Virtual Student Engagement

A Case Study from StudentAffairs.com

University of Missouri
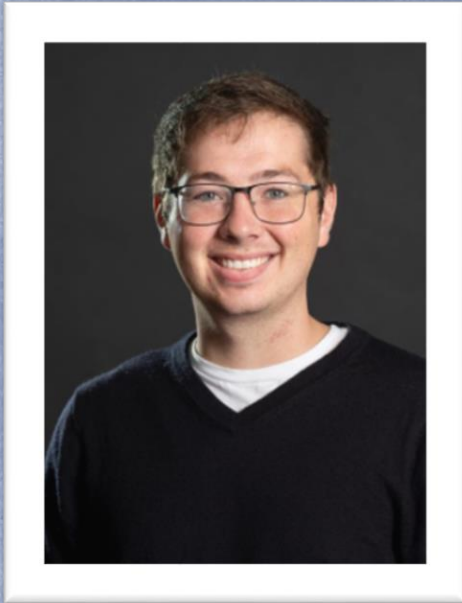
Turner Rafter (Team Leader)

Velma Buckner

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Meet The Committee

Max

Dean of Students

Sarah

Activities Director

Laura

**Director of
New Student Programs**

Boscoe University Demographics

- **Located in Kansas City, MO**
- **4 Year, Land Grant Institution**
- **28,000 Total Enrollment**
- **20,000 Undergraduate Students**
- **Mascot: Boscoe Bulldogs**

New to The U

A Virtual Engagement Initiative

Part One: Why It Works

- Our reasoning behind the program, based in student development theory.

Part Two: How It Works

- An outline of the program for new students (First Time Freshman & Transfer).

Mission Statement

New to The U is an engagement initiative designed to assist new students in making a successful transition to Boscoe University, both academically and personally. This initiative aims to foster a sense of belonging, promote engagement in the curricular and co-curricular life of the university, and seeks to help students develop and apply essential skills.

New to The U is a one-year virtual program provided by Boscoe University's Office Of New Student Programs. This program is designed to enhance new student experiences at BU by promoting academic success through mentorship and establishing community.

Program Objectives

I. Create a meaningful virtual program to promote student engagement.

II. Allow students to build a sense of belonging while at the institution

III. Construct opportunities for student engagement inside and outside of the classroom.

IV. Increase academic, personal and skills development for students.

Why It Works

New to The U was created on three pillars of student success, all backed by student development theory.

