



Catalyze Process Evaluation

Summary and Recommendations Report





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About the Human Services Research Institute

The Human Services Research Institute (www.hsri.org) is a nonprofit, mission-driven organization that works with government agencies and others to improve health and human services and systems, enhance the quality of data to guide policy, and engage stakeholders to effect meaningful systems change.

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Acknowledgements

This report represents a step in the ongoing process of Catalyze's development and implementation. It is not intended to mark the end of a process but to support the program's ongoing efforts to partner with institutions of higher education to close the degree divide. It shares findings from an evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the Catalyze capacity-building model.

This process evaluation was made possible by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. We also want to thank the Catalyze service members, coach supervisors, and champions who contributed to data collection activities during the 2018-2019 Academic Year—participating in phone and in-person interviews, surveys, and site visits. Additionally, numerous students across the institutions participated in surveys and interviews and openly shared their educational and campus experiences in order to enrich our understanding of the program.

Executive Summary



In July 2018, College Possible contracted with the Human Services Research Institute to conduct a one-year process evaluation of its Catalyze program. The goal was to promote increased understanding of the program model and to identify implementation issues most critical to program efficacy.

The Catalyze program was launched in 2016 and is focused on embedding an effective College Possible coaching model into existing infrastructure at institutions of higher education. Seven partner institutions implemented Catalyze in the 2018-2019 academic year, and Catalyze continues to expand, moving toward its vision of closing the achievement and degree divide that separates low-income and first-generation students from their peers.

The team that conducted the process evaluation employed several data collection methods to illuminate and explore the implementation of Catalyze. These methods included document reviews, key stakeholder interviews, implementation surveys, and interviews and focus groups with Catalyze staff and students. Multiple findings and recommendations emerged from these activities. Data-supported recommendations are outlined below; the full report provides additional context and findings. Recommendations are organized below according to the implementation level they *most* impact: the organizational level (College Possible National) or the institutional level (campuses). Yet, the recommendations and findings should not be viewed as isolated by level; they are fluid and dynamic.

Organizational-Level Recommendations

- **Recommendation #1:** Use a lens of collaborative complexity; it may serve as a useful tool for conceptualizing and responding to the collaborative nature of partner relationships—and it may help distinguish between organizational complexity (internal) and environmental complexity (external, such as campus contexts).
- **Recommendation #2:** Avoid mission drift, where possible, to help manage complexity and facilitate a focus on Catalyze’s core mission of student success.
- **Recommendation #3:** Attend to specific considerations on larger, more urban campuses—in terms of campus context, student needs, and coach well-being.
- **Recommendation #4:** Develop and implement a fidelity rubric or assessment to capture alignment, disparity, and innovations or adaptations to the model.
- **Recommendation #5:** Connect Salesforce data entry requirements with meaningful outputs that support coach development and growth.

Institutional-Level Recommendations

- **Recommendation #6:** Implement more structured processes for data tracking which services and supports students are receiving.
- **Recommendation #7:** Consider additional training or support (across campuses) around: managing portfolio sizes, recruitment, and student engagement; tracking other services received by students; coach overwhelm and well-being/supports for coaches; and race, equity, and whiteness.
- **Recommendation #8:** Avoid isolation of coaches and provide opportunities for coaches to reflect on the challenges of the role.
- **Recommendation #9:** Encourage institutions to supplement supports for coaches.
- **Recommendation #10:** Ensure coaches are introduced to key contacts and invited to participate in trainings and social events with other campus staff; this will enhance the integration of coaches into the professional campus community.

Major Learnings/Recommendations



Through an intensive curriculum of coaching and support, College Possible makes college admission and success possible for low-income students.¹ Through the Catalyze program, College Possible partners with institutions of higher education to focus on undergraduate student persistence, retention, and graduation. Near-peer coaches partner with students; campus liaisons, including coach supervisors and champions, manage the partnership and the program.

Growing College Possible to include the Catalyze capacity-building model has presented both opportunities and challenges. Catalyze has flexibility embedded in its structure, and institutional partners may adjust and adapt the program to fit campus culture and context. Yet Catalyze's implementation across a variety of diverse campus locations in various geographic regions makes replicability particularly challenging. The process evaluation seeks to describe and explain these implementation nuances.

The learnings and recommendations below reflect the results and findings from the data collection activities conducted throughout the process evaluation. For more information on the data collection methods employed, see page 31. The findings presented in this chapter emerged as the most salient: confirmed or triangulated across multiple data sources and with clear recommendations coming out of the data. In that sense, the findings highlighted below are pressing and actionable. Additional findings are presented in the next chapter.

¹ <https://www.collegepossible.org/about/>

Catalyze Operates as a Dynamic System Across Multiple Levels of Implementation

With a national office in Minnesota, partner institutions across states and regions, and multiple coaches spread across those campuses, Catalyze operates as a dynamic and complex system with three primary levels: organizational, institutional, and programmatic. Implementation occurs at all three levels, and each of the Catalyze levels interact and influence one another. That is, the levels are dynamic and reciprocal, not static. The mission of Catalyze is simple and clear, but the processes through which it delivers on its mission are multifaceted.

Core implementation drivers—those drivers that facilitate effective implementation and lead to desired outcomes—occur at each of Catalyze’s three levels. For example, facilitative and responsive data systems are considered key to programmatic success, and Catalyze uses multiple data systems to track institutional, student, and coaching information. These include Salesforce and national clearinghouses at the organizational level and multiple student information systems—both homegrown and otherwise—across campuses at the institutional level; at the program level, coaches access these systems to varying degrees. This complexity impacts program delivery. Organizational-level staff, for example, do not have discretion over campus student information systems, even though those systems can directly impact the efficacy of the student–coach relationship and the delivery of coaching services.

A dynamic systems approach is useful to conceptualize the interrelated and synergistic nature of the organizational, institutional, and programmatic levels of influence on program outcomes. During the kick-off of the process evaluation, the study team and Catalyze team developed a full logic model to conceptualize, in a linear fashion, the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of Catalyze (see Appendix A). A dynamic systems approach, however, allows us to think about the feedback, feedforward and balancing loops in the full system that can affect the efficiency of the system of influence.

The following figure displays a provisional dynamic systems model illustrating how hypothesized directional paths within and between levels may directly and/or indirectly affect all aspects of the Catalyze system—and where opportunities for leverage might exist. For example, the bidirectional arrow shows the influence of the Catalyze initiative on its staff as well as the influence of staff on the initiative. A directional arrow from persistence and graduation rates of Catalyze students to the institutional level shows the influence that student outcomes are likely to exert on aspects such as institutions renewing Catalyze contracts and whether new institutions partner with Catalyze. This in turn may affect the likelihood of Catalyze at the organizational level to meet recruitment and relationship goals and train additional Catalyze staff who can further promote university partnerships. Coaches will be dually influenced both by the institution in which they are embedded as well as through the influence of Catalyze staff and training. Coaches in turn may influence university institutions in terms of the support they receive and the climate in which they

operate. Similarly, a balancing loop may operate between coaching staff and different students in terms of their characteristics.

