Defining the ideal student experience from application to graduation

March 9, 2017

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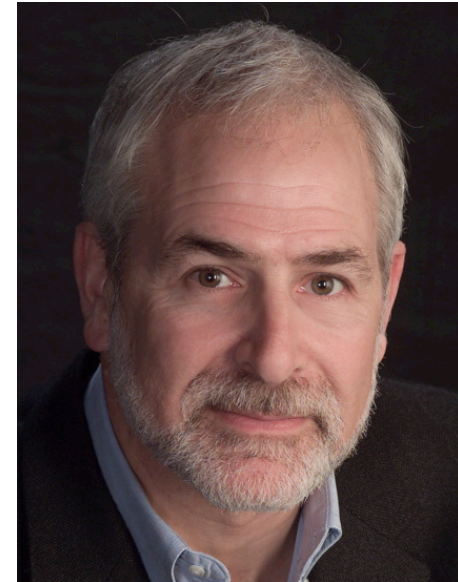GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Welcome

David Burge
VP of Enrollment
George Mason University
DBurge@gmu.edu
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Christina Fleming
VP of Marketing and Enrollment Services
Blackboard
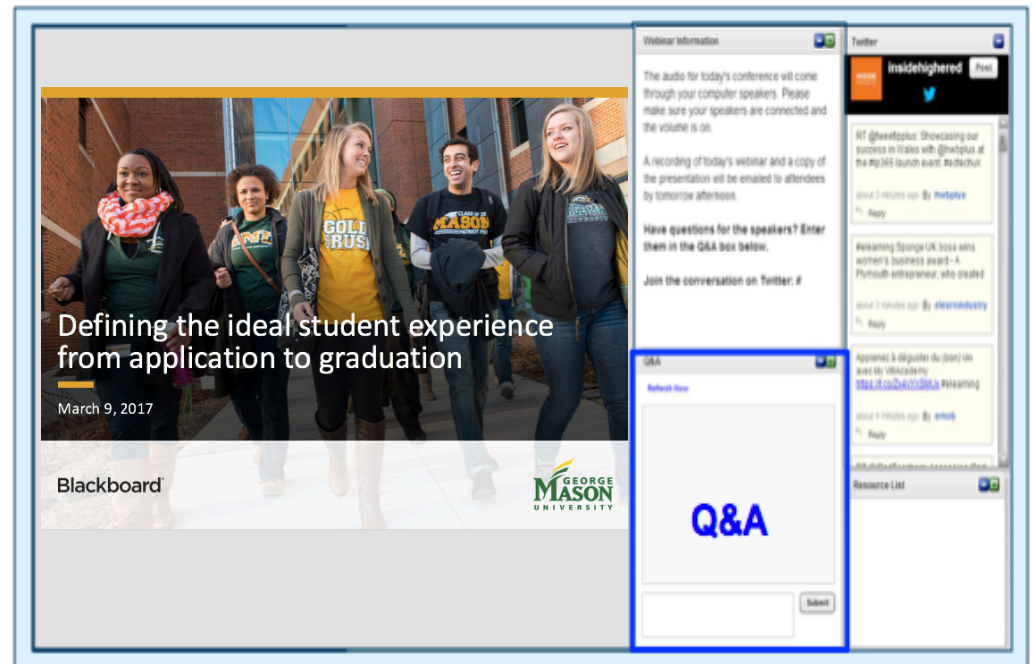Christina.Fleming@Blackboard.com
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Casey Green
Moderator
Digital Tweed Blogger and Director, The Campus Computing Project
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Before we begin

- We are using On24 for today's webinar. Please enter questions in the text field at the bottom of the Q&A Window. *We are monitoring the discussion and will try to bring the Q&A comments into the conversation.*

- We will not use the "raise your hand" feature.

- We are recording the webinar; the webinar archive and slides will be available later today.

Defining the ideal student experience from application to graduation

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Q&A

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About George Mason University

