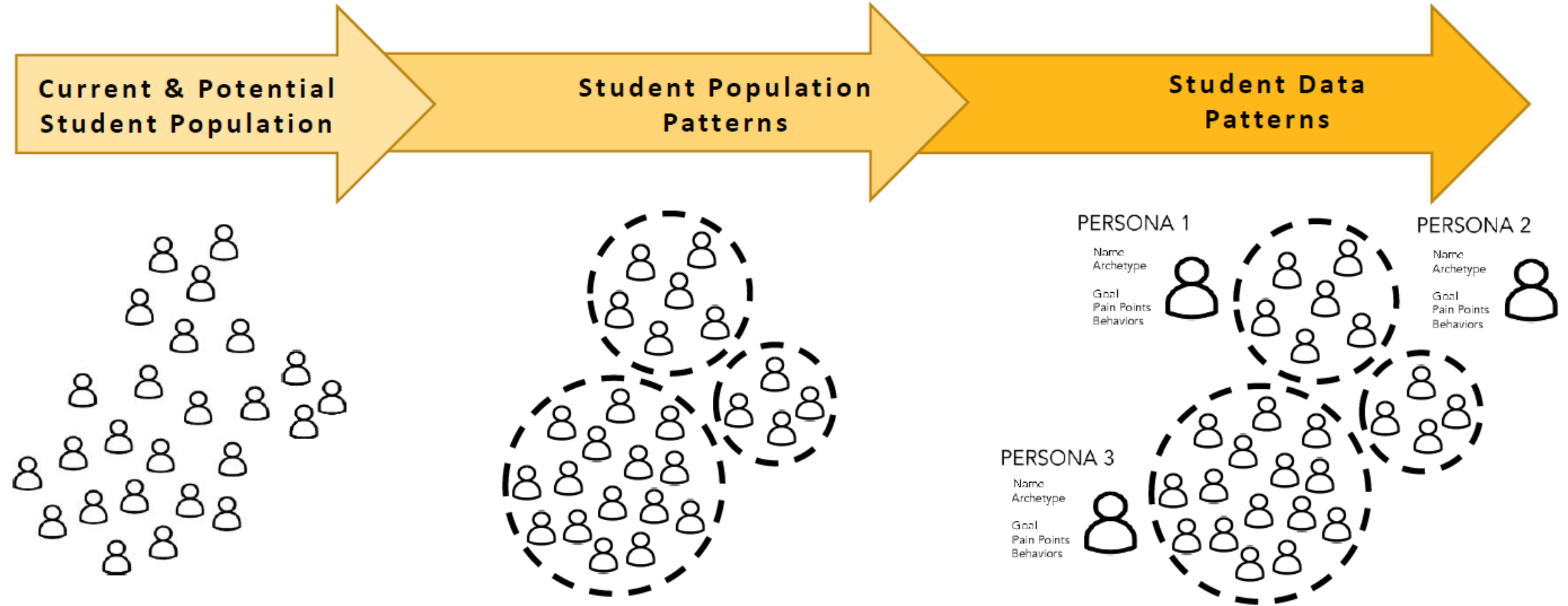


**Guided  
Pathways:  
15 to Finish**

**EDUC 1300:  
Student  
Success Course**

- *My reason for attending HCC is to graduate and move to a university to complete the BA.*
- *We need help with our financial situation – we need help trying to find money for education.*
- *Women have to choose between college and taking care of children, so there should be child care for them.*
- *I hadn't been to a college class in like, twelve years so...I ended up dropping because of work*

