Find Your Flock With Gather.Jayhawks!

StudentAffairs.com
Case Study: University of Kansas

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About Jayhawk University

Large Research Institution

Average of 20,000 Students Enrolled

Live on requirement for 1st year students

Predominantly White Institution

40% out of state students

9% International Students

On campus housing of 5,000 students

60% in state students

Due to the covid-19 pandemic, students are having an increasingly hard time making connections and feeling a sense of belonging at colleges and universities across the country, including Jayhawk University. Gather.Jayhawks is an interactive virtual platform that allows the entire Jayhawk community to connect with one another. Engagement is incentivized through a semester long virtual competition.
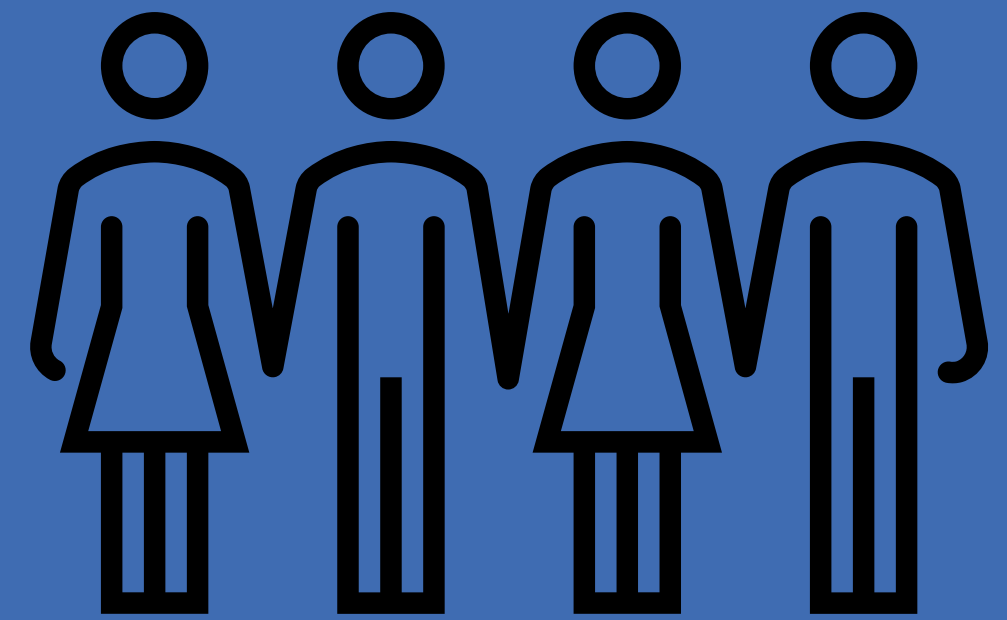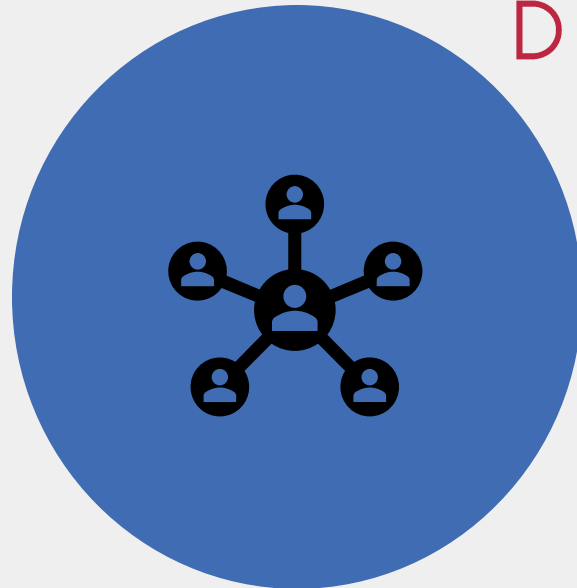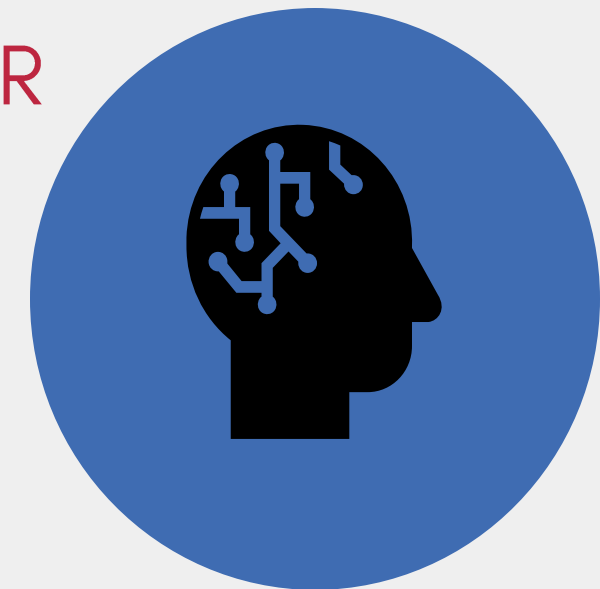
MEET OUR COMMITTEE

