

HEDS Student Success Champions Program

Call for Applications – Deadline October 1, 2021

The HEDS Student Success Champions Program supports people at HEDS institutions who lead student success projects. The two-year program aims to: (1) advance student success efforts at HEDS institutions and (2) help Student Success Champions develop leadership and change management skills for student success at their institutions. We invite anyone from a HEDS institution who is leading, or will soon lead, a student success initiative at their college or university to apply. We will accept applications for the inaugural cohort of Student Success Champions until October 1, 2021.

Core elements of the HEDS Student Success Champions Program

During their two-year term, Student Success Champions will work with, support, and learn from a community of practice focused on student success. The community of practice includes other Student Success Champions, the HEDS Directors and staff, HEDS Board members, and leaders with experience in institutional improvement.

The HEDS Student Success Champions Program employs a “learning by doing” approach where Champions develop leadership and change management skills as they design and/or implement a student success initiative at their institution. Through this work, Champions will gain confidence in their leadership abilities and build resilience to work through challenges that threaten to derail institutional change efforts.

Student Success Champions will work on a student success project for their institution during their time in the program. Champions may develop a new project when they join the program, or they may continue their work on an existing project at their institution. A broad range of projects fit under our student success umbrella, e.g., initiatives aimed at increasing retention and persistence, improving graduation rates, promoting equity and inclusion, helping students explore vocation and purpose in life, helping students figure out meaningful next steps after graduation.

Student Success Champions will develop their skills and receive project support through the following series of activities:

1. Two face-to-face meetings each year, one in winter and one in summer, that focus on helping Student Success Champions develop practical leadership skills including approaches to engaging the support of academic leaders, using evidence to advance projects, building coalitions, working with challenging faculty and staff, and keeping projects moving forward in dynamic institutional environments.
2. Two half-day, virtual group check-ins each year, in spring and fall, with HEDS leaders for updates on their projects, troubleshooting obstacles, and honing plans for next steps.
3. Ongoing consultations with HEDS Directors, representatives from HEDS institutions, and other Student Success Champions about their projects. The consultations will focus on real-time troubleshooting to help the Champions sharpen their projects and overcome barriers.

Who can apply to be a HEDS Student Success Champion?

The program is open to any employee at a HEDS institution—including faculty, student affairs professionals, administrators, assessment professionals, and institutional researchers—who is, or will soon be, leading a student success project and secures the support from their institution that we describe below.

We will select up to 10 individuals, one per institution, for the program this year. The number of new Champions and HEDS institutions we support in subsequent years may vary based on our capacity to support new projects.

Institutional and individual commitments for the program

The HEDS Student Success Champions Program follows a cohort model, and each Champion participates in the program for a two-year term. The term for the first cohort of HEDS Student Success Champions will begin in November 2021 and conclude in November 2023. We expect Champions to attend four meetings each year (two face-to-face and two virtual).

There is no fee for the Student Success Champions Program. However, we ask your institution to cover the cost of your travel, food, and lodging for the two face-to-face meetings each year. The first meeting will be January 13-15, 2022, at the conference center at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, IN. The second meeting will be July 20-22, 2022, also at Wabash College. Both meetings will begin at 2:00 p.m. on the first day and end at 1:00 p.m. on the third day (all times Eastern). The cost of each meeting, which covers two nights of lodging, food, and transportation between the Indianapolis International Airport and Wabash College, will be around \$500. We can provide additional nights of lodging to accommodate flight schedules at \$100 per night.

Please note, because the HEDS Student Success Champions Program is only open to employees of HEDS institutions, people will not be able to remain in the program if their institution ends its HEDS membership.

We will ask each Champion to complete a bio, submit a headshot, and develop an abstract of their project that we can post publicly on our website. We will develop a section of our website dedicated to the Student Success Champions' projects and ask the Champions to update their project information every year.

Application requirements

We seek people with a passion for improving student success who want to join a nationwide, interdisciplinary community focused on helping students achieve their goals for college and life. Champions must be willing to share their experiences working on student success initiatives at their institutions, both the good and the bad, with others in the program. We are also looking for people who are willing to spend time outside of formal meetings to offer advice and provide feedback to their colleagues in the program. We are especially interested in applications from people who would be willing to pay it forward and use their skills and knowledge to support future Champions.

Applicants should prepare a document that addresses the following questions. Please address each question separately, rather than writing one essay to answer all the questions.

1. Why would you like to be part of the HEDS Student Success Champions Program?
2. What student success goals would you like to pursue during the program?
3. What are the biggest challenges that students at your institution face?
4. What strengths do your students bring to bear on these challenges?
5. What strengths and weaknesses do you see at your institution that may impact your work on a student success project?
6. What skills and experiences do you bring to student success work?
7. What skills would you like the program to help you develop?
8. Champions will work on a student success project for their institution during their time in the program. Will you be starting a new project or continuing work on an existing project during the HEDS Student Success Champions Program?

- If you'll be starting a new project, please describe the goals for the project and any preliminary thoughts you have on the shape of the project. It's okay if your ideas about a potential project change during your work as a Student Success Champion. We'd just like to get a sense of what you're thinking about now.
- If you'll be continuing to work on an existing project, please briefly describe the goals of the project, where you are in the project, what's going well, and what's not been as successful.

Please include a letter of support from an administrative leader at your institution. This letter should briefly explain the importance of your work on student success to your institution and their commitment to cover the costs of travel and expenses for two face-to-face meetings a year for the two years of the program.

Applications are due on October 1, 2021. Please submit your responses to the application questions and your letter of support to [Charlie Blaich](#) and [Kathy Wise](#).

We will review the written applications to select finalists for the program and then conduct 30-minute Zoom interviews with the finalists. We will announce the first cohort of HEDS Student Success Champions on November 1.

Important dates

August 16, 2021 – Call for applications opens

October 1, 2021 – Application deadline

November 1, 2021 – HEDS announces first cohort of Student Success Champions

January 13-15, 2022 – 1st Student Success Champions meeting at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, IN

April 18, 2022 – 2nd Student Success Champions meeting – half-day, virtual event

July 20-22, 2022 – 3rd Student Success Champions meeting at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, IN

October 28, 2022 – 4th Student Success Champions meeting – half-day, virtual event