

PASS

Promoting At-Promise Student Success

Issue #2 — May 2024



Message from Dr. Ron Hallett PASS (Phase II) Co-Investigator

Greetings and welcome to the second issue of the **Promoting At-promise Student Success (PASS)** newsletter!

Since 2015, the PASS Project has consistently found that validating experiences positively influence **at-promise students'** academic and psychosocial outcomes. In particular, validating interactions with faculty, staff and leadership across campus over time in college are linked to increased retention and GPA as well as improved belonging, mattering and self-efficacy. This approach runs counter to traditional policies, practices and structures in higher education that involve siloed programs, units and

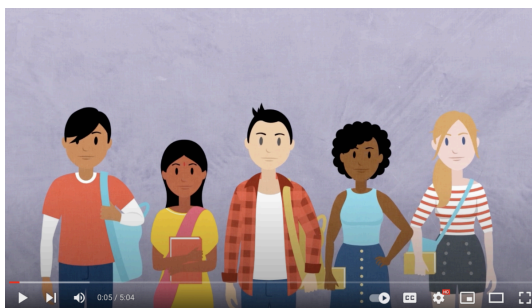


departments that reinforce deficit-oriented and fragmented interactions with at-promise students.

We published "**Creating a Campus-wide Culture of Student Success**", a book that highlights how a comprehensive college transition program—the Thompson Scholars Learning Community—created a culture of ecological validation, which involved leveraging several norms (e.g., strengths-oriented, proactive, identity-conscious, holistic, development). These norms framed interactions with students as well as the program's policies, practices and structures. In the book, we argue that ecological validation could be scaled to the institutional level in order to improve the experiences and outcomes for all at-promise students. We suggest that cross-functional professional learning communities (PLCs) could be a useful tool to accomplish this goal.

For the past three years, we have collaborated with three University of Nebraska campuses (Kearney, Lincoln, and Omaha) to create and implement PLCs focused on learning from previous research, exploring campus data and practices, and then seeking opportunities to enact change (**please see overview here**). While we continue to explore the impact of the PLCs with our campus partners, we have begun to share lessons learned from our collaboration thus far. We published an **article** that explains why and how PLCs can be an effective tool for institutions seeking to achieve equitable outcomes and foster meaningful experiences for at-promise students attending their campuses.

In addition, we have shared **advice concerning how to construct a cross-functional group of educators** with diverse personal identities who can collaboratively learn and engage in action focused on improving at-promise student experiences and outcomes. In particular, the members of the PLC benefit from having access to campus data that enable them to gain a deeper understanding of the issues that exist.



PASS Project: Ecological Validation Video

This **5-minute animated video** provides an overview of Ecological Validation.

University of Nebraska Practitioners and USC Researchers Co-present at National Convenings

Over the past few months, PASS researchers and University of Nebraska (NU) practitioners have co-presented at several national conferences. These collaborations provide an opportunity to share exciting work transpiring on NU campuses with diverse audiences.

In January, Zoë Corwin joined Amy Goodburn, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Senior Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Undergraduate Education, at the Association for Undergraduate Education at Research Universities (UERU) annual meeting in Washington DC. There, they reflected on how to successfully navigate large-scale long-term research-practice partnerships. A few months later, at the American



College Personnel Association (ACPA) conference in Chicago, Goodburn expanded on the theme of closing the research-to-practice loop alongside University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) Assistant Director of Curriculum for Thompson Learning Community, Jennifer Johnson, and PASS researchers Genia Bettencourt and Lauren Irwin. Attendees of both sessions appreciated the chance to reflect on our long-term partnership and share lessons learned with other practitioners and funders interested in similar research-practice approaches.

Two sessions at the First Year Experience (FYE) conference in Seattle were well-received by packed audiences. In the first session, USC researcher Joseph Kitchen and University of Nebraska-Kearney (UNK) Director of the Thompson Scholars Program, Jen Harvey, and Hunter Love, Assistant Director of Student Development, described findings and recommendations related to UNK's multidimensional peer mentoring model for first-year, low-income college students (please see related brief below). During the second session, Amy Goodburn, Sarah Edwards (Assistant Vice Chancellor for Curriculum and Programs in the Division of Academic Affairs at UNO), Kristy Saunders (Associate Director of UNL's Husker Hub) and USC's Zoë Corwin chronicled intentional efforts to vet communications and improve first-year email outreach on UNL and UNO campuses by incorporating a validating approach. The research team can not recall a time when they had so many conference follow-up emails requesting slide decks and briefs—a testament to the innovative approaches employed by NU campuses.

The collaborations with campus partners enable us to create practitioner-oriented presentations that have been well-received and we consistently receive emails from attendees who express appreciation for the insights they received. We look forward to future opportunities to continue collaborating with University of Nebraska campus partners.

