



East Carolina University Student Journey Map

Prepared by InsideTrack

Student Journey Map Process Overview

East Carolina University and InsideTrack partnered to create a Student Journey Map as the final phase of a larger partnership that included a Program Diagnostic and Change Management Training. Dr. Elizabeth Coghill, co-chair of the Student Success and Support Initiatives working group within the Provost Office's Strategic Enrollment Management Committee, spearheaded the Student Journey Map process and was instrumental in coordinating the Student Journey Map discovery sessions. In consultation with Provost Office leadership (Dr. Allen Guidry, Interim Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Angela Anderson, Associate Vice Chancellor, Chief Academic Success Officer/University Registrar, and Dr. Wendy Creasey, Director of Digital Learning & Emerging Technology Initiatives), Dr. Coghill chose participants, coordinated schedules, provided executive sponsorship, ordered supplies and coordinated the space. InsideTrack is thankful for the level of collaboration and support provided by Dr. Coghill and the Pirate Academic Success Center team.

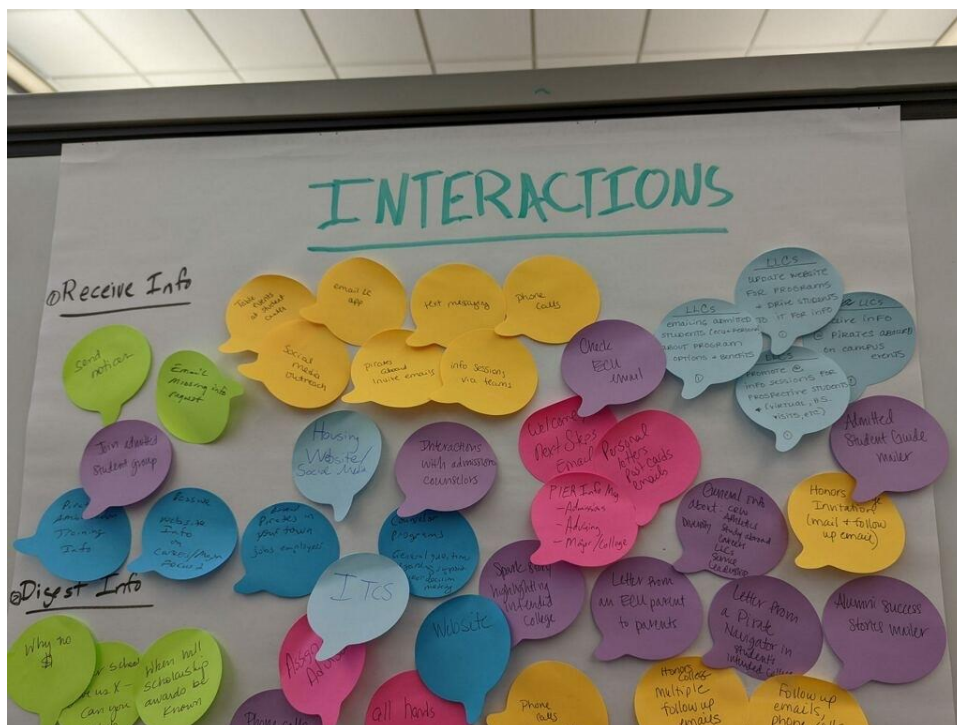
Prior to visiting the campus, the InsideTrack team interviewed 13 students in order to gain perspective on the student experience. These interviews guided where we would focus our attention during the Student Journey Map discovery sessions and also served as a litmus test to validate staff thoughts and feelings.

Two InsideTrack consultants, Patrick Boye and Erin Hearn, visited ECU on Thursday, April 28, 2022, and Friday, April 29, 2022. During our time on campus, we facilitated four guided Student Journey Map discovery sessions that were rooted in design-thinking best practices. We also facilitated a wrap-up session that allowed participants to step back and brainstorm next steps. Each discovery session was formatted using the same process:

1. Each session encompassed a specific phase in the student journey that begins with the point of admission and extends to the completion of their first fall semester. Phases included:
 - Phase One: February to Deposit Deadline (May 1)
 - Phase Two: Deposit Deadline to First Day of Classes
 - Phase Three: First Day of Classes to Census (Day 10 of Fall Semester)
 - Phase Four: Census to Last Day of First Term
2. Participants started the discovery session by breaking down each phase into five milestones. Milestones were defined as the metaphorical gates that students needed to walk through to successfully complete the stage and could be processes, tasks, or social/emotional stages. Individuals brainstormed milestones on their own within their department and then shared them with the group. From there, the group came to a consensus on what the milestones should be. In one session, the group decided there should be seven milestones instead of five.
3. Participants were then given sticky notes – with each department given a corresponding color – and asked to write down every interaction they had with a student during each milestone, within any channel. Participants then placed their sticky notes on a piece of paper under the corresponding milestone. This allowed us to capture student interactions by milestone and department within that phase.
4. Participants then used the same sticky notes to write down everything they thought students were doing during this phase. These could be activities related to any facet of the student's life. This allowed us to capture an empathetic look at all of the activities students are balancing during each phase.
5. Participants were then asked to write down everything they thought students were thinking and feeling during this phase. Again, these could be activities related to any facet of the student's life. This allowed us to capture an empathetic look at the complexity of students' thoughts and feelings during this phase.
6. We then shifted away from the student perspective and focused on the staff perspective. We asked staff to document all of the challenges they face in supporting students during this phase. This allowed us to better understand what would need to change in order to move from the current state toward an ideal state.
7. Lastly, we asked staff to write down the next steps or solutions they felt would improve the student journey. These could include solutions to the challenges they had documented or next steps in regards to the whole process.

Student Journey Map Process Overview

The Friday wrap-up session started with staff members and invited administrators walking around the room to read the Student Journey Map discovery session sticky notes. Participants were given reflection questions to consider as they reviewed the sticky notes. Participants then discussed their reflections in small and large group discussions. Next, participants were asked to brainstorm one solution to improve the student experience. They shared their ideas with their table, and each table chose one idea to share with the larger group. Finally, the group placed those ideas on an impact matrix, which can be found on page 35.



Using the Student Journey Map

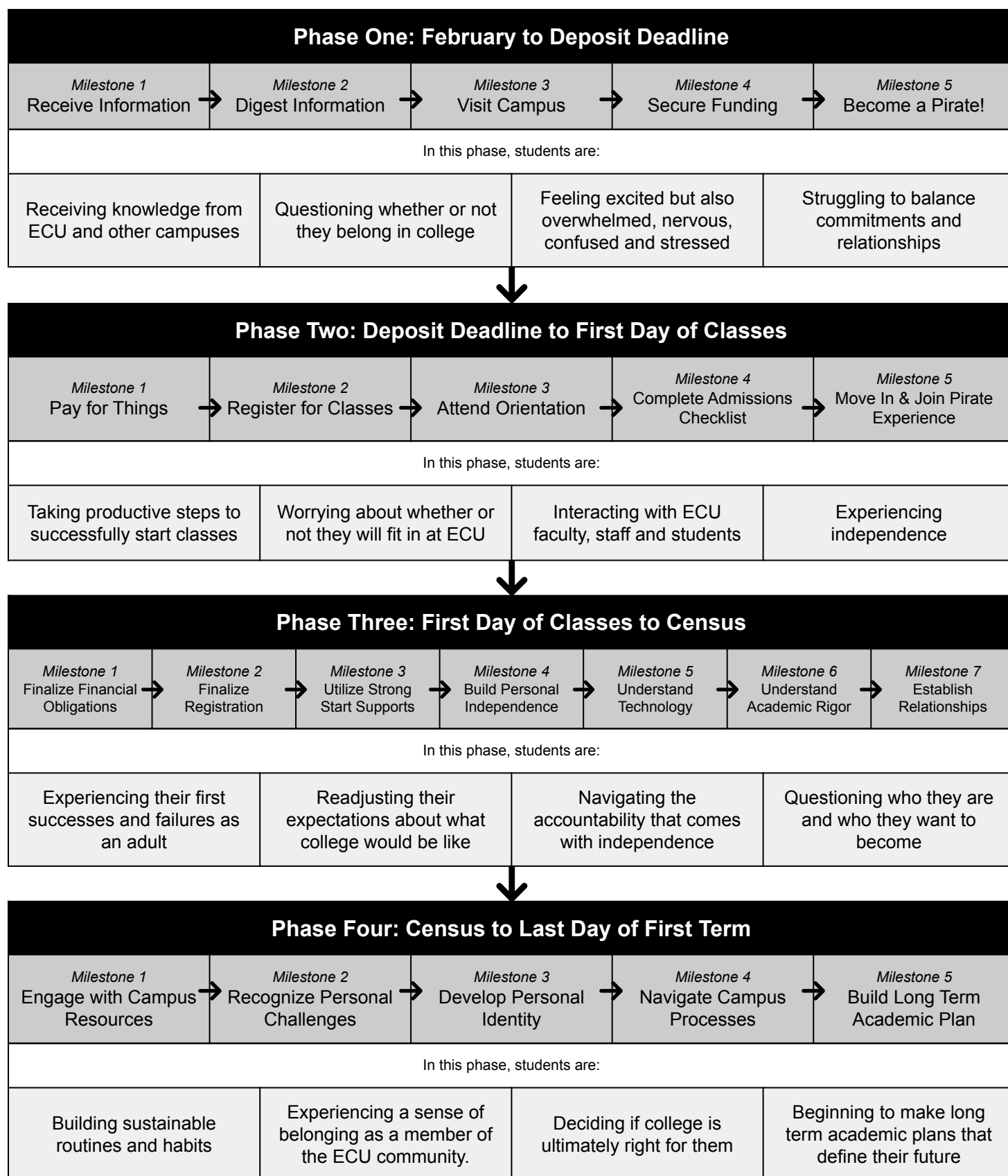
The Student Journey Map tracks development as students build a college-going identity. It is a tool used to understand the complex relationships between what students are doing and what they are thinking and feeling. The Student Journey Map is not intended as a process map, but rather a developmental map that provides an empathetic look at the student experience.