# PERSONA DEVELOPMENT

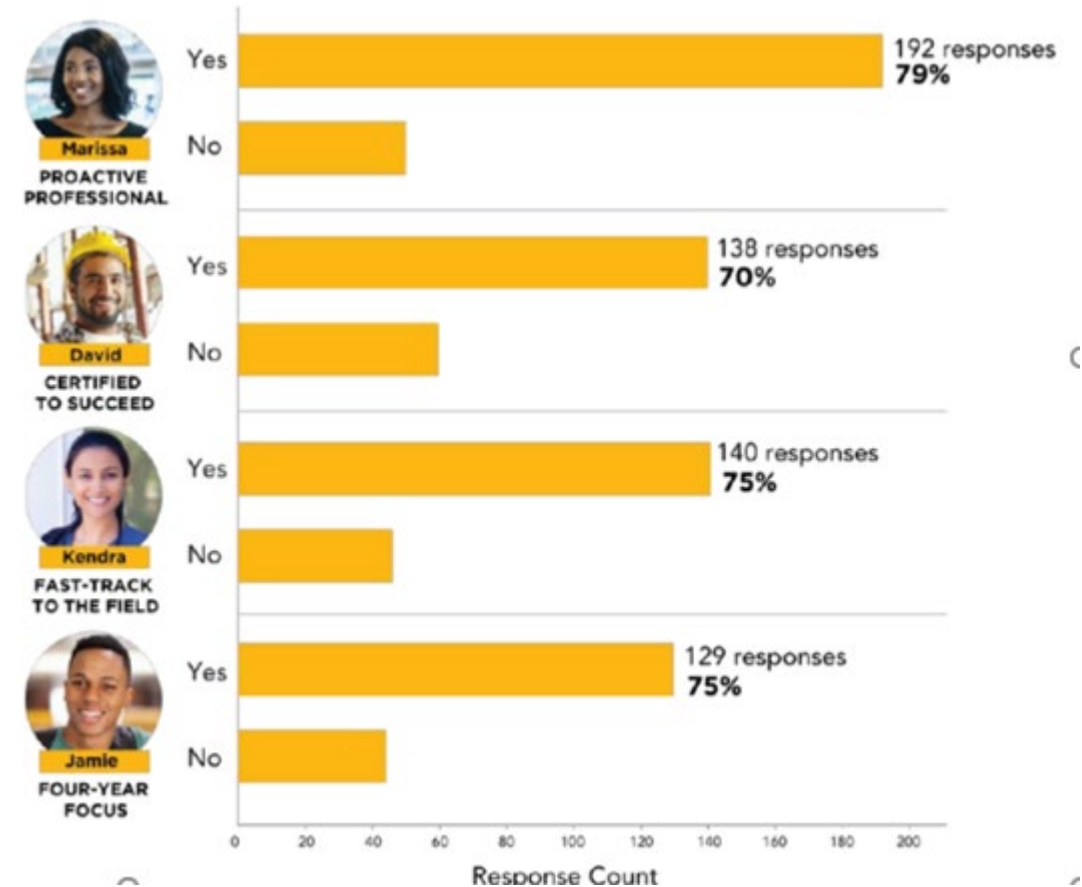


# What We Learned

Initial 4 personas  
felt right and  
relevant

Qualtrics results:

In your career, have you worked with  
students who would relate to this  
Persona as a high-level reflection of  
Themselves?



# Completing the Picture

Readiness is a complex consideration, and low readiness challenges have yet to be represented in initial four personas.

## Readiness Composite Factors

SELF EFFICACY // Personal motivation to pursue the journey



GATEWAY SKILLS // Readiness to start the journey



RESOURCES // Access to help to be successful on the journey



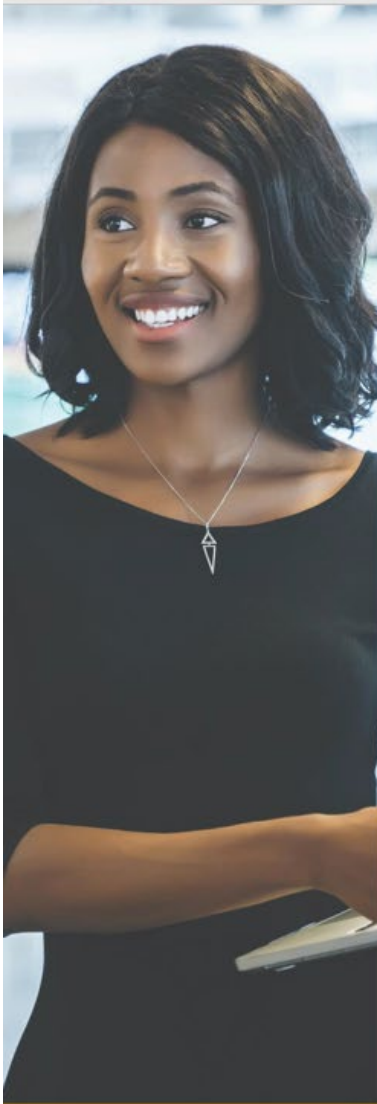
HEALTH // Basic needs are being met



# What We Learned About Faculty Perceptions of Students...

*Work-Life Balance is missing. Finding the time and money to enroll as an adult learner/working professional is only part of the challenge, particularly in his profession. Will HCC offer him the opportunity to be a parent, provide for his family, be a full-time working professional and student all at the same time? The message needs to highlight all this factors and the fact that HCC is that place where he can find balance. More importantly, key to his motivation is his family. For this reason, "Success Looks Like" section should include reference to being able to provide for his family along with achieving his educational goals and becoming more marketable. Another area of concern, which is misleading, is the idea that completion of any educational goal, whether it's a certificate, associates or higher degree automatically means one will obtain a manager/leadership role and to promote and perpetuate this message is concerning. David in this case simply wants to complete his certificate which will serve to affirm the knowledge, skills and abilities required of his profession, it will serve to add credibility to what he already does and raise his level of qualifications for his position. It is not a leadership or management certificate. This alone will require further study and training and a job/position that can provide him the opportunity to lead. To say/advertise that the completion of the Construction Management Tech Certificate will give him job placement at a leadership level is wrong, a misleading and setting up students for disappointment.*





# PROACTIVE PROFESSIONAL

## Marissa

**Age:** 28

**Program:** Associate in Arts, Business

### Background

Marissa is a sales specialist at a small IT company who enjoys her career but feels stalled. After ten years of working closely with customers, she feels like she could contribute more as a manager but is anxious about her credentials. She sees her boss promoting coworkers with 4-year college degrees, and decides to get proactive. She sees the first step as enrolling at HCC to test a full-time course load given her busy schedule, with the intention of getting her AA and continuing on to University of Houston.



### Goal

**Break a career ceiling with stronger credentials**



### Success Looks Like

- Building a strong transcript
- Getting accepted at UH
- Collecting credits she can carry



### Pain points

- Keeping up her work schedule and responsibilities
- Tracking 2-year and 4-year

### Readiness Composite Factors

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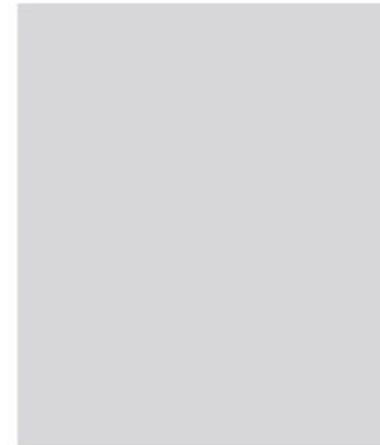
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### Persona Shape



### Institutional Data





# Draft of Personas Based on Feedback After Faculty/Staff Survey in Spring 2019

## Marissa: Proactive Professional

Marissa is a sales specialist at a small IT company who enjoys her career but feels stalled. After ten years of working closely with customers, she feels like she could contribute more as a manager but is anxious about her credentials. She sees her boss promoting coworkers with 4-year college degrees and decides to get proactive. She sees the first step as enrolling at HCC to test a full-time course load given her busy schedule, with the intention of getting her AA and continuing on to University of Houston.