Recent PASS Publications

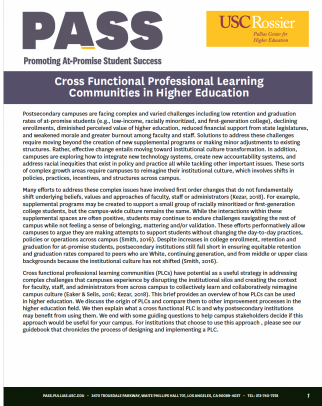
Direct links are provided to each publication. If you are unable to access these publications please contact Christine (rochac@usc.edu) for a pdf copy.

- Hallett, R. E., Kezar, A., Kitchen, J. A., & Perez, R. J. (2023). **Facilitating a sense of belonging for students with multiple identities**. In E. M. Bentrin & G. W. Henning (Eds.), *The impact of a sense of belonging in college* (pp. 59-71). Routledge.
- Hallett, R. E., Kezar, A., Kitchen, J. A., Perez, R. J., & Reason, R. (2023). An ecological approach to creating validating support for low-income, racially minoritized, and first-generation college students. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2023(204), 59-69. <https://doi-org.libproxy1.usc.edu/10.1002/he.20489>
- Kitchen, J. A. (2023). **Rethinking traditional approaches to major and career development: The major and career ecology model**. *Academic Leader*.
- Kitchen, J. A., Perez, R. J., Hallett, R. E., & Reason, R. (2024). Guidance for educators seeking to build validating relationships that promote college success for low-income students. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. Advanced online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000568>

Recent PASS Conference Presentations

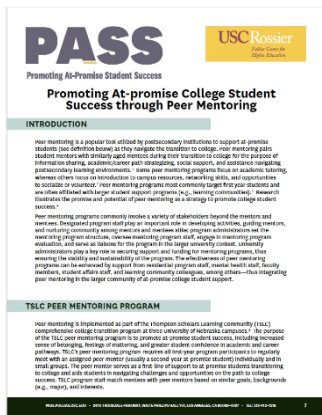
- Corwin, Z. B. (2023, September 7-8). *Opportunity engine: How colleges can help students achieve social mobility* [Conference presentation]. Education Writers Association, Riverside, CA, United States.
- Kitchen, J. A., Bowman, N., Todorova, R., Irwin, L., & Corwin, Z. B. (2023, November 17). *The relationship between low-income college students' time use and well-being: A mixed methods exploration* [Conference presentation]. Association for the Study of Higher Education, Minneapolis, MN, United States.
- Kezar, A., Hallett, R. E., Nagbe, M., Corwin, Z. B., & Hypolite, L. (2023, November 17). *Leveraging professional learning communities to create institutional culture change that supports historically marginalized students* [Conference presentation]. Association for the Study of Higher Education, Minneapolis, MN, United States.
- Hazard, A., Corwin, Z. B., Nagbe, M., & Kezar, A. (2023, November 16). *The power of possibility: Collaborating across institutional silos to support at-promise student success* [Conference presentation]. Association for the Study of Higher Education, Minneapolis, MN, United States.
- Hallett, R. E., Corwin, Z. B., Kezar, A., & Toccoli, J. (2023, November 18). *Faculty Coordinators* [Conference presentation]. Association for the Study of Higher Education, Minneapolis, MN, United States.
- Bowman, N. & Katsumoto, S. (2023, November 18). *Time use and well-being* [Conference presentation]. Association for the Study of Higher Education, Minneapolis, MN, United States.
- Hallett, R. E. & Toccoli, J. (2023, November 18). *Teaching low-income, racially minoritized, and first-generation students: Boundary spanning to connect instructors with campus resources* [Conference presentation]. Association for the Study of Higher Education, Minneapolis, MN, United States.
- Goodburn, A. & Corwin, Z. B. (2024, January 17). *Building research and practitioner teams for at-promise student success: Collaborations between the University of Nebraska and the USC Pullias Center for Higher Education* [Conference presentation]. Association for Undergraduate Education at Research Universities, Washington DC, United States.
- Kitchen, J. A., Corwin, Z. B., Harvey, J., & Love, H. (2024, February 19). *A multidimensional peer mentoring model for first-year, low-income college students* [Conference presentation]. First Year Experience, Seattle, WA, United States.
- Corwin, Z. B., Goodburn, A., Edwards, S., & Saunders, C. (2024, February 20). *Improving first-year email communications: A validating approach* [Conference presentation]. First Year Experience, Seattle, WA, United States.
- Bettencourt, G., Irwin, L., Goodburn, A., & Johnson, J. (2024, March 18-21). *Closing the research-to-practice loop: Lessons from the field* [Conference presentation]. American College Personnel Association, Chicago, IL, United States.
- Bettencourt, G., Irwin, L., & Perez, R. J. (2024, March 18-21). *Crafting sustainable careers as graduate students and new professionals* [Conference presentation]. American College Personnel Association, Chicago, IL, United States.
- Bravo, S. (2024, March 18-21). *Understanding Latin* students' navigation of major and career self-efficacy* [Conference presentation]. American College Personnel Association, Chicago, IL, United States.
- Bravo, S., Kitchen, J. A., & Corwin, Z. B. (2024, April 11). *Latin* Students' Major and Career Development: A Familial and Community Cultural Wealth Analysis* [Conference presentation]. American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA, United States.
- Todorova, R., Bettencourt, G., Lauderdale, K., & Corwin, Z. B. (2024, April 13). *Complicating understandings of low-income students' financial stress and well-being in order to inform institutional support* [Conference presentation]. American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA, United States.