The Student Journey Map is a simple distillation of several hours of interviews and design thinking sessions. The majority of the content in this map comes from the staff who support students each day. The content was then checked against student interviews to ensure that staff understanding of the student experience matches students' lived experiences.

The Student Journey Map breaks down the journey into distinct, linear phases that have a clear start and end point. From there, we break those phases into milestones, which are not necessarily linear and can be reordered depending on the individual student. In order for a student to be successful, they have to complete all milestones, but not necessarily in the order presented in this map.

A key intention of a Student Journey Map is to provide an empathetic view of student development and progress. In each phase, we've documented four key social and emotional factors that affect students. In order to understand how to better support students, it is important to consider these factors in relation to each process.

East Carolina University Student Journey Map



Phase Overviews

The following supporting material provides greater insight into each of the four phases we mapped as part of our Student Journey Map discovery process. The following charts provide a better understanding of the student experience and the processes students navigate during each phase.

Each section follows the same structure. First, we provide charts that highlight who students are interacting with, what channel they are interacting in, and whether those interactions are related to knowledge, skills or beliefs. Next, we chart what activities students are doing by productivity and related areas of focus. Lastly, we chart what students are thinking and feeling and its relation to building a college-going identity. In all areas of this report, we provide a distillation of the sticky notes created by staff. While we do our best to represent staffs' exact language, we edit the data for clarity and succinctness.

Campus Interactions by Area

Each campus area was assigned a specific sticky note color. Using the color-coding system, this chart shows the volume of interactions by campus area. Campus areas include:

- Special Populations (Neurodiverse Student Supports [STEPP Program and Pirate Academic Success Center], Honors College, PASC Learning Communities, Gear Up NC)
- Enrollment Partners (Undergraduate Admissions, Office of the Registrar, Orientation, ECU 1 Card)
- Student Affairs Partners (Identified by Student Affairs leadership)
- Academic Advising
- Student Affairs Supports (Dean of Students, Counseling Center, COAD 1000, Office of First Year Experiences and Transitions, Career Services)
- Financial Services (Cashiers, Financial Aid, Scholarships)
- Campus Living (Freshman Programming, Living Learning Communities)
- Academic Supports (Pirate Academic Success Center, Starfish Early Alert)

Campus Interactions by Channel

We coded each interaction sticky note by the channel the interaction took place in. Participants were not asked to note the channel, so InsideTrack inferred the channel based on what was written on the sticky note. When we could not infer a channel, we coded the sticky note as "unknown."

Interactions by Knowledge, Skill or Belief

We coded each interaction sticky note by its effect on student knowledge, skill or belief.

- Sticky notes coded as "knowledge" communicate information that a student needs to know. Often, this can be awareness about a process, department or service. Common examples of knowledge include researching different colleges or majors, knowing how to pay for college, and knowing how to write midterm papers.
- Sticky notes coded as "skill" are about skills students need to be successful. Common skills include time management, communication and relationship building.
- Sticky notes coded as "belief" are centered on developing or reinforcing a student's sense of belief. Belief is focused on self-perception and underlying drivers. Common examples of beliefs include vulnerability, grit and ownership.

This data allows us to understand what is primarily communicated to students via staff interactions in each phase.

Phase Overviews

“What Are Students Doing?”

For each phase, participants were asked to write down what they thought students were doing during that phase. This included all activities in and outside of school. We coded these sticky notes based on their level of productivity related to building a college-going identity. We also coded sticky notes using InsideTrack’s Focus Areas, which include:

- Admissions: related to the admissions processes, including submitting documents and researching schools
- Academics: academic processes, including reading, writing, test-taking and study skills, as well as choosing a major and registering for courses
- School Community: building a sense of belonging through community, building relationships with staff, and peers and understanding expectations
- Commitment to Completion: personal motivation for completing school, and understanding and maintaining their “why” for being in school
- Career: recognizing the connection between graduation and career opportunities, exploring career goals and opportunities, and managing work while they are in school
- Managing Commitments: successfully balancing school with competing priorities
- Finances: paying for school and managing personal finances
- Health & Support: navigating overall mental and physical health, which includes sleep, exercise and maintaining relationships outside of school, such as family members
- Effectiveness: ability to complete tasks and meet deadlines

This provides a matrix for us to see where students are spending the majority of their time and if those activities are productive or not. Phrases in bold on this matrix indicate activities that were included on multiple sticky notes.

“What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?”

Staff members were asked to write down what students are thinking and feeling during each phase on sticky notes. We first coded each sticky note based on its influence on building a college-going identity. We coded sticky notes as affirming, mixed/neutral or detracting. From there, we created two matrices. The first codes sticky notes using the “Knowledge, Skill or Belief” (see “Interactions by Knowledge, Skill or Belief” above for definitions). This matrix allows us to see which knowledge, skill or belief contributes to or detracts from building a college-going identity. The second matrix codes thoughts and feelings based on InsideTrack’s Focus Areas (see “What Are Students Doing?” above for definitions). This matrix allows us to see which focus areas contribute to or detract from building a college-going identity. Phrases in bold on these matrixes indicate activities that were included on multiple sticky notes.

Phase One: February through Deposit Deadline (May 1st)

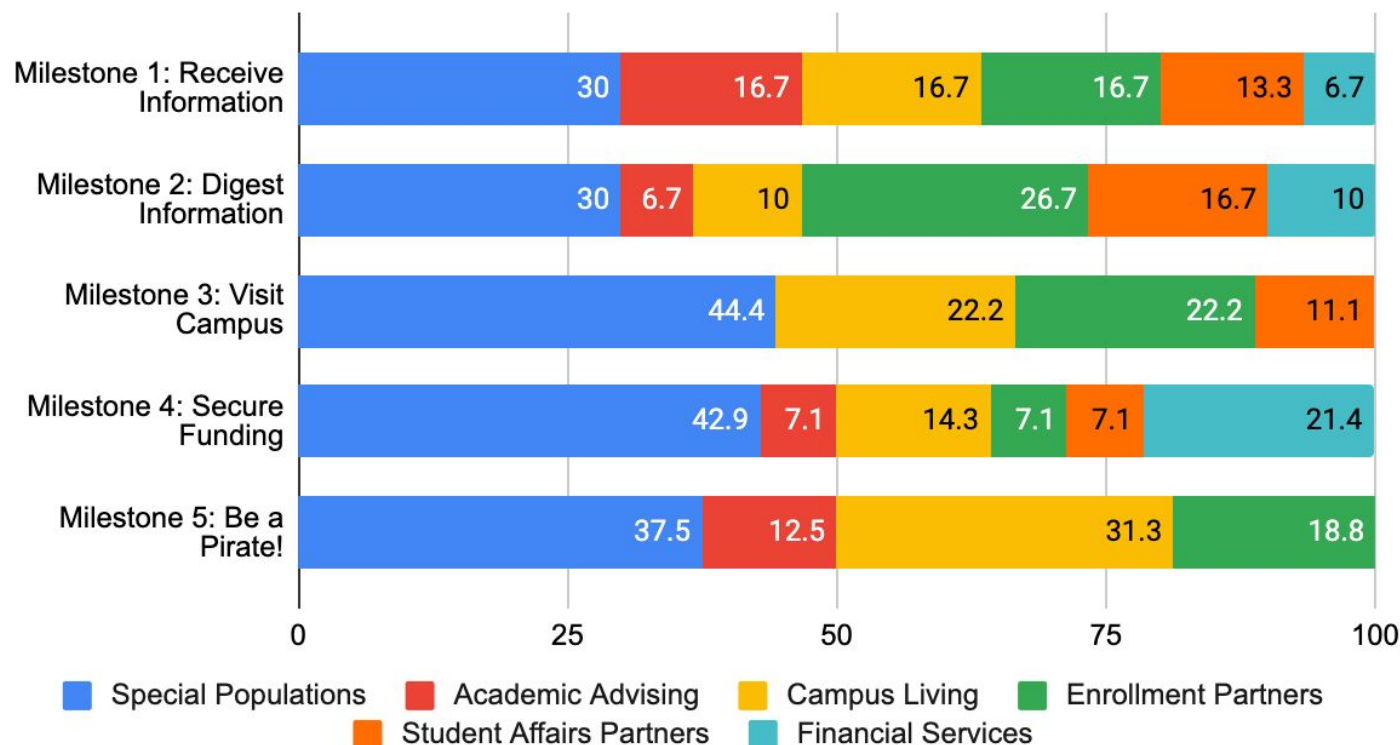
Students in Phase One may be receiving information from multiple schools about why the students should enroll at that institution. This communication is focused on schools informing students about their campus and programs. Students are struggling to manage the volume of the information they are receiving. Communications can reinforce feelings of insecurity about their future. Students are struggling to make their first adult decisions while they are actively wrapping up high school. The impact of future decision making while still in high school can leave them feeling both excited and overwhelmed.