Figure 1

Various levels of the program directly or indirectly affect all aspects of the Catalyze system

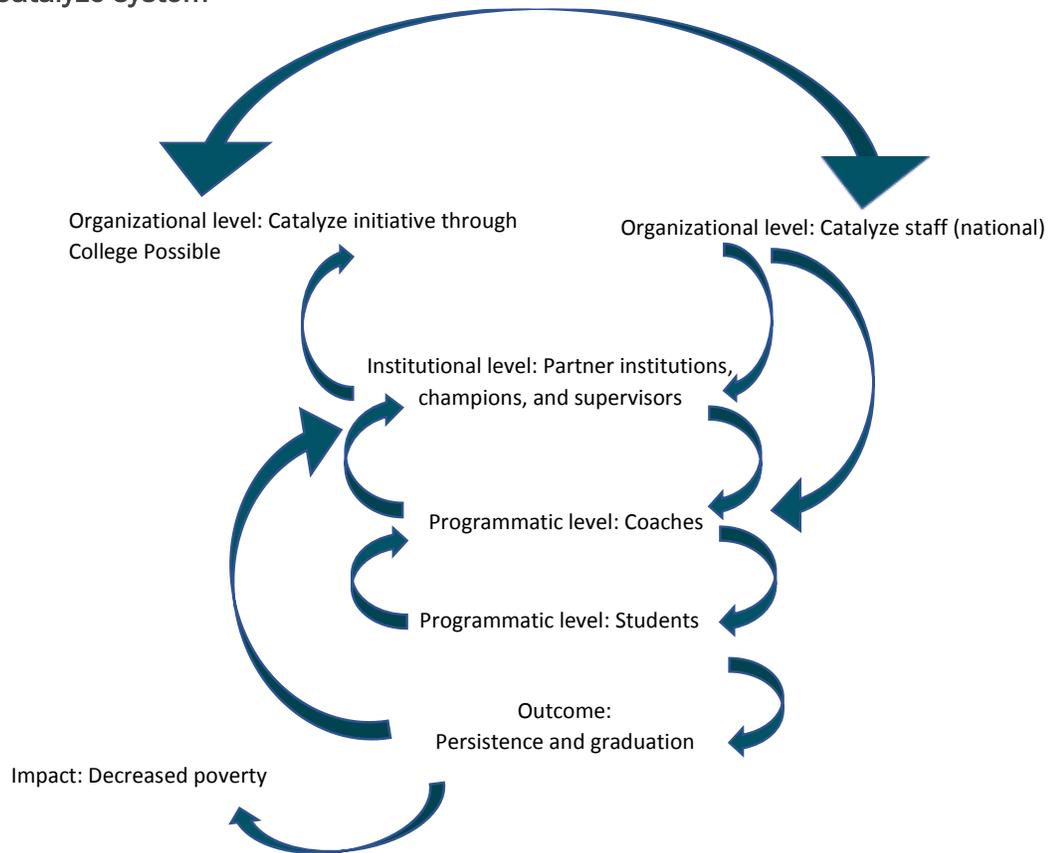


Figure 2

Examples of Partner Institution Variance in Characteristics

	Augburg University	Coe College	College of St. Benedict	St. John's University	Luther College	St. Cloud State University	University of Cincinnati	Austin Peay State University	Morgan State University
Public or private	Public	Private	Private	Private	Private	Public	Public	Public	Public
Co-ed (y or n)	y	y	n	n	y	y	y	y	y
Religious (y or n)	y	n	y	y	n	n	n	n	n
HBU, PWI, MSI	MSI	PWI	PWI	PWI	PWI	PWI	PWI	PWI	HBCU
Undergraduate student population	2,437	1,394	1,937	1,720	2,053	12,788	27,000	9,591	7,747
Location	Minnesota	Iowa	Minnesota	Minnesota	Iowa	Minnesota	Ohio	Tennessee	Maryland
Estimated Average Annual Cost (tuition, fees, r&b)	50,000	55,000	56,000	56,000	55,000	21,000	28,000	28,000	25,000
Campus Pell-eligibility									
White %	46%	67%	80%	78%	81%	71%	74%	60%	2%
Black/AA %	13%	8%	4%	5%	2%	6%	7%	22%	77%
Latino %	8%	10.00%	7%	8%	5%	3%	3%	7%	3%
Asian %	8.50%	4%	6%	5%	1%	6%	4%	2%	1%
Trio student support services program (y or n)	y	y	n	n	y	n	n	y	n
Academic term type	semester	semester	semester	semester	semester	semester	semester	semester	semester
# of coaches who are low income and first gen	2	1	1			2	3	2	NA
% of coaches who are low income and first gen	66%	50%	100%		100%	100%	50%	NA	NA

Understanding the complexity of Catalyze, as above, provides context for the following learnings. And while reducing complexity may not be necessary, manager

attentiveness to the intricacies of the program and the variance across campuses may help Catalyze national staff and coaches maintain manageable roles and responsibilities. Further, while environmental complexity is inherent in College Possible's programming—and especially within Catalyze given the complex environments of each individual partner institution—there may be resources and frameworks to assist with managing complexity.

❖ Recommendation

A lens of *collaborative complexity* may be a useful tool for conceptualizing and responding to the collaborative nature of partner relationships—and it may help distinguish between organizational complexity (internal) and environmental complexity (external, such as campus contexts). Schneider, Wickert, and Marti (2016) provide guidance on employing a collaborative complexity lens.²

❖ Recommendation

Where possible, avoid mission drift. This will help manage complexity and facilitate a focus on Catalyze's core mission of student success. For example, process evaluation data suggest that the addition of Community Leaders to Catalyze has increased programmatic complexity. Implementation and integration of the leadership and community-building program was experienced by coaches as somewhat tangential and burdensome, required additional resource and infrastructure considerations, and was implemented with considerable variability across campuses. Managing complexity may mean reserving the implementation of Community Leaders or other additions to the program until specific campuses have reached mature implementation.

Diversity of Catalyze Partner Institutions

Catalyze was piloted and initially implemented at primarily small, private institutions with existing partnerships with College Possible. As Catalyze continues to expand to larger public institutions, certain considerations may be warranted to ensure the continued effectiveness of the model and the longevity of partner relationships. Considerations at the institutional and programmatic levels may include:

- **Placement and visibility of coaches:** Larger campuses may require coaches to operate flexibly and meet students in various locations across the campus rather than primarily maintaining office hours in a designated location. For example, students at UC Main were considerably more likely to indicate they never or rarely attended drop-in hours (81%) than students at other institutions.

² Schneider, A., Wickert, C., and Marti, E. (2016). Reducing complexity by creating complexity: A systems theory perspective on how organizations respond to their environment. *Journal of Management Studies*, 54(2).

- **Complexity of navigating systems:** Larger institutions may have more complex processes and procedures for students, so students may require additional support from coaches in navigating various aspects of academic and campus life.
- **Integration with other programs:** Larger institutions may host multiple programs for students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, and first-generation students. Yet many of those students may remain unserved: they may be uninterested in engaging, they may be confused about the roles of the various programs, or they may be experiencing stress or overwhelm. There is a need for additional cross-program coordination on these campuses to simultaneously avoid duplication of services and to ensure more students can receive coaching services. Campus data systems may or may not effectively track which services and programs students are receiving.

❖ Recommendation

More structured processes for data tracking which services and supports students are receiving will not only assist in controlling for factors in an outcome analysis but will also help to preserve coach time, to underscore the effectiveness of coaches, and for institutional capacity-building. This may require additional coordination between College Possible and other student-serving programs, or regular meetings.

- **Race and Representation:** Larger and urban campuses may have more racially and ethnically diverse student bodies, and students of color may make up the majority of portfolios.