Age: 28 Program: Associate in Arts, Business



### Goal

Break a career ceiling with stronger credentials



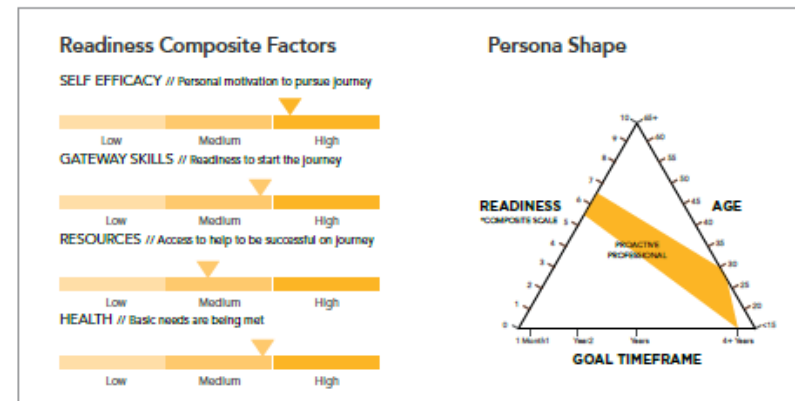
### Success Looks Like

- Building a strong transcript
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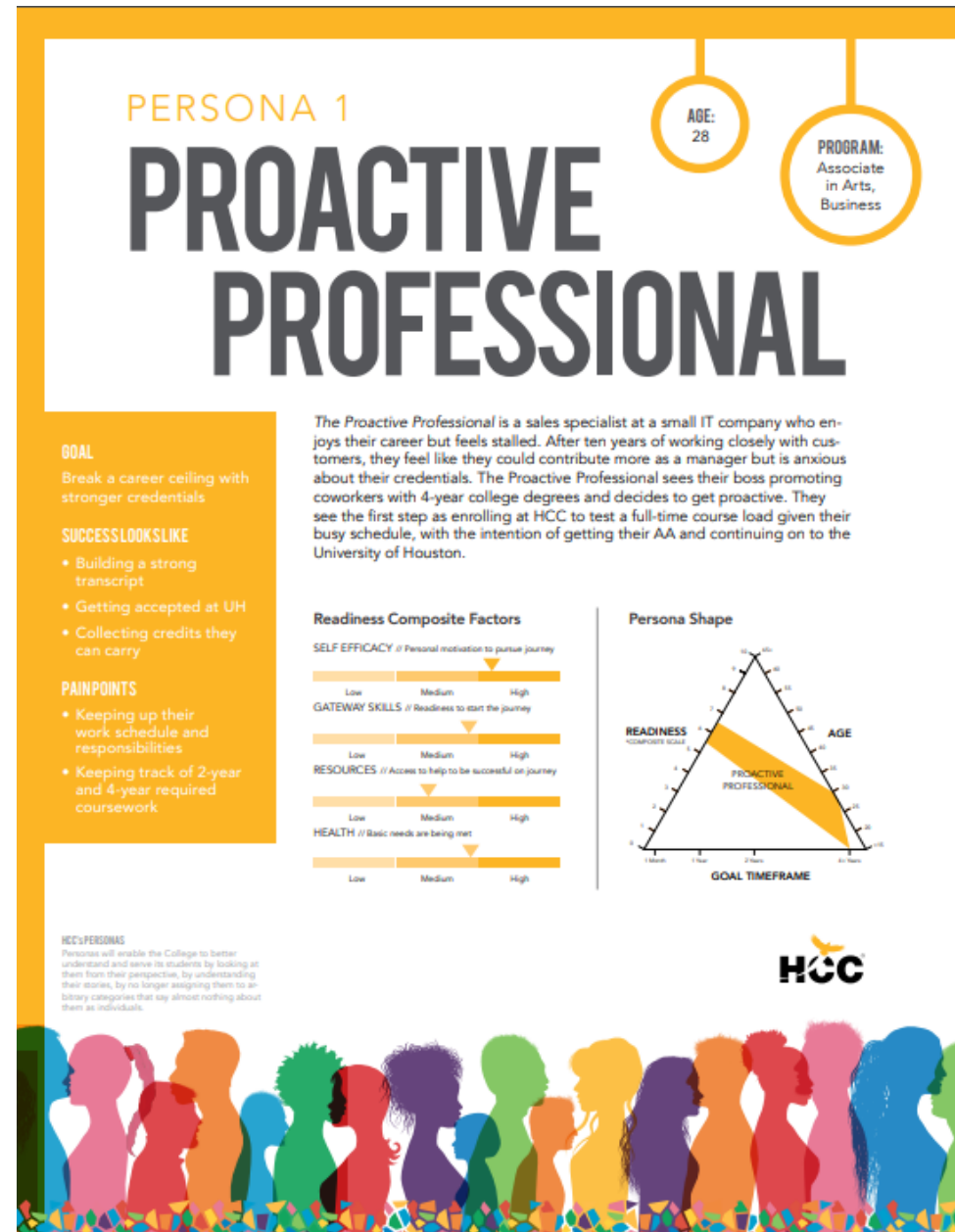


### Pain points

- Keeping up her work schedule and responsibilities
- Keeping track of 2-year and 4-year required coursework