Phase One: February to Deposit Deadline								
Milestone 1 Receive Information	→	Milestone 2 Digest Information	→	Milestone 3 Visit Campus	→	Milestone 4 Secure Funding	→	Milestone 5 Become a Pirate!
In this phase, students are:								
Receiving knowledge from ECU and other campuses	Questioning whether or not they belong in college		Feeling excited but also overwhelmed, nervous, confused and stressed		Struggling to balance commitments and relationships			

Phase One Campus Interactions

Interactions in Phase One were generally evenly spaced in each Milestone with Special Populations having the highest level of interactions. When paired with the variety of channels of communication, it does show that students may be overwhelmed by receiving numerous pieces of information from various departments. Overall, this shows us that there is a need for a cohesive communication strategy that is easily digestible by students.

Phase One Interactions by Campus Area

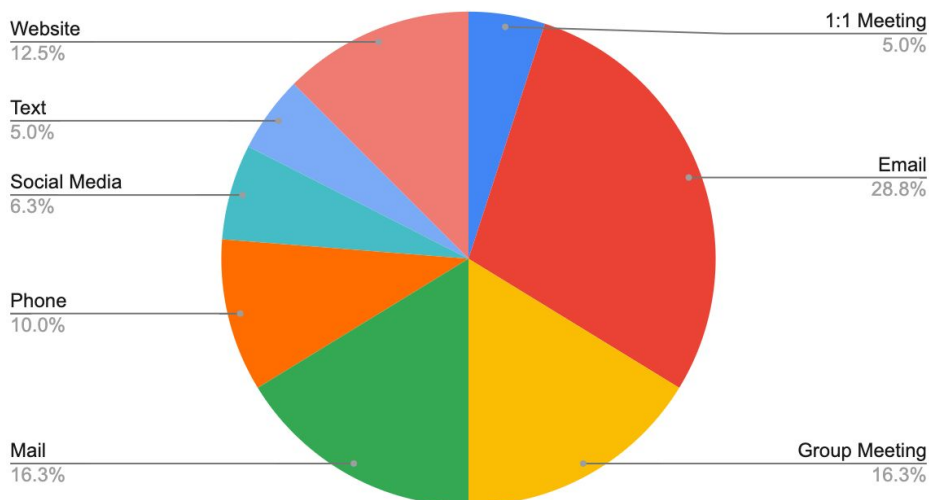


Phase One: February through Deposit Deadline (May 1st)

Phase One Campus Interactions (Continued)

During our mapping sessions, we reached a general consensus that most interactions with students took place over email. When drilling into the specific interactions, we found that there is a robust mix of interaction channels that students experience in Phase One. Email is the dominant channel of communication and many of the interactions marked as “Unknown” may be over email but this data shows us that ECU has a foundation for a multi-channel outreach approach.

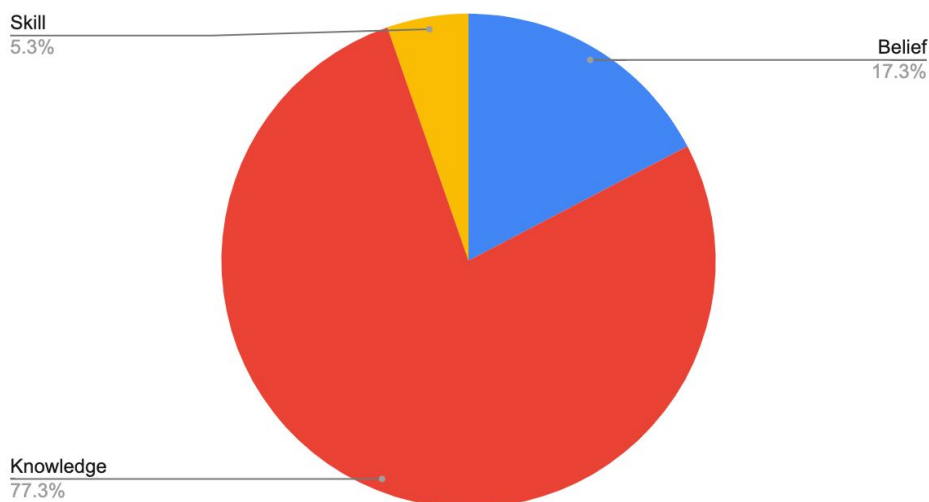
Phase One Interactions by Channel



113 interactions were captured during this phase. 80 interactions were able to be coded by channel and are represented in this chart. 33 interactions were not able to be coded and are excluded from this chart.

The majority of interactions with students were focused on providing students with knowledge about processes, programs and resources.

Phase One Interactions by Knowledge, Skill or Belief



113 interactions were captured during this phase. 75 interactions were able to be coded as a "Knowledge, Skill or Belief" and are represented in this chart. 38 interactions were not able to be coded and are excluded from this chart.

Phase One: February through Deposit Deadline (May 1st)

Phase One “What Are Students Doing?”

Overwhelmingly, ECU staff felt that students were productive during this phase. Students are simultaneously balancing wrapping up what is left of high school while making plans for college. Staff felt that the greatest challenge wasn't competing priorities but instead students' ability to follow through and be effective in completing enrollment tasks and meeting deadlines.

	Productive	Neutral	Unproductive
Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for high school graduation • Studying for high school finals • Trying to finish high school courses • Deciding on a major 		
Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turning in documents • Preparing to register • Figuring out plans to visit ECU campus • Visiting multiple campuses • Attending admitted students event or campus tour • Looking at social ECU media 		
Career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working • Finding a campus job or local job • Taking a career assessment • Exploring potential majors and careers 		
Commitment to Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buying a t-shirt • Deciding where to attend • Making a pros and cons lists of each opportunity • Comparing ECU to other schools • Looking for a good scene or fit 		
School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in high school extracurriculars • Prepping for move in • Visiting local restaurants • Posting on social media using ECU hashtags • Finding a roommate • Connecting with other students and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posting to social media • Wondering “What is there to do in Greenville?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting ready for prom

Phase One: February through Deposit Deadline (May 1st)

Phase One “What Are Students Doing?” (Continued)

	Productive	Neutral	Unproductive
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding a hotel room to stay Reading our emails Reading and responding to texts Reading ECU website 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needing parents to refocus them Ignoring Avoiding Feeling stuck and can't get into each portal for each school Trying to remember unique logins for each campus Not communicating with parents Not engaging with ECU emails Unsubscribing from texts
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paying deposits Trying to understand the FAFSA Asking parents for money and help Appealing for more money Reviewing financial aid package and scholarship awards Accepting awards 		
Health & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talking to friends Getting advice Sharing thoughts and ideas with friends Making choices with friends 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crying Depending on parents for help
Managing Commitments			

Phase One: February through Deposit Deadline (May 1st)

Phase One “What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?”

While staff felt that students were “doing” productive activities towards building a college going identity, staff also felt that students’ thoughts and feelings were detracting. Specifically, students struggle with the belief that college is the right place for them. Students also lacked the skills to manage feelings of stress and may feel overwhelmed and confused around higher education processes.

	Affirming	Neutral/Mixed	Detracting
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I understand the total cost of higher ed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which res hall is the nicest? How do I to file the FAFSA? How do I get more money? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confused Unsure Confused about the process as a first generation student Panicked about finances How do I determine the best fit for my major and career? Why are other schools are giving me more money? Worried about funds
Skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I find a campus job? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I find a part-time job? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally overwhelmed Overwhelmed with all the information I’m receiving Overwhelmed with the volume of emails and communications Stressed
Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I’m excited about the future. Free Happy Proud The food is good! Committed Excited 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxious about meeting new people Guilty Homesick I won’t come if you don’t give me more money. Disappointed because ECU isn’t my first choice Nervous about academics Nervous Nervous to be around other students Scared about leaving home Unsure Worried about making the right/wrong choice Disappointed Disappointment that financial aid isn’t sufficient Pressure Regret Where do my parents want me to go? Where are my friends or boyfriend/girlfriend going?

Phase One: February through Deposit Deadline (May 1st)

Phase One “What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?” (Continued)

A common assumption would be that in Phase One, detracting thoughts and feelings would be about the admissions process and academics. ECU staff felt that students struggle with commitment to college and to an institution. Additionally, they struggle with leaving their family and friend groups which provide ongoing support.

	Affirming	Neutral/Mixed	Detracting
Academics & Admissions			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nervous about academics
Career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I find a campus job? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I find a part-time job? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I determine the best fit for my major and career?
Commitment to Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm excited about the future. Proud The food is good! Committed Excited 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsure Disappointed because ECU isn't my first choice Worried about making the right/wrong choice Disappointed Disappointment that financial aid isn't sufficient Regret
School Community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which res hall is the nicest? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxious about meeting new people Nervous to be around other students
Effectiveness			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confused Confused about the process as a first generation student
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I understand the total cost of higher ed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I to file the FAFSA? How do I get more money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panicked about finances Why are other schools are giving me more money? Worried about funds I won't come if you don't give me more money.
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free Happy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guilty Homesick Nervous Scared about leaving home Pressure Where do my parents want me to go? Where are my friends or boyfriend/girlfriend going?
Managing Commitments			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally overwhelmed Overwhelmed with all the information I'm receiving Overwhelmed with the volume of emails and communications Stressed

