

Assessing the Blueprint to Success Initiative on Student Success



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Lehman College - Division of Student Affairs

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Blueprint to Success (BTS) initiative, launched in September 2022 by Lehman College's Student Affairs Division, is a roadmap designed to guide students through their entire college journey. This assessment is being conducted to evaluate the initiative's impact on key aspects of student life and experience. Due to having a full completion of BTS students, assessing the influence of the initiative on student experience at Lehman will offer a comprehensive understanding of the initiative.

Methods

The data for this study were collected through four anonymized methods for a total sample size of 292: (1) Navigate Lehman was used to gain student academic records. This included a student's GPA, credit completion, class standing, and dropout/withdrawal/incomplete/failure (DWIFs) rates. This was 243 academic records. (2) Three focus groups were used to gain a thematic analysis by having students discuss their opinions on the BTS initiative and Lehman College. This was a total of 15 students. (3) Five open-ended surveys were evaluated to further allow students to share their experiences without having to speak directly with a member of the College staff. (4) Finally, polls were used to offer a categorical approach. 29 student responses were assessed for frequent attendance events, social growth through events, and their satisfaction with the events, support services and Lehman College.

Key Findings

- The BTS initiative positively influenced students' academic performance, with higher levels of engagement correlating with higher GPAs and increased credit completion rates.
- Engaged BTS students reported a greater sense of accomplishment, attributing it to the digital badge system that tracks their progress and achievements.
- Student satisfaction with Lehman College was higher among those engaged in the BTS initiative compared to unengaged students.
- Participation in campus events was facilitated by the BTS program, as engaged students were more aware of upcoming activities through the "Club Central" platform.

Recommendations & Suggested Timelines

1. Improve accessibility of the digital badge system and marketing of the BTS initiative.
 - *Medium-term (6-9 months):* Integrate BTS digital badge information into new student orientation programs and first-year seminars.
2. Rebrand the "Club Central" platform with more inclusive language to encourage engagement.
 - *Short-term (3-6 months):* Convene a rebranding committee with representatives from student affairs, marketing, and student organizations.
3. Introduce major-specific events to better prepare students for post-college outcomes.

- *Short-term (3-6 months)*: Collaborate with academic departments and career services to identify potential major-specific events and workshops.
- 4. Conduct regular assessments to continuously enhance the BTS initiative based on student feedback.
 - *Short-term (3-6 months)*: Develop a comprehensive assessment plan for the BTS initiative, including regular surveys, focus groups, and data analysis.
 - *Long-term (Ongoing)*: Implement an annual cycle of assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement for the BTS initiative based on the findings and recommendations from each assessment.

Conclusion

This assessment shows a positive impact of the BTS initiative on various aspects of student life and experience at Lehman College. Implementing the recommendations will further optimize the program's effectiveness in supporting the diverse needs of students and fostering a transformative educational experience.