Largest public research university
in Commonwealth of Virginia

Serving nearly 35K students
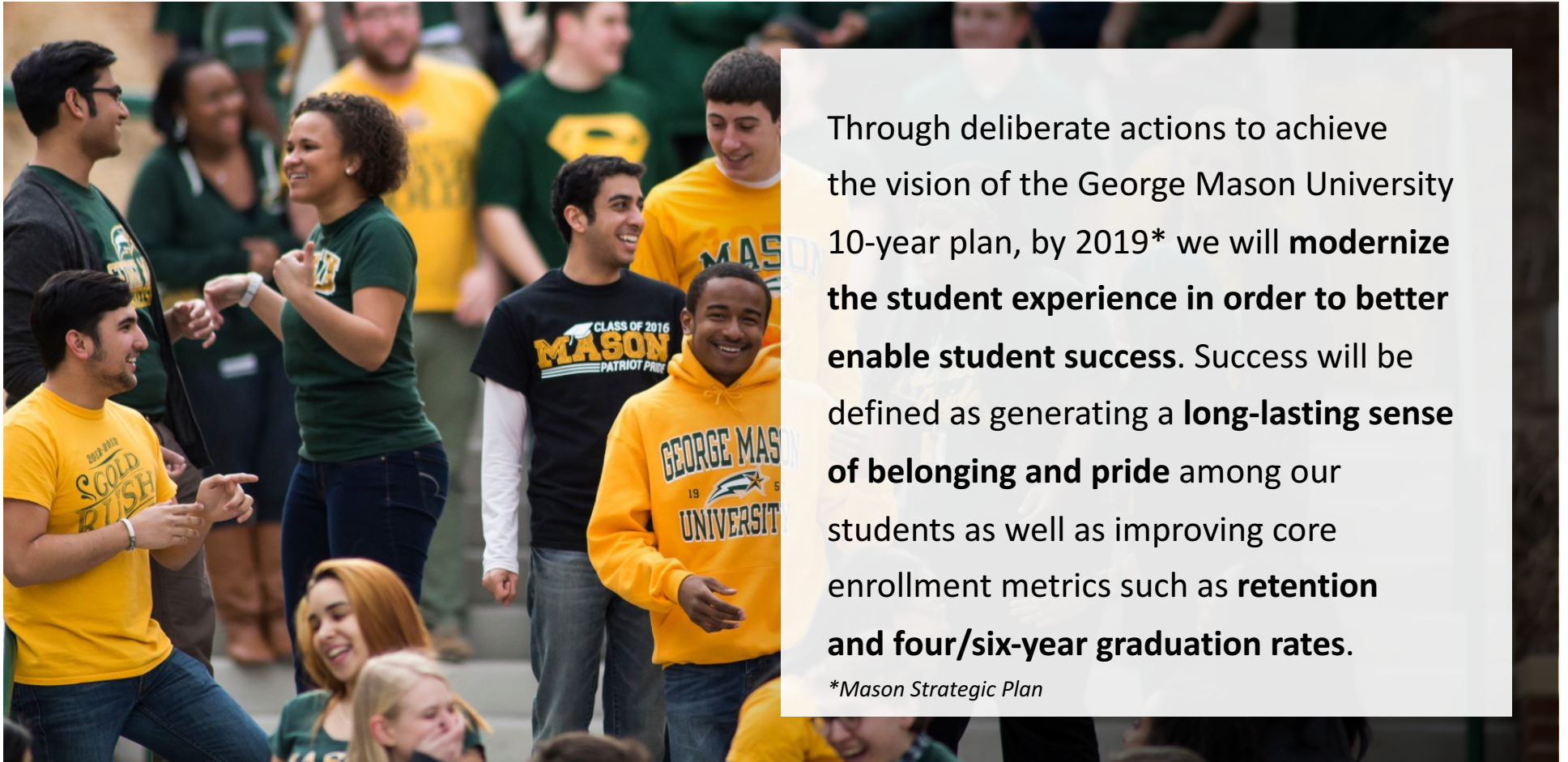with 12 schools and colleges

Diverse student body
with 130 countries of origin

Vision to modernize
the student experience by 2019

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Mason's goal

Through deliberate actions to achieve the vision of the George Mason University 10-year plan, by 2019* we will **modernize the student experience in order to better enable student success**. Success will be defined as generating a **long-lasting sense of belonging and pride** among our students as well as improving core enrollment metrics such as **retention and four/six-year graduation rates**.