Phase Two: Deposit Deadline to First Day of Classes

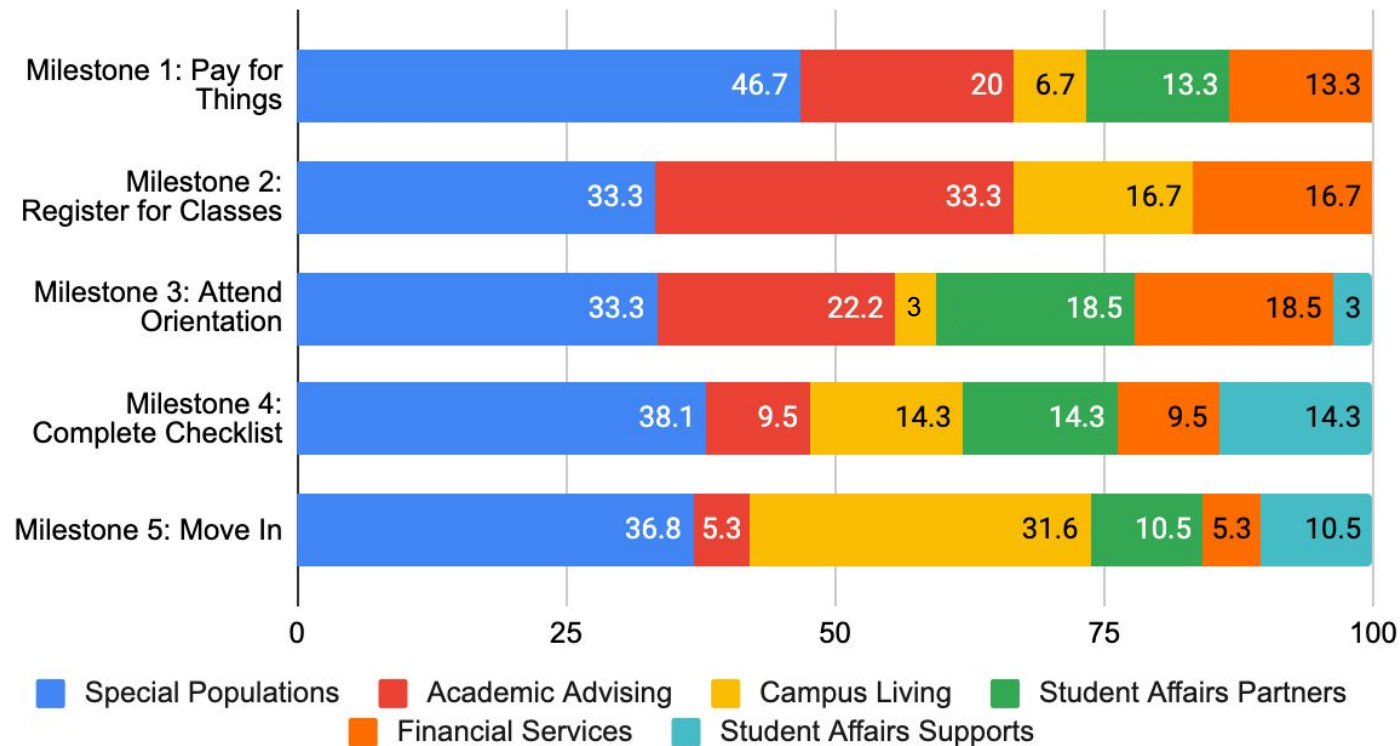
In Phase Two, students ultimately commit financially to ECU and begin classes. While they commit financially, students are still developing their college going identity and their belief that they belong. Students start to join the ECU community through orientation, campus events and move in where they build initial relationships.

Phase Two: Deposit Deadline to First Day of Classes				
Milestone 1 Pay for Things	→ Milestone 2 Register for Classes	→ Milestone 3 Attend Orientation	→ Milestone 4 Complete Admissions Checklist	→ Milestone 5 Move In & Join Pirate Experience
In this phase, students are:				
Taking productive steps to successfully start classes	Worrying about whether or not they will fit in at ECU	Interacting with ECU faculty, staff and students	Experiencing independence	

Phase Two Campus Interactions

Special Populations account for the largest percentage of interactions followed by Academic Advising and then Campus Living. As with Phase One, it seems that students may be getting disparate communication from various departments which could contribute to being overwhelmed as they seek to understand which communication is vital.

Phase Two Interactions by Campus Area

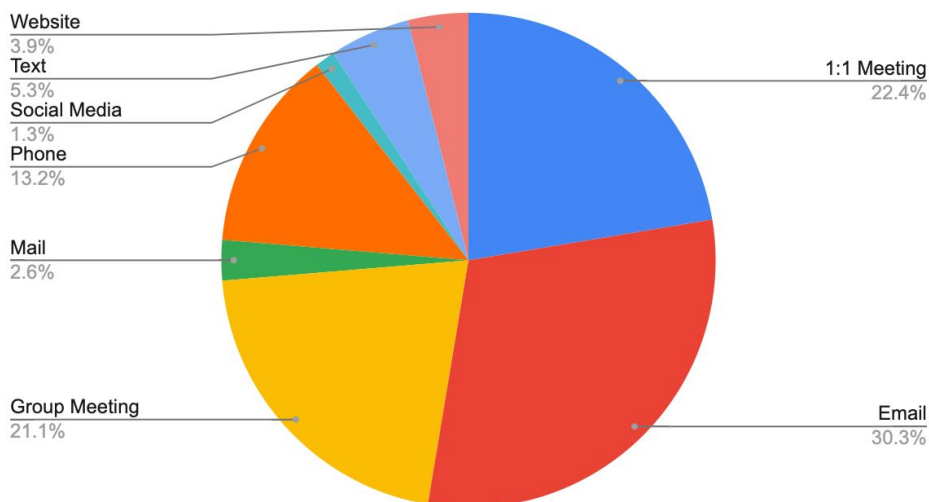


Phase Two: Deposit Deadline to First Day of Classes

Phase Two Campus Interactions (Continued)

Email and meetings are the most prevalent channels in Phase Two. Meetings combined equal 32.4% of interactions with students which makes sense as students begin to arrive on campus. Social media, which can be a key channel for building belonging, made up just 1% of interactions.

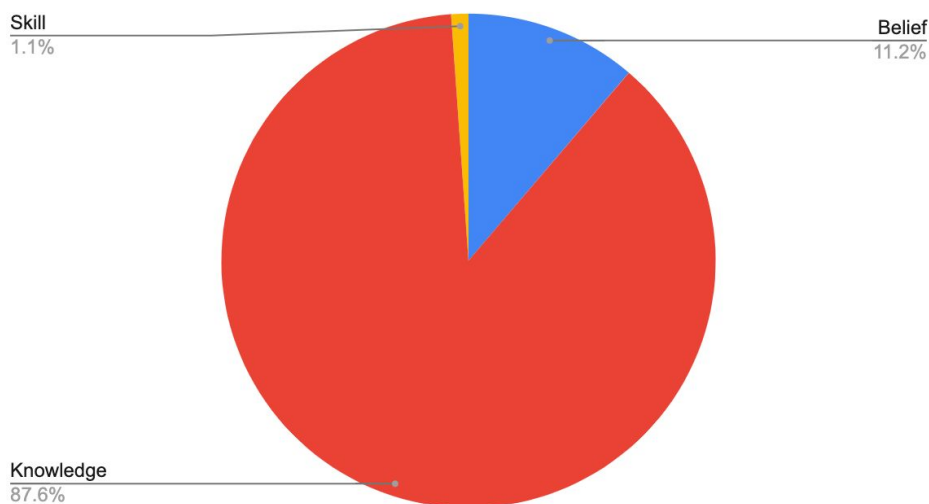
Phase Two Interactions by Channel



102 interactions were captured during this phase. 89 interactions were able to be coded by channel and are represented in this chart. 13 interactions were not able to be coded and are excluded from this chart.

As in Phase One, knowledge continued to dominate what was communicated to students in interactions in Phase Two.

Phase Two Interactions by Knowledge, Skill or Belief



102 interactions were captured during this phase. 76 interactions were able to be coded as a "Knowledge, Skill or Belief" and are represented in this chart. 26 interactions were not able to be coded and are excluded from this chart.

Phase Two: Deposit Deadline to First Day of Classes

Phase Two “What Are Students Doing?”

While ECU staff still thought that students were primarily taking productive steps to build a college going identity, students were beginning to engage in more neutral to unproductive activities than in Phase One. The majority of these tasks were related to existing relationships with family and friends as students prepared to leave home for the first time. The majority of productive activities were related to enrollment and academic processes.

	Productive	Neutral	Unproductive
Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing a major • Registering for classes • Attending orientation • Finding classrooms • Getting ready for 1st day of class • Getting schedule • Making phone calls to campus departments • Picking up 1 Card • Trying to understand Higher Ed jargon and processes 		
Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making phone calls to process paperwork • Submitting final documents • Uploading 1 Card photo • Getting needed immunizations • Sending transcripts 		
Career		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working 	
Commitment to Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing high school • Touring ECU campus • Making final decisions about which college to attend 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning life direction
School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking advice of other students • Engaging on campus • Meeting their roommate • Moving in campus housing • Not moving in because they live locally • Buying college and dorm room supplies • Packing 		

Phase Two: Deposit Deadline to First Day of Classes

Phase Two “What Are Students Doing?” (*Continued*)

	Productive	Neutral	Unproductive
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchasing books & classroom supplies • Completing checklist • Checking their ECU email 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being upset about classes being full • Not setting up or checking voicemail box • Not checking their ECU email
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting financial aid • Applying for scholarships & financial aid • Asking family for money for college • Paying deposits 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watching my bank balance drop
Health & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saying “goodbye” to friends and family • Preparing to move away from home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending graduation parties • Hanging with friends • Dealing with parents or guardians • Writing thank you notes for grad gifts • Attending prom • Breaking up with boyfriend or girlfriend • Going on vacation with family or friends • Receiving graduation gifts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking care of siblings • Playing video games
Managing Commitments			

Phase Two: Deposit Deadline to First Day of Classes

Phase Two “What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?”