❖ Recommendation

White coaches may require additional training on microaggressions, experiences of students of color, and resources for students of color. Coaches of color may bear a larger burden on these campuses, as students of color (both Catalyze and non-Catalyze students) may gravitate toward them for support, comradery, and identity-sharing.

- **Cost of living and impact on coaches:** Coaches serving in urban areas may face additional quality of life challenges, as they navigate the costs of housing and other living expenses.

❖ Recommendation

It may be more necessary for larger institutions to provide additional incentives or support for coaches, including parking or bus passes, meal plans, etc.

While there are unique considerations for larger institutions, there are some challenges that emerged as consistent across all institutions.

❖ Recommendation

Additional training or support may be warranted around: managing portfolio sizes, recruitment, and student engagement; tracking other services received by students; coach overwhelm and well-being/supports for coaches; and more training on race, equity, and whiteness.

Need for Facilitative and Responsive Data Systems

Implementation science calls for the use of “decision-support” data systems that can capture process data, outcome data, and fidelity data. The National Implementation Research Network suggests that, “to be useful, data need to be collected, analyzed, and reported over time and across actionable levels. That is, data need to be available so progress can be celebrated, needs

My coach pushed me to get out of my comfort zone and helped me to not think so small of myself. It has given me more confidence to be myself. [My coach] is kind of like a friend.

—Student

identified, and improvement plans generated.” Catalyze collects process, outcome and, to some degree, fidelity data within Salesforce.

Given the complexity of the model and the desire to demonstrate strong student-level outcomes, Catalyze may benefit from enhanced fidelity tracking (through a fidelity rubric or assessment). Best practice for social programs is for fidelity assessments to begin when a program is first funded or implemented and continue through implementation. The goal of a fidelity assessment is not to ensure perfect model fidelity but to track innovations or adaptations inevitably made by staff (such as coaches, supervisors, or champions).

❖ Recommendation

The implementation surveys administered during the process evaluation may serve as a basis for the development of a fidelity rubric. Implementation Drivers are based on common features that exist among many successfully implemented programs and practices. Based on survey findings and implementation science, a basic fidelity rubric for Catalyze might capture the following drivers:

- *Competency Drivers*
 - **Selection:** Criteria and processes for selecting coaches and for determining which institutional staff may serve as champions and supervisors.
 - **Training:** Coaches undergo training in a variety of topics that provide information related to underlying theory and values, hard skills and tasks, and rationales for practices at the institutional and organizational level. Coaches have opportunity to practice skills and receive feedback (i.e., through supervisor observations of one-on-ones).

- Coaching: Champions, supervisors and coaches receive coaching by accessing multiple sources of data which provide feedback. Data include information systems (facilitative) and observation.
- *Organization Drivers*
 - Decision-support data systems: Coaches have direct access to student information they need (including, but not limited to, early alerts, GPA, class progress/pass/fail, registration, major, other services and supports, advisor).
 - Reduction of administrative barriers by streamlining: process for coaches to access student data (direct access ideally), process for removing students from portfolios (e.g., no written student consent required), coach interaction processes (e.g. place coaches near one another).
- *Leadership Drivers*
 - Technical and adaptive leadership and responses to challenges that emerge.

In addition to capturing fidelity, Catalyze may consider if there are actionable or tangible process or outcome data that can support coaches in their day-to-day work with students. A demonstrated connection between data entry and findings can enhance the buy-in of practitioners (in this case, coaches) to the data entry process. There were universal reports across institutions that expectations around data entry into Salesforce were challenging for coaches to meet, and institutional partners believed that coaches weren't able to carry full portfolios because of the data entry requirements.

❖ Recommendation

Connect Salesforce data entry requirements with meaningful outputs that support a coach's development and growth. For example, coaches indicated a desire to know which recruitment methods were "working" in terms of engaging students. Further, supervisors and coaches requested more training on how to get the most out of Salesforce and use it to their advantage in supporting students and one another in their respective roles.

Catalyze Outcomes and Value

While there are numerous benefits of Catalyze for both students and institutions, partners emphasized the following components as especially compelling.

Near-peer coaches occupy a unique role on campuses. They are able to connect with and build relationships with students in a way that other staff are not equipped to do. The hiring and training of near-peer coaches is seen as a primary benefit of the Catalyze partnership.

The training provided by College Possible is considered strong, robust, and a centerpiece of Catalyze. Not only does training effectively prepare coaches, but

institutional partners consider the breadth and depth of training a core reason to partner with College Possible rather than absorb peer-coaching work in-house. Multiple coaches commented on their appreciation for trainings, as well as the interactive nature of DUCKS which allows coaches to have input into training topics. Coaches all reflected on the Kristin Taylor training as positive, impactful, and engaging. They reported practicing more reflective questioning with students and themselves and encouraging growth mindset in students.

College Possible brings additional knowledge, expertise, and accountability to campuses, enhancing campus commitment to effectively serving students from low-income backgrounds and first-generation students.

❖ Recommendation

Where possible, emphasize the above benefits as part of Catalyze's value proposition.

Challenges Experienced by Coaches

The near-peer coach role on campuses is seen as valuable, unique and difficult. Coaching challenges may occur based on campus resource limitations, student engagement difficulties, lack of integration of coaches into the professional campus community, and the personal and financial challenges experiences by coaches as AmeriCorps service members.

Across all campuses, coaches reported difficulties meeting their basic needs. While coaches experienced strong training and professional support from supervisors and from College Possible staff, it is challenging for these supports to compete with the problem of basic needs insecurity that coaches reported experiencing. The impact of this perception is broad: it can threaten a coach's sense of appreciation or value and it can further marginalize coaches, produce cognitive dissonance and disengagement with students, or induce compassion fatigue. It may become difficult for coaches to attend to the basic needs of students when they are stressed about meeting their own needs.

Additionally, coaches talked about their challenges completing all of their work during a 40-hour work week. Multiple coaches reported regularly working more hours than they reported. Some coaches said they spent over 50% of their time in Salesforce. Coaches reported difficulty managing their own well-being and relationships. While coaches generally felt supported by College Possible, they sometime experienced tension. For example, coaches may learn through training or DUCKS about setting boundaries to protect their time, but then be pushed to meet with a certain number of students and track student interaction data to an extent that they didn't feel they could protect those boundaries. Some coaches reported really difficult personal and mental health experiences during their tenure. While the stipend provided through AmeriCorps is not at the discretion of College Possible, the following recommendations may enhance coach support or satisfaction.

❖ Recommendation

Coaches thought there would be more interaction between coaches, but characterized the nature of the position in retrospect as “straight casework.” Providing opportunities for peer support and encouragement from one coach to another may bolster their sense of support. During focus groups, coaches expressed gratitude for the opportunity to reflect on their experience and skills they’ve developed, and for the chance to discuss some of the challenges they’ve faced. While more opportunity for reflection may not be sufficient in meeting coach’s needs, it may help.

❖ Recommendation

Encourage institutions to supplement supports for coaches. Coaches even mentioned feeling valued when supervisors let them take mental health days and do work from home. While supplementing the coach stipend with housing and meal plans might be ideal, even providing parking passes or bus passes was named as helpful by coaches.