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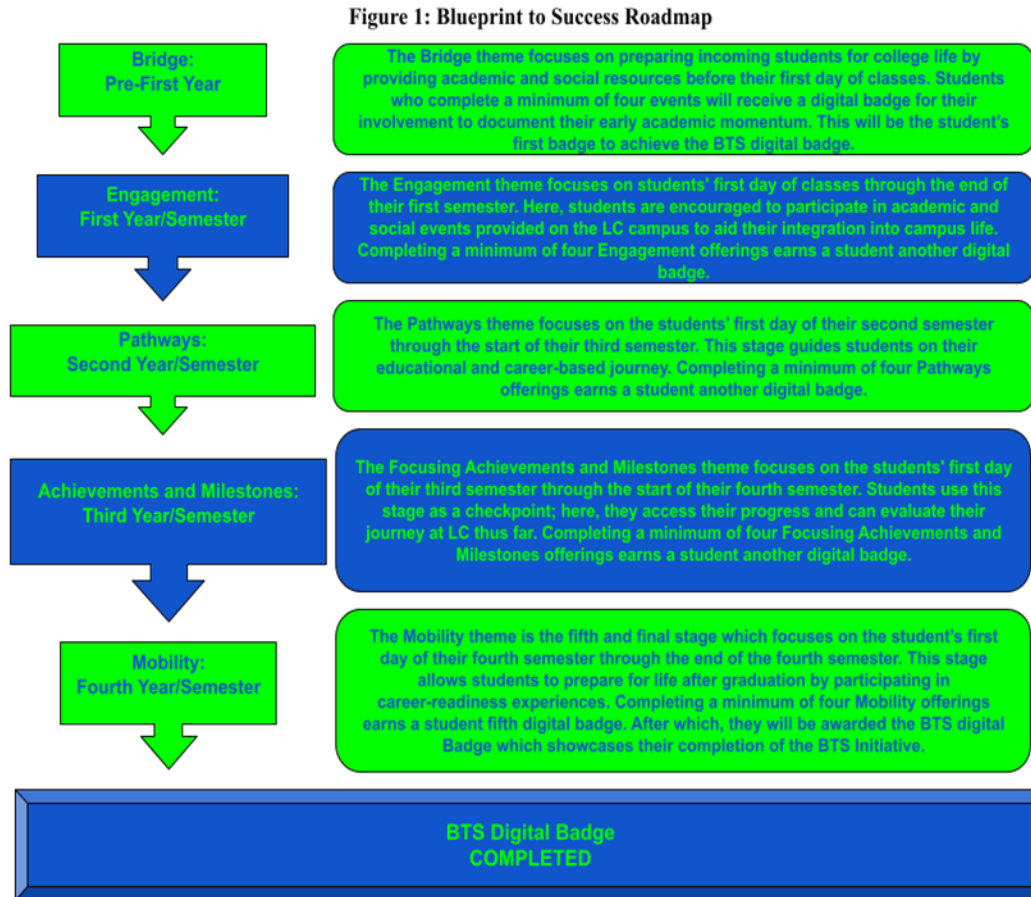
Describing the Blueprint to Success Initiative

Introduction

This section defines what the Blueprint to Success (BTS) initiative is and why it was implemented within the Student Affairs Division. It outlines the objectives and goals of this initiative and explains the purpose and importance of assessing its impact on student life and experience at the college.

Objectives and Goals

The Blueprint to Success pilot initiative was officially launched within the Student Affairs Division at Lehman College in September 2022. This is a comprehensive roadmap of support services that seeks to guide students through their entire college journey - from pre-enrollment to graduation. Figure 1 below showcases this roadmap - separated into five distinct themes and provides the goals of each.



Note: This figure demonstrates the five themes/levels of the BTS Initiative. The left column shows the duration of each theme, while the right column shows the purpose and objective of each theme.

Purpose of Report

As the BTS initiative has now been in place for almost two years, it is crucial that we assess its impact on various aspects of student life and experience. This report provides an in-depth evaluation of the initiative's effectiveness in achieving the goals and objectives of each theme.

Specifically, the purpose of this report is threefold:

1. To examine the influence of the BTS initiative on key indicators of students' academic success, such as GPA, credit completion, and dropout/withdrawal/incomplete/failure (DWIFs) - this is inclusive of repeated courses and missed academic success markers.
2. To explore the initiative's impact on student experience: this includes, but is not limited to, social integration, personal growth, and career preparedness.
3. To identify strengths and areas for improvement within the BTS program. This will be done by providing data-driven recommendations for enhancing its effectiveness and better supporting the diverse needs of Lehman College students.

By conducting a comprehensive assessment of the BTS initiative, this report aims to inform College Divisions of the initiative's impact, and guide future efforts to optimize student support services at Lehman College. The findings and recommendations provided within this report will contribute to the institution's ongoing commitment to fostering a positive and transformative educational experience for all students.

Methodology

Introduction

This assessment was designed to evaluate the impact that the Blueprint to Success (BTS) initiative has had on student experience at Lehman. This evaluation employed a mixed methodology, providing a closer look into students' perceptions of the initiative and determining whether the quantitative data supported these findings. This section is used to describe how the data was collected and analyzed.

