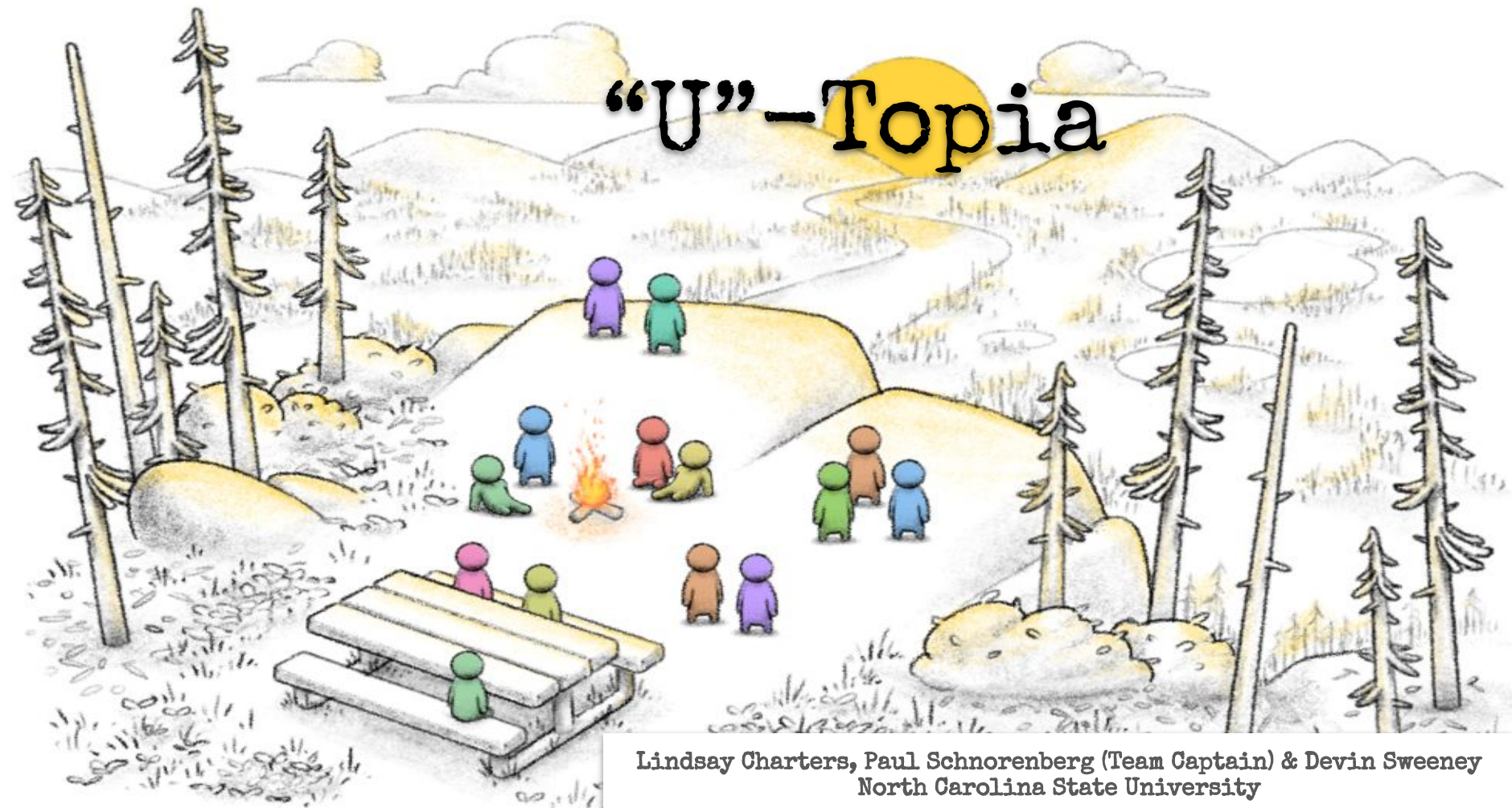


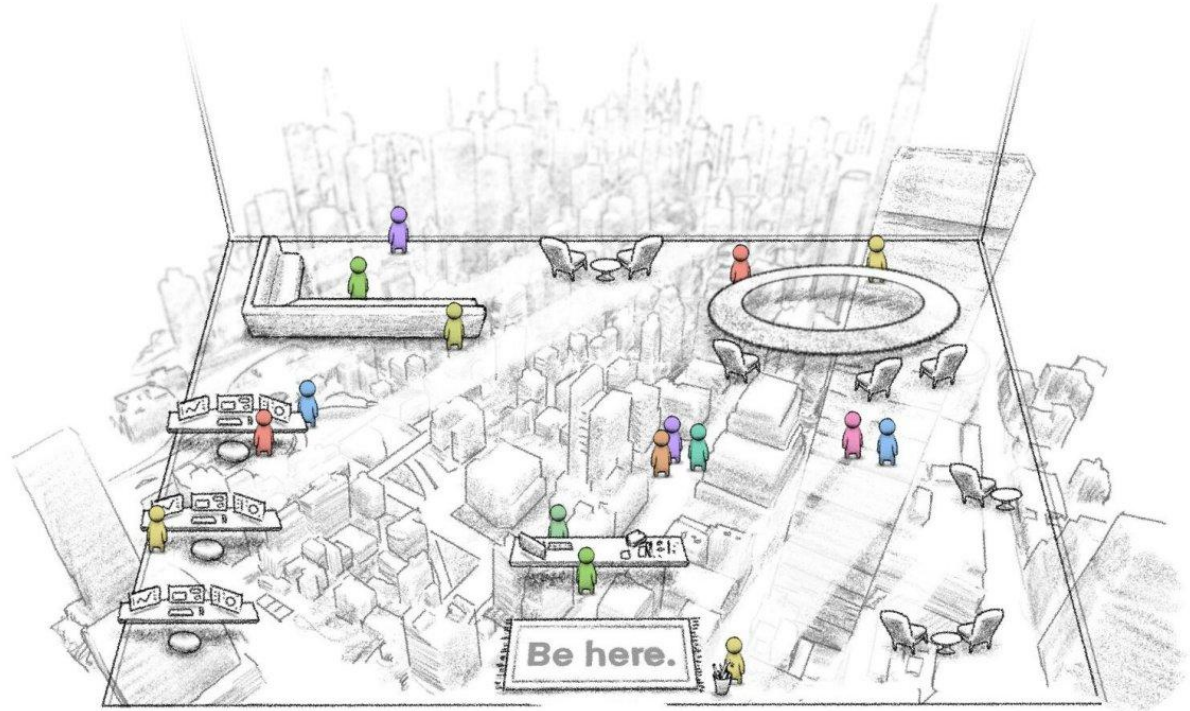
# “U”-Topia



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# Introducing Topia:

- **What is it?** Topia is an online platform designed to humanize real time video chat in customizable virtual worlds
- **Functionality:** As you move around the space the video of those you walk near pops up & as you walk away it disappears to keep conversations local to their space in the world



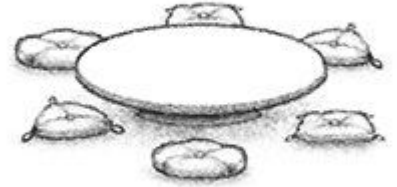
# Why Topia?

The name of our project “U”-Topia was born out of combining the platform and the idea of implementing this in a University setting, while also providing a common experience still made Unique to each student organization and student needs.

- a. The goal of **relationship building** is at its core, which is why the majority of elements are black & white and the characters are in color
- b. Topia can be **customized** to programmatic needs by partnering with Topia’s team or the institution can develop “Assets” and “Kits” to upload to fit their needs
  - i. The ideal model would be adding campus specific features & ultimately creating a campus kit which mimicked walking around on campus and interacting with students and offices in these spaces as you would in real time on a campus
- c. [Link to “U-Topia”](#)



# Additional Features of Topia



Topia also has **other features** which make it more ideal and more accessible for use on a college campus, especially in a virtual world:

- Characters allow space for **personal preference/identities** to be considered by being gender-non specific in design and participants can name themselves as they see fit
- Main Host can **broadcast** to all participants at once for large events
- Add **links to external resources**, which can be useful for conference style events
- Host **multiple meetings/conversations** in one space, still with ease of access to others in the world simply by clicking to move
  - Participants can also **private message** in real time with participants in the same world
- Host **events of varying sizes** with numerous participants (fees will be discussed throughout the presentation)
- **Premade assets and kits** for ease of use and introduction to individual student organizations to utilize Topia
- Using this platform we are able to reach students who are unable to physically access some of our in-person spaces, whether it be due to distance or disability, creating a **more accessible space** for all participants
  - Additionally, Topia can be navigated via **keystrokes or click to move** - allowing participants to utilize the method which best serves their abilities