There was also consistent perception by coaches across all campuses that they are somehow invisible, that their role is misunderstood, that they are perceived or treated as students. On one campus, however, coaches have been able to integrate into bimonthly meetings for young professionals, and this has enhanced their feeling of connection. On another campus, coaches have attended diversity committee meetings, though they don’t play a formal role. Given the regular turnover of coaches, it is challenging to envision roles for them on committees, etc.; however, institutional partners would like to think about other ways to utilize coach expertise while also protecting their primary purpose of supporting students through coaching.

Coaches reported multiple methods of demonstrating their new roles as young professionals and maintaining appropriate boundaries with students—from not wearing backpacks on campus to dressing up to avoiding spending time in large groups of students to avoid the perception by other staff that they are non-professionals or still students themselves. The majority of coaches felt somewhat integrated into the professional campus community (80%), while the remaining coaches believed they were neither integrated nor isolated (20%). Further, four coaches felt viewed as young professionals compared to eleven who felt viewed as students or interns/volunteers. New coaches (rather than returning coaches) were more likely to feel they were viewed as undergraduate or graduate students rather than interns/volunteers or young professionals.

❖ Recommendation

Coaches who experienced themselves as more integrated had been introduced to key contacts or had participated in trainings and social events with other staff, suggesting these activities may underscore integration of coaches.

Summary

These overarching learnings and recommendations from the process evaluation are important to consider as Catalyze continues to grow and expand. Determining which components of the program to replicate at future partner institutions—and where to make adaptations or innovations—may be key to developing a stable and appealing capacity-building model that is both attractive to institutions and impactful for students. The next chapter contains more granular thematic findings without associated recommendations.

Additional Findings



In addition to the learnings and recommendations presented above, the process evaluation explored and revealed other findings. These findings are presented below by theme; they may have emerged from only one data source or perspective (e.g., student interviews) and were not necessarily accompanied by specific data-driven recommendations. Therefore, they warrant additional consideration and reflection—likely by the Catalyze team—to determine how or whether responsiveness or action is appropriate. Considerations, rather than recommendations, are provided throughout to guide the reader.

Institutional Characteristics

Coaching Spaces and College Possible Location on Campus

College Possible Catalyze coaches are positioned physically—and institutionally—across a variety of locations on campuses. Physical coaching spaces on some campuses are in proximity to other student support services and are highly visible and accessible for students, while others are seen as removed or isolated, requiring intentionality on the part of students to visit or meet with coaches.

Stakeholders were not in consistent agreement about the ideal type of space for coaches; some preferred high-traffic campus areas that facilitate socialization and student drop-ins, while others preferred more formalized spaces that encourage coach professionalization and coach mobility across campus. On some campuses, a less-

desirable space was seen as an unintentional but positive impetus to keeping coaches mobile: prompting them to meet students in dorms, libraries, and elsewhere on campus and, in a sense, bringing the program to students rather than vice versa.

Some stakeholders noted the correlation between physical location, social capital, and social location, noting that space considerations are not just for the benefit and visibility of students but also for the well-being and integration of coaches. Physically isolated coaches, perhaps especially coaches of color operating in recognized or unrecognized racialized campus environments, may become marginalized if their spaces are not viewed as professional or visible. Just as social connection is well-established as a protective factor for academically at-risk students, some stakeholders recognize that social connection is necessary for young professionals (coaches) to thrive.

Students were asked if their coach's space was where the student would have expected to be; 88% of students overall indicated that their coach's space was where expected. Notably, though, 23% of students at UCBA noted their coach's space was not where they would expect it to be. Students at UC Main were more likely than students at any other institution to rate the accessibility of their coach's space as less than accessible.

When coaches were in the same general space as one another, students developed relationships with multiple coaches (at institutions with more than one coach), having their own coach who they turned to for one-on-ones and support but relying on other coaches if theirs happened to be unavailable.

❖ Consideration

No matter the preference of stakeholders, the primary consideration around space was availability. Space is uniformly a sensitive and politicalized commodity across campuses. It may be worth exploring potential locations for coaches during the contract phase, with an emphasis on ensuring that coaches can be located near one another, which is seen as a benefit by both coaches and students.

Programmatic and Institutional Staff Roles and Characteristics

Champion and Supervisor Roles and Characteristics

Champions and supervisors occupied a range of institution positions, indicating that institutional partners are filling those roles as makes sense culturally and structurally. There was considerable variance in how long both champions and supervisors had held their institutional positions (from under a year to over ten years) and in the length of time they'd been at their institutions. Overall though, champions had been in their roles and employed by their institutions for longer. Champions also reported substantially more experience working on retention or persistence-related efforts for first-generation and low-income students. These findings align with the assumption that champions are more senior-level decision-makers than are supervisors.

Supervisors and champions had the most oversight over student clubs, programs for students of color, multicultural or intercultural services, programs for first-gen or low-income students, and academic advising. It's notable that no supervisors or champions had direct authority over counseling or health center services or residential life services, as those are the areas where coaches universally reported the least integration and collaboration. Conversely, coaches felt substantially integrated into those areas where supervisors did have oversight. Additionally, of those students who were referred for off-campus services (20%) by their coaches, the majority were referred to mental health services.

❖ Consideration

Provide additional attention to relationship-building in those functional areas outside the purview of champions and supervisors that directly and regularly impact College Possible students. These include the areas of health and mental health services and residential life.

Since supervisors are responsible for the day to-day oversight of coaches, we asked about their experience supervising others. While most supervisors had experience supervising others prior to becoming College Possible coach supervisors, not many had experience coaching recent college graduates. This aligns with supervisors and champions indicating that the experience of coaching new professionals was unique—coaching on professional development, professional integration, and transitioning from student to professional.

Further, while most champions and supervisors reported role clarity, some expressed confusion around the role of supervisor versus the role of program advisors. For example, sometimes coaches learned about tasks or training through College Possible and the supervisor wasn't aware. Coaches themselves reported some confusion when they received competing messages from College Possible and their institution, such as whether they could talk to a student's parents on the phone (institution saw this as violation of FERPA, for example, while College Possible saw it as allowable).

❖ Consideration

While additional rigidity around the roles and responsibilities of institutional partners versus College Possible staff is likely not necessary, awareness of the sometimes-competing messages or guidance that coaches receive may be beneficial.

Some champions and supervisors felt unprepared for the level of commitment and activity through Catalyze. Three out of five supervisors spent more hours than expected on Catalyze partnership activities. One supervisor reported spending 16-20 hours a week, while another reported more than 20 hours. Even so, all supervisors who responded to the implementation survey felt it was very possible or somewhat possible to complete all that was required for the Catalyze partnership and College Possible program to be a success.

Three out of seven champions spent more hours than expected on Catalyze partnership activities, and champions were less likely than supervisors to believe that it was possible to complete all that was required for the Catalyze partnership and College Possible program to be a success. During interviews, some champions expressed considerable surprise at the responsibilities and obligations related to College Possible.

❖ Consideration

Simultaneously consider carefully the expectations for partners, especially champions, and clearly communicate those expectations at the start of the partnership.

Coach Characteristics

During AY2018-2019, the majority of coaches had been first-generation undergraduate students themselves (11/15 coaches) and had come from low-income backgrounds (13/15 coaches). The majority were graduates of the institution where they were coaching (11/15), and most were new coaches (11/15) as opposed to returning coaches (4/15).

To give a sense of coach background and exposure to student services, coaches were asked on their implementation survey about their participation in a range of services and supports while they themselves had been undergraduate students. The most frequently cited services were multicultural or intercultural, student clubs, and writing services or centers.