*Mason Strategic Plan

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Vision for 2019

1 → **2** → **3**
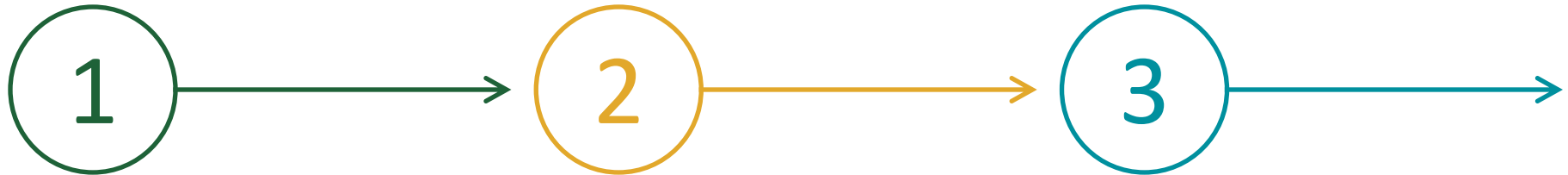
Year one

Define the ideal student experience; analyze the current environment; identify gaps and issues; develop an action plan; set goals for year two; and launch work.
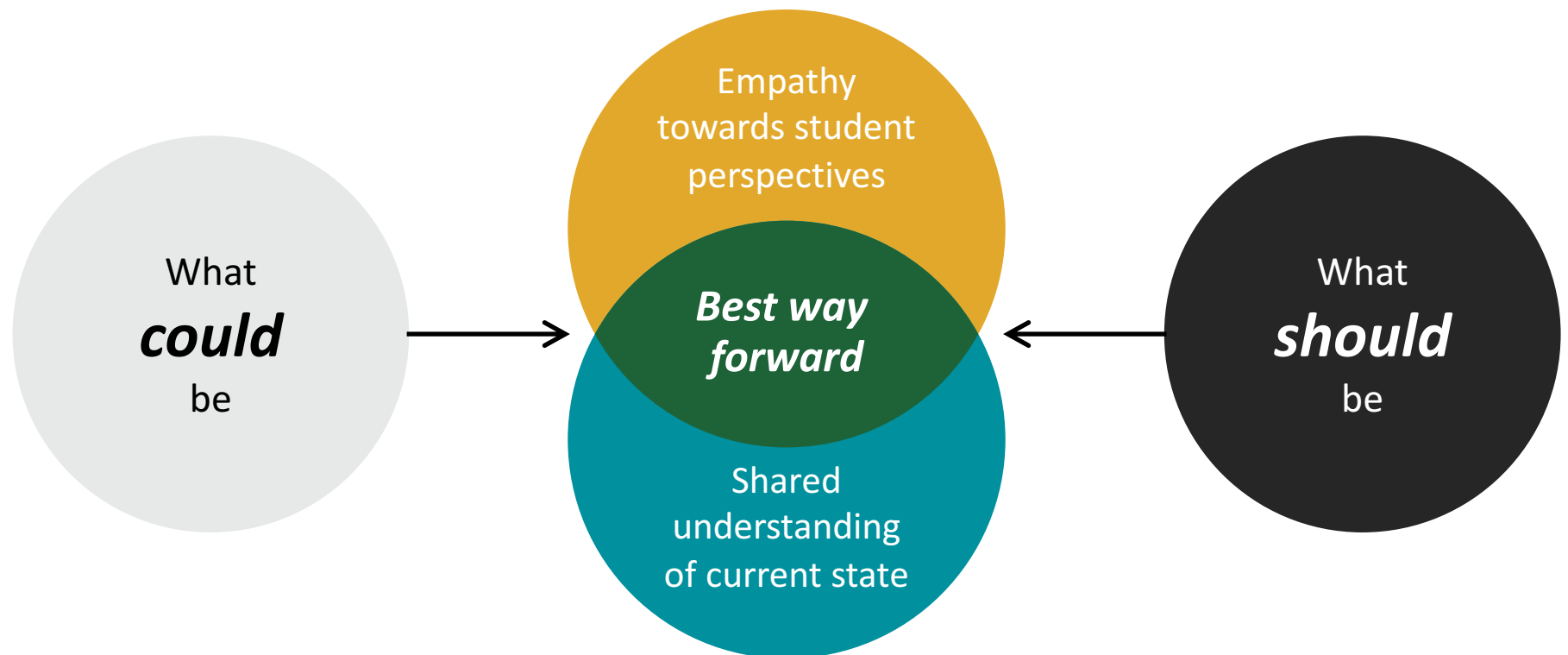
Year two

Define cross-functional teams; move forward with the first phase of implementation; assess student satisfaction; adjust; and create goals for year three.

Year three

Move forward with the second phase of implementation; assess student satisfaction; adjust; and create goals for the following year.

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Desired approach

What **could** be

Empathy towards student perspectives

Best way forward

Shared understanding of current state

What **should** be

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Self-study and research

12,900+ student responses from prior studies examined

11,000+ Beacon survey responses studied

4,000+ student enrollment records sampled

1,200+ Mason Student Experience Survey responses studied

~100 student immersion exercises examined

40+ hours of student interviews explored

160+ hours of on-campus research

130+ staff and faculty interviewed

115+ reports and datasets studied

5 months of research and analysis

200,000 national student market behaviors correlated to Mason enrollment patterns
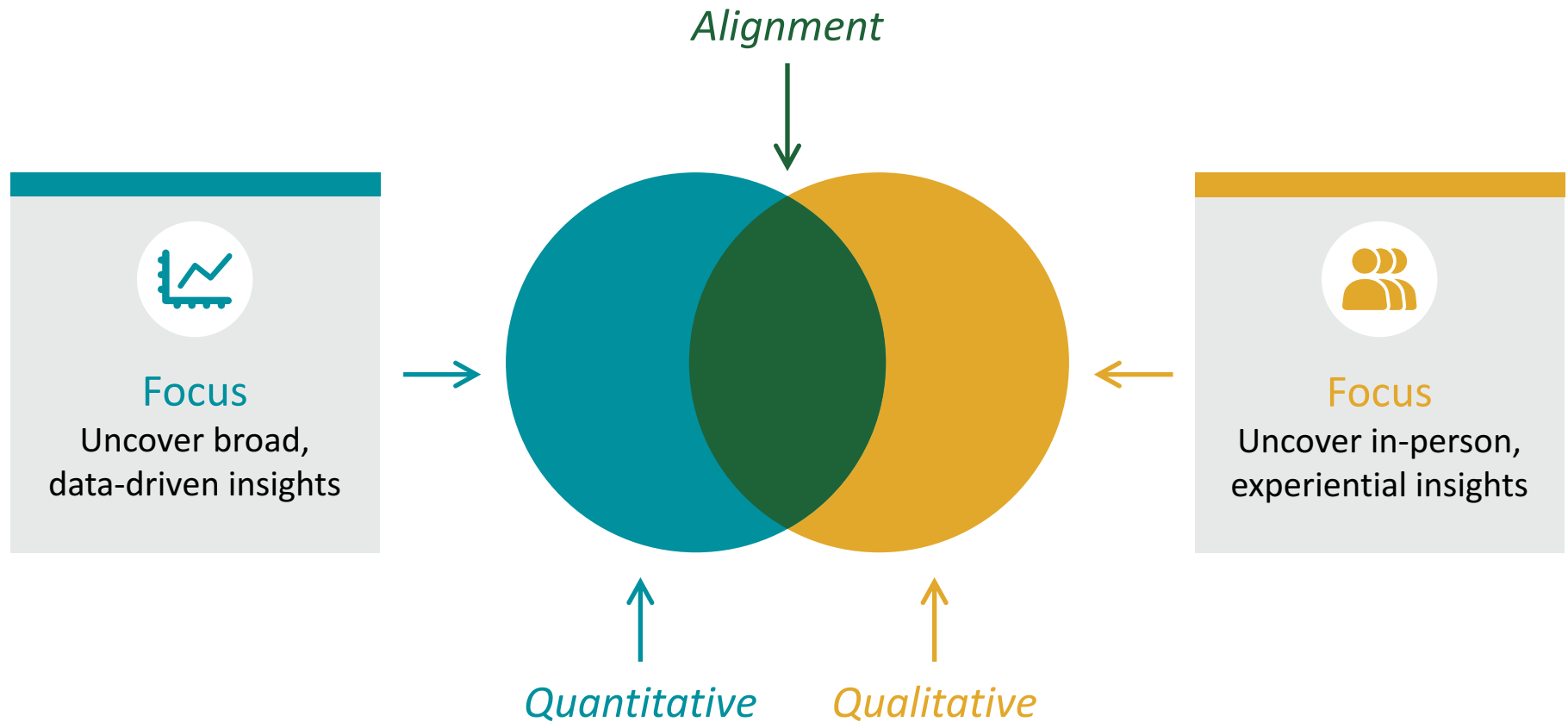
Steering group (1): Over 40 individuals from multiple offices across Mason

