



The Student Experience Project is a collaborative of university leaders, faculty, researchers and national education and improvement organizations who are committed to innovative, evidence-based practices that increase degree attainment by transforming the college student experience and creating equitable learning environments.

To reach these goals, the SEP's first effort is to find clear, targeted steps that faculty and administrators can take to support students in STEM coursework and classrooms, creating replicable models to build community in college and foster a sense of belonging for students from all disciplines and backgrounds. →

Tackling Inequities in College Education



↑ **FOUR** in ten college students pursuing a four-year degree do not graduate within 6 years.

Institutions of higher education are enrolling more diverse student populations than ever before. Yet while admitting hardworking students of all backgrounds who wish to pursue their academic goals, many institutions of higher education are not designed to provide every student with an equal opportunity to graduate.

Institutions are not yet meeting the challenge to support students who face barriers entering college—such as students of color, students from low-income households, and those who are the first in their family to attend college—and therefore, these students tend to graduate at **significantly lower rates**.

Why Are Underrepresented College Students Not Graduating?

Research shows that college readiness and financial security are not the only factors fueling disparities in college graduation rates. **A student's background can impact how confidently that student navigates college life**—everything from finances to final exams. Low-income students, students of color, and first-generation students are most likely to experience the social and academic challenges of college as **reinforcing the perception that they do not “belong” in higher education**.

How Can We Help Every Student Persist To Find Success In College?

As our K-12 education system works to prepare students for their future and as our nation grapples with how to make college more affordable, institutions of higher education must also take action to ensure that every student knows they **belong on campus and are supported to pursue their degree aspirations**. Over a decade of research in social psychology demonstrates that **positive experiences of community, belonging, and academic support** on campus and in the classroom **can increase a student's likelihood of persisting through academic challenges** toward graduation.

The SEP's mission is to find strategies to **transform the college student experience so that every student feels a sense of belonging and receives the support and resources** necessary to persist and succeed.

Who Is The SEP?

The SEP began as a **partnership between six national education organizations** committed to tackling inequities in college education:



Coalition of
Urban Serving Universities



The Raikes Foundation convened six universities and colleges across the United States to collaborate and transform the college student experience:



The SEP is also proud to work with a number of other institutions of higher education who make up the SEP Peer Learning Network. For more information on our partners, please visit www.SEP.org/partners.