STUDENT ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR

OFFICE OF FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE DIRECTOR

OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT & COMMUNITY STANDARDS DIRECTOR

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR

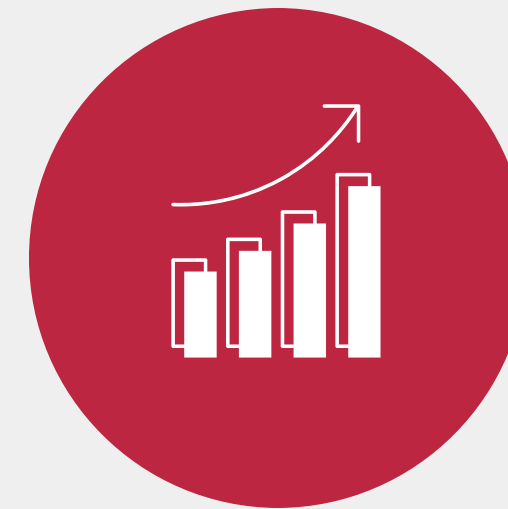COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES DIRECTOR

Our Approach is Informed by Theories and Research:

Needs Assessment

Student Development Theory

Enrollment Management
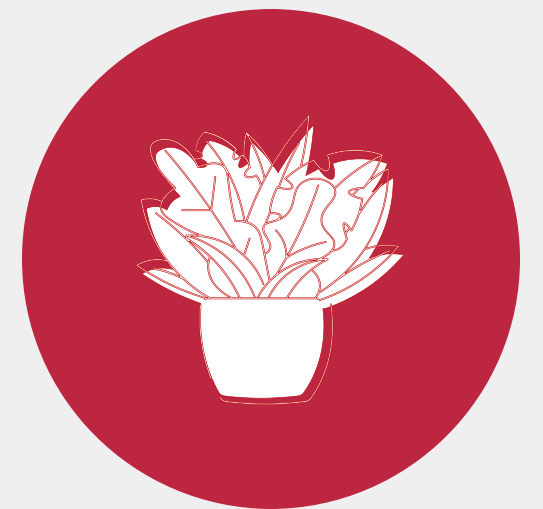
Mental Health Research

NEEDS ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

80% of remote students lack familiarity with campus & social interactions with other students (including out-of-state and international students).

76% of students living on campus have limited social interactions because lounges are closed and guest policy is restricted

45% of students living on/near campus are frustrated with limited university social programs (e.g. Welcome Week) leading to unsafe behaviors such as partying
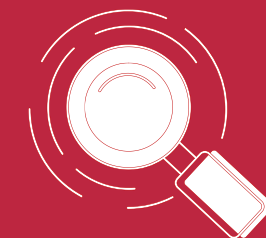
Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (MMDI) (Jones and McEwen, 2000)