- **Kathy Adcock**, Manager, Administrative Applications & Integration, ITS Enterprise Applications

- **Pamela Allen**, Project Manager, Student Educational Planner, Center of Advising, Retention & Transition

- **Melanie Balog**, Managing Editor, Strategic Communications

- **Juliet Blank-Godlove**, Dean of Students, Dean of Students Office, University Life

- **Matt Boyce**, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Admissions

- **Jeannie Brown Leonard**, Dean, Student Academic Affairs - Advising, Retention & Transitions

- **David Burge**, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Office of the Provost

- **Christine Clark-Talley**, Associate Vice President, Office of Alumni Relations

- **Jamie Coniglio**, Head, Fenwick Research Services, Fenwick Library, University Libraries

- **Eve Dauer**, University Registrar

- **JJ Davis**, Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance, Office of Senior Vice President

- **Gbemi Disu**, Executive Director, Office of Global Strategy, Office of the Provost

- **Maria Fiore**, Associate Director, Business Operations, Housing & Residence Life

- **Marc Fournier**, Assistant Vice President of Business Services, Auxiliary Enterprises

- **Renate Guilford**, Associate Provost, Academic Administration, Office of the Provost

- **Kim Holmes**, Director, Retention and Student Success, Student Academic Affairs - Advising, Retention & Transitions

- **Susan Kehoe**, Director, Academic Strategies, Information Technology Services

- **Thulasi Kumar**, Associate Provost, Institutional Research and Assessment, Institutional Assessment; Inst Research & Reporting

- **Sally Lorentson**, Assistant Dean, University Life/Director, Orientation, Family Programs & Services

- **Michelle Marks**, Vice Provost, Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost

- **Barbara Meehan**, Executive Director, Counseling and Psychological Services

- **Janette Muir**, Associate Provost, Undergrad Education/Campus Coordinator, 4-VA, Office of the Provost

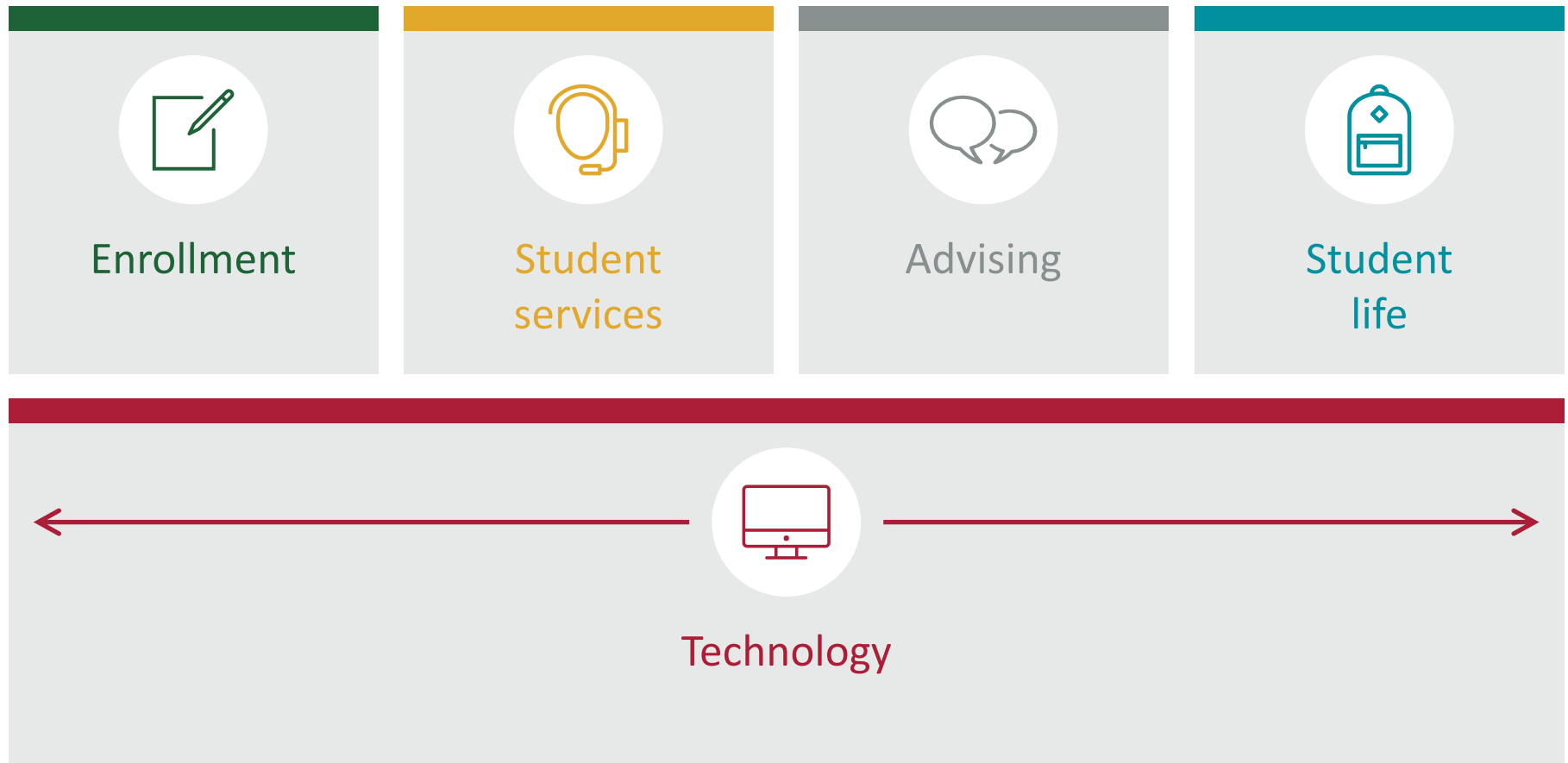- **Robin Parker**, Project Director, Director of Compliance, Office of the Provost