Data Collection

The data was taken from the three BTS Cohorts at the time this report was written. To analyze these relationships, regression analysis and thematic analysis were conducted, enabling the establishment of a relationship between the BTS initiative and student experience.

Sample

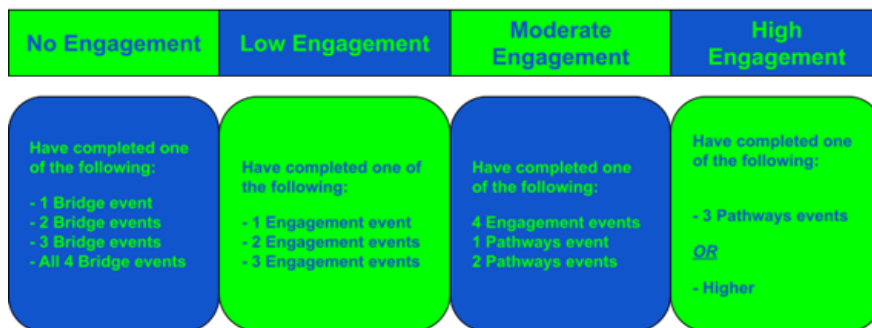
This evaluation took a comparative approach by examining the level of engagement students have in the BTS initiative. The data was gathered across several platforms for a total of 292 results collected for this evaluation.

First, data was collected through an Academic Advisement platform - 'Navigate Lehman'. A total of 243 student academic records were evaluated to determine if there was correlation between student's engagement in BTS and their academic success. The platform was used to determine a student's:

- ❖ First Semester at Lehman
- ❖ Class Standing
- ❖ GPA
- ❖ Credit Completion
- ❖ DWIFs
- ❖ Highest [completed] Level of BTS

BTS engagement was broken up into four categories to provide a better understanding of how different levels of engagement impact academic performance. Figure 2 (right) demonstrates the four levels of BTS engagement which were used for this evaluation.

Figure 2: Levels of BTS Engagement



Notes: Students within the "No Engagement" level are labeled as such due to the mandatory events that students need to attend. Students within the "Low Engagement" level are labeled as such because they have not received their Engagement level badge. Students within the "Moderate Engagement" level are labeled as such because they are halfway through the BTS initiative at this point. Students within the "High Engagement" level are labeled as such because these are the highest levels of the BTS initiative.

Second, data was gathered through focus groups, surveys, and polls respectively. These were administered through targeted emails, social media, 'Navigate Lehman', and random selection at

college events. This data looked at engaged and unengaged BTS students. Specifically, engaged students were actively participating in BTS, while unengaged students were not. Across these three methods, a total of 49 students' responses were recorded. These were then used to determine how BTS and Lehman College impacted the following:

- ❖ Sense of Belonging
- ❖ Event & Club Engagement
- ❖ Personal/Academic Achievements
- ❖ Digital Badge System
- ❖ Overall Satisfaction & Feedback

With these indicators in place, the data analysis could provide a better understanding of how the BTS initiative impacted student life and experience at Lehman College.

Data Analysis

To comprehensively assess the impact of the BTS initiative on student life and experience, a mixed methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. This allowed for a more holistic understanding of the initiative's effects. The questions for engaged students centered around the influence of the BTS initiative on student experience, whereas the questions for unengaged students focused on the influence Lehman College has had on student experience.

Quantitative & Qualitative Analysis

Regression analyses were conducted to establish relationships between engagement in the BTS initiative and various indicators of student experience. The tables included variables such as BTS engagement levels (measured by the five BTS themes), and academic performance metrics (e.g., GPA, credit completion rates, DWIFs). As mentioned above, this data was gathered on 'Navigate Lehman'. By comparing BTS engagement, this quantitative analysis aimed to isolate the potential impact of BTS on key academic factors.

To complement the quantitative findings and gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of students, the qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions and open-ended survey questions. This data was then analyzed through NVivo to provide contextual information about student engagement, sense of accomplishment, overall satisfaction, and areas for improvement within the BTS program and Lehman College.