- An individual's identity is shown as the dots on the rings. The closer to the core an identity is, the more salient it is to the person in the moment.
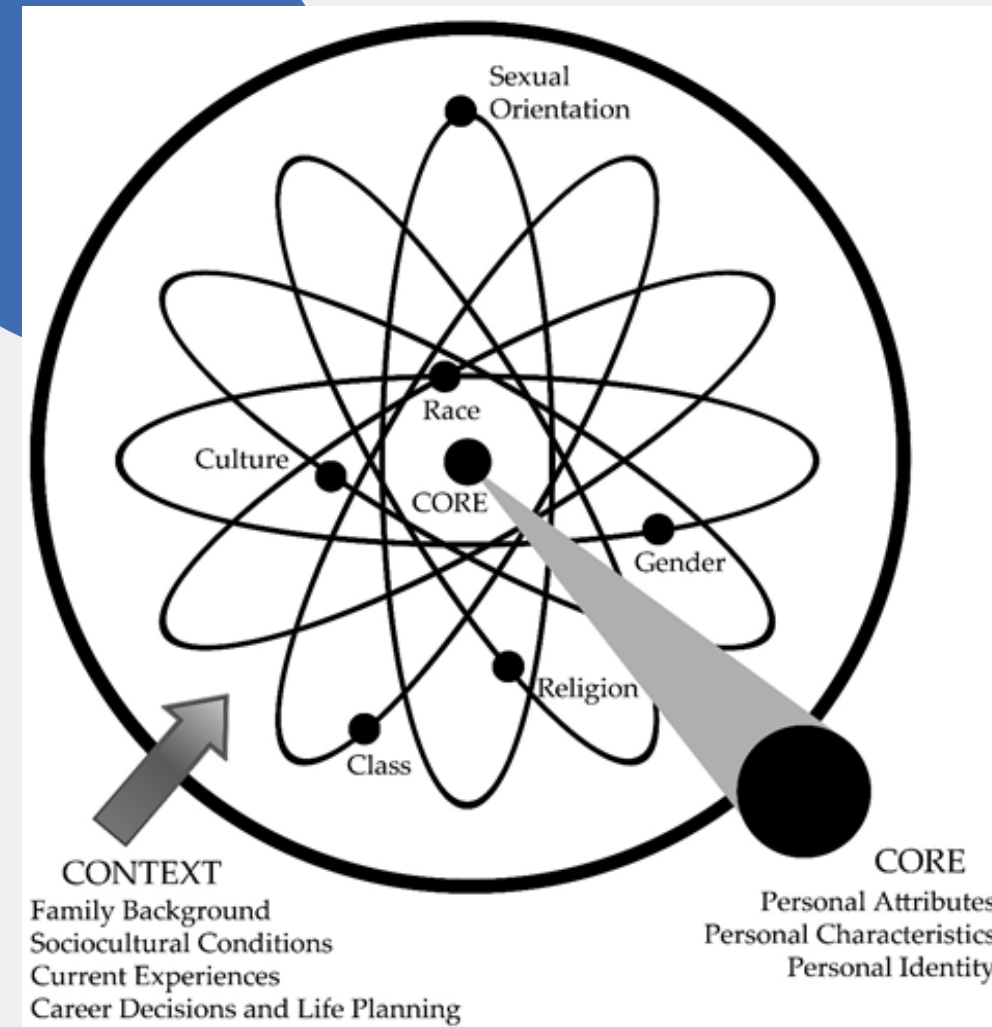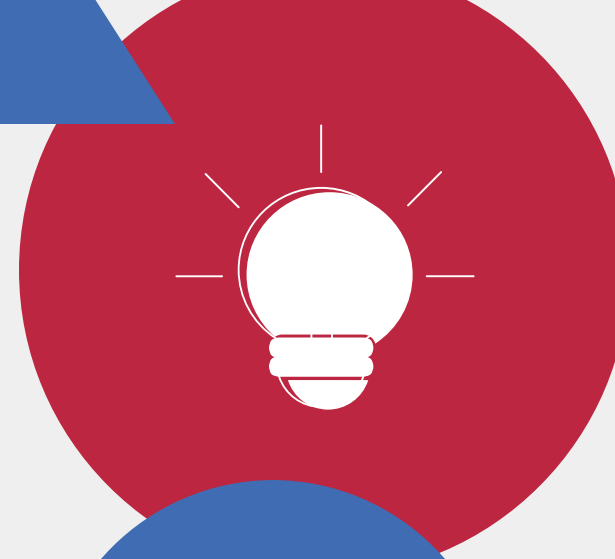- This model stresses the salience of social identities showing their fluidity.
- While the model is not developmental, it shows how we view ourselves not how others view us, in the moment.

Sexual Orientation
Culture
Race
CORE
Gender
Religion
Class

CONTEXT
Family Background
Sociocultural Conditions
Current Experiences
Career Decisions and Life Planning

CORE
Personal Attributes
Personal Characteristics
Personal Identity

Situating MMDI in Gather.Jayhawks

- Students are able to have their individual avatar created with their identities portrayed in a way that accurately represents them.
- When a student clicks on a participant, their Jayhawk student ID would pop up with a list of things the student would want to share such as their age, major, club affiliations, and identities

Self Authorship

Marginality & Mattering

Phases of Self-Authorship:

Following External Formulas
- Accept stereotypes
- Rarely find meaning in identity
- Identity defined through parents

Crossroads
- Begin to recognize stereotypes- stand back from and reflect on them
- Start to understand that things are not all two sided

Self-authored ways of knowing
- Vocalize and trust internal voice
- Integrate choices about identity into daily lives

As students use Gather.Jayhawks they make decisions contributing to more complex ways of knowing and understanding themselves.

