

# PASS

Promoting At-Promise Student Success

USC Rossier  
*Pullias Center for  
Higher Education*

## PASS FORUM

MARCH 3, 2023

### Experiential Learning & Post-Grad Outcomes

#### SELECTED NORMS OF ECOLOGICAL VALIDATION

**Holistic:** Considers all aspects of a student’s background, identities (e.g., race, gender, and sexuality), personality, goals, and academic and interpersonal experiences in college when connecting them with resources and opportunities.

**Proactive:** Accepts responsibility for regularly reaching out to students to initiate building relationships, address challenges, and identify opportunities to promote their success.

#### VIGNETTE #1

Carlos identifies as a first generation Latino student from a low-income, rural background. Since arriving at UNL two years ago, he has done particularly well in his mathematics and statistics classes. Carlos wants to declare a major next semester but is confused about how choosing a major relates to potential career choices. His parents want him to become a teacher and return to his hometown after he graduates. But Carlos isn’t crazy about working with children. He also wants to live in a community that would be supportive of his queer identity (Carlos is “out” at UNL, but not back home). He decides to visit the career center to get some guidance about different possibilities for summer internships and jobs after he graduates. Carlos is very shy, so taking initiative to visit the career center is a big step for him.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How might a holistic approach to student support enhance Carlos’ experiences in the career center? What does a holistic approach look like from a practitioner perspective?
- What does proactive support look like from the perspective of the career counselor? How might proactive support feel for Carlos?



## VIGNETTE #2

Maxine, an international student whose first language is not English, has held several research positions on campus and has presented and published her findings. Maxine is graduating this year and applying for a research internship, designed for recent graduates, at a prestigious and influential think tank. In conversation with an advisor, Alisha, Maxine expresses concern that there are not many jobs open to international student applicants, and that she feels pressure to create perfectly worded application materials because this position could truly change her life for the better. Alisha expresses belief in Maxine's qualifications and potential. She outlines a clear plan to support Maxine by reading one draft of her application and providing feedback by a particular date. Alisha gives Maxine several points of praise, a few suggestions for improvement, and affirms that she is addressing the resume prompt and the selection criteria for the position very well. Alisha then turns her attention to her commitments to other students and other projects. However, over the course of several days prior to the external application deadline, Maxine makes many minor changes to her resume and emails Alisha to seek feedback repeatedly. Alisha takes each question about each small edit seriously and consistently affirms that Maxine is making good choices, has implemented the revision feedback, and is making good progress toward application submission. However, Maxine's confidence and independence does not appear to improve. Over the three-day holiday weekend before the application deadline, Maxine emails Alisha every few hours with new questions and new copies of the application for review. Maxine expresses that she is not sleeping because of her worries about the application.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What evidence of the holistic norm do you see in Alisha's response? How might Alisha strengthen her support to Maxine by engaging with the holistic norm?
- How does a proactive approach enhance Alisha's ability to support Maxine? What could she have done differently?

## PASS FORUM

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### Curriculum & Academics

#### SELECTED NORMS OF ECOLOGICAL VALIDATION

**Collaborative:** Builds connections between various campus services and programs to create integrated and reinforcing validating experiences across students' ecology of campus support.

**Reflective:** Continually considers students', staff's, and academic leaders' experiences to make necessary adjustments to improve student success using both formal and informal data to inform decision-making.

**Developmental:** Supports students through their educational journeys in a cohesive way from admission through graduation.

#### VIGNETTE #1

Luisa is a first generation, Latina student in her junior year majoring in criminal justice. As an undocumented student with few family resources, Luisa has recently struggled to pay her tuition. In the fall semester, she received emergency funds from the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid to pay off her previous year's balance, but she now again owes more than \$5,000 from the fall and is unable to register for spring classes due to this financial hold. Luisa struggled academically as a first year student but is now in good academic standing with a 2.9 grade point average and 79 earned credit hours. She is an active participant in First Husker, serving as a peer mentor for first-year students, and has engaged in several internships related to her interests in immigration and non-profit work. She aspires to attend law school. When you meet with Luisa to discuss her situation, she expresses optimism that she will eventually achieve her goals but says she doesn't have a plan for addressing the financial hold impacting her registration.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What identities stand out to you and how might a collaborative campus approach to student success that is validating benefit her?
- How can you utilize the developmental norm to consider Luisa's identities as well as her educational and personal goals?