Students continue to wrestle with building a sense of belonging in Phase Two. Students grapple with how to build new relationships while maintaining old ones. ECU staff felt that students are balancing mixed emotions and often feeling anxious and excited. All of this can contribute to feelings of being overwhelmed which some students may have limited experience navigating.

	Affirming	Neutral/Mixed	Detracting
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who do I want to be in the future? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I in the right major? Where are my classes located? Confused Confused at our ECU specific terminology How do I understand a college schedule? How am I going to pay back my loans? How am I going to pay for all of this?
Skill		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can't wait to get my refund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will I make friends? What if I don't like my roommate? Upset at full classes What if I forget to do something? Overwhelmed during book buying process Worried about finances Stressed Overwhelmed Time is not on their side
Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can't wait for the first home football game! Excited Excited about freedom and to be away from home Elated Relief Freedom Happy Hopeful I'm escaping the trap of my hometown. Independence Proud to be a high school graduate Thankful for opportunity to get an education Excited about high school graduation Thinking about how this will be different than high school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do my parents want from me versus what do I want? Who am I? Who do I want to be? Mixed emotions (ex. nervous excitement) Nostalgia I have to make lots of decisions. I have lots of things to do. What will be on my own be like? What will living with a roommate be like? What will I do with my Summer? What will college be like? What can I expect? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The parties are going to be awesome!" "Which beer should I try first?" Why does everyone else have it all together? Am I sure I'm declaring the right major? Am I ready to leave home? Why is Freshman parking so far away? I hope my roommate is normal. Will I be safe? Will I fit in? Will I make friends? Disappointment because ECU isn't my first choice I have way too many choices. Do I want to move away from home? Why am I doing this? Anxiety Nervous Conflicted about leaving Fearful that they may let my family down Homesick Panic Lonely Loss Missing friends and family Not ready Out of place Ill prepared Sad Scared Worried Will I be successful? I just want to enjoy my summer. Frustrated Guilty What will my family do without me here? Will I succeed?

Phase Two: Deposit Deadline to First Day of Classes

Phase Two “What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?” (Continued)

Many of the students’ mixed thoughts and feelings are tied to their commitment to being in college and to ECU. This is compounded by having to navigate the evolution of existing relationships while building an independent adult identity. At this point in the student journey, students appear less concerned with the process of being in school and more concerned about how they will fit in and belong.

	Affirming	Neutral/Mixed	Detracting
Academics & Admissions			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I in the right major? • Where are my classes located? • Confused at of our ECU specific terminology • How do I understand a college schedule? • Overwhelmed during book buying process • Am I sure I'm declaring the right major?
Career			
Commitment to Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do I want to be in the future? • Excited • Elated • Relief • Freedom • Happy • Hopeful • Proud to be a high school graduate • Thankful for opportunity to get an education • Excited about high school graduation • Thinking about how this will be different than high school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do my parents want from me versus what do I want? • Who am I? • Who do I want to be? • Mixed emotions (ex. nervous excitement) • Nostalgia • What will college be like? • What can I expect? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disappointment because ECU isn't my first choice • I have way too many choices. • Why am I doing this? • Anxiety • Nervous • Not ready • Will I be successful? • Will I succeed?
School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can't wait for the first home football game! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will living with a roommate be like? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will I make friends? • What if I don't like my roommate? • "The parties are going to be awesome!" • "Which beer should I try first?" • Why is Freshman parking so far away? • I hope my roommate is normal.

Phase Two: Deposit Deadline to First Day of Classes

Phase Two “What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?” (Continued)

	Affirming	Neutral/Mixed	Detracting
School Community (Continued)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will I be safe? • Will I fit in? • Will I make friends? • Out of place
Effectiveness		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have to make lots of decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confused • Upset at full classes • What if I forget to do something? • Why does everyone else have it all together? • Frustrated • Ill prepared
Finances		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can't wait to get my refund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How am I going to pay back my loans? • How am I going to pay for all of this? • Worried about finances
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excited about freedom and to be away from home • I'm escaping the trap of my hometown. • Independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will be on my own be like? • What will I do with my Summer? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I ready to leave home? • Do I want to move away from home? • Conflicted about leaving • Fearful that they may let my family down • Homesick • Lonely • Missing friends and family • Guilty • What will my family do without me here? • Loss • I just want to enjoy my summer. • Sad • Scared • Terrified • Worried • Panic
Managing Commitments		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have lots of things to do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stressed • Overwhelmed • Time is not on their side

Phase Three: First Day of Classes to Census

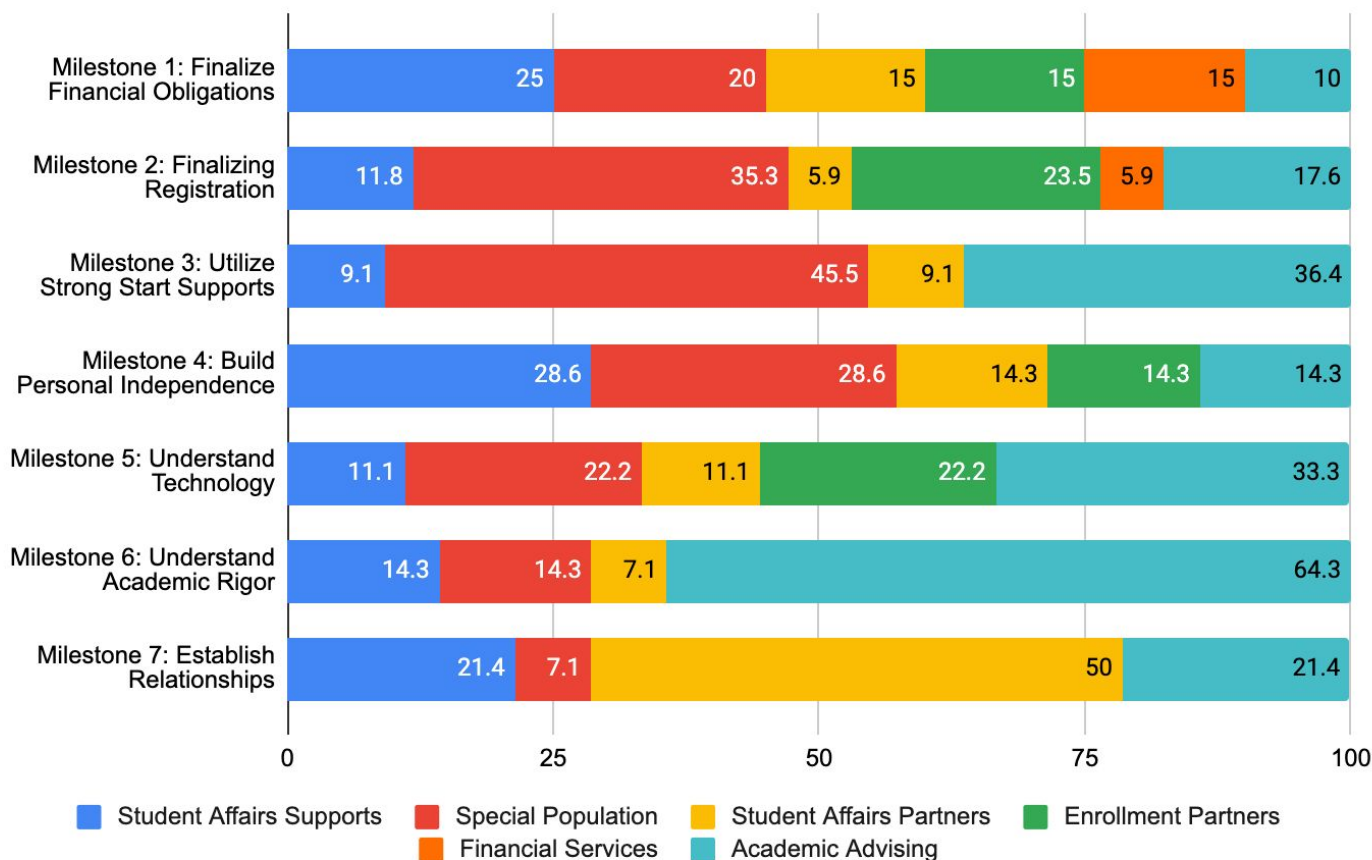
In Phase Three, students get their first taste of the highs and lows of independence. Initial relationships with new friends and roommates are tested. They often experience failure or disappointment. In this phase, students begin to question their decisions while adjusting their expectations as they get a better understanding of what the reality of being an ECU student is really like.

Phase Three: First Day of Classes to Census						
Milestone 1 Finalize Financial Obligations	→	Milestone 2 Finalize Registration	→	Milestone 3 Utilize Strong Start Supports	→	Milestone 4 Build Personal Independence
						Milestone 5 Understand Technology
						Milestone 6 Understand Academic Rigor
						Milestone 7 Establish Relationships
In this phase, students are:						
Experiencing their first successes and failures as an adult		Readjusting their expectations about what college would be like		Navigating the accountability that comes with independence		Questioning who they are and who they want to become

Phase Three Campus Interactions

Interactions with Academic Advising are greatest in Phase Three. Special Populations continue to have a large number of interactions with students as in the other phases. As students begin to establish relationships on campus they also begin to have more interactions with Student Affairs Partners.