❖ Consideration

Only 20% of coaches participated in study abroad or student government, suggesting that coaches might need additional support in guiding students through those experiences.

Champions and supervisors also reflected on the characteristics they sought when hiring coaches, as well as those coach traits that have been identified as influential for student engagement and success. A broad range and list of skills emerged as “most important” for coaching efficacy—some cognitive, some non-cognitive, though all foundational. Several stakeholders noted that desired coaching traits mirror the qualities of successful students. An asterisk indicates that the skill is also identified as desirable by College Possible HR. This exhaustive list of characteristics is primarily meant to convey the multiple and sometimes competing expectations of coaches.

- Ability to multi-task*
- Caring, with capacity to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries with students
- Communicative and relational*
- Connected to College Possible mission*
- Curious and willing to ask questions, probing
- Creative
- Energetic
- Empathetic*

- Experienced barriers and challenges to their own college academic success
- Graduates of institutions where they serve
- Knowledgeable about issues of equity
- Motivated
- Organized
- Outgoing with ability to integrate themselves into the professional campus community
- Patient and teachable
- Persistent and resilient*
- Proactive*
- Problem-solvers*
- Reflective listeners
- Self-advocates
- Student advocates
- Tech-savvy

Students themselves reflected on the characteristics they valued in their coaches:

- Good listener
- Reassuring (coaches were especially perceived as reassuring when they reported ways in which they struggled socially or academically on campus during their undergraduate experience)
- Almost like a therapist and a teacher
- Interactive and engaging
- Funny
- Positive
- Accessible
- Responsive to emails and phone calls
- Empathic
- Connector—with other staff, departments, and student orgs on campus

Coach Roles

The multiple roles played by coaches, along with coaches' engagement and approachability, were surprising to students. Students didn't expect coaches to serve as advocates or navigators, accompanying students to meetings with professors and staff. Students were surprised that they felt comfortable with their near-peer coaches. Whereas students felt that other staff were obligated to assist them, they noted that College Possible coaches really *wanted* to help them, and that relationships with coaches were more personal than relationships with other staff. Some students also reported their relationships with their coaches shifting over time from a more transactional relationship wherein coaches provided basic academic and financial aid support to more emotional and relational support. Coaches provided affirmation and confidence-building.

It is clear that coaches play a vital and different role than other campus supports. All the literature suggests that at-risk students need supports who can be available, provide tangible support, etc. Students can't plan for the types of support they will need or when they may need it, so support services that require advance scheduling are often unhelpful and impractical for these students.

❖ Consideration

Emphasize the unique role of coaches in student recruitment materials and activities.

Training, Preparation, Integration and Well-Being of Coaches

Training and Developing Coaches

Since coach training responsibilities are shared by College Possible and partner institutions, on-campus trainings largely focused on campus processes rather than soft skills development. Training topics included: FERPA; student information system(s); financial aid and FAFSA; academic advising; satisfactory academic progress; academic probation or suspension and appeals; study abroad; student mental health needs and resources; LGBTQ students; bias incidents; and diversity and inclusion. Some trainings were delivered formally through workshops or modules, while others were informal conversations between supervisors, coaches, and institutional staff with purview over topic areas.

In their implementation survey, coaches said they were most likely to receive additional institutional training on student information systems, FERPA, multicultural student services, and diversity. Supervisors generally agreed, though less than half thought coaches had received diversity training and not all thought coaches had received multicultural training. Coaches identified the following opportunities for additional training:

❖ Consideration

While generally coaches thought that training on the FAFSA was strong, they requested additional training on completing the FAFSA with students who are undocumented. Several coaches also requested additional training and support in managing themselves and how to be their best selves in this coaching role—one coach called this a “basic identity [development] course.”

❖ Consideration

While generally College Possible notes that student mental health is outside the purview or arena of coach responsibility and expertise, coaches are regularly interacting with students at points of crisis who may or may not have another trusted adult in whom to confide (such as a therapist). Even when coaches recognize the importance of referring students to a health or resource center, there may not be enough mental health resources on campus. For these reasons, it might be good for coaches to receive additional training on mental health issues and crises.

While most trainings were contained, some were iterative or ongoing; for example, some coaches participated in student success collaboratives or diversity certificate programs. The latter were considered particularly impactful and incentivizing for coaches, as they allowed coaches to engage more meaningfully with students but also enhanced the future hireability of coaches since the learnings were not institution-specific.

Given the expected turnover of coaches, stakeholders struggled at times with how to invest in coaches; typically, the first year of employment at a new academic institution is considered a training year—a model not replicable when coaches only serve one or two years.

Supporting Coaches

In addition to providing trainings for coaches, institutions also provided structural and material supports. Examples of common supports include: email addresses, employee IDs, office or cubicle space, desks, laptops or desktops, headsets, tablets, printers or access to printers, couches, and lounge areas. While most institutions mirrored one another in the range of trainings and structural supports provided, other supports and incentives varied. For example, whereas some institutions provide housing and meal assistance, other institutions do not. In addition, some have few additional dollars to support the Catalyze program through meeting or event budgets, while one school has a \$15,000 annual budget for programming and supplies. Supports provided impact coach and student relationships—for example, schools with more generous line items for programming allow coaches to take students to lunch, coffee, etc.

Supervisors provided ongoing support through one-on-one meetings with coaches and through staff meetings. Coaches indicated that some supervisors rarely used Salesforce dashboards or reports during the one-on-ones while others always did. Similarly, coaches indicated variance in how often supervisors used Salesforce dashboards or reports during coach staff meetings. These findings align with supervisor perception that Salesforce was not a consistently helpful tool in supporting and developing coaches, and that supervisors themselves requested additional support in how best to utilize Salesforce.

When asked about supervisor support, nearly all coaches said their supervisor offered meaningful feedback and guidance and that their supervisor treated them as a professional (14/15 coaches). All coaches said their supervisor was usually or always available when needed. Most coaches recalled weekly check-ins and staff meetings with their supervisor, but fewer coaches recalled regular observations of their one-on-ones.

Based on their skillsets, coaches may take on differing roles over the course of the year. For example, one coach may lead Community Leaders, while another

may lead recruitment presentations. This can be challenging for supervisors to navigate. Because coaches occupy the exact same role, supervisors are unclear if they

We have a community of students where 20% of them don't have their books, and a fair number of them are homeless. So I think there's an emotionally taxing piece of this work [for coaches], and they don't really get the support that a staff member may get with their colleagues.

- Institutional Partner

should hold the same expectations for multiple coaches in terms of competency and contribution.

Professionalization of Coaches

The professionalization and integration of coaches on campus was perceived as a challenge. The professionalization of coaches was considered particularly complex when they were graduates of the institution at which they served. Transitioning coach relationships with students from a peer relationship to a near-peer coaching relationship, and transitioning coach relationships with professional staff to one of colleagues, was a process. The process was largely unexpected, as stakeholders—even those who had considerable supervisory experience—had not before been in the position of working with new institution-graduates. This segue was also complicated by the sometimes-nebulous role of coaches—one that was difficult to convey to the campus community—who occupy a space between volunteer, intern, and institutional employee.

Champions and supervisors realized it takes time and intentionality to integrate coaches into the professional campus community. This integration is facilitated by: vocal champions in positions of authority who can clearly state expectations of coach integration, involvement of coaches in existing student support groups and staff meetings, consideration around how College Possible coaching will align with other student supports such as academic advising, and clearly stated expectations for integration processes. One champion advocated for coaches and academic advisors to review and/or write job descriptions together for each role as an exercise in distinguishing between the two roles and taking ownership over their distinct but related responsibilities.

