

## HEDS Student Success Champions Program

### 2024 Cohort Call for Applications – Deadline September 15, 2023

The HEDS Student Success Champions Program supports people at HEDS institutions who play key roles in 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, or will be, working on a student success initiative at their college or university to apply. We will accept applications for the 2024 cohort of Student Success Champions until September 15, 2023.

#### 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 that's focused on student success. This community 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 help 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.

Do you ever feel lonely in your work around student success? Do you ever feel overwhelmed by the vast number of resources (tools, articles, books, journals, and software) available to help your campus improve student's persistence and belonging? Do you wish for colleagues that can sing in your choir, empathize with your work, and help you be a better professional AND laugh at your jokes? Then Student Success Champions is for you! Working with a cohort of like-minded professionals who ask thoughtful questions, engage in meaningful debate, share their tools, and offer their insights has been the most helpful professional development activity I have participated in in 15 years, and I've been doing this for 27! I highly encourage you to apply for this program – your project will improve, your professional network will expand, and you will be reminded of the joy that comes from making an impact and connecting!

*Katy Lowe Schneider, Hanover College*

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 continue their work on an existing

Even if you don't have a project completely fleshed out, share your ideas for your project in the application. I entered the program with one idea for a project, but that idea morphed and took on new life as I received helpful feedback from other participants. In addition, this experience has been really beneficial in allowing me to get feedback from individuals that are not on my campus. These outside perspectives have helped me think differently about my project and find new ways to work through obstacles I may be facing. In short, if you see yourself benefiting in any way from this program, do yourself a favor and apply.

*Jonathan Manz, Lewis & Clark College*

project at their institution. A broad range of projects fit under our student success umbrella, including initiatives aimed at increasing retention and persistence, improving graduation rates, promoting equity and inclusion, helping students explore vocation and purpose in life, promoting students' well-being, helping students develop academic and life skills, and helping students figure out meaningful next steps after graduation. You can learn more about the work of the first two cohorts of HEDS Student Success Champions at <https://www.hedsconsortium.org/student-success-champions-program/>. Click on the “Meet the 2022/2023 cohort of Champions!” boxes to see who the Champions are and read short descriptions of their projects.

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

1. Two face-to-face meetings each year, one in January and one in July, 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 several-hour 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 consultation 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, engaged in a student success project and secures the support from their institution that we describe below.

There is no “hierarchy” or politics involved. There are entry level champions and associate provosts, but it feels like everyone’s opinion matters equally and each person has something to bring to the table... This community is ready to support and “champion” you!

*Maddie Jarmola, St. Catherine University*

We will select up to 15 individuals for the program this year. Two individuals from the same institution may apply as a team. 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. We’re soliciting applications for the third cohort of the program now. The term for this cohort of HEDS Student Success Champions will begin in January 2024. 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 10-13, 2024, at the conference center at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, IN. The second meeting will be July 16-19, 2024, also at Wabash College. Both meetings will begin with dinner on the first day and end at 1:00 p.m. on the fourth day (all times Eastern). The cost of each meeting, which covers three nights of lodging, food, and transportation between the Indianapolis International Airport and Wabash College, will be around \$675. We can provide additional nights of lodging to accommodate flight schedules at \$125 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.

A section of our website is dedicated to the Student Success Champions Program. We will ask each Champion to submit a headshot and develop an abstract of their project that we can post publicly on our website.

The SSC program gives you dedicated time and positive accountability to pick something you’re really passionate about and make it happen. It’s an opportunity to break out of the daily grind and work on something exciting and proactive!

*Lainie Sowell, Linfield University*

### 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. If you are applying as a team, please answer questions 1-7 individually and write a joint response to question 8.

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? (Please see follow-up questions below.)
  - 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 September 15, 2023. Please submit your responses to the application questions and your letter of support to Charlie Blaich and Kathy Wise at [StudentSuccessChampions@hedsconsortium.org](mailto:StudentSuccessChampions@hedsconsortium.org).

We will announce the third cohort of HEDS Student Success Champions on November 15.

### **Important Year 1 dates for the 2024 Cohort**

July 10, 2023 – HEDS begins to accept applications

September 15, 2023 – Application deadline

November 15, 2023 – HEDS announces 2024 cohort of Student Success Champions

January 10-13, 2024 – Student Success Champions meeting at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, IN

April 15, 2024 – Student Success Champions meeting – several-hour, virtual event

July 16-19, 2024 – Student Success Champions meeting at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, IN

October 18, 2024 – Student Success Champions meeting – several-hour, virtual event

### **Questions?**

If you have questions about the HEDS Student Success Champions Program, the student success project, the application, or anything else, please contact Charlie Blaich and Kathy Wise at [StudentSuccessChampions@hedsconsortium.org](mailto:StudentSuccessChampions@hedsconsortium.org). We're happy to talk!