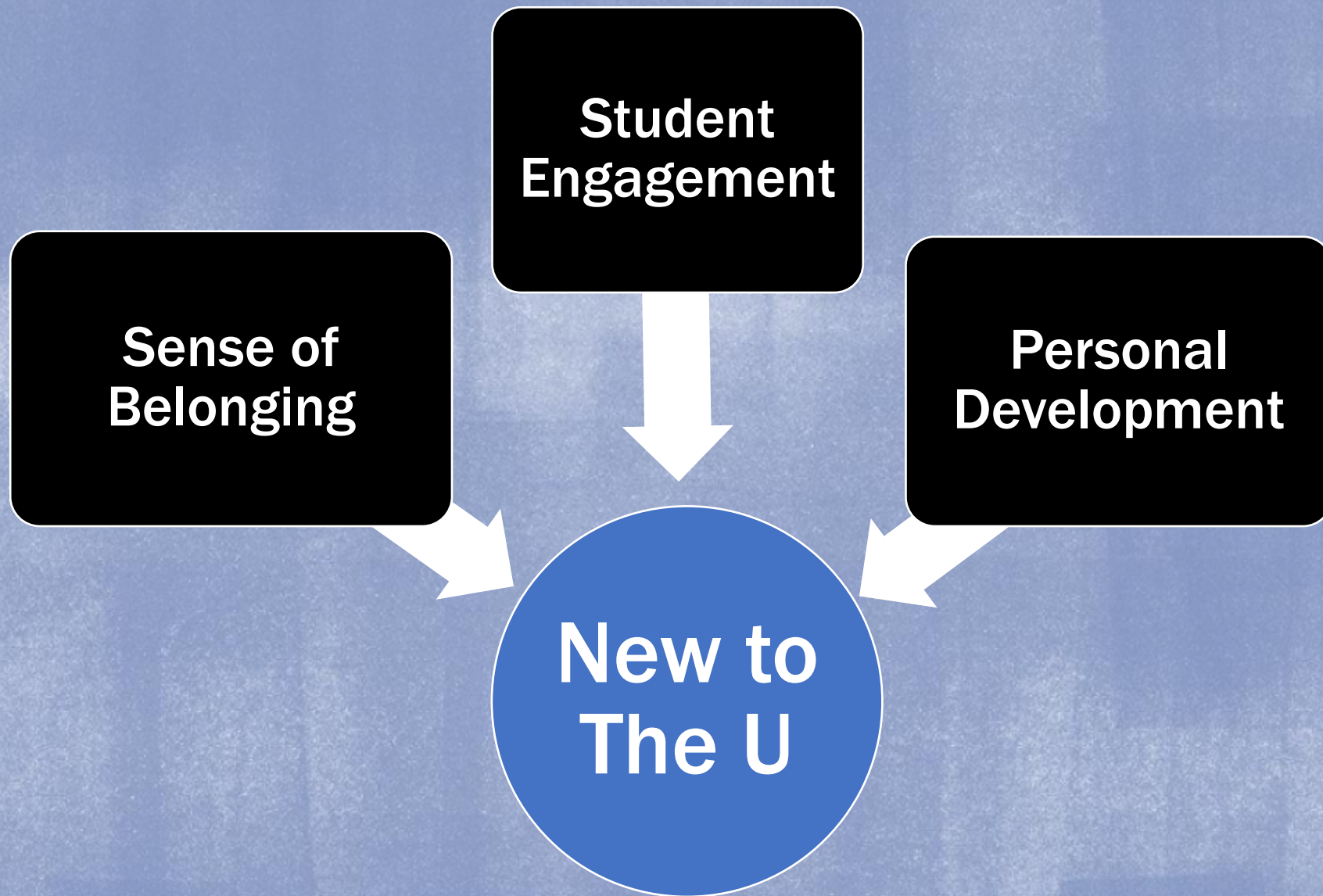## Sense of Belonging

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Student Engagement
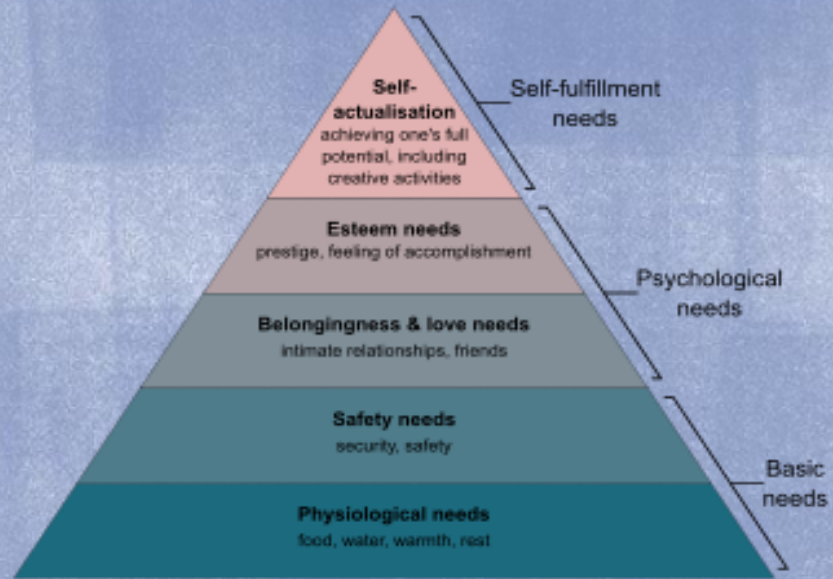
- Tinto's Student Integration Perspectives