Space considerations were also embedded in professionalization. While space was limited on all campuses, some stakeholders hold that the College Possible coaching space should be formal and focused on academic excellence, whereas other stakeholders view the coaching space as social and family-like.

Stakeholders facilitated activities to integrate coaches into the professional campus communities. Formal and informal meetings with staff from various campus departments and oversight areas were the primary mechanism by which stakeholders expected collaboration to occur. Meetings between coaches and representatives from student support services, student life, residential life, health services, counseling, admissions, financial aid, career centers, and registration/registrar offices were arranged on nearly all campuses. Most of these meetings occurred at the start of the coach's tenure, and some stakeholders struggled with how to reinforce learnings from those meetings throughout the term. Further, some stakeholders recognized that meetings themselves cannot necessarily promote true collaboration or partnership. In this way, stakeholders identified integration as an important but sometimes fraught element of College Possible. There was some level of expectation that coaches had the social and emotional skillset necessary to “integrate themselves” into the professional campus community, but few tangible examples were given beyond coach characteristics of how that integration might occur.

❖ Consideration

Stakeholders also noted that even as Catalyze did become integrated with other student support services, it could still remain largely invisible to institutional decision-makers. Promoting visibility and awareness of College Possible was seen as the responsibility of stakeholders, particularly champions, who have the desire and clout to consistently highlight the program and its successes for other administrators. At some institutions, a high level of support and visibility was perceived among senior leadership, while minimal integration occurred with on-the-ground, student serving-staff; on other campuses, the reverse was true.

Campus Student Services

Student Services

Across all campuses, coaches reported meetings across a variety of student support services and departments, with Financial Aid being the most common. Even so, Financial Aid was the department with which coaches reported facing the most challenges (for example, being generally understaffed or unfriendly or unhelpful to students)—and it was also the department that students most frequently required help to navigate. Coaches were also not likely to have meetings with housing or residential life and reported challenges collaborating with those departments. For coaches that graduated from the institution where they serve, they reported the strongest relationships with those professors and staff that they were closest to during college, suggesting additional benefit to employing coaches at the institution where they serve.

Coaches participated in multiple formal and informal meetings related to College Possible during fall term 2018. The most common were financial aid, academic advising, admissions, and multicultural student services. Collectively, at least 122 meetings were held.

On the student survey, students were asked about which on campus programs or resources coaches had referred them to; 62% had been referred to financial aid and 55% to academic advising. Only 20% of students indicated their coach had referred them to off-campus services. Of those who were referred for off-campus services, the majority were referred to mental health services.

Student Persistence and Retention

Persistence and Retention

We conducted some analyses utilizing Salesforce data to examine persistence indicators. There was considerable variance by school

It was appealing to have a voice to hear me out besides my advisor or counselor, and someone close to my age who had more insight and could relate because they weren't a teacher or administrator.

— Student

related to the proportion of Catalyze students who registered for Spring 2019 classes, with both UC campuses having under 60% registration rates. Again, it may be worth considering if data entry variances are contributed to disparities.

*School Percent of Catalyze Students
Who Registered for Spring
2019 Classes*

<i>Augsburg</i>	90%
<i>Coe</i>	95%
<i>CSB</i>	85%
<i>Luther</i>	77%
<i>SCSU</i>	84%
<i>SJU</i>	55%
<i>UCBA</i>	54%
<i>UC-Main</i>	80%
<i>Total</i>	77%

Across all campuses, fewer Catalyze students had renewed their financial aid for the upcoming academic year than had registered for spring term. Since data were pulled mid-spring term 2019, these percentages have likely increased. Even so, the differences across institutions are notable.

*School Percent of Catalyze Students
Who Renewed Financial Aid*

<i>Augsburg</i>	71%
<i>Coe</i>	91%
<i>CSB</i>	92%
<i>Luther</i>	77%
<i>SCSU</i>	55%
<i>SJU</i>	91%
<i>UCBA</i>	43%
<i>UC-Main</i>	63%
<i>Total</i>	63%

We examined whether there was an association between frequency of attendance at drop-in coaching hours with renewing financial aid or registering for spring term and, interestingly, there was no statistically significant relationship. In fact, those students who attended office hours less frequently were, qualitatively, more likely to register for spring classes and renew financial aid, which are both indicators of persistence.

Coaches reported observing many verbal and non-verbal signs from students as persistence and retention indicators. For example, when students continue to talk

about home a lot throughout their first year, this is an indication they may not return to the institution. Conversely, when students exhibit bonds with other students, staff, or faculty and when they are future-thinking and verbalize excitement about their major, these are all signs to coaches that students are likely to return.

We examined if strength of relationship (as reported via student survey) with peers, campus community, coaches, and faculty and staff was positively associated with persistence indicators, but it was not.

Coaching and Recruitment

Recruitment and Why Students Engaged with College Possible Coaches

Coaches and supervisors engaged in a variety of recruitment methods. Supervisors and coaches reported coordinating with TRIO program staff, conducting classroom presentations, and conducting presentations to staff and faculty as primary methods of recruitment. The most common activity that coaches participated in was welcome week activities, followed by admissions events and orientation. Recruitment during foundation freshman courses seemed successful to those coaches who did it and supervisors who oversaw it.

Students recalled initially learning about College Possible in various ways. While coaches reported via survey participating in a variety of platforms for recruitment, students primarily recalled receiving emails. Other ways they heard were through their advisor or during an orientation fair.

During interviews, all students were asked about their impetus for deciding to join College Possible, even prior to meeting their coach. Via interview, students indicated they:

- Wanted support from someone who had navigated the same institution
- Wanted support from someone who had recently been through the college experience
- Had a parent who encouraged student to join (first-gen student)
- Wanted another advisor-type person in their network
- Had a CP coach in high school who was considered helpful and wanted a similar relationship in college, or had participated in other similar high school programming and had a positive experience

Via student survey, students indicated they were looking for the following benefits and supports through College Possible:

- Having someone to guide them through college processes (such as financial aid and registration): **73%**

- Receiving additional academic support and help accessing other campus resources: **49%**
- Having someone close to their age to turn to for support: **41%**
- Having someone with a similar background to turn to for support: **41%**
- Having a friend or community on campus: **41%**

While those factors may have initially compelled students to explore coaching, coaches themselves were the reason students engaged. For example, one student decided to meet with her coach weekly because her coach understood and “got” her. This student felt often misunderstood by others; she felt she was sarcastic and that this was a turnoff to other staff but her coach understood her sarcasm and also saw through it. This student and coach worked together strategically, writing down goals for coaching and checking in on goals weekly. Some goals included obtaining a specific GPA and pursuing supplemental instruction. Some students reported coaches were their closest friends.

It is worth noting that the transition from involvement in HS College Possible coaching to college coaching was sometimes difficult: students missed their coach from high school or had expected the college program to be more similar with more regular meetings.

Types of Coach Support for Students

Students reported multiple examples of support provided by coaches. Sixty-three percent of students indicated that they primarily desired financial management support, and 49% indicated they primarily *received* financial management support.