However, most first year students may need guidance in terms of their development (ie. Many may be at the crossroads phase).
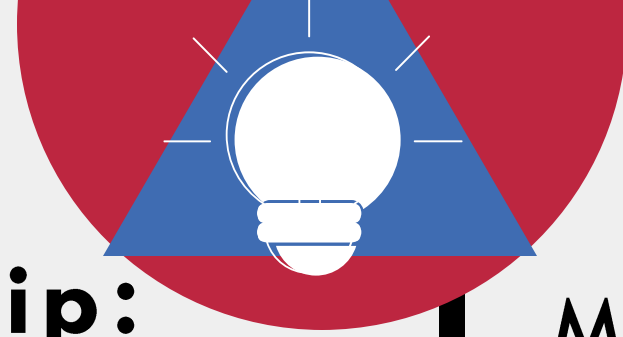
Marginality

Temporary: e.g. first-year students from dominant populations(Phan, 2020).
- Relevance: These students experience a prolonged marginality without traditional socializing experiences such as in person first year seminar, or sporting events
- Virtual Instruction leads to prolonged newness/ marginalization

Permanent: e.g. students who hold marginalized identities (students of color, low SES etc.)
- Digital Divide exacerbates challenges

Mattering

The belief that a student matters to someone else which has the potential to positively impact their outputs

HOW Gather.Jayhawks WILL FOSTER A SENSE OF BELONGING:
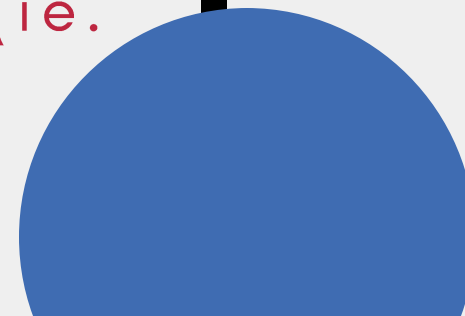
SENSE OF BELONGING

Strayhorn (2018) describes sense of belonging as the need for students to feel connected and that they matter to others. By drawing on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Strayhorn (2018) articulates the importance of belongingness as a basic piece of motivation for students. If students do not experience a sense of belonging they are more likely to leave the institution.

Gather.Jayhawks is a platform that will allow students to connect virtually in casual and organized engagements. Students will have the opportunity to collaborate with classmates, meet with various affinity groups, learn more about and join student organizations, and interact with other students they "meet" in the virtual platform. The competition aspect of our program provides incentives and creates an opportunity for students to make meaningful connections with their peers.

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
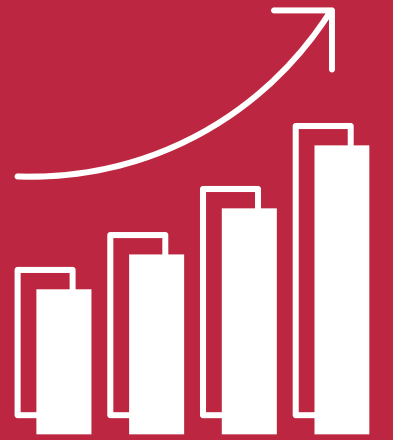
Retention

The predictive-enrollment models that leaders have used to plan classes won't hold up in a COVID-19 world. Much will be tested, including an institution's ability to serve and educate all students and create the sense of community and vibrancy typically found on campuses nationwide (McKinsey, 2020).

Jayhawk University is a place where students want to be even if things are not able to be in person.

"A college's first-year class helps define the student experience and heavily influences the institution's finances" (McKinsey, 2020).

Gather.Jayhawks will foster a sense of belonging and connection to Jayhawk University, which could ultimately contribute to the retention of first year students.

Mental Health Considerations

- "Higher education may be entering the most dangerous time for student mental health" (Schroeder, 2020).

- Students have great risk of "burnout" due to stress, budget cuts, technology fatigue, and lack of campus connection (Schroeder, 2020).
  - The ramifications of "burnout" can lead to impacts on self-image, career success, and physical/ mental health.