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Steering group (2): Over 40 individuals from multiple offices across Mason

- **Rose Pascarell,** Vice President, University Life

- **Pam Patterson**, Associate Vice President, University Life

- **Laura Phelps**, Assistant Director, Online Student Services & Communications, Office of Digital Learning

- **Patrick Quinn**, Director, Student Fiscal Services, Fiscal Services

- **Ellen Drogin Rodgers,** Associate Dean, Student and Academic Affairs, College of Education & Human Development

- **Michael Sandler**, Director of Strategic Communications, Strategic Communications

- **Kahan Sablo,** Assistant Vice President, University Life

- **Nicole Sealey,** Academic Director, INTO George Mason University

- **Tom Shifflett,** Director, Enterprise Applications, Information Technology Services

- **Charlie Spann**, Executive Director, ITS Strategic Business Operations

- **Debra Lattanzi-Shutika**, Chair, English/Folklore Studies Concentration, MAIS, English

- **Marilyn Smith,** Vice President/Chief Information Officer, Information Technology Services

- **Ahmad Taheri**, Director, IT Projects & Info Serv., Enrollment Central, Office of the Provost

- **Amy Takayama-Perez**, Dean, Admissions

- **Joy Taylor**, Director, Learning Support Services, Information Technology Services

- **Sandy Tarbox**, Director of Financial Aid, Student Financial Aid

- **Judith vanBever-Green**, Executive Director, International Programs & Services

- **Kirk Vandebrooke**, Director of Technology Services, Auxiliary Enterprises, University Life

- **Eric Woodall**, Director of Digital Communications, Communications and Marketing

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Qualitative and quantitative findings

Alignment

Focus
Uncover broad, data-driven insights

Focus
Uncover in-person, experiential insights

Quantitative

Qualitative

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Perspectives and inputs

Enrollment

Student services

Advising

Student life

Technology

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Questions?

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Steps to an improved experience

Uncover the current state of today's student experience

Define the ideal experience and the values that make it unique

Identify the gaps between the current and the ideal experience

Create a roadmap to bridge the gaps with actionable steps

Implement prioritized steps over an achievable timeframe

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Uncover the current state

160+ hours
of on-campus research

115+ reports
and datasets studied

130+ staff
and faculty interviewed

Ideal student experience

An ideal student experience is consistently personal, productive and an educative dialogue that occurs between a student and all embodiments of an institution.

It is grounded in empathy for the students and framed by the pedagogy and ethos of the institution.

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Define the ideal

The ideal Mason student experience is where I, as a student…

Am **captivated** by Mason's specific perspective on the world and the futures it is determined to create.

Feel that Mason goes above and beyond to **eliminate steps** that do not relate to my personal growth.