Phase Three Interactions by Campus Area

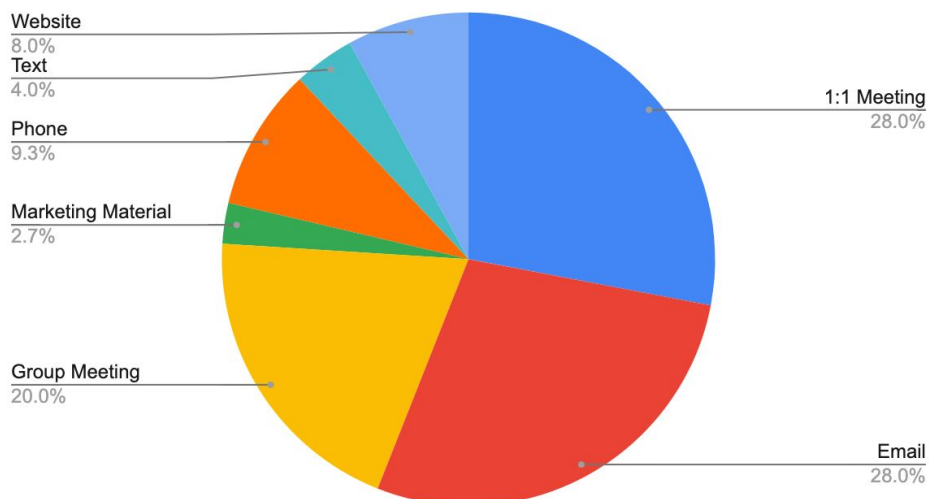


Phase Three: First Day of Classes to Census

Phase Three Campus Interactions (Continued)

Phase Three interactions are dominated by one on one interactions through email and in meetings. In Phase Three, we see the greatest amount of potentially tailored communication. This makes sense as students begin to settle in on campus and begin to experience their first successes and challenges.

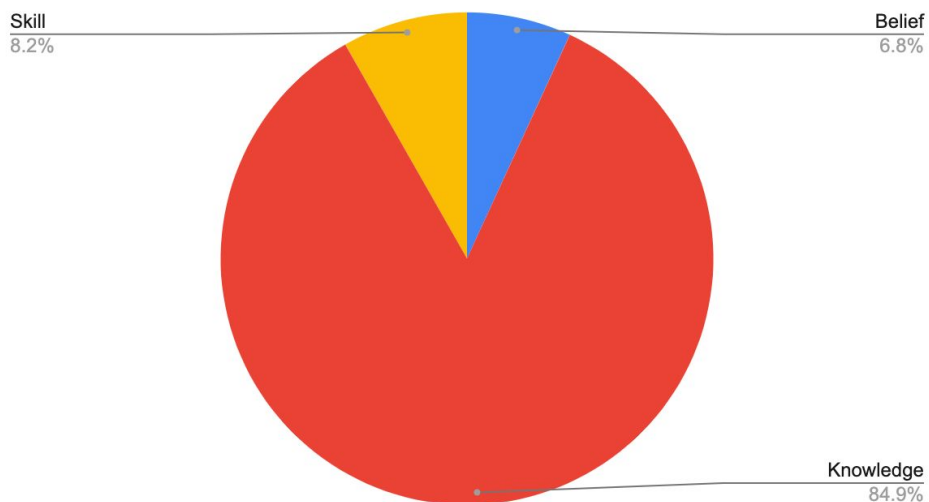
Phase Three Interactions by Channel



92 interactions were captured during this phase. 75 interactions were able to be coded by channel and are represented in this chart. 17 interactions were not able to be coded and are excluded from this chart.

As we'll see later in this report, students are wrestling with their belief in their college going identity in Phase Three. Interactions with ECU staff are still centered on knowledge as they are in all phases of the student journey. In fact, the smallest portion of interactions centered around building belief happen in Phase Three as compared to all other phases.

Phase Three Interactions by Knowledge, Skill or Belief



92 interactions were captured during this phase. 73 interactions were able to be coded as a "Knowledge, Skill or Belief" and are represented in this chart. 19 interactions were not able to be coded and are excluded from this chart.

Phase Three: First Day of Classes to Census

Phase Three “What Are Students Doing?”

In Phase Three, students are focused on balancing academic responsibilities while establishing a community connection at ECU. This requires them to learn to manage their multiple commitments and campus roles in order to be successful. In Phase Three, we begin to see traditional unproductive college behaviors emerge which have the potential to derail a student's ability to focus on school as a top priority.

	Productive	Neutral	Unproductive
Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filling out DSS forms for class • Finalizing Schedule • Finding their classes • Completing homework • Taking exams • Interacting with professors • Learning the drop/add deadlines • Meeting with advisor • Tutoring • Walking around campus • Go to class • Going to class • Buying books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going home for Labor Day • Changing their major 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing first assignments • Struggling with education technology
Career		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for job • Working 	
Commitment to Completion			
School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding social groups • Joining clubs • Getting Pirate gear • Going to tailgates • Getting football tickets • Learning dining system • Learning new technology • Bonding with roommate • Making friends • Going to new organization meetings • Navigating living in a dorm • Eating in dining halls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going downtown • Discovering Starbucks truck • Going to Sup Dogs • Having awkward conversations with roommates • Joining sorority or fraternity • Decorating dorm room • Shopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going to their first party • Looking for a new roommate • Not getting along with their roommate
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoying syllabus week • Exploring Greenville • Figuring out transit • Finding class locations • Realizing they can sell their books • Using Pirate Bucks 		

Phase Three: First Day of Classes to Census

Phase Three “What Are Students Doing?” (Continued)

	Productive	Neutral	Unproductive
Finances			
Health & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building healthy habits • Saying goodbye to friends • Building a new routine and schedule • Sleeping • Working out at the Rec Center • Calling their parents • Maintaining relationships • Learning how to interact with strangers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing first breakup • Going home for weekends • Contacting friends at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People watching • Using social media including Tik Tok • Playing video games • Not calling parents • Dealing with stressful relationships back home • Watching Netflix
Managing Commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buying a parking permit • Buying books • Emailing professors • Learning to balance school and work • Learning time managements skills • Preparing for auditions prep • Learning to manage free time 		

Phase Three: First Day of Classes to Census

Phase Three “What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?”

Students’ thoughts and feelings in Phase Three remain similar to those in Phase Two. Students’ belief that they belong in college is bolstered as they make new friends and achieve success in their coursework. It is also hindered as they continue to experience rejection and failure for the first time. Many students begin to experience the joys and challenges that come with independence.

	Affirming	Neutral/Mixed	Detracting
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is easy. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is this class for me? Am I ready for my first exam? Did I pick the right major? Confused
Skill		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I even study? How do I make alone time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distracted Anxious about taking an exam How will I make friends and meet people? Stressed Overwhelmed There are too many options and choices. Panicked How do I deal with peer pressure? Disappointed
Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excited about making friends Excited for a new environment I love my roommate. Excited to explore identity (ex. coming out, transitioning, finding new identity) Defining personal beliefs Feeling confident Freedom Happy Happy What is my tolerance for taking risks? Independence I have finally arrived! Excited Elated Proud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do my personal beliefs match up with my family’s beliefs? Guilt and relief about leaving home What is my long term objective? The world is a really big place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I in the right major? I can’t understand my professor. What if I fail this course? I dislike roommate. Why am I not making friends? Do I belong at ECU? Do I belong in college? Feeling like an imposter I’m not smart enough to do this. Why did I do this? What if I run out of money? Doubt Lonely Lost Afraid of failure What is wrong with me? Worried about family Sad Anxious I can’t handle my homework. Fear of missing out. What are others thinking about me? Homesick Insecure Nervous I miss high school.

Phase Three: First Day of Classes to Census

Phase Three “What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?” (Continued)

In Phase Three students begin to question decisions they made as they began school. Academically, they may experience unexpected challenges that cause them to question their major. Socially, they may experience rejection from friends or dislike their roommate causing them to question their sense of belonging. As they ask these big questions of themselves, they begin to question their commitment to being in college and earning a degree.

	Affirming	Neutral/Mixed	Detracting
Academics & Admissions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I even study? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is this class for me? Am I ready for my first exam? Did I pick the right major? Anxious about taking an exam I can't understand my professor. What if I fail this course? I'm not smart enough to do this. I can't handle my homework.
Career			
Commitment to Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Happy Independence I have finally arrived! Excited Elated Proud Feeling confident Freedom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is my long term objective? The world is a really big place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disappointed Lost Doubt Afraid of failure Do I belong at ECU? Do I belong in college? Feeling like an imposter Why did I do this? I miss high school.
School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excited about making friends I love my roommate. Excited for a new environment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will I make friends and meet people? How do I deal with peer pressure? I dislike roommate. Why am I not making friends? Lonely Fear of missing out What are others thinking about me?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is easy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I make alone time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distracted There are too many options and choices.