## VIGNETTE #2

Jordan is a first-year student who lives on campus at UNL. Jordan identifies as a first-generation Black woman from Atlanta. Jordan comes to you and isn't sure whether UNL is the right place for her. Jordan has not found many friends, is feeling homesick, and finds their classes to only be marginally relevant to her declared major within the College of Business. Even though it is only the start of October, Jordan shares that she would like to move out of the residence halls and seek a withdrawal on a few of the courses she is no longer interested in. When you ask for more specifics and an explanation, Jordan shares more – and that she is having a hard time finding her place on campus – and specifically on her floor community in the residence hall. In addition, Jordan shares that she smokes marijuana recreationally – never on campus though. However, when she returns to her room in the residence hall, other students on the floor notify the resident assistant (RA) and UNL Police become involved. Jordan shares that the UNL Police have visited her room several times and describes one encounter where she loses her cool a bit more than she would have liked. Jordan feels like she is disturbing the community, but also is feeling targeted by floormates calling the police. She is beginning to wonder if the pranks and practical jokes happening at her expense are not so coincidental. Overall, Jordan just feels like it would be better to drop a few of the irrelevant classes she is in and move off campus.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What questions can you ask to facilitate a discussion with your colleagues to utilize the reflective norm in thinking about how to create a validating living and learning environment on campus? How do you reflect on Jordan's experience to improve the student experience for all students?
- What might a developmental approach look like if you want to support Jordan in navigating the challenges she is experiencing with her previous goals in mind?

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### Campus Resources & Student Involvement

#### SELECTED NORMS OF ECOLOGICAL VALIDATION

**Strengths-oriented:** Focuses on the cultural assets, talents and skills, previous successes, and personality traits that students bring with them to campus and avoids a deficit approach that focuses on assumed challenges.

**Identity-conscious:** Intentionally designs support with students' identities in mind with particular attention to the identities of students from underserved backgrounds.

#### VIGNETTE #1

Ashley is an out of state, African-American student in her second semester at UNL. She came to UNL to study pre-health. She mistakenly arranged an appointment with you rather than her advisor to discuss dropping her chemistry course. During the meeting, Ashley expresses frustration that she hasn't been successful in her pre-health coursework and is considering dropping out of pre-health. She has wanted to be a doctor for as long as she can remember and feels like she will be letting everyone back home down if she pursues something else. She is also questioning whether UNL is the best place for her to be explaining that she doesn't feel as though she "belongs."

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What questions can you ask to help Ashley discover the strengths she is utilizing to manage her current challenges? What questions can you ask to remind Ashley about the strengths she has already utilized in her educational journey?
- How would you connect Ashley to other campus entities to support her own identity-development and future goals?



## VIGNETTE #2

Anonymous: I'm an undergraduate at UNL, or at least I was. For context, I transferred here before the fall semester of 2020. It hasn't really been going the best. In fact, it's been painful. I've been riddled with the loss of several people, the stress over having two jobs, school itself, illness and just simply isolation and loneliness. So painful that it extremely hindered my success that semester. Ever since then, I've been fighting a losing battle. I've tried to receive help by going to CAPS but I never had the time to attend due to scheduling issues. I would love to appeal my dismissal due to me believing my excuses are valid. I worked hard to get to this school and escape my way of life back home. I just didn't receive any mental support while down here. Although, I have a few questions on a couple of things. One of my jobs are in fact at the UNL Campus Recreation Center. I was wondering if I'm able of keeping that job even though I'm unable to attend classes at the moment. I'm more or less stuck in Lincoln because I'm scheduled to get an apartment for the next few months. Which means that I'd have pay rent for the next few months. So, I would need this job to at least have a few dollars to help with that. I think the only thing that stops me from being appealed is the hold on my account due to having an outstanding balance. I know that the deadline is soon I believe, but I'm asking to maybe work something out with you. I can pay it off, but it will take a while. Maybe an extension Assist me with counseling, being able to maintain my job and meal plan? Since both of my jobs get paid biweekly. I'm hoping if we can work something out come this next week. My hopes are that there is an opening at the desired complex come the next few weeks. If you cannot assist me, it's understandable. Or if you're up for it, we could meet in person. If you're not the right person to speak to about this matter. Could you please point me in the right direction? Reply at your earliest convenience. I appreciate you for your time.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What strengths do we read this student is demonstrating despite the setbacks and barriers?
- How might an identity-conscious approach to student support assist this student in managing the billing and financial barriers this student is presenting?