- Todorova, R. Corwin, Z. B., & various scholars. (2024, April 14). *Ecological perspectives of well-being in higher education spaces* [Conference symposium]. American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA, United States.
- Bowman, N., Katsumoto, S., Tennesen, N. & Todorova, R. (2024, April 13). *Differences and similarities in time use and well-being among female and male undergraduates* [Conference presentation]. American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA, United States.
- Nagbe, M., Corwin, Z., Hypolite, L., Kezar, A., & Hallett, R., (2024, April 13). *Applying black intellectual thought to institutional change research: A case study of collaborative institutional agency* [Conference presentation]. American Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA, United States.



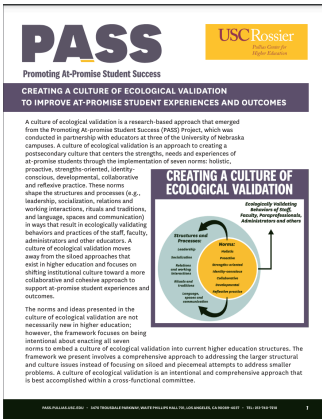
Read this New Practitioner Brief:

"Cross Functional Professional Learning Communities in Higher Education"



Read this New Practitioner Brief:

"Promoting At-promise College Student Success through Peer Mentoring"



Read this New Practitioner Brief:

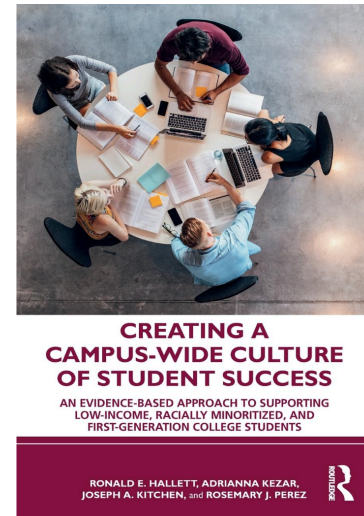
"Creating a Culture of Ecological Validation to Improve At-promise Student Experiences and Outcomes"

PASS Project Featured in New Book

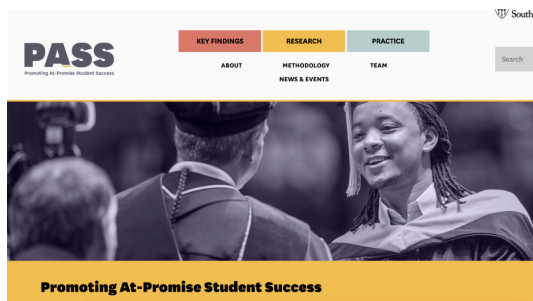
New publication details findings from the Promoting At-promise Student Success project

Pullias Center director **Adrianna Kezar** is one of the authors of "Creating a Culture of Campus-wide Student Success," a new book that highlights key findings from the **Promoting At-promise Student Success (PASS) project**. PASS project team members **Joseph Kitchen**, **Ronald E. Hallett** and **Rosemary J. Perez** join Kezar as authors of the new book, published by Taylor & Francis.

Offering a new approach to institutional practices, this book describes evidence-based strategies to create a campus culture conducive to truly supporting *all* students. We are at a critical crossroads in higher education, where large numbers of low-income, racially minoritized, and first-generation college students – referred to in this book as "at-promise students" – are attending college in greater numbers than ever, yet access has not translated to significantly improved retention and graduation rates. This book, therefore, proposes a realignment of existing initiatives to create campus-wide support through a new model of coordination.



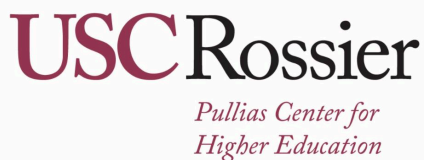
Buy the Book



PASS Website

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Visit our Website



The Promoting At-promise Student Success (PASS) project is a partnership between the USC Pullias Center for Higher Education, the University of Nebraska and the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation.

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