Phase Three: First Day of Classes to Census

Phase Three “What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?” (*Continued*)

	Affirming	Neutral/Mixed	Detracting
Finances			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What if I run out of money?
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excited to explore identity (ex. coming out, transitioning, finding new identity) Defining personal beliefs What is my tolerance for taking risks? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do my personal beliefs match up with my family's beliefs? Guilt and relief about leaving home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is wrong with me? Worried about family Sad Anxious Homesick Insecure Nervous
Managing Commitments			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stressed Overwhelmed

Phase Four: Census to Last Day of First Term

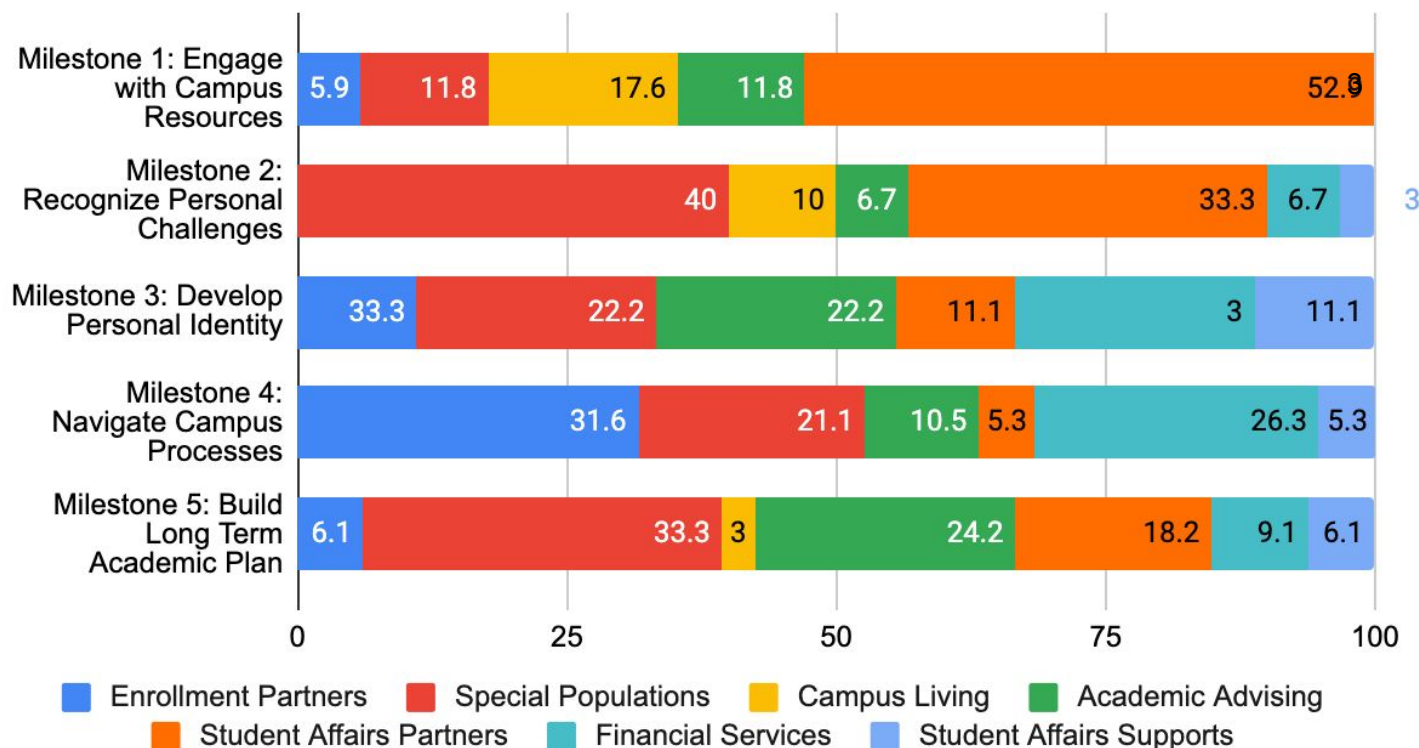
Students display resilience and grit in Phase Four. In this phase, students build routines and belonging. They decide whether or not ECU is right for them. If so, they map out long term plans for the future. Students explore and broaden their identity. In Phase Four, students transition from asking “who am I” to asking “how do I become the person I want to be”?

Phase Four: Census to Last Day of First Term								
<i>Milestone 1</i> Engage with Campus Resources	→	<i>Milestone 2</i> Recognize Personal Challenges	→	<i>Milestone 3</i> Develop Personal Identity	→	<i>Milestone 4</i> Navigate Campus Processes	→	<i>Milestone 5</i> Build Long Term Academic Plan
In this phase, students are:								
Building sustainable routines and habits		Experience a sense of belonging as a member of the ECU community.		Deciding if college is ultimately right for them		Beginning to make long term academic plans that define their future		

Phase Four Campus Interactions

The bulk of interactions were with Academic Advising teams as well as Special Populations teams. Interestingly, as students finalize their financial plan for school, interactions were relatively evenly spaced across departments. As students experience the academic rigor of college, they are most likely to interact with Academic Advising. As students focus on relationship building, they interact heavily with Student Affairs Partners.

Phase Four Interactions by Campus Area

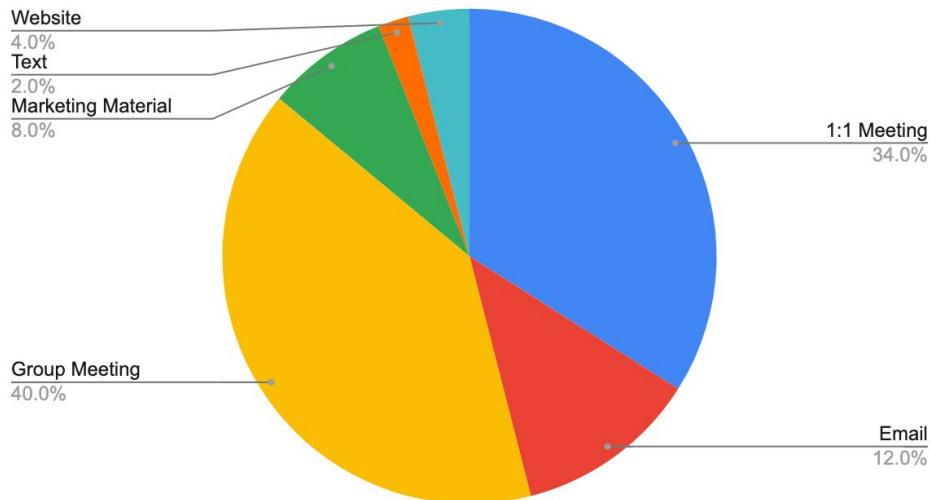


Phase Four: Census to Last Day of First Term

Phase Four Campus Interactions (*Continued*)

Interactions in Phase Four primarily were held in either one on one or group meetings. The use of email greatly decreased in this phase. Given that students are on campus, this seems appropriate.

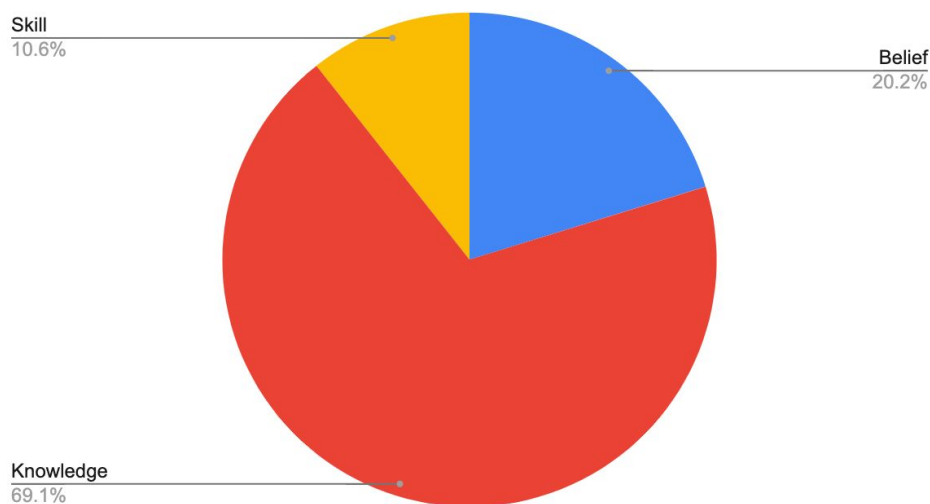
Phase Four Interactions by Channel



101 interactions were captured during this phase. 50 interactions were able to be coded by channel and are represented in this chart. 51 interactions were not able to be coded and are excluded from this chart.

As with all other phases, knowledge remains what is most often communicated to students. The percentage of interactions reinforcing belief in a college going identity is largest in Phase Four as compared to other phases.

Phase Four Interactions by Knowledge, Skill or Belief



101 interactions were captured during this phase. 94 interactions were able to be coded as a "Knowledge, Skill or Belief" and are represented in this chart. 7 interactions were not able to be coded and are excluded from this chart.

Phase Four: Census to Last Day of First Term

Phase Four “What Are Students Doing?”

In Phase Four, ECU staff felt that students begin to hit their stride by better understanding how to manage their new academic responsibilities and social roles. Students begin to build routines and understand how to use resources to navigate challenges. They also navigate the challenge of balancing life at ECU with a life back home.

	Productive	Neutral	Unproductive
Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring possible majors • Visiting Faculty office hours • Doing homework • Learning how to study • Meeting with advisor • Picking a major • Completing a long term plan to complete their major • Planning their next term • Registering for classes • Studying • Taking exams • Using tutoring • Using accommodations • Using study skills coaching • Using the library • Completing assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with academic challenges • Dropping classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having conflicts with professors
Career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying for jobs • Working 	
Commitment to Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring future plans (ex. graduate school, military, study abroad) • Feeling self-realized • Trying new experiences (ex. new food, new places) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciding if college is right for them • Deciding if they will be returning after break • Asking if they fit in
School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting involved in campus events • Attending social gatherings • Building relationships • Engaging in campus community building • Finding roommates • Going to football games • Initiation/onboarding to organizations • Interpersonal relationships • Joining social groups (ex. fraternities, sororities, clubs) • Learning about campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining social groups (ex. fraternities, sororities) • Socializing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having conflict with others • Going to parties

Phase Four: Census to Last Day of First Term

Phase Four “What Are Students Doing?” (Continued)

	Productive	Neutral	Unproductive
School Community (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living with roommate • Looking at off-campus housing • Managing new living spaces and cultural differences • Making new friends • Navigating relationships • Trying to make friends • Volunteering 		
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for help • Checking emails • Commuting to campus • Identifying and using necessary campus resources • Learning their limits • Re-engaging after breaks in academic calendar • Seeking resources • Signing leases for next school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusting to independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procrastinating
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigating the FAFSA • Budgeting 		
Health & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calling parents • Defining their normal • Eating healthy • Getting exercise • Embracing sexuality and gender identity • Learning about themselves • Sleeping • Practicing self care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crying in staff member's offices • Going home for breaks • Managing balance between school and family life • Managing romantic relationships • Shopping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Binge-watching their favorite show • Dealing with traumatic situations • Managing family obligations • Feeling at home • Not sleeping • Engaging in social media (ex. Tik Tok) • Stressing out • Playing Video games • Experiencing first major heartbreaks
Managing Commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending class • Learning time management • Managing a new schedule • Balancing academic and social responsibilities 		

Phase Four: Census to Last Day of First Term

Phase Four “What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?”