This analysis shed light on the subjective experiences of both engaged and unengaged BTS students, offering valuable perspectives on the initiative's influence on their personal growth, social integration, and overall college experience. By triangulating the quantitative and qualitative findings, this assessment allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the initiative's impact, capturing both the measurable outcomes and the nuanced experiences of Lehman College students.

Coding of Concepts

The coding process involved a systematic analysis of the qualitative data collected through surveys, focus groups, and poll observations. Three overarching themes emerged from the coding process:

- 1) *Student Participation & Engagement* - this theme captures the various aspects of student engagement and the sense of purpose fostered by the BTS initiative and Lehman College. Specifically, events attended frequently, academic and social achievements;

- 2) *Sense of Accomplishment & Satisfaction* - this theme encompassed the specific components and features of the BTS initiative. For example, personal/academic growth, BTS marketing, and student's experiences with the BTS digital badges;
- 3) *Recommendations* - this theme focused on students' overall satisfaction and the support needs that they would like to see improved.

Using this mixed methods data, the following section will present the findings and allow for informed critiques of the BTS initiative. It will also offer some insightful recommendations regarding the future of this comprehensive roadmap and offer a potential answer to the primary question of this assessment: How has the BTS initiative impacted student experience at Lehman College?

Findings & Recommendations

3.1 Introduction

This section is used to showcase the findings of the Blueprint to Success (BTS) assessment. Reviewing academic performance, participation and engagement, sense of accomplishment and satisfaction, and finally recommendations for the future of this initiative. Overall, the findings suggest that the BTS initiative has had a positive impact on student success at Lehman College.

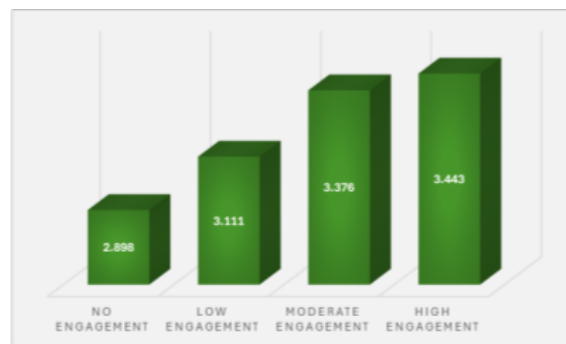
3.2 Academic Performance

One of the primary reasons for this evaluation was to determine if and how the BTS initiative impacts academic success. Due to some data being absent, a total of 238 out of 243 academic records were analyzed.

First, an average student GPA based on BTS engagement was conducted to offer a condensed look. Figure 3 below displays the findings of these results. It is seen that a student's GPA increases depending on how engaged they are within the initiative - with the 'No Engagement' level having an average GPA of 2.898 and the 'high engagement' level having a GPA of 3.443.

However, to determine the significance of this data, a regression analysis was performed. Table 1 below indicates the findings of the Regression analysis. As shown, this analysis provided a statistical significance of 0.005 for these two concepts. In other words, this analysis found evidence that higher levels of BTS engagement have a positive influence on a student's GPA.

Figure 3: Average GPA & BTS Engagement



Note: This figure displays the average GPA of students based on their BTS engagement level. As seen above, the "No Engagement" group has an average of 2.898; the "Low Engagement" group has an average of 3.111; the "Moderate Engagement" group has an average of 3.376; and the "High Engagement" group has an average of 3.443. There appears to be a correlation between BTS engagement and an increase in student GPA.

Although this table demonstrates a positive correlation between engagement in BTS and a student's GPA, it only represents 1.91% of this data. In other words, a student's engagement in BTS is only one factor that impacts their GPA; there are other factors that could also affect it (i.e. - class standing).

The academic records were also used to determine if there was a correlation between the number of credits a student completes and their engagement in BTS. Findings suggest that the more engagement with BTS a student has, the more credits they will complete; whilst the lower engagement a student has with BTS, the less credits they will complete.

