Creating and Assessing Inclusive Learning Environments Through Data-Informed Liberatory Design

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Resources

bit.ly/Liberatory_DesignAI24

Land, Labor, and Knowledge Acknowledgement

- Colleges and universities were built on the stolen lands of many Indigenous peoples.

- Colleges and universities are built and maintained on the labor of others, including those enslaved and oppressed.

- The information presented in this session is built on the knowledge created by many others. No one person holds knowledge—a community holds knowledge.
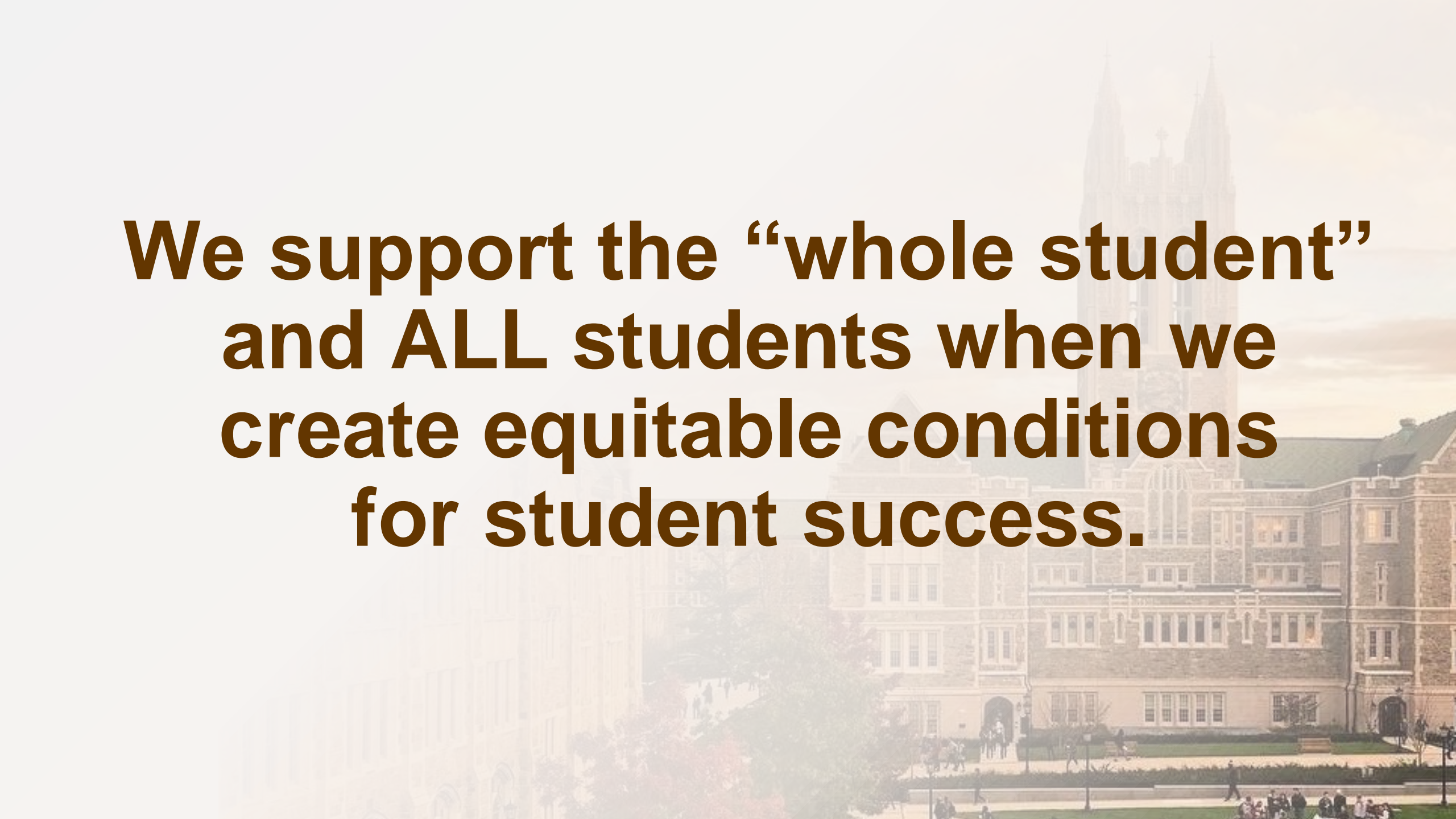
Introductions

Positionality Pause

Creating the conditions that foster student success has never been more important in higher education.

We support the "whole student" and ALL students when we create equitable conditions for student success.

What do we mean when we say student success?