Trust the Mason community has my best interests at heart. I always have advocates here.
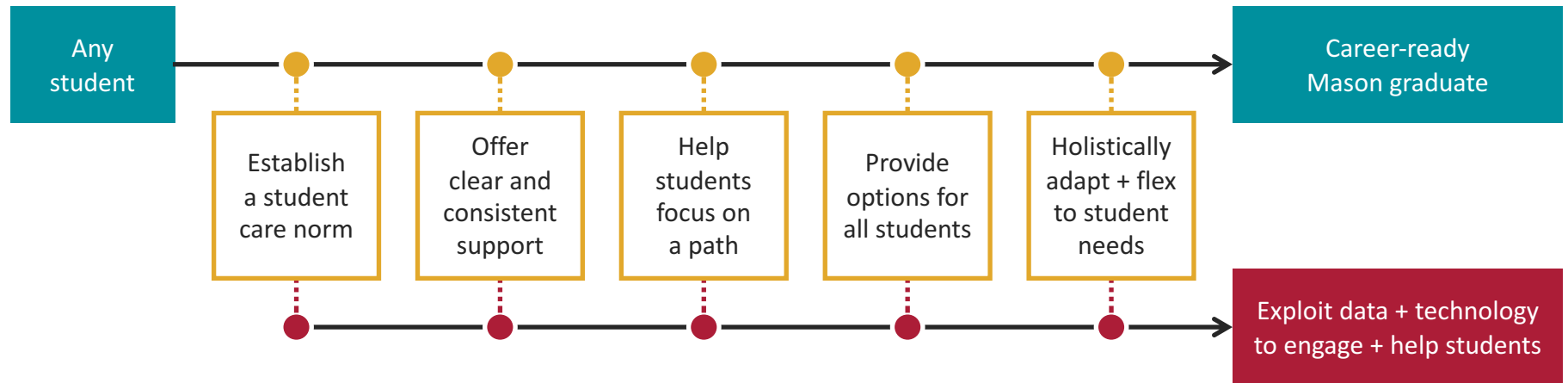
Am **challenged and transformed** by interactions both planned and organic.

Am impressed with Mason's **flexibility** — the ability to adjust as my goals and interests evolve over time.

Am regularly **inspired by the Mason community**, its support, empathy, and sacrifice.

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Ideal student lifecycle

Enabling meaningful personalized contact is at the heart of the ideal, which is **made possible by technology** to drive a consistent and coherent Mason experience **for all students.**

Any student → Establish a student care norm → Offer clear and consistent support → Help students focus on a path → Provide options for all students → Holistically adapt + flex to student needs → Career-ready Mason graduate

Exploit data + technology to engage + help students

Take advantage of Mason data, consumer norms, and Smart Cities practice to craft an unparalleled supportive and responsive student experience.

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Identify the gaps

Innovation debt

Change fatigue

Expectation gap

Business processes

Communication gap

Data (and trust) gap
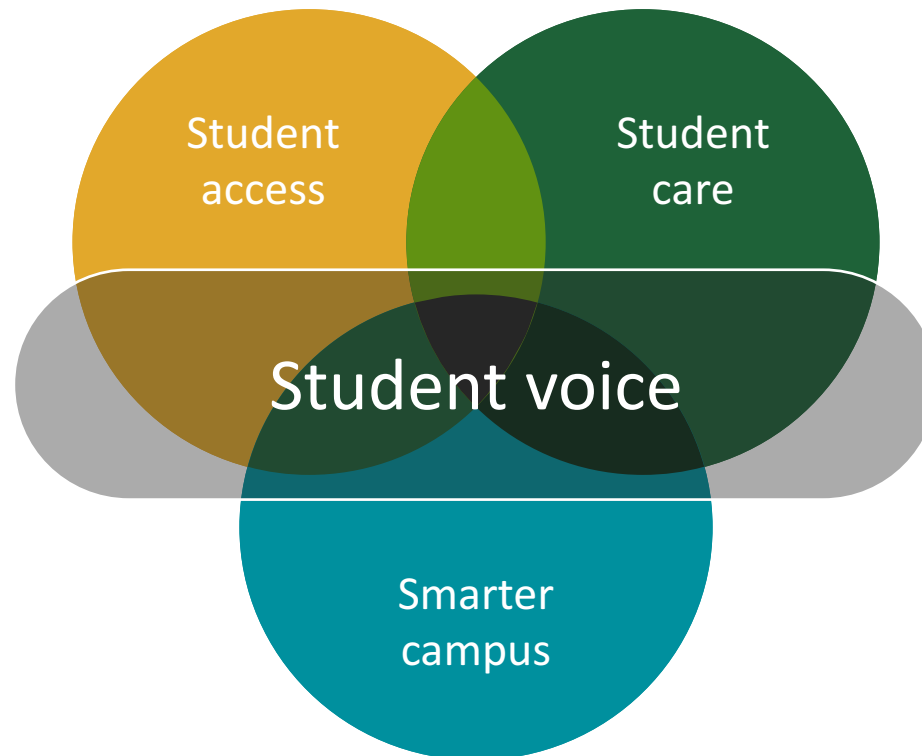
Context gap

Lifecycle coherence

Roadmap creation

Student access
All students should feel part of an inclusive community.

Student voice
Students should be active contributors to the collective Mason vision and experience.

Student care
All students should encounter proactive, coordinated and nurturing interactions.

Smarter campus
All students should experience a harmony of people, processes, and technologies.

Venn diagram labels:
- Student access
- Student care
- Student voice
- Smarter campus

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Implementation recommendations

Student access

- 24/7 access
- One-stop services
- Infrastructure investments

Student care

- Relationship management (CRM)
- Advising practice
- Orientation redesign

Student voice

- Shared language
- Student perspectives
- Channels of expression

Smarter campus

- Innovation management practice
- Business rules and processes
- Data-driven inputs

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Questions?

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Mason's evaluation phase

October – December
Evaluation Phase

Members of the Leadership Team and Steering Committee will engage with the campus community to review the findings. *Feedback due by December 20 via web form or individual meetings.*

January
Evaluation Phase, concluded

Membership of the Leadership Team will meet with the Executive Council and G4 leadership teams to present amended findings. *Evaluation of feedback incorporated into project roadmaps.*

February
Action Planning

Year One and Year Two priorities released and work teams created.