Personal Development

- Chickering & Reisser's Vectors of Development

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Self-actualisation	Self-fulfillment needs
achieving one's full potential, including creative activities	
Esteem needs prestige, feeling of accomplishment	Psychological needs
Belongingness & love needs intimate relationships, friends	
Safety needs security, safety	Basic needs
Physiological needs food, water, warmth, rest	

Maslow describes a sense of belonging as a basic human need and motivation, which suggests that the need for belonging must be met prior to motivation for esteem and personal accomplishment.

How New to The U Utilizes This Theory

- IC Groups and MAC Activities Create Belongingness
- Being Provided With Campus Resources To Meet Basic Needs
- BU Bookstore Coupon Allows Students to Buy Spirit Wear Which Creates A Sense of Connection to University

Tinto's Student Integration Perspectives

Integration Occurs In Both Academic and Social Facets

New to The U's Individual Cohorts are created by grouping five new students of the same academic major with upperclassman acting as a mentor. This peer-to-peer mentorship model introduces new students to academic and social opportunities on campus.
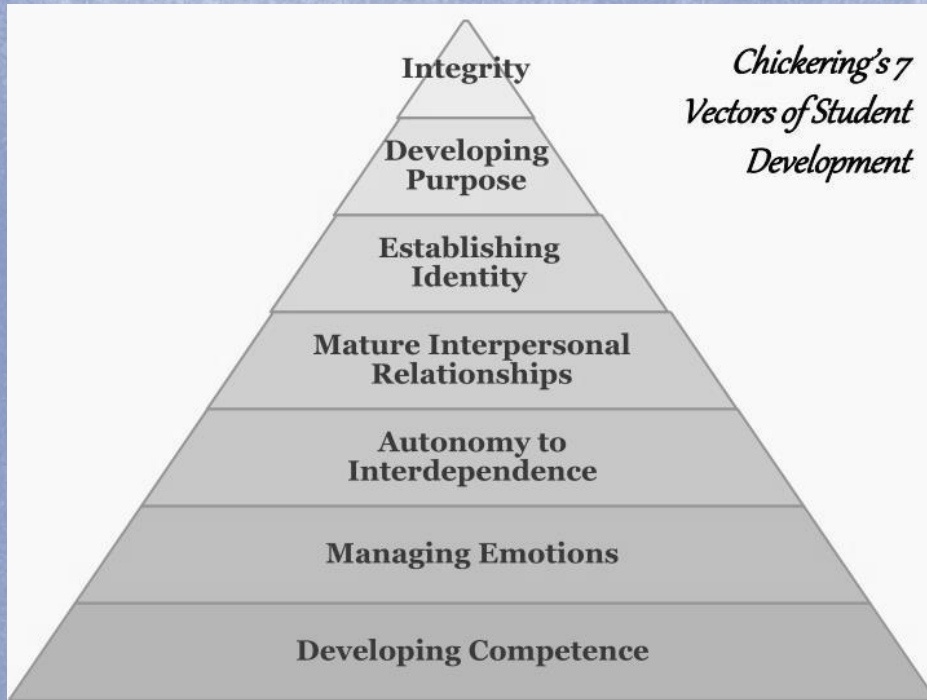
How New to The U Utilizes This Theory

Academic

- IC Groups Created Based on Academic Major
- Upperclassmen Mentors Are Included In the Academic Major

Social

- MAC Activities Foster Social Interaction Between Different Academic Majors
- MAC Activities Are Not Academically Related, But Instead Focus On Creating Community

Chickering & Reisser: Seven Vectors of Development

Chickering's 7 Vectors of Student Development

(Pyramid from bottom to top)
- Developing Competence
- Managing Emotions
- Autonomy to Interdependence
- Mature Interpersonal Relationships
- Establishing Identity
- Developing Purpose
- Integrity

How New to The U Utilizes This Theory

- IC Meeting Activities & Mentorship Will Develop A Sense of Competence
- Mentor Will Act As Another Level of Developing Competence In Academic Major
- Being Provided Campus Resources To Assist In Managing Emotions
- IC Meeting Professional Development Activities Help Create a Sense of Autonomy

How It Works

Phase One:
Recruitment

Recruit students through social media.