Student Success

GPA

Persistence

Completion

Knowledge/Skills

Career

Wealth

Basic Needs

- Regular and nutritious food and safe drinking water
- Secure housing
- Dependable transportation
- Convenient and safe child and elder care
- Sufficient physical and mental health care
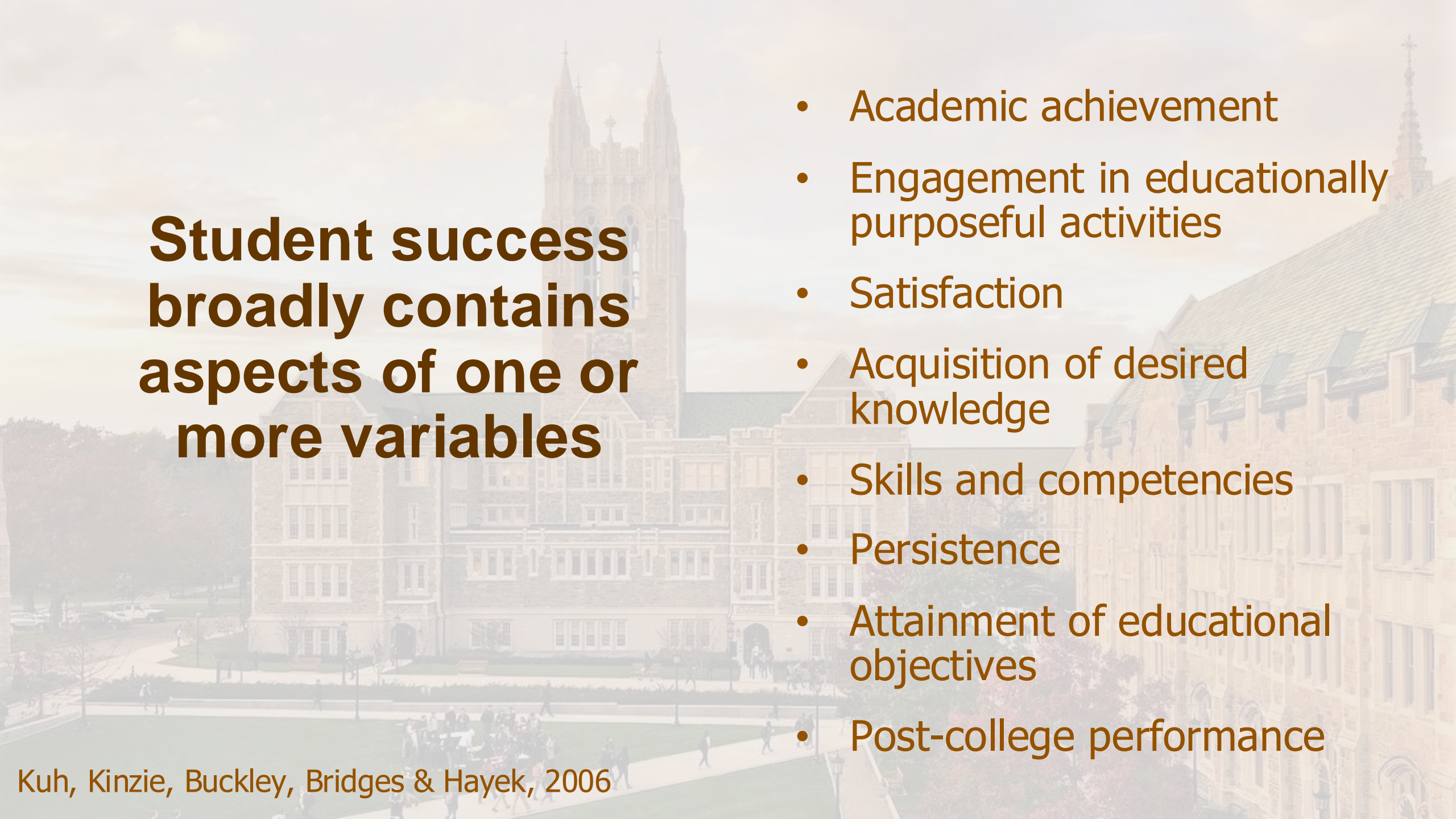- Emergency aid
- Textbooks
- Digital access
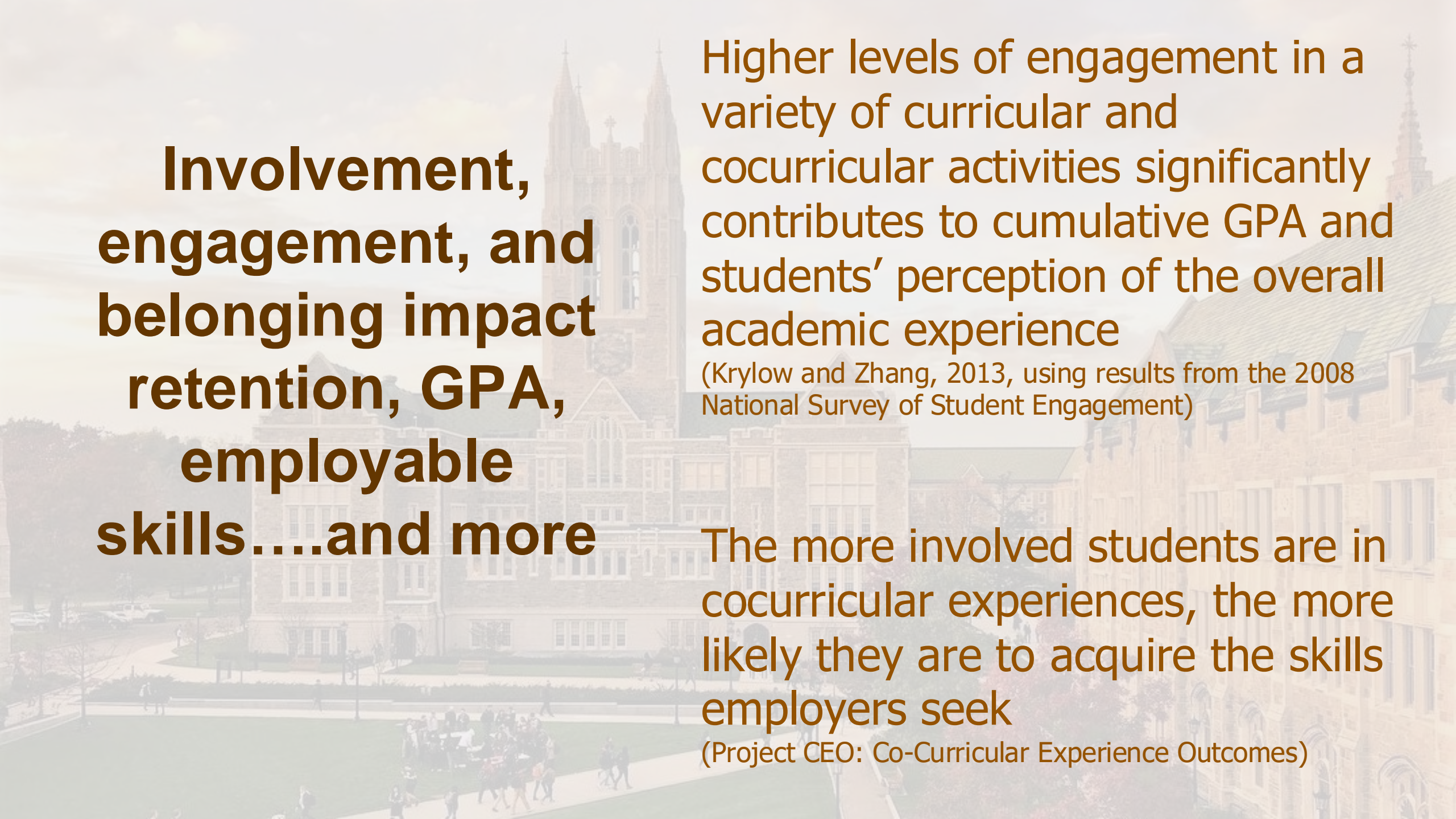
Student success broadly contains aspects of one or more variables

- Academic achievement

- Engagement in educationally purposeful activities

- Satisfaction

- Acquisition of desired knowledge

- Skills and competencies

- Persistence

- Attainment of educational objectives

- Post-college performance

Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges & Hayek, 2006

Involvement, engagement, and belonging impact retention, GPA, employable skills….and more

Higher levels of engagement in a variety of curricular and cocurricular activities significantly contributes to cumulative GPA and students' perception of the overall academic experience

(Krylow and Zhang, 2013, using results from the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement)

The more involved students are in cocurricular experiences, the more likely they are to acquire the skills employers seek

(Project CEO: Co-Curricular Experience Outcomes)

Student involvement, engagement, and belonging are statistically significant contributors to positive outcomes of the college experience.

THE IMPACT
of a SENSE of
BELONGING
in COLLEGE

Implications for Student Persistence,
Retention, and Success

Edited by ERIN M. BENTRIM
and GAVIN W. HENNING
Foreword by KRISTEN A. RENN

(Astin, 1977, 1984, 1993, 1996; Moore, Lovell, McGann, & Wyrick, 1998; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996).
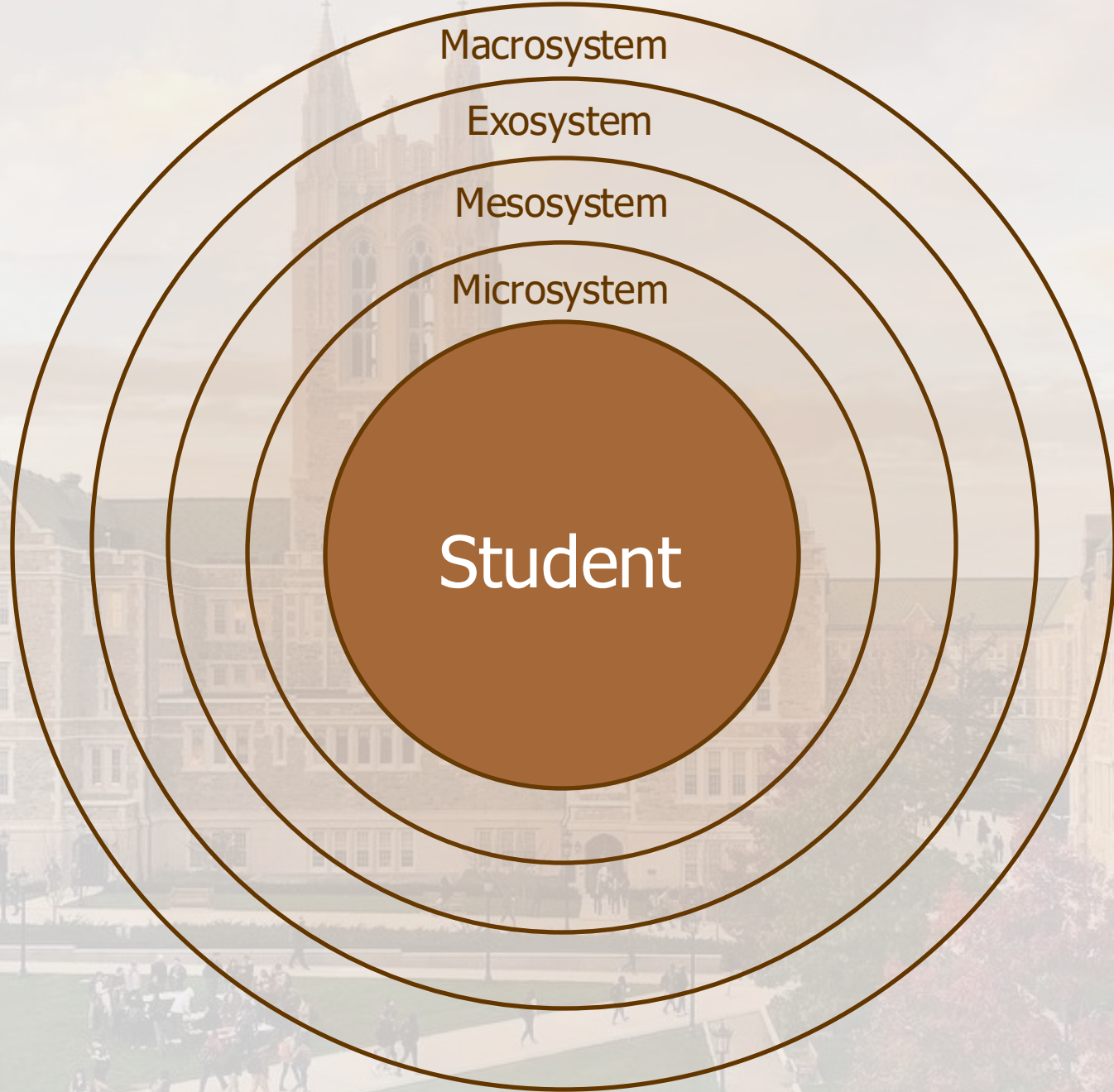
Social, Skills + Competencies, Academic, Financial, Environmental, Demographics

Cultural + Institutional Context
Identity + Intersectionality
Wellness + Well-being
Belonging
Student Basic/Essential Needs

Why

Why are Inclusive Environments Important?