Table 2 displays the Regression analysis which provides a statistical significance of 0.002. Specifically, this analysis found evidence to support that BTS engagement has had a positive influence on credit completion. Similar to the GPA, however, there are other factors impacting a student's credit completion, as BTS engagement only represents .64% data.

Table 1: GPA & BTS Engagement Level

| Source | SS | df | MS | Number of obs = | 238 |
|----------|------------|-----|------------|-----------------|----------|
| Model | 6.86078374 | 1 | 6.86078374 | F(1, 236) | = 7.89 |
| Residual | 205.267836 | 236 | .869778965 | Prob > F | = 0.0054 |
| Total | 212.128619 | 237 | .895057466 | R-squared | = 0.0323 |
| | | | | Adj R-squared | = 0.0282 |
| | | | | Root MSE | = .93262 |

| gpa | Coefficient | Std. err. | t | P> t | [95% conf. interval] |
|---------|-------------|-----------|-------|-------|----------------------|
| bts_lvl | .1910051 | .0680084 | 2.81 | 0.005 | .057024 .3249861 |
| _cons | 2.909825 | .109855 | 26.49 | 0.000 | 2.693403 3.126247 |

Table 2: Credit Completion & BTS Engagement Level

| Source | SS | df | MS | Number of obs = | 238 |
|----------|------------|-----|------------|-----------------|----------|
| Model | .768654839 | 1 | .768654839 | F(1, 236) | = 10.01 |
| Residual | 18.1296023 | 236 | .076820349 | Prob > F | = 0.0018 |
| Total | 18.8982572 | 237 | .079739482 | R-squared | = 0.0407 |
| | | | | Adj R-squared | = 0.0366 |
| | | | | Root MSE | = .27716 |

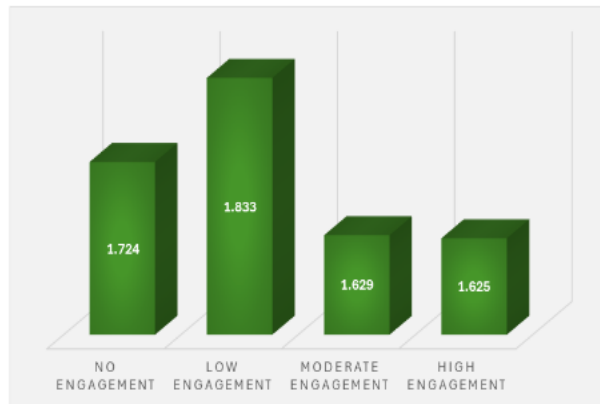
| creditcomp-n | Coefficient | Std. err. | t | P> t | [95% conf. interval] |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|-------|-------|----------------------|
| bts_lvl | .0639328 | .0202114 | 3.16 | 0.002 | .024115 .1037506 |
| _cons | .7666285 | .0326478 | 23.48 | 0.000 | .7023102 .8309467 |

Note: The statistical significance is seen in the third row down from the top-right hand side next the Prob>F. The strength of the correlation is the first number within the Coefficient column on the bottom-left hand side.

Finally, academic records were analyzed to determine if there was a correlation between student BTS engagement and their dropout/withdrawal/incomplete/failure (DWIFs) rates - this was inclusive of repeated courses and missed academic success markers as well. The findings of this regression analysis proved to be insignificant with a .388, as it is higher than the .05 cutoff for significance.

Figure 4 (right) displays the average DWIFs based on the four levels of engagement for this study. Although the “Moderate Engagement” and “High Engagement” levels have the lowest average DWIFs, there is a disconnect within the “No Engagement” and “Low Engagement” levels, causing insignificance.

Figure 4: Average DWIFs & BTS Engagement



Note: This figure displays the average DWIFs of students based on their BTS engagement level. As seen above, the “No Engagement” group has an average of 1.724; the “Low Engagement” group has an average of 1.833; the “Moderate Engagement” group has an average of 1.629; and the “High Engagement” group has an average of 1.625. There appears to be a correlation between BTS engagement and an increase in student GPA.