ECU staff felt that in Phase Four students develop a greater sense of belonging compared to the first three phases. Students begin to form their individual identity as they successfully navigate successes and failures. Students also start to understand the emotional toll that comes from having a life at ECU and a life back home. Developing an adult identity while completing their first term of school can create anxiety and stress which they may not yet have developed the skills to navigate.

	Affirming	Neutral/Mixed	Detracting
Knowledge		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I on track to graduate? I need help but don't know who to ask. Should I drop a course? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm struggling with my course. Who is my advisor?
Skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My boyfriend/girlfriend and I are doing really well. I really like my roommate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I communicate with my professor? How do I study? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety Anxiety over grades Anxiety over money I've gained weight. Intimidated I've having a hard time concentrating. I'm too nervous to ask for help. Overwhelmed Stressed
Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted Belonging Confident Connected Excited Finally, someone understands me. I'm proud to be the first in my family to go to college. Freedom I can do this on my own I'm proud of the grade I earned. Independence I feel present. Proud I like who I am becoming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navigating relationships with other people is complicated. Should I change my major? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I smart enough? Angry Do I fit here? I don't want to go back home. Exhausted I feel like a failure. My family obligations are too much for me to handle with school. My family is putting too much pressure on me. Homesick Is college right for me? Is ECU the right college for me? Lonely This is too hard! Who am I? Where do I belong? Will I make it through finals?

Phase Four: Census to Last Day of First Term

Phase Four “What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?” (*Continued*)

In Phase Four, many students begin to form a stronger commitment to ECU and to completing a college degree. Others may question their academic ability and experience frustration with academic processes. Students start to feel like members of the ECU community which contributes to their sense of belonging.

	Affirming	Neutral/Mixed	Detracting
Academics & Admissions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I on track to graduate? • Should I drop a course? • How do I communicate with my professor? • How do I study? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I’m struggling with my course. • Who is my advisor? • Anxiety over grades • Should I change my major? • Am I smart enough? • Will I make it through finals?
Career			
Commitment to Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excited • Confident • I’m proud to be the first in my family to go to college. • Freedom • I can do this on my own • I’m proud of the grade I earned. • Independence • I feel present. • Proud • I like who I am becoming. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angry • I feel like a failure. • Is college right for me? • Is ECU the right college for me? • Lonely • This is too hard! • Who am I? • Where do I belong?
School Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My boyfriend/girlfriend and I are doing really well. • I really like my roommate. • Accepted • Belonging • Connected • Finally, someone understands me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigating relationships with other people is complicated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimidated • Do I fit here?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is easy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I make alone time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distracted • There are too many options and choices.
Finances			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What if I run out of money?

Phase Four: Census to Last Day of First Term

Phase Four “What Are Students Thinking/Feeling?” (*Continued*)

	Affirming	Neutral/Mixed	Detracting
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Excited to explore identity (ex. coming out, transitioning, finding new identity)Defining personal beliefsWhat is my tolerance for taking risks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">How do my personal beliefs match up with my family's beliefs?Guilt and relief about leaving home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">What is wrong with me?Worried about familySadAnxiousHomesickInsecureNervous
Managing Commitments			<ul style="list-style-type: none">StressedOverwhelmed

Impact Matrix

On our last day together, we asked ECU staff to walk around the room and read all of the notes they had created that reflected the interactions they had with students, what students were doing, what they were thinking and feeling as well as the challenges staff faced and the potential solutions. We asked ECU staff members to brainstorm on their own one solution that could be implemented to improve the student journey. Then, staff shared their ideas in small table groups where each table picked one idea. Each table shared their idea. As a group, we plotted them on an impact matrix so we could identify the level of effort and impact each idea had.

We came away with 7 ideas that all fit within the “high impact” quadrant with varying degrees of effort required. We’ve taken these ideas and integrated them into our recommendations which follow. As leaders consider how to move forward in order to improve the student journey, we suggest starting with these seven ideas. Staff were visibly engaged and encouraged by this process. They also demonstrated support of these ideas. The best ideas come from within a team and we believe each of these ideas would bring great impact to ECU students.

Low Effort		High Effort			
<div>Campus Visits</div> <div>-Transportation - Pirates Aboard OR School Day</div> <div>Sponsor Specific Regions</div>		Implement formal communication plan		Faculty & staff coach for every 1st year student	High Impact
		Weekly student communication coordination committee		Cross train or one stop shop customer service	
		Creation of App - Checklist of items - Personalized info (ex. advising) - How to's for navigating systems - Coordinate communication, push notifications	Peer Coaching or mentoring so students have a “contact” to guide them and answer questions		
					Low Impact

Recommendations

Prioritize the Student Experience

The student experience should remain at the root of every process and decision. Staff and faculty will need to show positive regard and empathy as students apply, matriculate, and pursue their degrees. With each task and each phase, ECU should ask, “Is this approach/phase/process student-centered and how can we show them that they belong here?”

ECU has done an excellent job of taking a proactive approach in adapting its processes and services to students and creating spaces to enhance belonging, including robust campus visits, Pirate Days, and dedicated advisors. InsideTrack recommends that ECU continue to prioritize the student experience by periodically reflecting on what students are thinking and feeling throughout the school year and tailoring the tone of the student communications to match these realities.

This may include reviewing communication processes to ensure that it includes information that builds students' skills and beliefs. After sampling the types of information that ECU sends, it appears that students receive an overwhelming number of emails that are transactional and include facts about campus and various programs. We suggest considering tailoring these communications to address students' emotional states as well.

Streamline and Plan Student Communications

A common theme during the Student Journey Map discussion was that students do not respond quickly, or at all in some cases, to messages from school staff. There is an underlying assumption that students do not read emails. There is a question of whether or not students have regular access to their school-provided email accounts. This is, unfortunately, not a phenomenon that is limited to ECU, but rather something that InsideTrack sees in institutions across the country.

Our first recommendation is to work to limit the number of email communications that are being sent to students. Students receive many outreach emails from many different departments as they are beginning to enroll and start classes. This can lead to information overload or fatigue, causing them to check out completely from that communication channel. In order to create a student-centered experience, Admissions, Financial Aid, Advising, and other departments should partner to align on communication and outreach strategies around registration, orientation, and completing financial aid, and do all that is possible to limit the number of emails that students are receiving.

Second, InsideTrack was informed that a resource bot is being developed. This tool can be used to send nudge notifications to students. We strongly encourage identifying opportunities to use text pushes rather than email for student communication. Experience tells us that text messages are more effective when they contain a clear call to action whenever possible. An example is a message reminding students that the registration deadline is closing and to register for classes.

Third, InsideTrack recommends that ECU develop a standardized approach to emails when communicating information that requires student action. All departments should use an Action Required header in email subjects when students have follow-up priorities. This way, students will be able to filter through emails and will reduce the likelihood that students skip over important information. Email communication should be targeted to students who have pending action items to minimize the number of action-required emails that are not applicable to the student. Send quality, focused messages instead of large quantities of messages.

Finally, we recommend creating an interdepartmental communication committee that meets regularly to plan out the communication for specific a time period. This committee can maintain a calendar of important messages and cascade the timing so that students are not receiving multiple important action steps at the same time. More information is not always better. Unsuccessful messaging campaigns occur when students feel overwhelmed with the number of messages received and no longer pay attention to communication channels. Prioritizing when students receive information will make the delivery more effective.

Recommendations

Balance Electronic and In-Person Communication

Students are not experts in higher education. “Expert” is the role of higher education professionals. Many students do not know how to navigate the complicated set of processes and procedures required to enroll and ultimately earn a degree. Research indicates this is especially true for first-generation college students. It should be expected that students are not going to read or understand all of the information provided to them on the website, through mail/email, or in the classroom.

Staff and faculty should be readily available to answer students' questions, provide guidance, and offer their expertise with patience and without judgment, and with an understanding of the emotional journey of the student. InsideTrack recommends that ECU continue to foster a culture of personalized support. Technology is an additional resource for information but should not supplant interpersonal relationships.

Create Cross-Departmental Training and Connections

One theme that emerged during the working sessions was the lengths that ECU employees will go to support and engage with students. Students who were interviewed indicated that they identified one go-to resource on campus for all of their questions. These relationships were built on interpersonal connection, not on skill set, role or area of expertise. Although ECU employees cannot be expected to answer every question, they should be prepared to transfer a student to the right department to find the answer. ECU may consider creating a staff-facing frequently asked question guide that includes contact information for each department. Our experience indicates that students are more successful when they are transferred to a person, not a hotline. In order to ensure that all information being shared is accurate and timely, we recommend periodic, ongoing cross-training for all student-facing ECU employees. Staff should be given time to create interpersonal connections so that they feel comfortable asking questions or connecting students to a person.