



NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

# Serving the **Whole Student**

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# Holistic Education: Definition



**A specific and purposeful approach designed to provide all students with the type and intensity of support they need to identify and achieve their educational and career goals.**



# Holistic Education: Definition



- The philosophy of educating the **whole person**, beyond academics.
- A comprehensive approach to teaching where educators seek to address the **emotional, social, ethical, and academic needs** of students in an integrated learning format.
- It means
  - understanding and **meeting students’** where they are,
  - addressing their individual needs,
  - leveraging their strengths, and
  - focusing on student development and learning.



# Holistic Education: Definition

Students receive a **personalized experience** where...

- They **feel they are supported** in achieving their goals through intentional and early development of academic, career, and financial plans.
- They **tell their story once** & are not running from office to office for answers.
- Are proactively **connected with supports** targeted to their individual needs so they enter the classroom between prepared to learn.
- Feel confident that faculty, staff, and administrators are **invested in their success**.

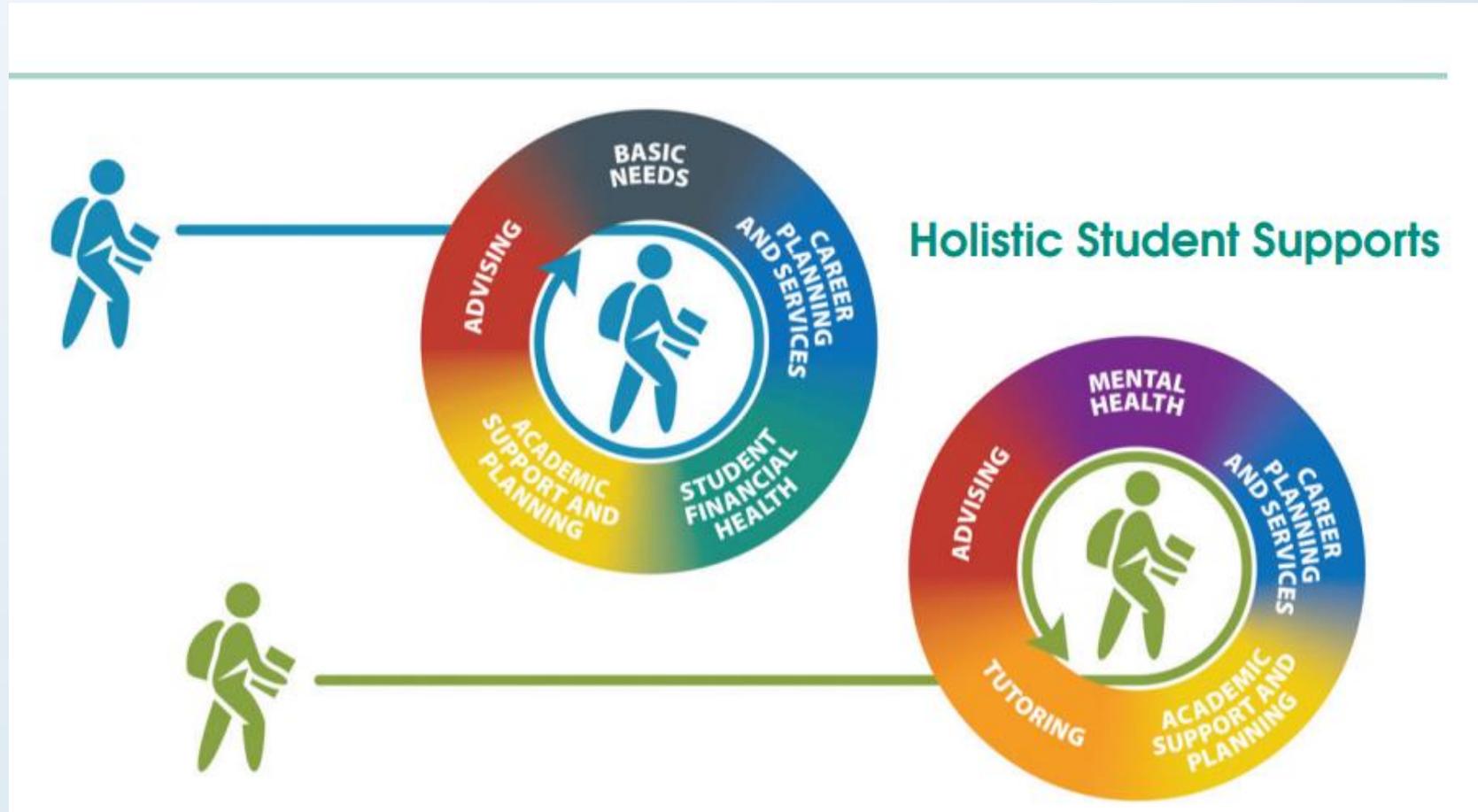
# Holistic Education: Definition

HOLISTIC EDUCATION USED TO BE...



# Holistic Education: Definition

With holistic support, students are better served





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Key Components of  
Holistic Student  
Supports



# Holistic Education: Key Components



Holistic Student Supports embody an intentional focus on services. Specifically:

1. The **types of services** offered,
2. The ways in which those services **are delivered**.
3. How **students connect** to those services.