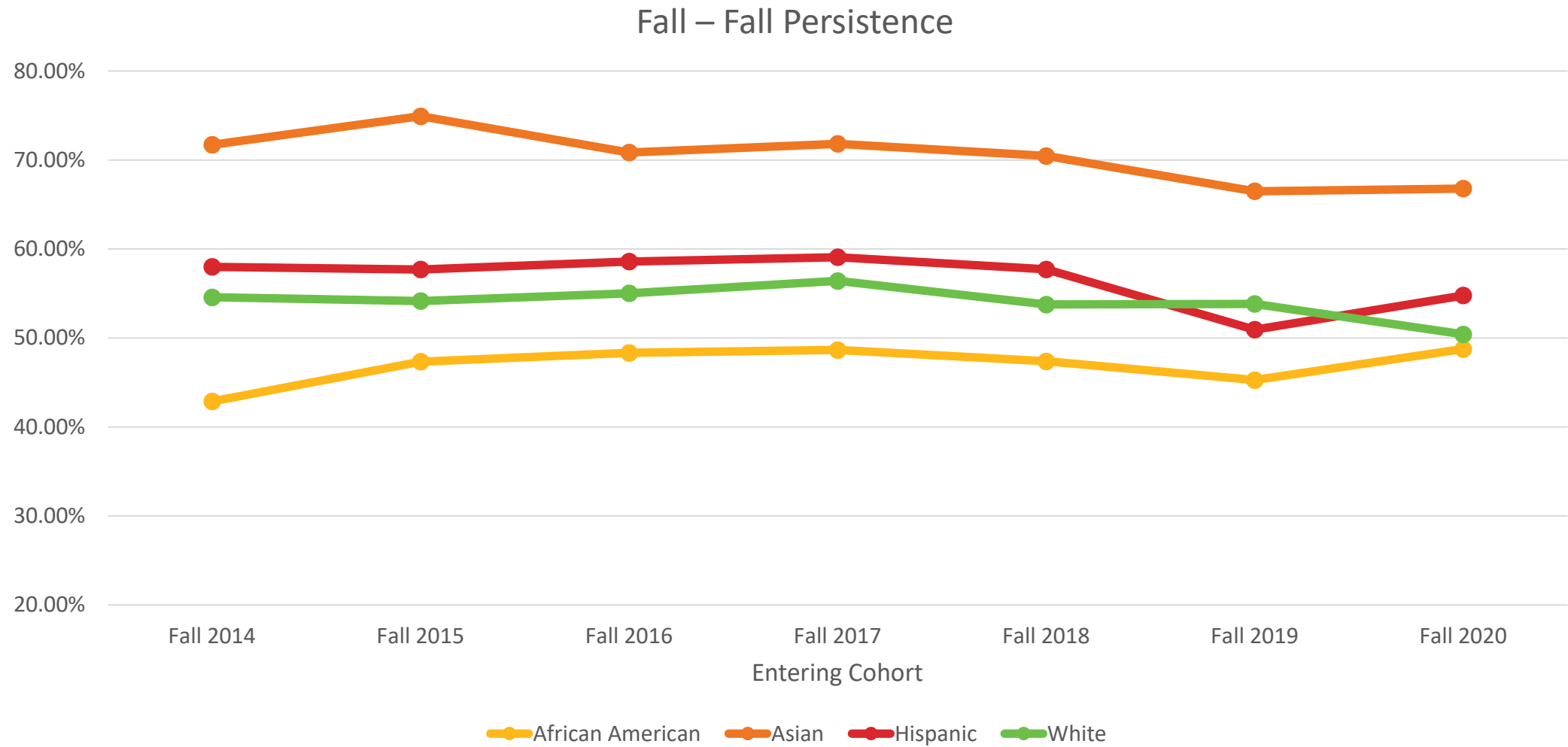


# Current Version

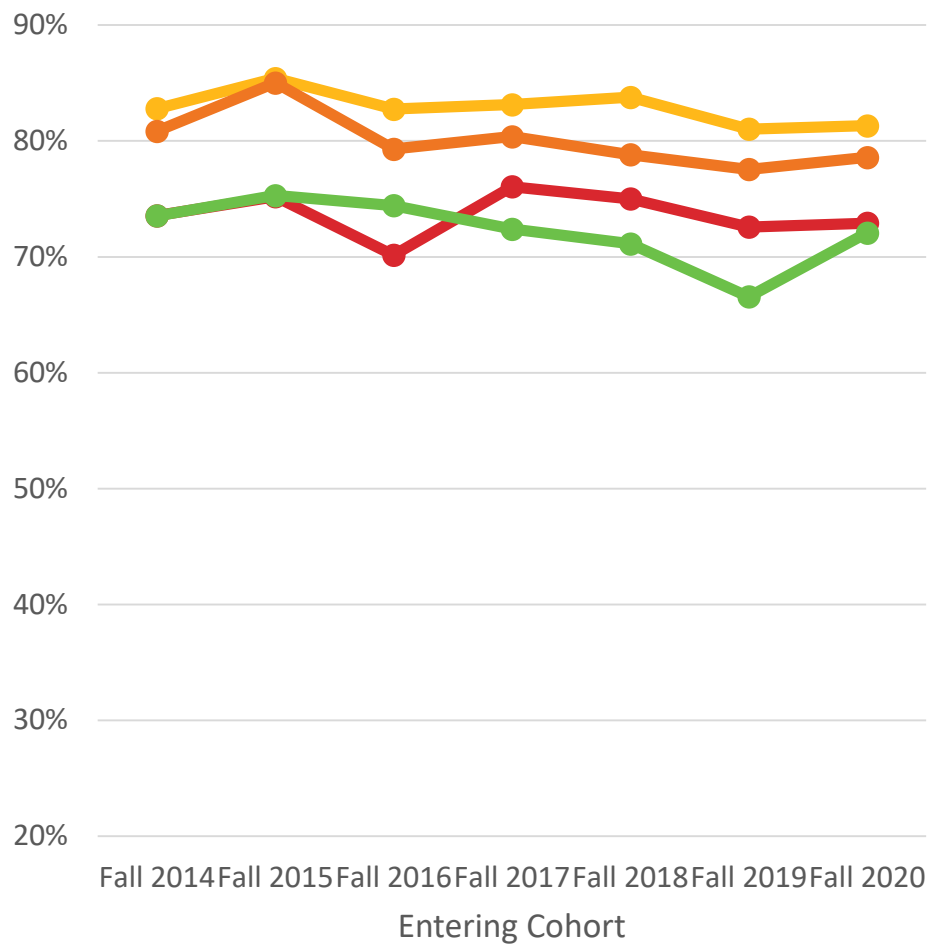


# Quantitative Data

# Fall to Fall Persistence by Entering Cohort

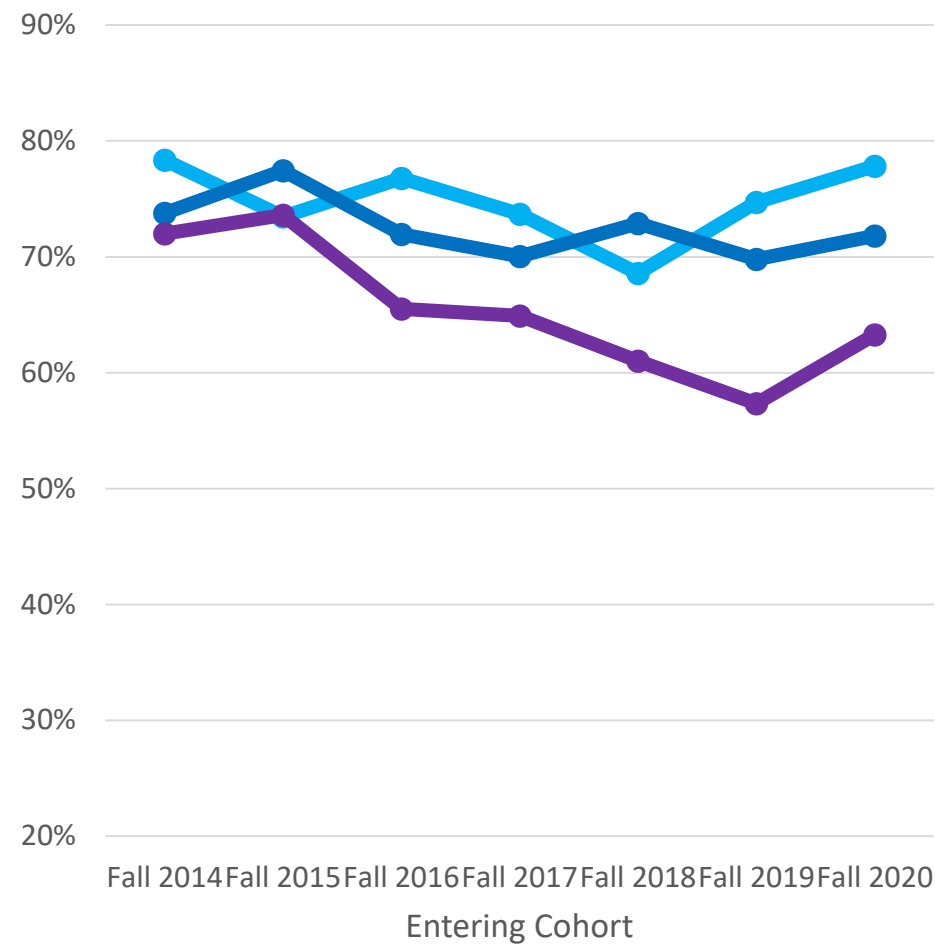