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The Student Experience Symposium
February 13th, 2017

Students react to the report

- They want current students be a part of implementation teams and that they be consulted along the way.

- The results seem more business-focused versus education focused.

- Tuition pricing—how can they see that their dollars are actually going to make these kinds of things happen? They want to see tangible things.

- Want to create an "Amazon" type of experience for students at Mason.

- Confirm the lack of clarity about which websites to look at for academic information.

- Interested in communications resources – would like communication organized better; fewer emails, a page with relevant updates.

Networking is what I am getting the most out of Mason."

Won't go to Fairfax for services not offered in Arlington."

Would like events on campus to start later, 6pm or later, to accommodate work schedules."

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Themes become work streams

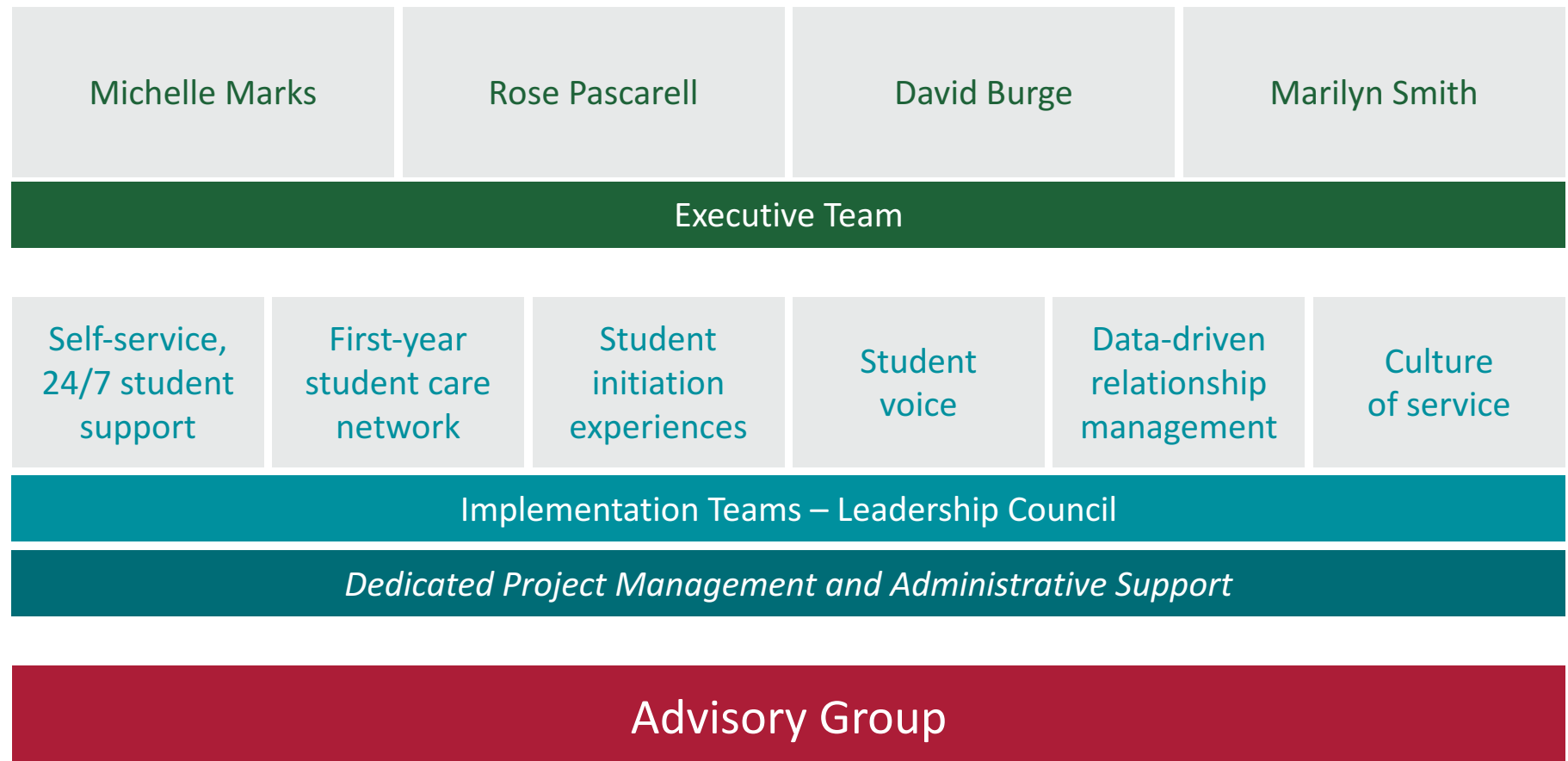|		
Self-service, 24/7 student support	First-year student care network	Student initiation experiences
Student voice	Data-driven relationship management	Culture of service

Project governance

Michelle Marks	Rose Pascarell	David Burge	Marilyn Smith

Executive Team

Self-service, 24/7 student support	First-year student care network	Student initiation experiences	Student voice	Data-driven relationship management	Culture of service