**Astin's
I-E-O
Model**

Environment:
e.g., campus climate, institutional/programmatic characteristics, academic/social interactions, curricular measures, classroom experience

Inputs:
e.g., student demographics/background, motivation, pre-college experiences

Outcomes:
e.g., student learning outcomes, feelings toward faculty and peers, self-efficacy, changes in values/beliefs

Why are Inclusive Environments Important?

Tinto's model of student departure

Why are Inclusive Environments Important?
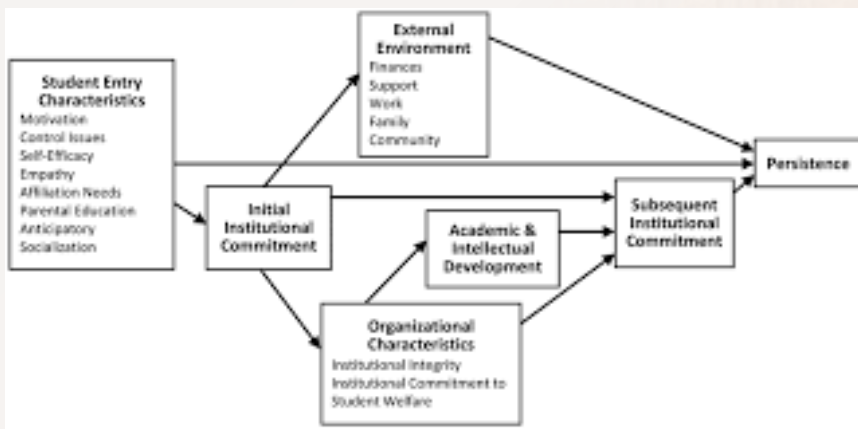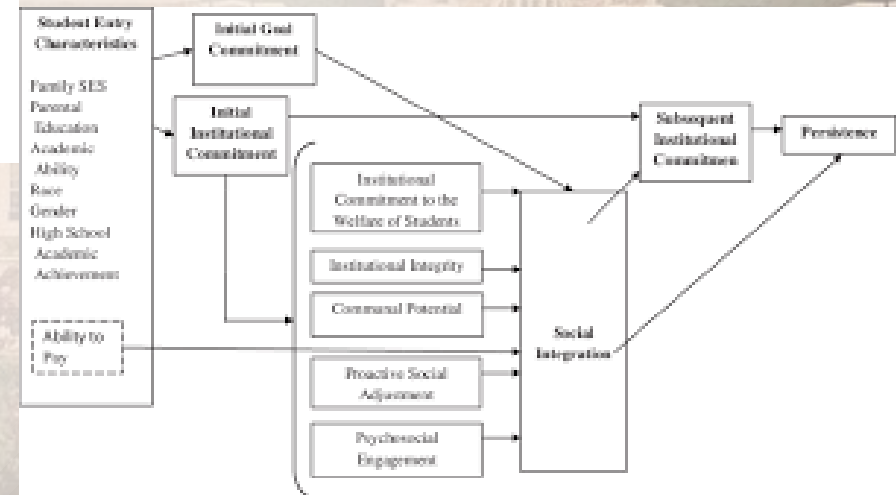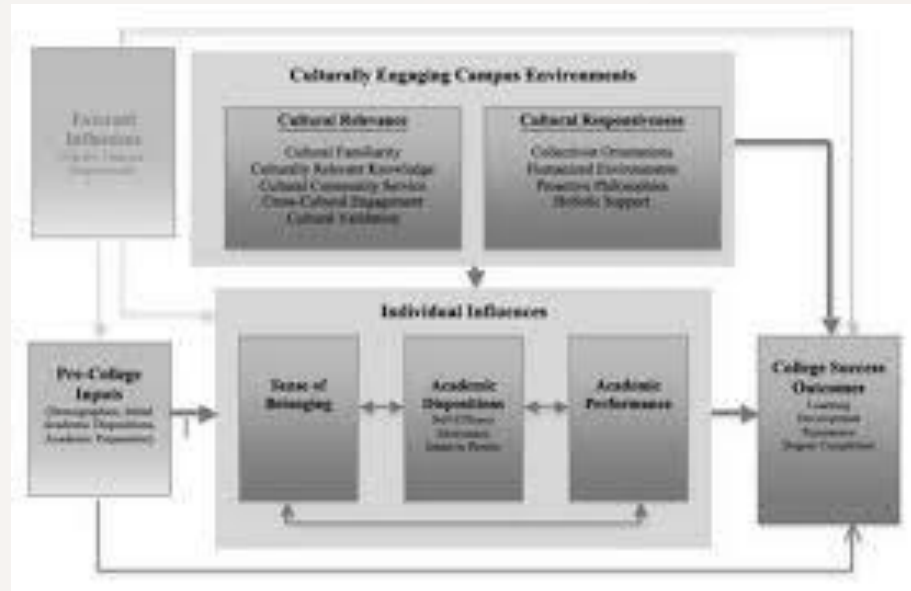
Source: Reason, R. D., & Braxton, J. M. (2023). Improving College Student Persistence: New Developments in Theory,

Institutional Impact of Centering Student Success

Boost academic performance	Promote retention and degree completion	Discover systemic barriers to learning and engagement	Collaboration across institution
Address historic systemic inequities	Address accreditation and compliance expectations	Equip institution with data to make transformational change	Contribute to the structural transformation of HE and society

Systematically addressing student success <u>on the front-end</u> impacts communities and society in the long run

- Reduces debt and helps build a more resilient middle-class
- Helps drive economic and workforce goals in states or cities or communities
- Increases the ability of communities to have a robust, well-educated workforce
- Decreases the need for additional spending *later*
- Positively impacts civic engagement.

Disparate Outcomes: Income

Equity Indicator 5a(i): Estimated bachelor's degree attainment by age 24 for dependent family members by family income quartile: 1970 to 2022
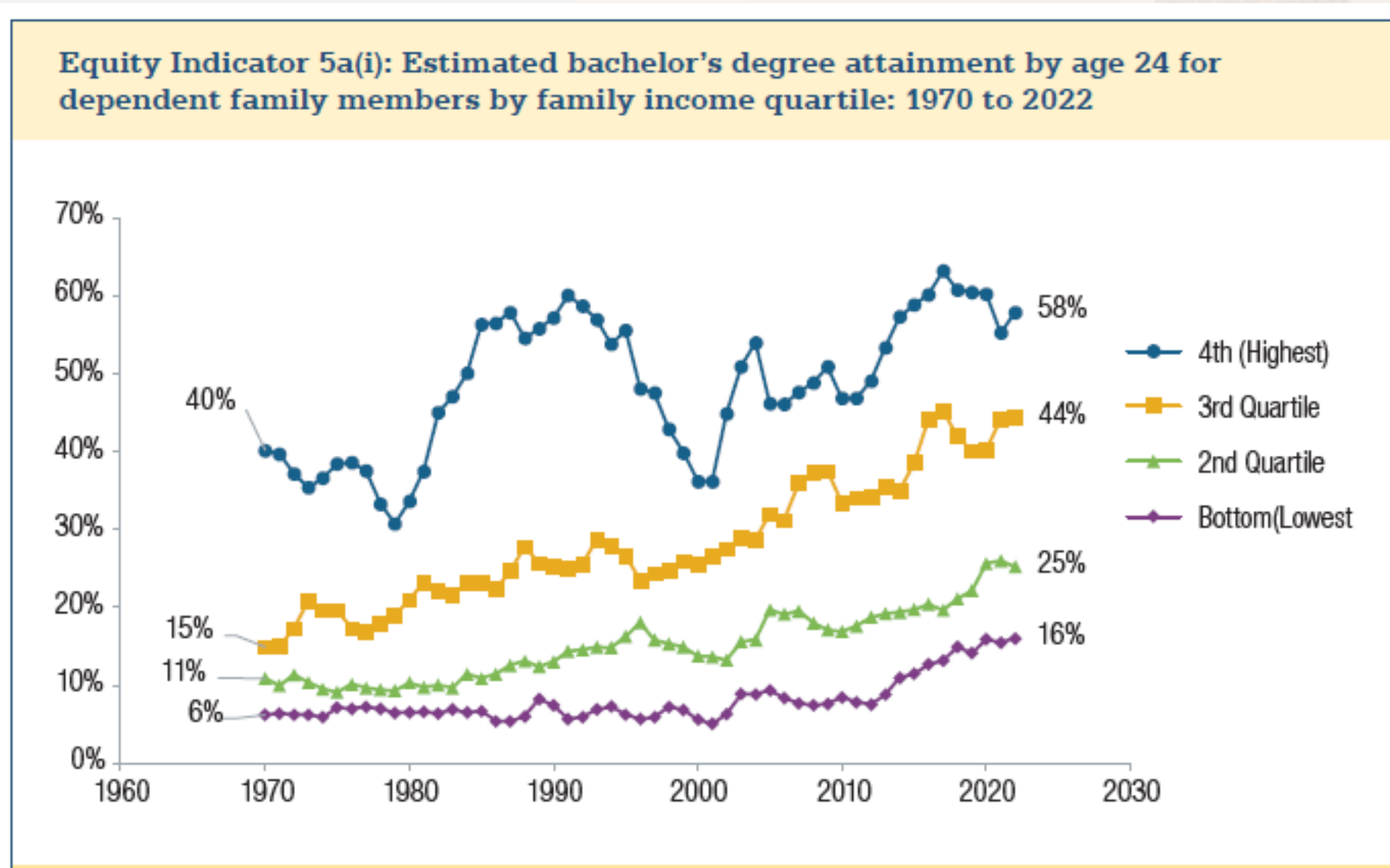
Disparate Outcomes: Income