- Student Mental Health and Technology
  - Studies show that students can develop meaning of self through technological platforms (Shuh et al., 2011).
  - Students, through digital platforms, can create a true representation of oneself. The ability to create full representations and expressions of oneself is vital to the development of a college student (Katz & Rice, 2002).

About Gather.Jayhawks

PROGRAM FOR PROMOTING SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH AN ONLINE FORMAT

"Without students in attendance, the programs that provide knowledge and opportunities for developing campus communities lose their viability... social media and technology platforms have emerged from the need to continue connecting university students to their communities" (Amey & Reesor, 2015, p. 160-161).

Goals for Our Program:

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Gather.Jayhawks promotes informal and formal engagement opportunities. With fluid video capabilities, students can walk in and out of conversations like they would in person.

CAMPUS-WIDE INTEGRATION

The program builds off of existing programs to incentivize participation by students such as the annual involvement fair. The program also promotes ongoing engagement with academic affairs through integration of components related to academic success such as advising or faculty office hours.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Gather.Jayhawks promotes equity and inclusion with campus-wide access to the program through technology loan initiatives. Additionally, digital interactions are monitored closely to promote inclusion and accountability.

Program Details

Students will be able to navigate a virtual campus that is identical to Jayhawk University's physical campus. The purpose of the program is to allow students to virtually engage in similar ways as if they were in person. Thus, students will be able to visit various offices and video call staff that work in those offices to receive access to their services.

Students can choose to create their own teams or be randomly assigned to a team to compete in the semester long program that prompts individuals and teams to participate in weekly challenges. The challenges are intended to incentivize engagement in various components of campus including campus resources, academic resources, faculty interactions, and late-night philosophical debates.

Program Features

Student identification profile menu

Students can schedule Telehealth papointments

Can visit and make appointments with campus offices

Library staff can be reached for assistance in the virtual library

Private study spaces are available for students to connect with peers in their classes

Casual interactions can occur like a conversation

Can compete in virtual games; some even hosted by offices

Faculty can host office hours

Campus Partner Contributions and Oversight

OFFICE OF FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

- Will be responsible for intentional outreach with first year students.
- Use connections Orientation Leaders made with new students to promote programs.

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Work with Gather.Town to configure Single Sign On credentials to the Jayhawk University to create the Gather.Jayhawks virtual platform
- Offer training for students, staff, and faculty.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

- Responsible for program promotion, assessment, and weekly challenge logistics.

OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AND COMMUNITY STANDARS

- Will create an online behavior policy.
- Provide proactive education for students on cyber citizenship how to responsibly engage.
- Manage report systems within Gather.Jayhawks and facilitate conduct hearings when needed.

COUNSELING AND PHYSOCHOLGICAL SERVICES

- Licensed counseling staff will be available through telehealth technology to meet, with students just like on campus!

Promotes Team Identity

Use Existing Campus Programs

Integrate Faculty Interactions to Increase Academic Engagement

Weekly Competitions
GATHER.JAYHAWKS

WEEK 1
5 points per participant

Connect with your Gather.Jayhawks team and get to know each other.

WEEK 2
5 points per participant

Attend the involvement fair to learn more about how to get involved on campus.

WEEK 3
2 points per participant per engagement and an additional 2 points per victory

Engage in the week's competitions happening at Allen FieldHouse.

WEEK 4
10 points per participant when you share the resource with your team

Attend the Connect U to resources virtual fair.

WEEK 5
2 points per participant per study session. Additional 5 points per participant that attended a faculty office hour in the first 5 weeks.

Academic Check: 1. Host a study party and receive 2 points per person in attendance. 2. Receive an additional 5 points per person who has attended a faculty office hours within the first 4 weeks.

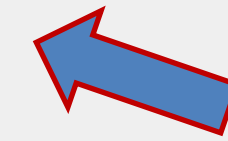### WEEK 6
5 points per participant who completes the task

Find all 7 virtual Jayhawk logos on the virtual campus in Gather.Jayhawks.

WEEK 7
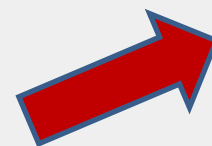**5 points per person wearing Jayhawk gear**

Get your flock together and take a virtual screenshot of all your team in Jayhawk University gear.

Promotes Casual Engagements

Promotes Engagement with Campus Partners

Weekly Competitions
GATHER.JAYHAWKS

WEEK 8
5 points per participant

Attend virtual extra-curricular activity with your flock members. Make sure to capture a picture of your watch party.