Students are matched to Individual Cohorts based on survey.

Phase Two:
Academic Year Programming

Bi-weekly virtual meetings of Individual Cohorts.

Monthly All Cohort virtual activities to increase social interaction.

Phase Three:
End of the Year Program

End of the Year Celebration.

Quantitative and qualitative assessment of the program.

Individual Cohort (IC)

- Individual Cohort Groups are matched via an Introductory Survey.

- Students Are Initially Matched To An IC Based on Academic Major, But Secondary Factors Are Considered Such As:
  - ❑ Identities
  - ❑ First Generation Status
  - ❑ First Time Freshman Student or Transfer Student

- IC Cohorts Are Groups of 5 New Students With 1 Upperclassman Acting As a Mentor.

Individual Cohort (IC) Meetings

- Bi-weekly meetings held on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30pm via Zoom.

- Meeting topics are consistent across all IC Groups in New to The U.

Examples Of Topics To Be Discussed

Campus Resources

Goal Setting

Cultural Competency

Mental Health Awareness & Management

Professional Development

Monthly All Cohort (MAC) Activities

MAC Activities are monthly opportunities that allow all IC groups in New to The U to come together and meet each other to build further engagement and community.

Some Examples of MAC Activities

Residential Hall Friendly Cooking Class

Friendsgiving With A Meal

BU Football Watch Party

**These events will be virtually held via Zoom.

New to The U Virtual Programming At a Glance

September

2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6 IC Bi-Weekly Meeting -Introductions of cohort participants and mentors -Overview of meetings and various activities for the academic year 5-:30 PM – 6:30 PM	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 IC Bi-Weekly Meeting -Expectations Exercise -Ice Breaker -5:30 PM – 6:30 PM	21	22	23
24	25	26	MAC Activity – BOSCOE Virtual Resource Fair An annual event hosted by the New to The U program to introduce new students at BU to student organizations, faculty/staff, University departments, and local businesses.	28	29	30
31						

Social Media Specifics

- Start the Campaign During Summer Orientation
- Share Recruitment Video On All of BU's Social Media Platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- Snapchat GeoFilter For Use On Campus
- Utilize Leadership Team Introduction Posts On Instagram

Social Media Specifics

Leadership Team Introduction Post

Snapchat GeoFilter

Incentives To Join New to The U!

- Students Who Attend the First Month MAC Event Will Receive a Coupon To Use At The BU Bookstore
- Attendance is Tracked Afterwards To Be Entered Into Regular Raffle Prizes
- Consistent Monthly Attendees Will Be Able to Attend the End of Year Celebration

A Coupon To the Bookstore?
Gateway to Sense of Belonging

Being able to purchase BU gear and wear it proudly makes you feel like a part of the community.

Methodology

New to the U program will be assessed by quantitative and qualitative methods throughout the duration of the academic year.

Assessment Methods

- Pre- and Post-Program Student Surveys

Survey questions will remain constant to best measure student progress throughout the program.

- Participant Interviews

Interview questions will revolve around how the program is structured as well as what the student is gaining from the experience.

Pre- And Post-Program Survey Questions

- Do you feel you are an important and respected addition to this university?

- In what ways are you engaged or involved as a student?

Interview Questions

- What is the most challenging part of the New to The U program?

- What activity stood out the most to you in the program?

- What activities would you suggest for New to The U to include in order to make the program more effective?

Boscoe University

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New Student Programs

References

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