Equity Indicator 5c(iii): Percentage of dependent students who first enrolled in a postsecondary education institution in academic year 2011-12 who completed a bachelor's degree or higher within 6 years, by low-income and first-generation status and institutional level of initial enrollment: 2012/17

Legend:
- Low-income and First-Generation
- First-Generation and Not Low-Income
- Low-income and Not First-Generation
- Neither Low-Income Nor First-Generation

All
- Low-income and First-Generation: 21%
- First-Generation and Not Low-Income: 34%
- Low-income and Not First-Generation: 37%
- Neither Low-Income Nor First-Generation: 66%

4-Year Institution
- Low-income and First-Generation: 40%
- First-Generation and Not Low-Income: 55%
- Low-income and Not First-Generation: 54%
- Neither Low-Income Nor First-Generation: 78%

2-Year Institution
- Low-income and First-Generation: 6%
- First-Generation and Not Low-Income: 12%
- Low-income and Not First-Generation: 7%
- Neither Low-Income Nor First-Generation: 26%

Source: Cahalan et al. (2024)

Disparate Outcomes: Gender

Equity Indicator 1j(ia): Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions by sex: 1970-2022

Legend:
- Female — 44%
- Total — 39%
- Male — 34%

Starting values: 32%, 26%, 20%
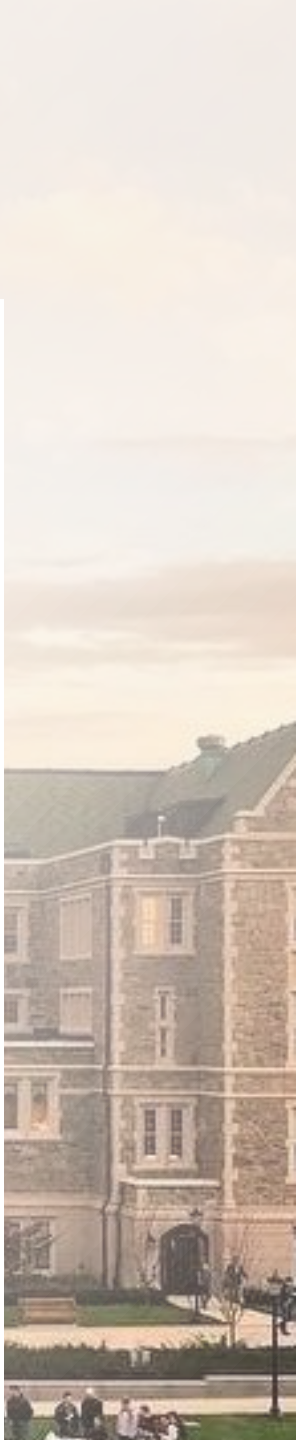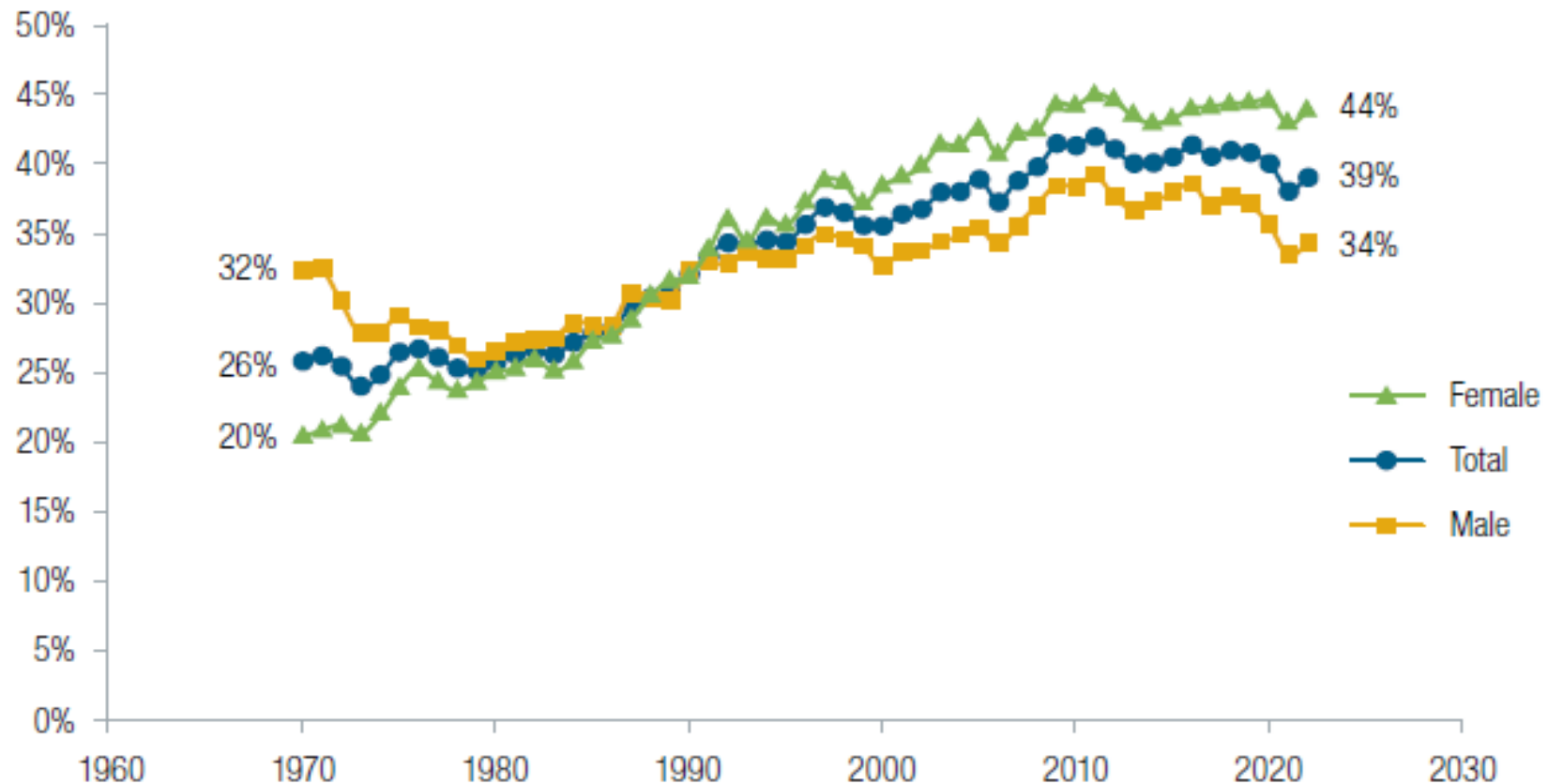
Disparate Outcomes: Gender