Implementation Teams – Leadership Council

Dedicated Project Management and Administrative Support

Advisory Group

What the implementation teams will do

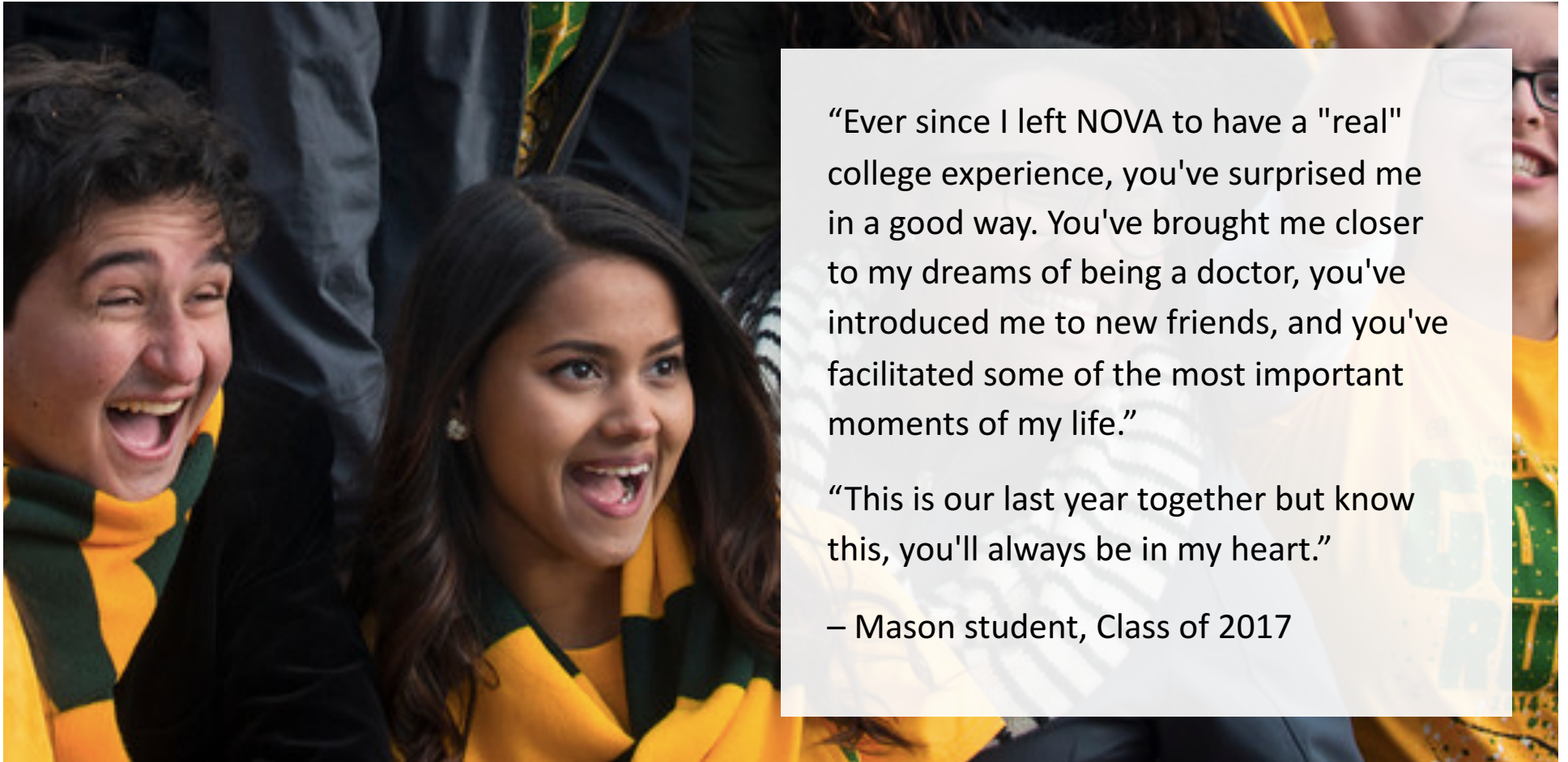|		
Build action plans	Identify quick wins	Weigh return on investment
Provide linkages to strategic plan	Develop an associated project plan	Budgets and timelines

Conclusion

"Ever since I left NOVA to have a "real" college experience, you've surprised me in a good way. You've brought me closer to my dreams of being a doctor, you've introduced me to new friends, and you've facilitated some of the most important moments of my life."

"This is our last year together but know this, you'll always be in my heart."

– Mason student, Class of 2017

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Resources to learn more

About Mason:

- 10 Year Strategic Plan (2014 - 2024): http://strategicplan.gmu.edu/

About the partnership:

- Blackboard Blog Article: Partnership story
- Mason + Blackboard Video

About Blackboard Services:

- Blackboard.com/studentservices

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Questions
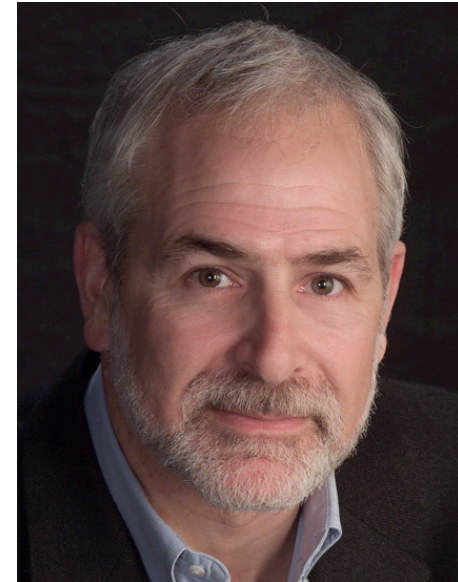
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Thank you!

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