### Fall-Spring Retention



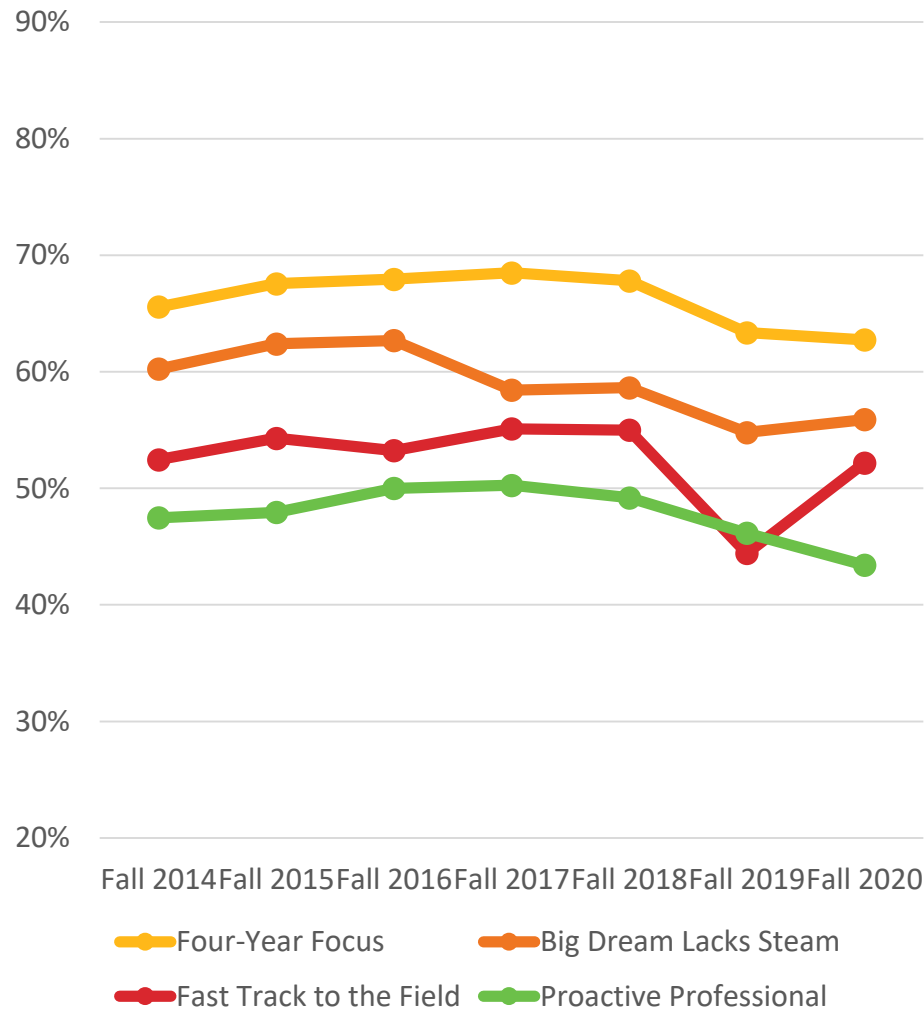
—●— Four-Year Focus      —●— Big Dream Lacks Steam  
—●— Fast Track to the Field      —●— Proactive Professional