Equity Indicator 5a(iiia&b): Number and percent of bachelor's degrees conferred by sex: 1869 to 2021

a. Number of Bachelor's Degrees Conferred
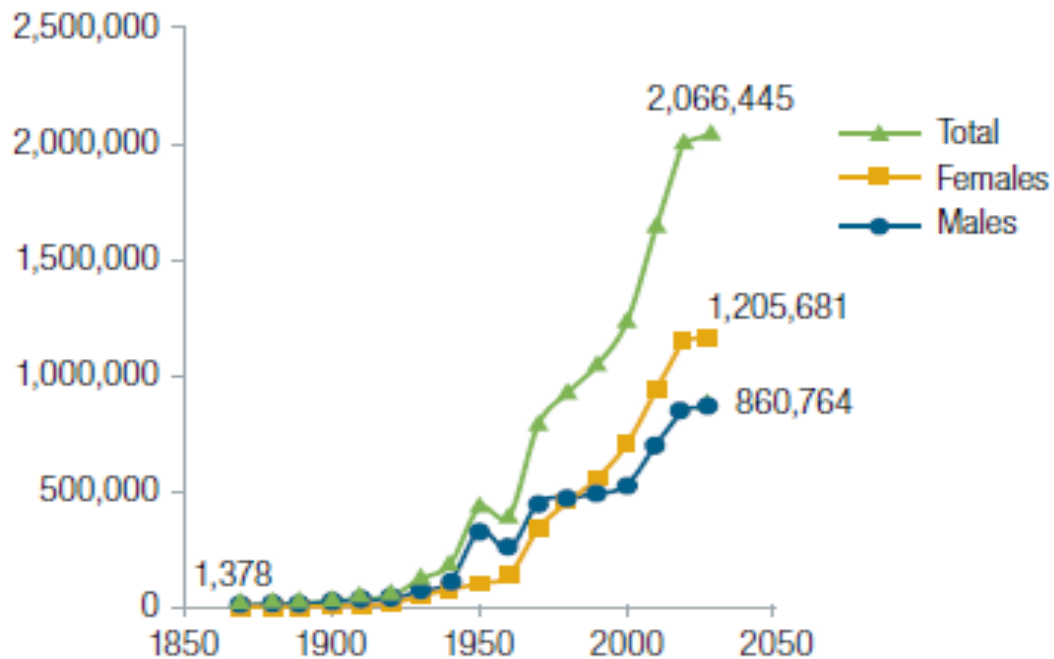
b. Percentage Distribution by Sex
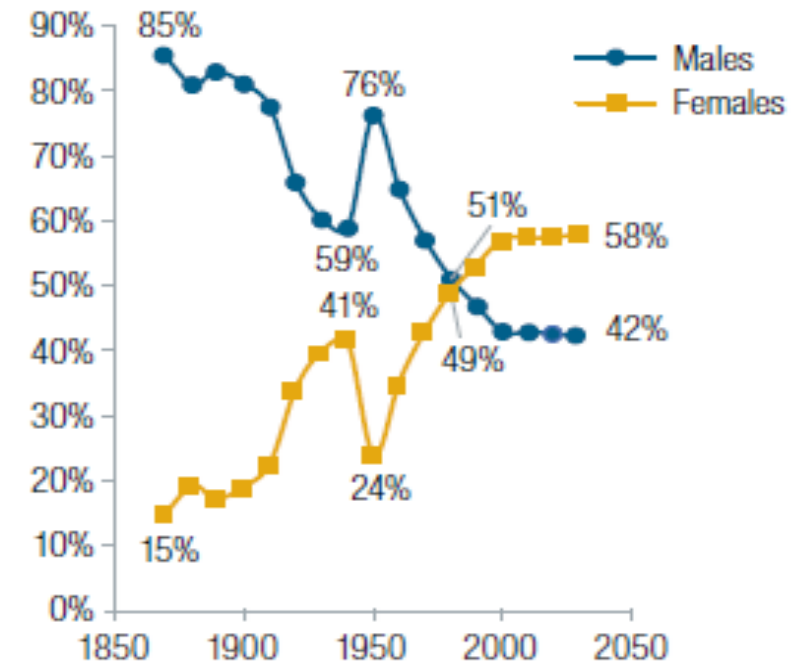
Disparate Enrollment: Race/Ethnicity

2022 Overall College Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
White	52%
Hispanic	22%
Black	13%
Asian	7%
Two or More	4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1%
Pacific Islander	1%
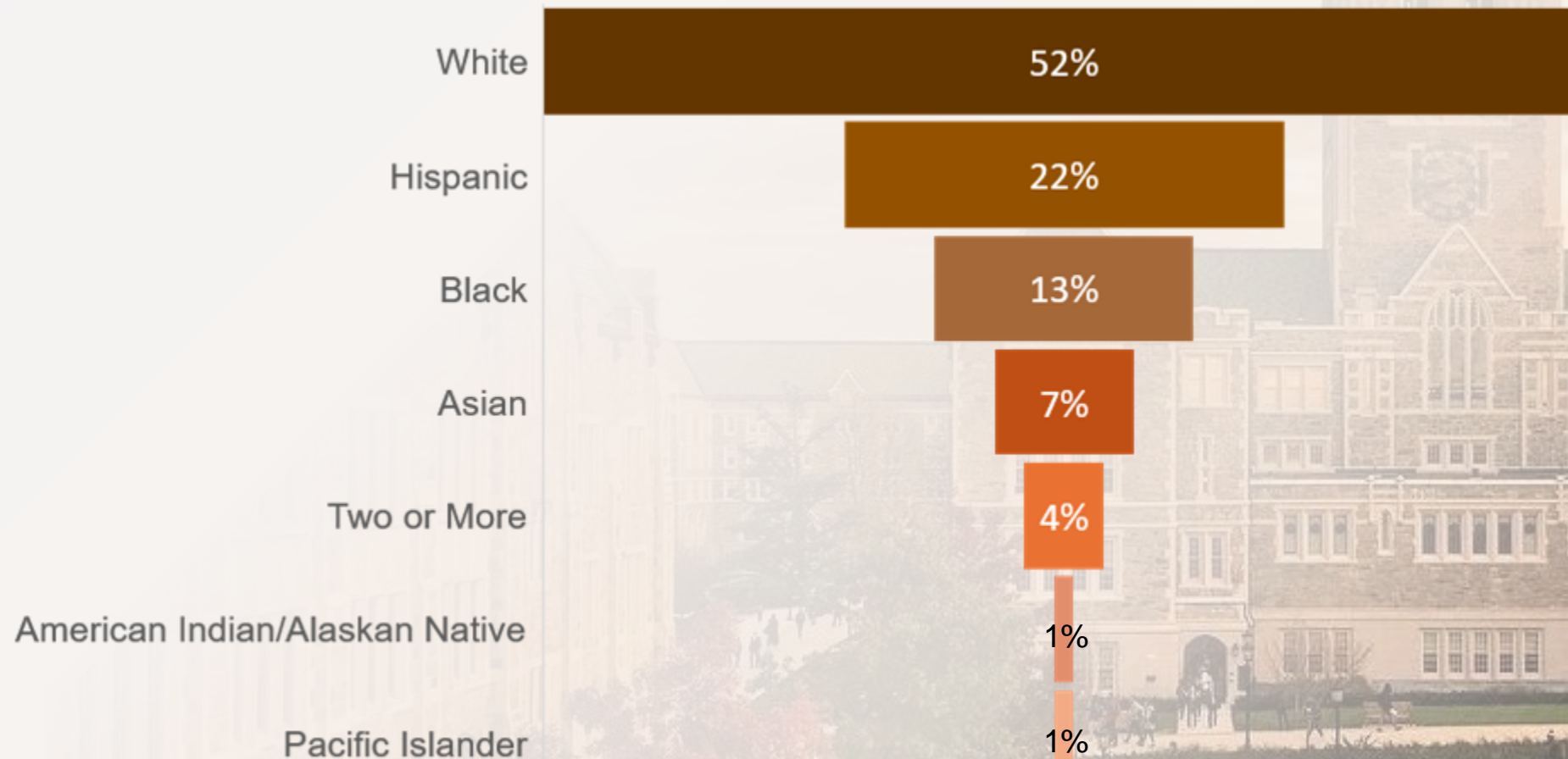
Disparate Enrollment: Race/Ethnicity

