

PURPOSE FIRST

Too often, college-bound students are either presented with an overwhelming number of major options or decide on a major without really understanding the career implications or whether it aligns with their interests and values.

These uninformed decisions often lead students to drop out, yielding some college credit but no degree or other credential of value. But even for those who do complete, many extend their time to degree, tack on additional costs and struggle to transition into a well-paying, rewarding career. Underrepresented and less advantaged students are disproportionately affected by these challenges, diminishing critical efforts to close achievement gaps.



31 Million +

Americans have enrolled in college and left without receiving a degree or other credential over the last 20 years.

(NSC Research Center, 2014)

36%

of graduates would choose a different major.

(Gallup-Strada, 2017)

43%

of college grads are underemployed in their first job.

(Korn, Wall Street Journal, 2018)

African Americans & Hispanics are underrepresented

in the fastest-growing, highest-paying occupations: STEM, health, and business.

(Carnevale, Fasules, Porter, Landis-Santos, 2016 & Carnevale, Porter, Landis-Santos, 2015)

OUR PARTNERS



SHARED BELIEFS

- **Higher education should be a launching pad** toward a meaningful career, empowering students with the knowledge to make informed choices, the structures to explore available opportunities, and the tools needed for success.
- **Career exploration and planning** must be intentional and start early in the educational experience.
- States, systems and institutions must **build a culture of purpose** across all tiers in higher education.



BEST PRACTICES

STUDENT OWNERSHIP

- Help students become self-advocates
- Show students that higher education is not simply a box to be checked

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

- Create a shared vision for success
- Customize plans by institution

INFORMED CHOICE

- Administer early interest assessments
- Provide labor-market data and in-depth career information

ACADEMIC STRUCTURES

- Offer meta-majors
- Offer a First-Year experience

CAREER EXPLORATION

- Utilize technology that empowers the process
- Integrate career exploration with orientation

ADVISING & NETWORKING

- Require students to connect with academic and career advisors
- Create and activate social capital

OUTCOMES

- **Better understanding** of career connection to major
- **Earlier enrollment** in program of study
- **Greater credit completion** in program of study
- **Increased major stability**



THE PURPOSE FIRST EXPERIENCE