Although BTS engagement may not directly affect a student's DWIFs, the findings suggest an overall positive influence on student's academic success with increased BTS involvement.

3.3 Student Participation and Engagement

When referencing students' participation and engagement on campus based on their involvement in the BTS initiative/Lehman campus, there was a notable difference between how the students were informed about the campus events. When the engaged students were asked about how difficult it was to find out about

upcoming events, the common response was that they constantly check 'Club Central'. Given this website is how BTS students learn about the events they can attend to complete their badges, this finding is understandable.

However, when the unengaged students were asked the same question, the common responses were that they heard about events through 'word of mouth' or 'social media' posts. This suggested the unengaged students were unfamiliar with or did not use Club Central.

It is possible that this happens because of the language of the website. The term 'club' can be considered exclusionary for unengaged students as they do not 'see a reason' to check Club Central for upcoming events that they can attend. This possibility was confirmed when unengaged students were asked if they were familiar with Club Central, where many responded that this website is 'only for organizations' on campus and they 'didn't know' that events were posted there.

With this information, it is believed that student participation and engagement are likely to increase depending on their involvement in the BTS program. Students are more likely to become aware of events through the avenues provided by the program and attend said events.

3.4 Sense of Accomplishment & Satisfaction

One of the major goals of the BTS initiative and Lehman College, is providing support services where students feel a sense of accomplishment. For the BTS initiative specifically, the use of a digital badge system is implemented.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, once a student completes a theme/level of the BTS program, they receive a digital badge. This badge can then be placed on their professional social media accounts (e.g. - LinkedIn) and their resumes to offer job recruiters a closer look into the students' experience outside of the classroom. According to the engaged students, these badges allow them to feel accomplished and makes them want to be more active on campus. In other words, students actively involved in BTS often attribute this sense of accomplishment from the digital badges they receive through the initiative.



For unengaged students, many noted that they also feel as though they are accomplishing something academically because of Blackboard, however, having a platform that tracks the events and clubs they attend would also 'be nice'. The fact that this was expressed by more than one student during the focus groups shows that regardless of students' personality types, they would like to be able to track their accomplishments at college. Having said this, it

is plausible that if the unengaged students began participating in the BTS initiative, their sense of accomplishment will increase, and they can link those accomplishments to the program.

Finally, from the qualitative data, there was also an overwhelming sense of community and belonging that students expressed. Many students specified a feeling of ‘family’ and ‘being at home’ since starting at the college; few even expressed their interests in continuing their education here after graduating [freshmen and seniors alike]. Regardless of their engagement in the BTS program, this feeling of community was seen across the various groups of students. However, there was a correlation between student engagement with BTS and student satisfaction with Lehman College.