Equity Indicator 1l(iia&b): Changes in enrollment by award level and race/ethnicity from fall 2019 to fall 2021 and from fall 2021 to fall 2023
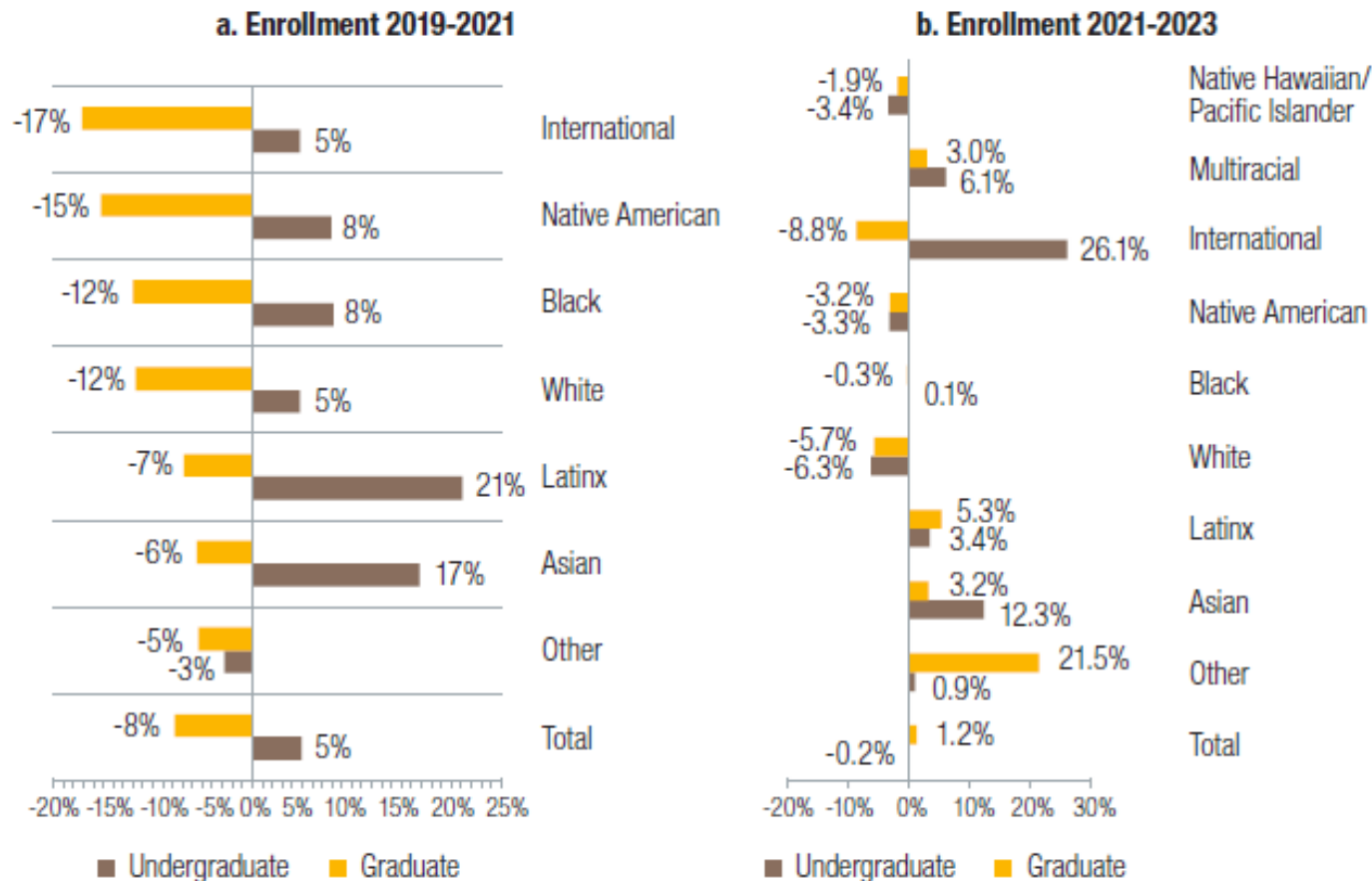
Disparate Outcomes: Race/Ethnicity

Equity Indicator 5d(i): Distributions of associate's and bachelor's degrees conferred to U.S. citizens and distribution of the civilian population by race/ethnicity: 1980 and 2021

1980 Associate's and Bachelor's

White*
- 89%
- 84%
- 77%
- 80%

Black*
- 7%
- 9%
- 13%
- 12%

Hispanic
- 2%
- 4%
- 8%
- 7%

Asian/Pacific Islander*
- 2%
- 2%
- 2%
- 2%

American Indian/Alaska Native*
- 0.4%
- 0.6%
- 0.7%
- 0.6%

Legend:
- 1980 Bachelor's Degrees Conferred
- 1980 Associate's Degrees Conferred
- 1980 18-24 Year-Old Population
- 1980 Civilian Population

2021 Associate's and Bachelor's

White*
- 57%
- 49%
- 53%
- 59%

Black*
- 10%
- 12%
- 14%
- 13%

Hispanic
- 16%
- 26%
- 23%
- 19%

Asian*
- 8%
- 6%
- 6%
- 6%

Two or More Races*
- 4%
- 4%
- 3%
- 2%

American Indian/Alaska Native*
- 0.5%
- 0.8%
- 0.8%
- 0.7%

Pacific Islander*
- 0.2%
- 0.3%
- 0.2%
- 0.2%

Legend:
- 2021 Bachelor's Degrees Conferred
- 2021 Associate's Degrees Conferred
- 2021 18-24 Year-Old Population
- 2021 Civilian Population

Source: Cahalan et al. (2024)

Borrowing by Race/Ethnicity

Equity Indicator 4d(ia&b): Percentage of bachelor's degree completers who ever received loans (federal and non-federal loans to students) and average amount borrowed among those who borrowed by race/ethnicity: Selected NPSAS years: 2000, 2012, 2016, and 2020 (in constant 2022 dollars)
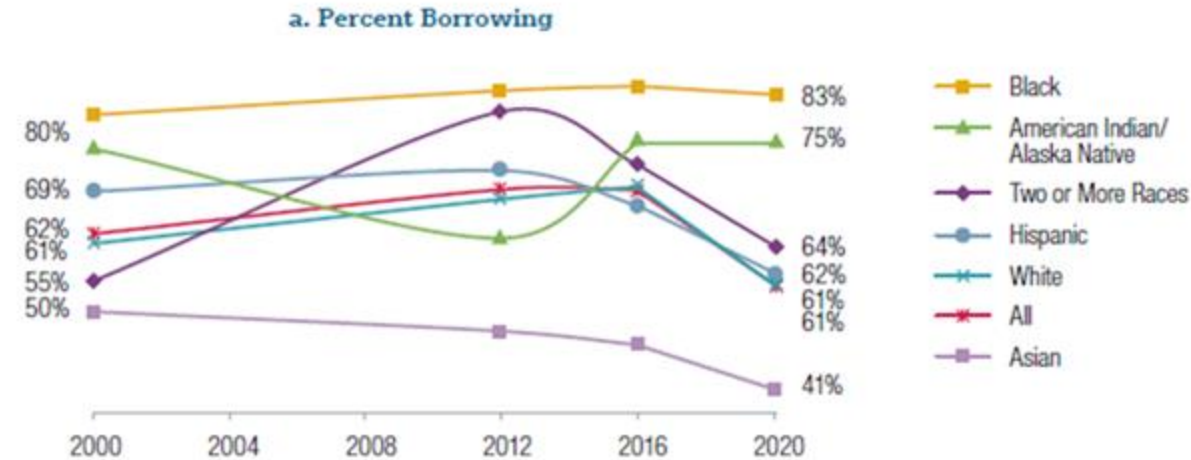
Disparate Long-term Outcomes

Equity Indicator 4e(vi): Bachelor's degree graduates' financial well-being 10 years after graduation by race/ethnicity: Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B): 2008/18