WEEK 9
2 points per participant per study party session. Additional 5 points per every participant that has attended a tutoring or study group session.

Academic Check: 1. Host a study party and receive 2 points per person in attendance. 2. Receive an additional 5 points per person who has utilized a tutoring service or study group this semester.

WEEK 10
5 points per participant

Engage in a virtual campus conference or academic conversation/ webinar.

WEEK 11
2 points per participant

Get together with your Gather.Jayhawks team and talk about your self-care plan for the week.

WEEK 12
Each team gets 10 points for completion and top three teams receive an additional 5 points

Picture scavenger hunt (hints will be released at 8am on Monday and your team will have until 5pm on Friday to complete the scavenger hunt).

WEEK 13
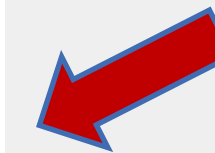**5 points per participant and an additional 2 points per person on a winning team**

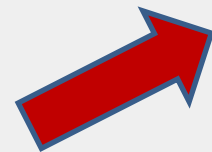Attend one of the three trivia nights offered.

WEEK 14
Team points will be calculated and winners announced!

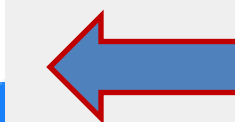Complete the exit survey of the user experience. Announce the winning team and prizes.

Allows Students to Learn About Campus, its History, and Resources Through Prompts During Scavenger Hunt

Assessment to Understand How to Improve Future Initiatives

- Online and technological learning can lead to and/or exacerbate inequality for those in marginalized communities (Buzetto-Hollywood, 2018).

- Jayhawk University understands this component of engagement through digital platforms and is taking steps to address areas and systems of inequality.

- Jayhawk university will provide training to all students on how to use digital platform.

- Technology lending program will be available to students who do not have access to appropriate equipment.

- Gather.Jayhawks will be compatible with mobile devices and downloadable as an app.
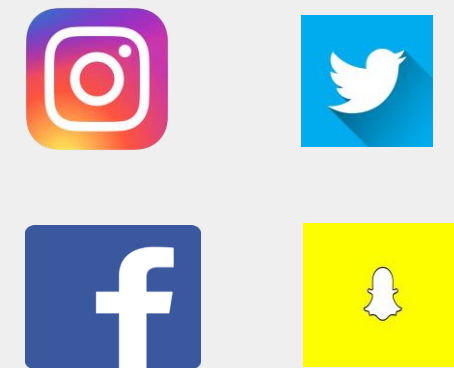
ACCESS

Program Use of Social Media

We will use various University affiliated social media accounts to promote the program. We will also use social media to track engagement.

- Motivation Mondays– share an uplifting/fun post to start the week off on a lighter note.
- Task Tuesdays– share link and short blurb about topic/tasks for the week for the competitions.
- Found my flock Fridays– students talking about their experience and connecting with their teams or small groups.
- #ClubJayhawk (universal hashtag) will keep students up to date and engaged on all platforms. This will also allow us to keep data on social media engagement.

Some social media initiatives include:
- Tik Tok – join the flock
- Facebook
- Weekly newsletter
- Instagram/Instagram Stories
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- Digital Signage on campus

TikTok

Our multi platform approach would allow students to engage with Gather.Jayhawks on all social media platforms always making information accessible

COST BREAKDOWN

- The cost of the Gather.Town platform for Jayhawk University will be a shared cost between Gather.Town and the Jayhawk University.
  - Jayhawk University will be one of Gather.Town's initial university developments and models.

- The platform charges $22 per student. Our goal is to have 2,000 students active on the platform.
  - Total cost of $176,000 for Gather.Jayhawk Platform
  - Jayhawk University will be responsible for $88,000.

- There will be an $11 allocation of current university fees paid by students to subsidize the cost of the program/platform.

- Additionally, university departments such as Student Affairs, IT, Academic Affairs, and Undergraduate Admissions will split a single salaried position to be a program controller/manager.

Evaluation of Gather.Jayhawks

For the committee and Jayhawk University to see the overall impact and success of Gather.Jayhawks several evaluations will take place including:

- Implementation Evaluation:
  - An initial evaluation to assess the design, delivery as well as participation of Gather.Jayhawks
- Program Evaluation
  - To understand if the program met its set learning outcomes

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