- **Examples of academic success support** ranged from the graduation process and application coaching, time management strategies, registering for classes, connecting students with tutors and group study opportunities, meeting with instructors with students. On the student survey, 79% students indicated that one-on-ones with their coaches during Fall 2018 were extremely or somewhat helpful in providing academic support. There was considerable variance by school; 77% of students at UCBA found one-on-ones helpful for academic support, while only 17% at SJU found them so.
- **Examples of personal development support** included preparing for life after graduation, encouraging students to persist in activities or to join clubs or organizations, coaching around social and dating skills, stress management, helping students navigate racism and microaggressions, processing personal challenges (e.g., a parent’s divorce). On the student survey, 74% of students indicated that one-on-ones with their coaches during Fall 2018 were extremely or somewhat helpful in providing personal development and social support.
- **Examples of financial management support** included helping with the FAFSA and financial aid appeals processes, connecting or liaising with the billing office, connecting student with work study, and even babysitting a

student's child so the student could go to a job interview. On the student survey, 72% of students indicated that one-on-ones with their coaches during Fall 2018 were extremely or somewhat helpful in providing financial support; students at UCBA had an especially favorable experience (91%).

Coaches themselves were equally divided in their thinking around which of the three categories of support were provided most. In terms of the elements of the Catalyze curriculum that were most helpful in supporting students, coaches ranked the following the highest: study skills, scholarships, time management, crisis support, academic resources, loans, and account balance.

Coaches are able to help students through such a broad range of activities, and students recalled multiple experiences of coach helpfulness. Coaches also influenced student desire and capacity to persist: when students knew that support existed for them on campus, they felt more able to return; because coaches helped them with the FAFSA, they were able to secure the financial aid needed to return.

Coaching Sessions, Voice to Voice Coaching and Relationship Building

Coaches and students reported a range of informal to more structured initial and ongoing coaching sessions. These sessions varied by coach and by campus, but nearly all students interviewed reported what felt like organic, fluid, and informal relationships and conversations with their coaches. Across campuses, coaches reported surprise on how difficult it was at times to engage with students, especially since coaches often reiterated the sentiment that they would have appreciated similar support while they were in college. Coaches reported building ultimately strong relationships with some students who were initially difficult to engage, while some other students remained out of touch. Institutional partners, beyond coaches, expressed challenges working with nonresponsive students and the inability to remove them from the program or portfolios (without written student consent, which partners deemed unrealistic).

Just as each coach and student is an individual, each coaching relationship varied—some more formal, some informal, some primarily around educational support, others around campus navigational support, and others more deeply personal with students confiding relationship and personal challenges, along with successes and hopes, with coaches. Some students said they dropped in to see their coaches multiple times a week while others indicated they were too busy to do so but saw their coaches a couple times a term and that that level of contact was helpful. While most meetings transpire in the coaching space, some coaches meet with students across campus or even off campus. Some students noted that their coach takes them for “coffee stress release breaks” off campus, and that this activity helps them reset and makes them feel valued.

An analysis of Salesforce data suggests that there were significant differences between schools in the number of successful communications coaches had with students, ranging from an average of 15 successful interactions during Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 at Coe College, and 2.5 successful communications at UC-Main. Both UC

campuses had far fewer successful interactions than other schools, though it's important to consider if data entry limitations may have occurred.

<i>School</i>	<i>Mean Number of Successful Coach & Student Interactions</i>
<i>Augsburg</i>	10.5
<i>Coe</i>	9.5
<i>CSB</i>	11
<i>Luther</i>	15
<i>SCSU</i>	12
<i>SJU</i>	7.5
<i>UCBA</i>	3.5
<i>UC-Main</i>	2.5
<i>Total</i>	6.5

Overall Flagship students had many more cumulative successful coach-student communications (12) than did non-Flagship Catalyze students (5). We also examined whether there was a statistically significant association between attempted and successful interactions, which would demonstrate if increasing attempted communications may impact the number of successful communications. Interestingly, there is only a very weak relationship between the two, suggesting that that other factors are more likely to influence successful interactions than the number of attempted interactions.

Some coaches utilized online calendars for scheduling coaching sessions, though the majority of students reported that they rarely scheduled meetings with coaches and instead preferred to drop in. Some coaches kept their calendars visually available for students, or put campus maps on their doors with an indication of where they were. If coaches were in meetings, some would indicate on their door whether they could be pulled out of meetings to meet with students, really clearly indicating to students that they were the coach's priority.

Students also reported regularly texting their coaches as the primary alternative to in-person meetings. Two-thirds of coaches reported that students were most likely to engage with them by coming by their office or engaging in person, while 12/15 coaches said their students did not engage by phone for voice-to-voice coaching. Two-thirds of coaches also said text was a good way to engage with students (students agreed), while none used Facebook groups or Instagram. On the student survey, the majority of students indicated that they preferred to communicate with their coaching in person or via texting or messaging; more even preferred Facebook Messenger than phone.

Coaches reported multiple methods of engagement and relationship building, including simple measures like greeting College Possible students whenever they're seen on campus and using empathy by relating similar lived or college experiences to

students. Students saw this as key and reported respect and bonding for coaches who had been through similar experiences and come through with academic success and/or personal resilience. It was a challenge for coaches to be able to engage with all of the students on their portfolio and to maintain or attempt contact with non-responsive students. Some coaches struggled with the balance of needing to spend considerable time and resources with some students who required a lot of support and reaching out to non-responsive students.

Drop-In Hours

Most coaches reported holding between 4-9 or more than 10 drop-in hours a week, with time slots nearly every weekday. Two coaches reported no drop-in hours. Six coaches held drop-in hours regularly away from their offices—including at local coffee shops, the library, student events, student life center/student union, in the hallway, in study rooms, and in cafeterias. There was no real difference between new and returning coaches as to whether they offered drop-in hours outside of their office. Email reminders were the most common method of notifying students about drop-in hours, followed by text message (but only 1/3 of coaches); there were not many other methods used such as email signature or social media to advertise drop-in availability or hours.

On the student survey, students were asked how often they attended their coach's drop-in hours. Generally, students said they sometimes attended, while only 11% said they frequently attended. Eight percent of students indicated they didn't know what drop-in hours were.

Coaching Contracts

While contracts between coaches and students are not expected, 33% of students indicated that their coach had completed a contract with them. Students at Coe were the most likely to have completed contracts (44%).

Community Leaders

There's considerable variance in the approach to developing and implementing the Community Leaders program across campuses. Some hold regular meetings that students make a priority,

while others meet infrequently or via Facebook Messenger. Students are considered the leaders and planners at some institutions, while coaches continue to take primary responsibility at others. Some coaches and students reported that their Community Leaders programs were stronger at the start—for example, that they planned and held multiple events during the first Community Leaders implementation year, but fewer in AY18-19. Some Community Leaders students reported feeling surprised at how informal it was—they had expected a more formal student organization or club environment.

The benefits of Community Leaders included a platform for College Possible students to get to know one another, to feel supported, and for Community Leaders themselves to develop additional organizational, administrative, and event planning skills. Standout community leaders events included FAFSA events, study events, and dinner at the President's house.

Some supervisors and coaches mentioned a desire for tokens or items that underscore the sense of belonging for students in College Possible—such as t-shirts, buttons, pens—to make it feel more like a student club.

Supervisors believed that if students felt even greater sense of belonging to College Possible, persistence rates may be higher.

On the student survey, students indicated that their primary way of connecting with other students on campus was through student clubs (57%) or classes (50%). Twenty-two percent of student respondents said Community Leaders was their primary way of connecting with other students on campus. Of those students who served as Community Leaders Board Members, 5% felt they experienced growth in their leadership skills and 4% thought they enhanced their event-planning skills.