Legend:
- White, not Hispanic or Latino
- Black, not Hispanic or Latino
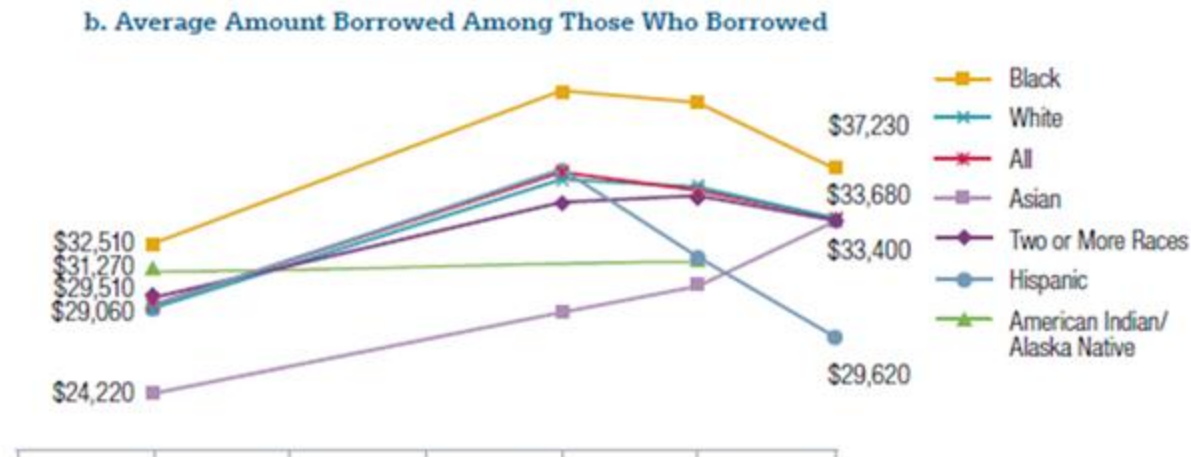- Hispanic or Latino, of Any Race
- Asian, not Hispanic or Latino
- Other or Two or More Races, not Hispanic or Latino

Owned a Home: 67%, 47%, 53%, 53%, 59%

Had Retirement Account: 89%, 80%, 80%, 83%, 82%

Reported Negative Net Worth: 18%, 37%, 26%, 16%, 23%

Did Not Meet Essential Expenses in the Past 12 Months: 11%, 29%, 19%, 11%, 16%
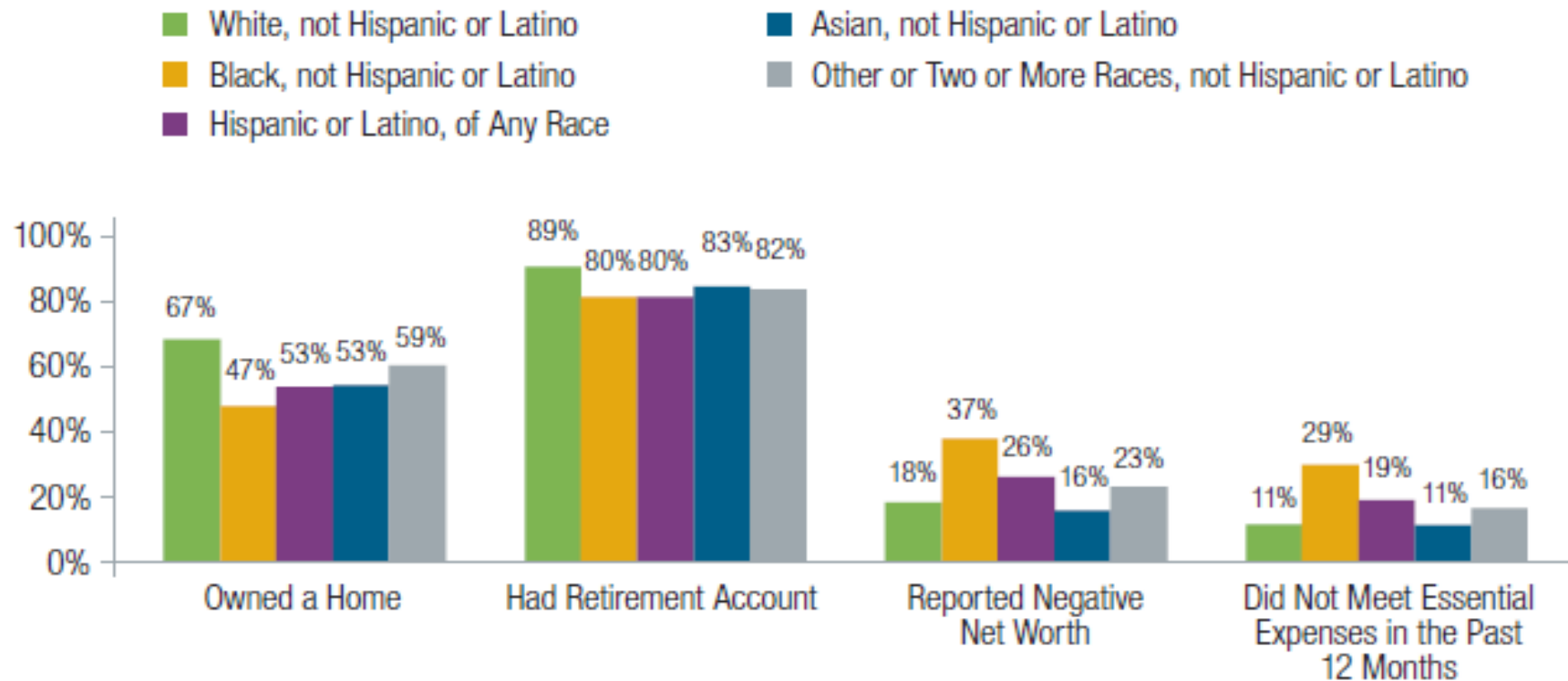
Lessons from Institutions' DEI Efforts

- Having a clearly defined equity statement and vision is a first step.

- Is your campus actively and systematically working to understand and fix perceived hostilities against any group?
  - Not piecing together "campus climate-y" items from non-campus climate instruments or studies
  - Not shying away from studying how policies, norms, and structures within the system perpetuate hostile environments?
  - Embedding climate study results with broader institutional data

- Words on a website are nice, but we need action.

Attacks on DEI

Attacks on DEI make educational environments exclusionary, adding further emphasis on why we need to be intentional in creating environments that combat current outcomes trends.

Who

Who is Responsible for Creating Inclusive Environments?

Who is Responsible?

1. How many of you are faculty? Staff including assessment pros? Campus leadership or administrators?

1. Raise your hand if your current job description mentions having a responsibility for creating inclusive educational environments.

1. Raise your hand if you feel a sense of responsibility for creating a healthy campus environment.

Faculty

- The classroom environment is a huge part of creating a healthy and inclusive campus environment.
  - o Language (culturally responsive examples)
  - o Direct communication (asset vs deficit)
  - o Flexible (rigid or understanding)
  - o Representation
  - o Presentation
  - o Skills

Assessment Pros (OA/IR/IE)

- Power in data, and Assessment Pros have the power!
- Follow your curiosity. Interrogate the existence of any gaps.
- Conversation starters
- Benchmarking
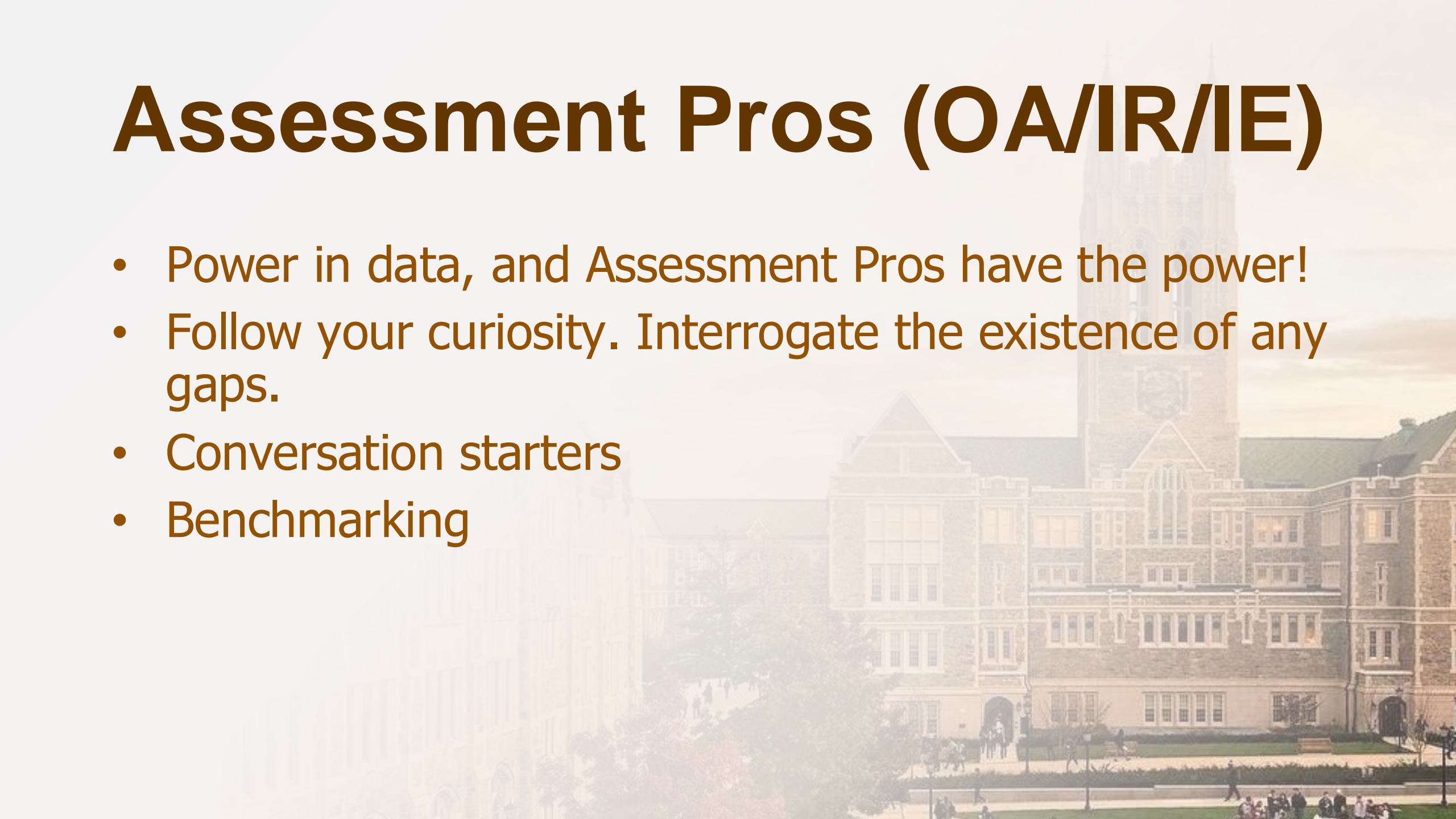
Staff