Figure 5: BTS Engagement & Overall Satisfaction

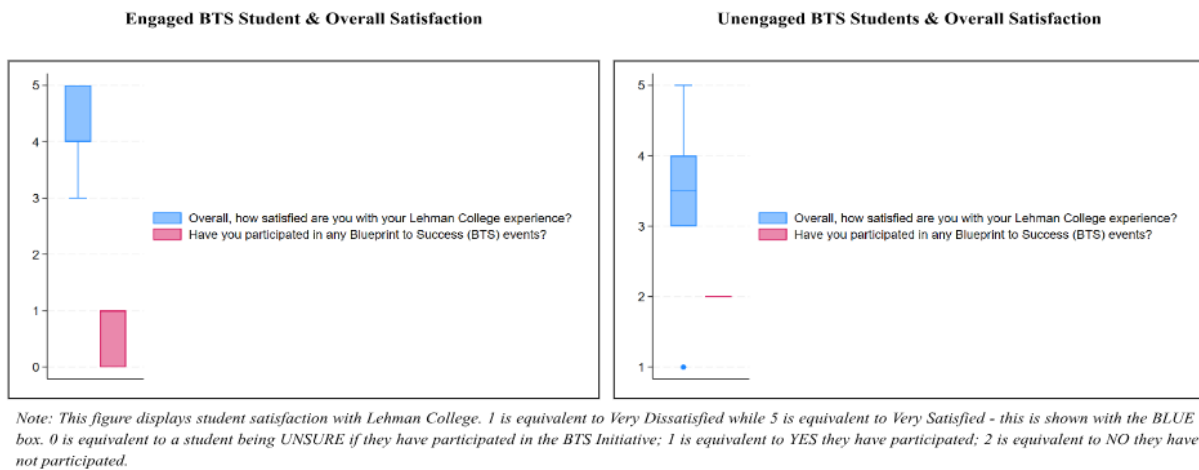


Figure 5 above shows that students engaged in the BTS initiative (left) have a higher satisfaction level between Satisfied and Very Satisfied, whilst unengaged students (right) have a lower satisfaction level between Neutral and Satisfied. This suggests that BTS engagement has a positive impact on students' satisfaction with the Lehman Campus.

Fortunately, both engaged and unengaged students have feelings of accomplishments; however, the findings show that students engaged in the BTS program track and directly associate their accomplishments with the digital badges that the program offers; while unengaged students yearn for a platform that allows them to track these same successes.

3.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this assessment, the following actions are recommended for the future of the BTS initiative:

1. *Improving BTS digital badges and marketing.* Although students greatly appreciated the digital badges offered by the BTS initiative, there were issues regarding access to them. It was mentioned several times throughout the data collection period that allowing students an easier way to see and manage their progress would be beneficial for them. Even though students have access to these badges, and their BTS transcripts - which show all events they have attended - students seem unfamiliar with how to view their progress. It is suggested that during Lehman College orientation,

using breakout rooms and sessions to teach students about the BTS initiative, how to track their progress and navigate Club Central could increase students' knowledge of the program and help them access their progress more efficiently. Or, if Student Affairs can extend BTS across campus to different schools and directors, this will allow for an increase in marketing across different channels on campus.

2. *Rebranding of 'Club Central'*. As noted above, students who are not actively engaged in the BTS initiative tend to be unfamiliar with the Club Central website. Students have mentioned that since they are not involved in any organizations on campus, when they hear 'club' in the name of something, they believe it does not apply to them. As a result of this, students are often not learning about events on campus that they can attend



- [regardless of club status]. It is suggested that a rebranding of the site be made to have more inclusive language (e.g. - Lehman Connections, Lehman Engage). The illustration (*above*) showcases an example of a more inclusive website and language from South Connecticut State University. By improving this language, it will allow students to familiarize themselves with the website and engage with various campus groups, events, and resources offered at the college.
3. *Providing major-specific events*. Regardless of BTS status, students expressed a want for more major-specific events. Although students are fairly satisfied with the events that are offered for them through Lehman and the BTS initiative, having events that are specifically targeted for their majors and what they can do with their degrees after graduation happens to be a major issue. It is suggested because students will be able to better shape their time at Lehman and prepare for post-college outcomes that directly impact them due to their majors.
 4. *Continuously improving the Initiative*. To create consistent and positive change, regular assessment of this program is needed. This will allow for students to continue to share their experiences with the BTS initiative to determine what is working and not working. This will also allow for the Student Affairs Division to offer the support services that Lehman students need to make the most out of their college experience.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of the Blueprint to Success (BTS) initiative on student success across multiple platforms. According to the findings, the Blueprint to Success Initiative has offered an effective roadmap of support services to Lehman College students.

This initiative has:

- Fostered academic success (GPA, credit completion)
- Increased community development and involvement
- Allowed for students to successfully track their accomplishments (BTS digital badges)
- Increased student satisfaction with Lehman, BTS, and campus events

Since this program is still within the beginning phases, there were minor issues uncovered throughout this assessment, however, students have said that they greatly impacted from the BTS initiative. Now that the data confirms these feelings, the next steps of the program are addressing issues mentioned in this report with the recommendations laid out above. Continuing regular evaluation for this program will allow for further growth throughout the Student Affairs Division and Lehman College as a whole.