# Outline of Program:

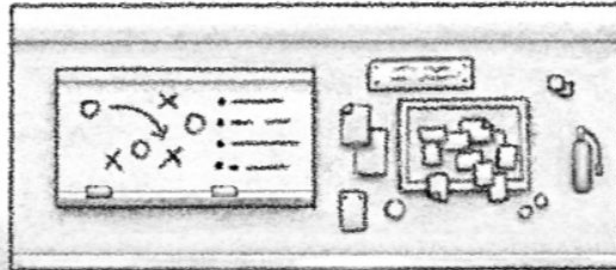
**Concept:** Virtual program series highlighting the use of the platform Topia

## 1. Three major components

- a. Introductory Student Organization Fair
- b. Platform available for student organizations to utilize for their own club meetings
- c. Campus-wide virtual carnival

## 2. Main goals of the Program

- a. To promote and foster social interaction, sense of belonging and combat student isolation
- b. Encourage engagement, activity, and leadership from student organizations
  - i. Help organizations to continue to provide their own programming and also recruit first-year students to join their organizations
- c. Establish a sense of community and care from the institution, especially targeted at students off-campus



# Introductory Student Organization Fair:



1. **Institution will have the initial map in Topia**
  - a. For this element of the series the Topia “Conference” Kit will be utilized
  - b. This particular kit is styled like a conference exhibit hall, complete with a map feature, separate booths and the ability to do showcase videos
2. **Student Organizations will be invited to sign up and join as part of an organization showcase**
  - a. Goal of the organization showcase is to provide a space for students to interact with clubs/organizations they may be interested in joining, as well as providing exposure for the registered student organizations to increase membership
  - b. Participation for first-year students will be incentivized through the first year seminar curriculum as a required event to attend
3. **Each student organization will have a booth on the map**
  - a. As many booths as necessary for interested organizations can be added
  - b. Booths can be customized via assets & our office of student activities will assist with this
4. **At the organization fair, the students can walk around at their own pace to visit the different booths and talk with the organizations about what they do and how they can join!**





# Making the Case for Student Organizations

**Rosch, D. M., & Collins, J. D. (2017). The significance of student organizations to leadership development. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 2017(155), 9-19.**

- Student organizations are critical because serve multiple purposes such as sharing their views with others, creating a welcoming environment for members, provide opportunities for interaction and achieving goals, and function as a collective voice for students.
- Student organizations provide support through Erikson's stages of psychosocial development especially the intimacy vs. isolation where they try to learn how to build durable relationships with others.
- Student organizations allow exploration of self authorship (magolda) where they enter viewing the org as the authority members do but further involvement allows them to develop a sense of self and a view of how the org fits into the larger community.
- Student organizations also help build psychosocial capacities (Kegan's order of the mind).

## **Advancing Student Leader Development Through Student Organization Advising and Institutional Support**

**Kane, C. (2017). Advancing student leader development through student organization advising and institutional support. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 2017(155), 59-70.**

- Kane argues that we "Cannot assume student outcomes will occur without environmental design" emphasizing the intentionality required in crafting environments for students.
- In order to do this, institutions must make choices about the level of support given to student organizations to yield optimal outcomes.
- To accomplish this, institutional support is given through facilities, staff resources, and other educational resources.
  - In our case facilities and resources→ Topia serves as a reservable facility/space in this covid world



# Topia & Student Organizations:



1. **The institution will pay \$9 per month for a membership of Topia**
2. **Our office will implement a reservation process**
  - a. Student organizations can sign up to reserve the platform for a specific time and date
3. **Student organizations can use Topia to host their own programs or general meetings too!**
  - a. If they are a club of less than 20 members they can also create their own Topia world to use free of charge at all times without needing the paid membership
  - b. For their virtual meetings/programs in Topia: a specific premade kit can be applied; they can develop their own organization specific assets; or they can make a custom map to be saved as a kit specific to their organization
4. **The institution will offer registered student organizations three virtual workshops on Topia**
  - a. “Topia Basics” – General knowledge on how to use and navigate Topia
  - b. “Best Practices in Topia” – Nuances for hosting meetings and/or events in Topia
  - c. “Map/Asset Creation in Topia” – Session specific to development of the artistic/custom elements of Topia
5. **The institution will help market student organization Topia events on the office’s own social media outlets**