- If staff don't feel they belong on campus, then that will tend to trickle down.
- If the culture of the institution makes departments fight for resources, that limits collaboration and promotes silos
- Staff hear when students have experienced racism, have felt unwelcomed, or are disengaging from the campus due to a cold campus climate.
- Staff also operate and navigate policies.
- Staff help reinforce and uphold policy.
- As individuals, we can all strive to model inclusivity more effectively.

Campus Leaders & Trustees

- Set expectations and model them
- Strategic plans should include resources and intended uses for campus climate studies
- Don't shy away from data but embrace it
- Set specific goals for specific populations
- Empower others

Understanding Our Sphere of Influence

Engage in reflexivity and identify your sphere of influence.

- What is your current reach in terms of ways you can impact sustaining an inclusive environment?
- How can that grow?
- What committees are you on or can be on?
- What connections can you make across campus?

How

Liberatory Design

An approach to addressing equity challenges and change efforts in complex systems.

Meshes human design (aka design thinking) with complex systems theory and deep equity practices.

National Equity Project https://www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/liberatory-design

Liberatory Design

Understand the territory you're navigating

Engage others to make meaning

Act to address your equity challenge and learn from your action

National Equity Project https://www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/liberatory-design

Define Student Success at Your Institution

For an institution of higher education focused on improving student success outcomes, developing a **definition of success** for that particular campus constitutes an essential first step.

Once the end goal is clear, the institution can **develop a holistic, student-centered strategy** across all dimensions of the student experience, from the classroom to support services to campus operations to relationships with the broader community, with all designed to foster measurable improvements in persistence rates, time to graduation, and completion rates.

Fishman, Ludgate and Tutak, 2017

Consider Barriers to Inclusive Environments

- External pressures

- Internal pressures
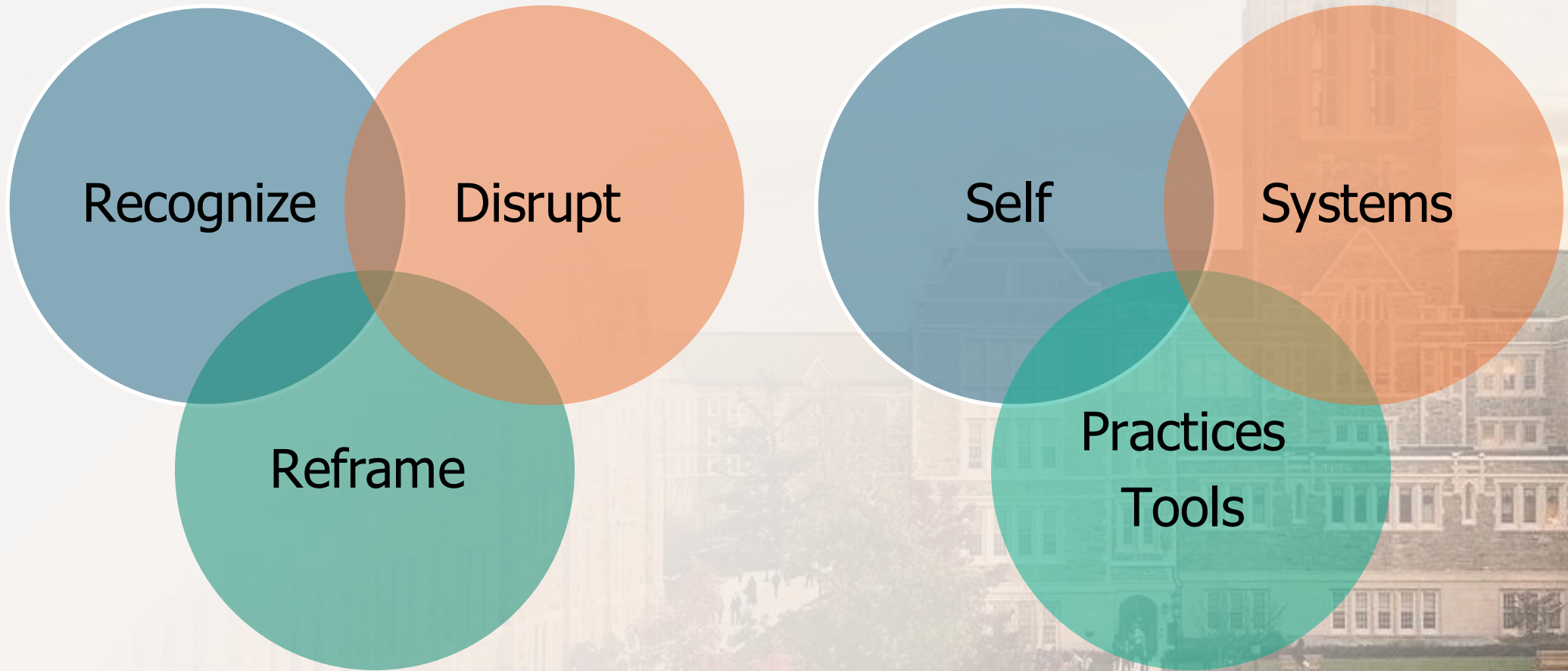
- Old ways of thinking

Beliefs About Assessment

- Centering students

- Impact of assessor positionality

- Limitations of Western-based paradigms

- Assessment as inquiry

- Assessment as vehicle for equity

- Universal Design for Learning

Equity-Centered Assessment Change Model

Recognize

Disrupt

Reframe

Self

Systems

Practices Tools

Lundquist, Henning & Heiser, 2021

theequitylab.org

Strategies for Change

Oneself

- Consider your power, privilege, and positionality

- Keep an identity journal

- Get comfortable with discomfort

- Read to reflect

- Build connections and relationships

Systems

- Perform environmental scans

- Data audits

- Implement equity audits

- Institute climate studies

- Identify student needs

Data Audits

- Environmental scan

- Institutional data system audit

- Institution survey data audit

Practices

- Consider the impact of systems on institutional environments

- Engage in double-looped assessment

- Apply design thinking and/or liberatory design to assessment

Practices

- Implement equity-centered assessment strategies

- Center equity into program review

- Integrate change management theories into assessment practice

Reflection: Call to Action

What Will You Do?

Sources

- Reason, R. D., & Braxton, J. M. (2023). Improving College Student Persistence: New Developments in Theory, Research, and Practice.

- Cahalan, M. W., Brunt, N., Vaughan III, T., Montenegro, E., Breen, S., Ruffin, E., & Perna, L. W. (2024). *Indicators of higher education equity in the United States 2024: 50-year historical trend report.* Washington, DC: The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, Council for Opportunity in Education (COE), and Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy of the University of Pennsylvania (Penn AHEAD).

- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2022, Fall Enrollment component. See Digest of Education Statistics 2022, table 306.50.