# Holistic Education: Services

**Services are aligned with student needs. Institutions:**

- Understand **who its students are**,
- what **their responsibilities are** outside of the classrooms,
- the **life factors they are juggling**, and
- the **strengths and assets they bring** to their college experience.



# Holistic Education: Delivery

A one-size-fits-all approach to delivering supports does not acknowledge the diversity of students needs, experiences, strengths, and personalities.

Institutions must deliver two types of services:

- **High-touch services**
- **Low-touch services**

# Holistic Education: Delivery



- **High-touch services**

offered as intensive one-on-one advising, coaching, or counseling sessions that provides a specific service or support to a targeted set of students, often with short- and long-term goal setting.

- **Low-touch services**

are core supports that reach a wider range of students, typically through large-scale orientations, first-year experience courses, or technology applications.

# Holistic Education: Connections



Some students' needs are **universal**, and institutions can meet them **broadly** and **systematically**.

These are classified as **long-term services**. Such as:

- Mandatory orientations
- First-year Experience course.
- Financial education workshops
- Academic advising

# Holistic Education: Connections



Some students' have needs that are classified as **critical needs** or **significant immediate needs**.

Institutions must meet those needs by offering **short-term services**. Such as:

- Access to food pantries.
- Transportation Services.
- Childcare subsidies.
- Mental health and wellness.



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Designing  
Holistic Student  
Supports



# Four Stages of Designing Holistic Support



## Step 1: Discover and Design

- Become familiar with **student needs, institutional capacities** and **processes**.
- Collect and analyze data.
- Develop a vision and initial planning.

## Step 2: Early Implementation

- Implement early plans,
- collect data, and refine your plan.
- Communicate with other for buy-in and culture change.

# Four Stages of Designing Holistic Support



## Step 3: Mature Implementation

- Regular professional development and training for all employees involved to reinforce changing roles and responsibilities.
- Continue to communicate and share data to reinforce the value of the work.

## Step 4: Institutionalization and sustainability

- Scale the work across all areas to serve all students.

# Core Design Principles

## 1. Sustained

Students are supported through their full journey at an institution – particularly at key momentum points.

This includes getting information from the outset and ongoing interaction through out their journey.

## 2. Strategic

Students are connected to the specific supports they need, when they need them, and in the delivery mode that they need them.

This means providing resource-intensive support.

# Core Design Principles

## 3. Integrated

Students are seamlessly connected to information, resources, and services without being bounced around.

Key to this is building bridges connecting departments to promote equitable and stable college experiences.

## 4. Proactive

Students are connected to supports at the first sign of trouble, not after a situation builds to a crisis point.

Key to this are data systems designed to capture information on students.

# Core Design Principles

## 5. Personalized

Students receive the type and intensity of support appropriate to his or her unique and diverse needs.

Key to this is faculty and staff having a deep understanding of who their students are – particularly in their non-academic needs.



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Final Thoughts on  
Holistic Student  
Supports



# Holistic Education: Final Thoughts



Establishing shared responsibility: personal and institutional responsibility for collective success.

Creating a culture and shared understanding of everyone's role in and commitment to supporting students holistically requires that:

- All faculty and staff understand the **importance of their role**.
- Faculty and staff **respond directly** or refer students to the appropriate office.
- **Job descriptions include language** ensuring clear roles in providing support.
- Holistic student support is **included in the strategic plan**.

# Holistic Education: Final Thoughts



Build meaningful relationships.

Success of holistic student supports is rooted in deep and ongoing attention to relational interactions both with students and among staff and faculty so that:

- Student positively identify with **at least one person** who will support and encourage them.
- Student **feel like they belong** on campus.
- Supports are delivered that are focused on **understanding what the student needs** to be successful and acquire self-efficacy.

# Holistic Education: Final Thoughts



## Monitor Student Progress.

To connect all students effectively and efficiently to the supports they need when they need them in a customized and sustained manner, institutions must implement practices that enable:

- **Frequent and consistent** checks on student progress to ensure they are connected to supports before they reach a crises point.
- **Ongoing assessment** of services offered and unmet need areas.
- Faculty and staff **engage** with students in a meaningful way.
- Faculty and staff regularly **follow up** on referrals and use of services.

# Holistic Education: Final Thoughts



Use targeted data and technology across the institution.

Strategically use resources that ensure seamless communication flow and a cohesive student experience. Key practices for the use of data and technology include:

- Broad use of data and technology by faculty, staff, & students to monitor progress towards their goals.
- Faculty and staff leveraging technology to identify students needs and connect them with appropriate services.

# Holistic Education: Final Thoughts



Use targeted data and technology across the institution.

## Continued...

- Using technology that connects students with supports and tracking how and when they use the services.
- Technology deployed to empower students to complete routine tasks and access services electronically.
- Data shared widely among stakeholders to foster continuous improvement of the college's holistic student supports.

## References

Achieving the Dream (2022). Holistic student support: A toolkit for redesigning advising and student services to effectively support every student. Retrieved from [file:///C:/Users/cdlujan/Downloads/atd\\_hss\\_redesign\\_toolkit\\_2018.pdf](file:///C:/Users/cdlujan/Downloads/atd_hss_redesign_toolkit_2018.pdf)