### Fall-Spring Retention

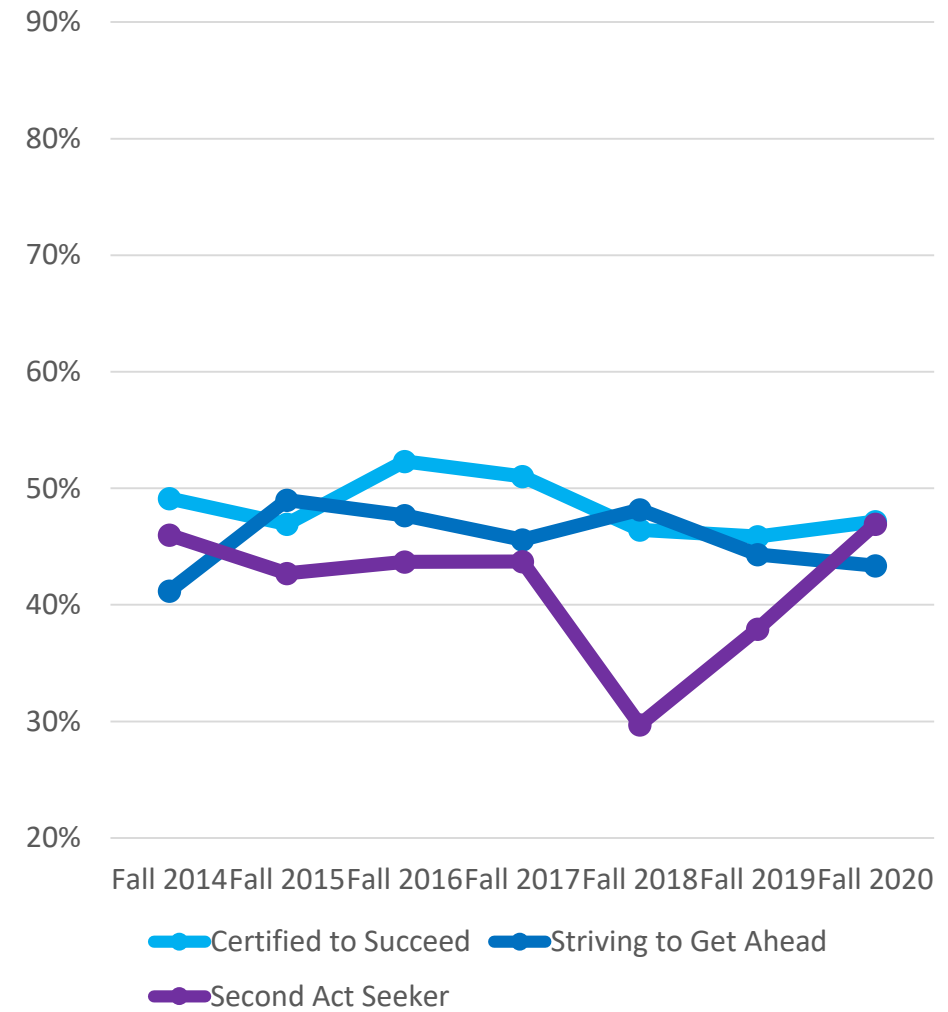


—●— Certified to Succeed      —●— Striving to Get Ahead  
—●— Second Act Seeker

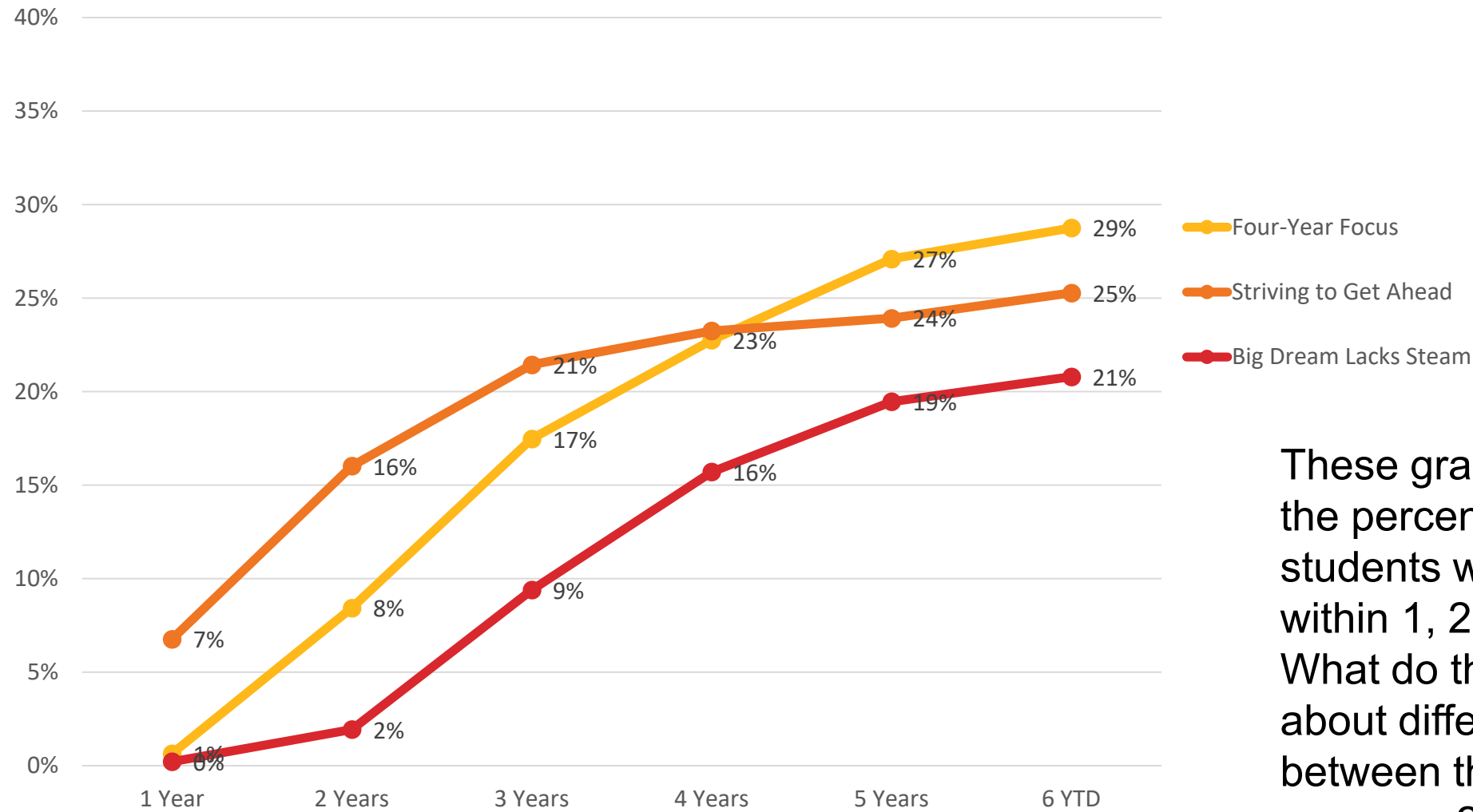
### Fall-Fall Persistence



### Fall-Fall Persistence



Discussion: Time to Completion



These graphs show the percentage of students who complete within 1, 2, ... 6 years. What do they tell you about differences between these personas?