**Student Activities Office**

# Peer Interaction, the key to Student Wellbeing?

## Peer Interaction

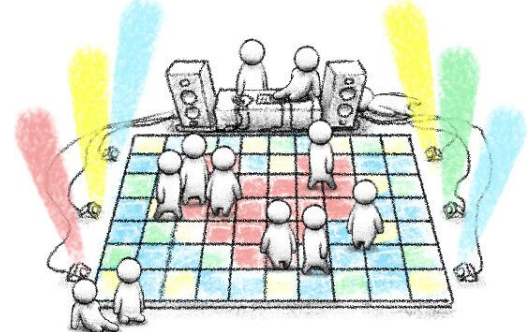
1. Astin (1993)→ Student's peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years
2. Pascarella (1985)→ Pascarella's general causal model for assessing student's development, interactions with the faculty and peers will affect the quality of student effort and students' learning and cognitive development
3. Tinto (1993)→ Student departure model, has suggested that extracurricular activities and peer group interactions form a social system that leads to student integration

## Student Wellbeing

1. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education survey and interview findings highlight the importance of teaching practices and the learning environment on student wellbeing (Crawford 2020)
  - a. During remote times it is important to "Check in with students: online learning can be lonely and isolating"
  - b. It is critical now more than ever to "Promote your university's services"
2. Gallup Research on K-12 and Higher Education
  - a. "Graduates who were emotionally supported during college -- who had a mentor who encouraged their hopes and dreams and professors who cared about them as people and made them excited about learning -- are three times as likely to have thriving wellbeing after college."



# Virtual Carnival Event:



The institution would purchase spots for **\$2 per attendee** for the event (any unused spots will be credited to the university account for later use on events)

1. This event would highlight campus resources and allow student organizations to be featured in a more fun and casual setting
2. Organizations and Resources would have the opportunity to have their own booths with different **games and online activities**
  - a. For example, screen sharing feature could be utilized to host Kahoot, Jackbox, etc.
    - i. Other concrete examples of activities could be: Mario Kart Tour, Uno, Psych (Lying Trivia), Pictionary, House Party (app), etc
3. The institution would also hire a DJ to play **live music** during the event, which can be heard at a specific “stage” asset within the Topia world
4. We would also implement a **live team scavenger hunt** to be played & members of the office of student activities would be stationed around the Topia to give out clues to find the next person
  - a. This will be incentivized for the Top 3 teams





Virtual Carnival Event

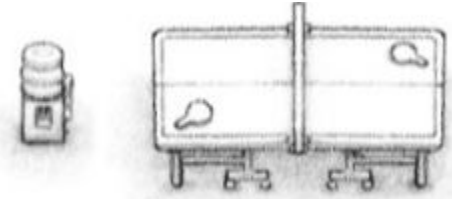


# Social Media Plan:

## Part #1→ Student Organization Recruitment

1. Office of Student Activities will promote the virtual organization fair as a way to gain membership for student organizations and initially introduce the Topia platform
  - a. The institution is requiring participation of at least one member from all registered student organizations - they must register so the office can purchase credits
  - b. A **video message** will be sent to club presidents and members to demonstrate the use of Topia & how it can benefit them on an organizational level
2. All student organizations which register by the initial recruitment deadline will be **highlighted on social media** ahead of the organization fair taking place
3. Link for the Topia world would be shared with student organizations to also promote directly through their social media outlets
  - a. Event would be password protected so that attendees could not join ahead of time



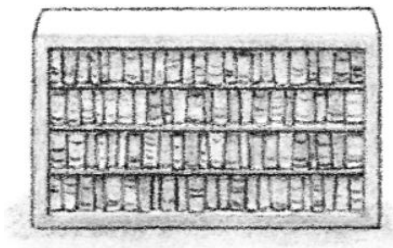


# Social Media Plan (cont.):

## Part #2→ Promotion to Student Population

1. **First year students**→ As previously stated, this will be a requirement to attend for their first-year seminar course. They would be tasked with gathering information from at least 3 student organizations they would be interested in joining.
2. **All students** would be emailed a promotional video and quick glimpse of the event to help create awareness and spark interest
  - a. All students would also be emailed a form to indicate interest so office could continue to gauge how many credits to purchase
3. Share marketing materials with **campus resources** who will participate in the carnival for them to promote on their own social media channels
  - a. Additionally, we will advertise the unique carnival offerings and features via social media post-organization fair

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