# How We Are Applying What We Know...

## The Ultimate Student Experience



**Student  
Success**

*Equitable Student Outcomes*



# Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

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## **Personalized Learning Pathways:**

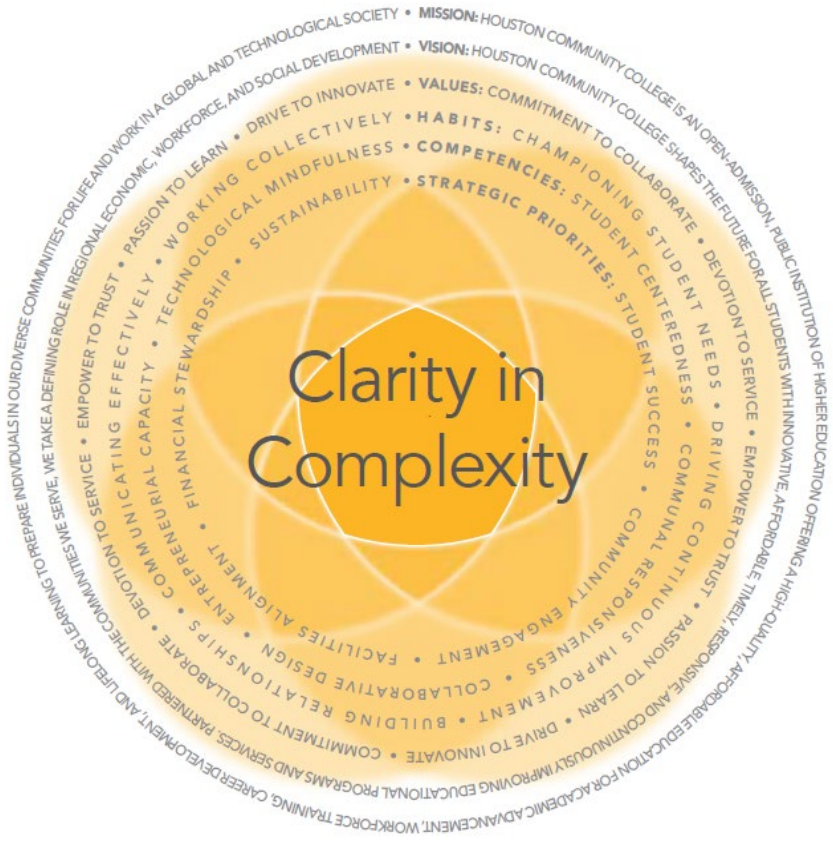
Improve student success through a Personalized Learning Pathways approach which provides holistic, individualized support for students throughout their journey



# Central Goals

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- ➔ HCC will proactively identify student needs and challenges and provide corresponding support to meet students where they are
- ➔ HCC students will be provided with consistent and accurate information to help them make effective decisions about their education and career pathways



# Strategic Focus Areas & Current Activities

- Student advising and engagement strategies
- A comprehensive professional development plan for faculty and staff
- Alignment and integration of data and information systems
- Implementation of coordinated interventions – that are designed to leverage the College’s student persona matrix more effectively



# HCC Student Success Framework

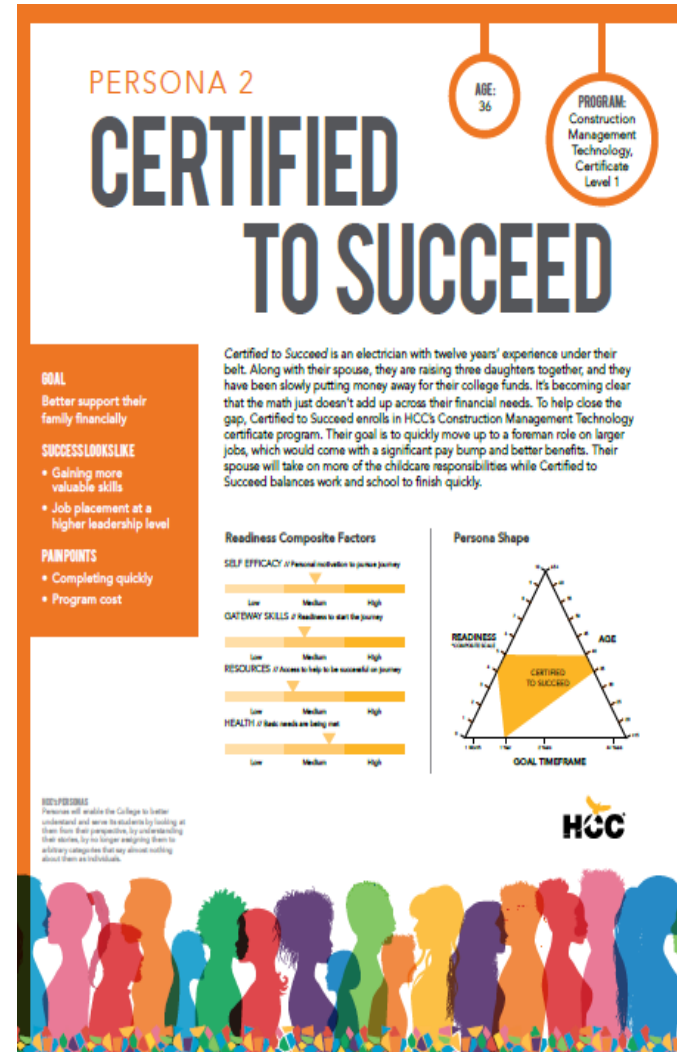
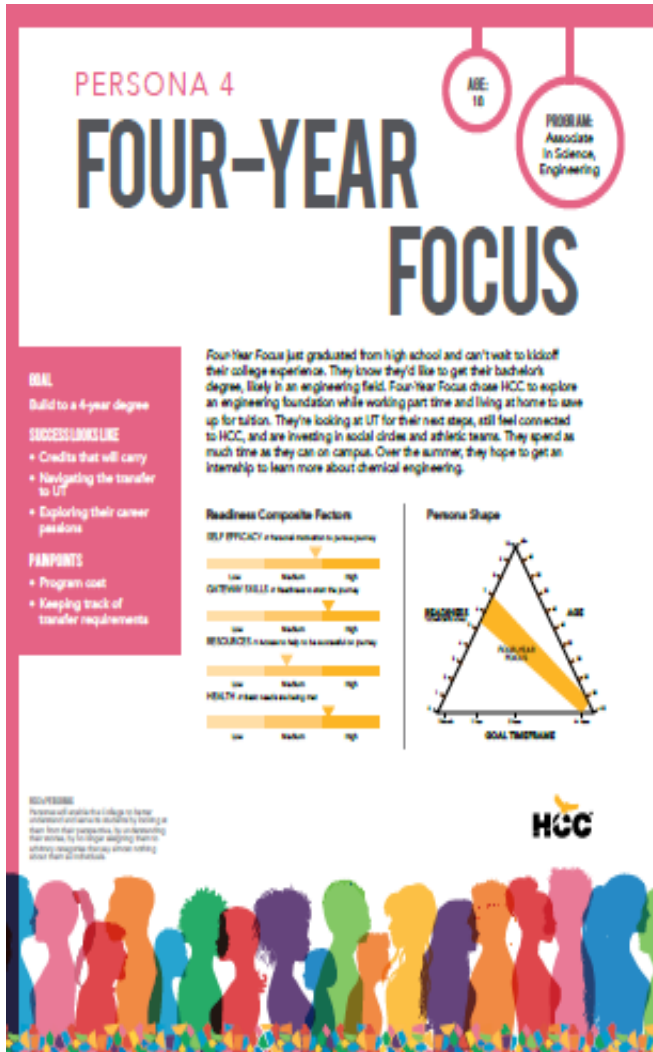
HOUSTON  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



How can Personalized Learning Pathways support students along their pathway across the identified student experience stages to make the student experience more cohesive?

What insights can we glean from our Student Personas about the student journey?

# Gaining Insight from Student Personas



Think about how you would use the Personas in your professional development with admissions, advising, and enrollment staff?

- What is important to consider?
- What would you change?
- How are the student journeys different?





# Questions?