Having a mentor helping to navigate and guide me in this new place, and guidance with financial aid, were big factors in me opting into the program.

— Student

These are smart students who happen to be low-income, and identifying the program as primarily based on income is very loaded for students.

— Institutional Partner

❖ Consideration

Cultivate ways of enhancing student sense of belonging that are simple and do not add additional burden to coaches.

Messaging of Program

Stakeholders expressed commitment to practicing intentionality and consideration about the languaging of the program—noting that different messaging may be appropriate for institution decision-makers and administrators as compared to students. For example, framing the College Possible Catalyze partnership as one of student advocacy and student service and support may be beneficial for administrators (especially as Catalyze partnerships are first being established), but is not especially meaningful for students.

❖ Consideration

To recruit and engage students, focusing on the program as one of academic success and excellence, rather than emphasizing the characteristics of students eligible for coaching (such as first-generation or low-income students) may help engage students and honor the work students did to graduate from high school and enroll in college.

One stakeholder said, “These are smart students who happen to be low-income, and identifying the program as primarily based on income is very loaded for students.” While some campuses struggled with the appropriate language to differentiate between College Possible near-peer coaches and other mentors, at least one campus has moved away from referring to coaches as College Possible or College Possible Catalyze coaches at all, instead referring to them as Success Coaches—a title that meaningfully conveys the role of coaches as well as the possibility for student achievement and self-efficacy.

Programmatic, Organizational and Institutional Equity, Diversity and Student Representation

Although Catalyze is geared toward first-generation students and students from low-income backgrounds, on many campuses these students are predominantly, if not disproportionately, students of color. Often students (and coaches themselves) don’t see themselves represented by staff or faculty, which shapes their experience. In fact, coaches themselves may be primary representatives for students, which carries substantial responsibility and weight for coaches. During interviews, students of color indicated the importance and significance of having the support of coaches of color.

While coach supervisors and champions weren’t sure they could speak to how College Possible was educating or training coaches in cultural competency, some institutional partners noted that coaches were more adept at meeting the needs of students of color and navigating those needs than were institutional staff members.

❖ Consideration

Partners and coaches requested additional support and training on race, the experiences of students of color, and navigating predominantly white institutions as students and coaches of color.

One coach said “CP misses the mark on this issue. If I wasn’t a person of color myself, I would struggle with students. There was no training on this until the mid-year mark and even then it was provided by a coach.” Coaches need support navigating complex racial dynamics and regular microaggressions against themselves and students, as well as incidents of racial profiling or prejudice.

Further, it is important to remember that coaches of color may be serving students who are not College Possible students because those students of color may not see themselves represented by other staff or faculty; this may place an increased burden on coaches of color. These coaches may also be navigating microaggressions themselves or be more likely to be seen as students rather than professionals on campus.

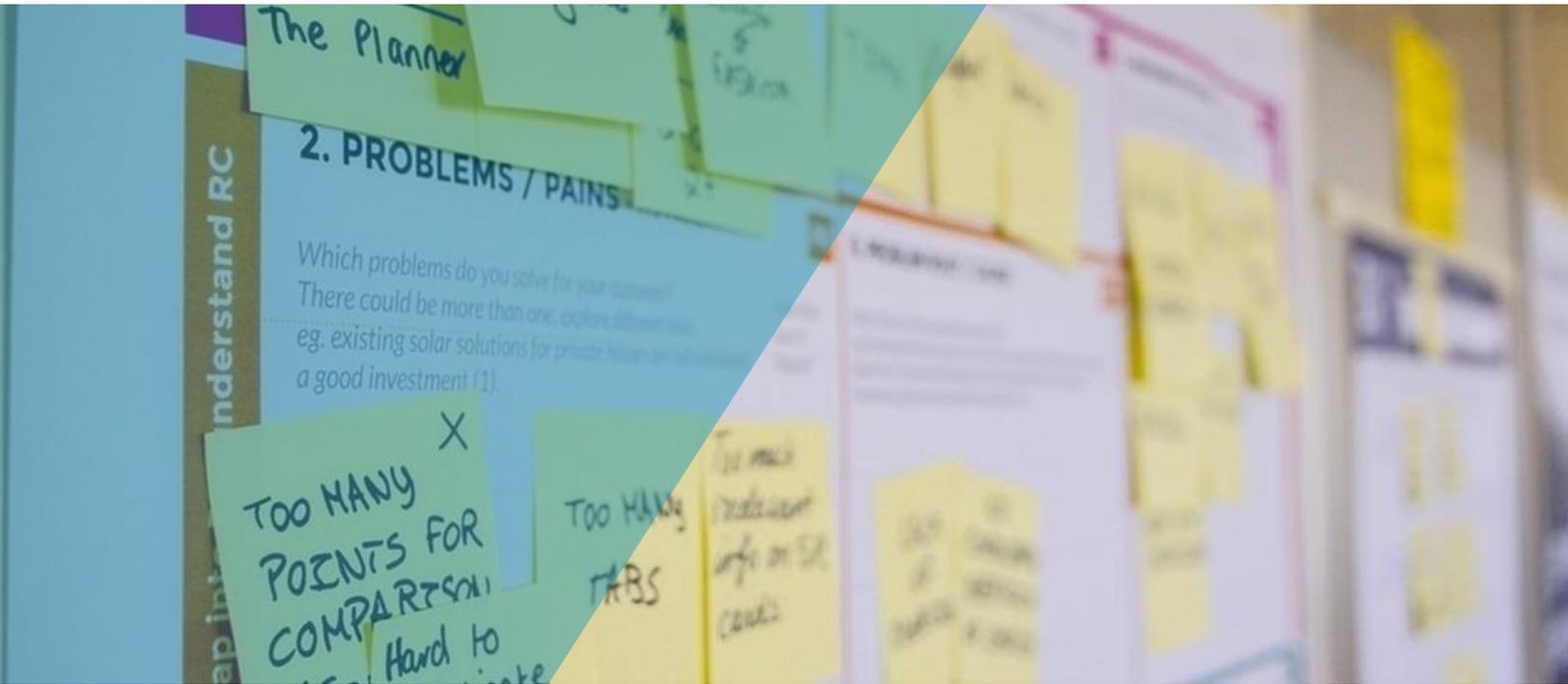
Further, the Salesforce data tracking requirements seemed to pose particular challenge and burden to coaches of color. These coaches were substantially relationship-oriented, and the process of spending time entering data did not resonate with them or feel fulfilling relationally. For many of them, the skillset they felt they brought to CP was similar lived experience and an ability to connect with students—and these skillsets weren’t honored during data entry. It is not uncommon for communities of color to value collectivist and relationship work over individual tasks, so this may be occurring in regard to data entry expectations.

❖ Consideration

Implementation science is increasingly attentive to racial equity and the ways implementation activities have excluded or not considered communities of color. Catalyze may benefit from utilizing frameworks or tools around implementation equity. The National Implementation Research Network is a good resource.³

³ NIRN’s 2019 summer institute was focused Implementation Science and Equity. Resources are available from <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/resources/2019-summer-institute-implementation-science-materials>

Study Design and Methods



Evaluation Design Overview

The Catalyze process evaluation design was a participatory and mixed-methods approach, relying on both existing data (such as Catalyze documents) and the collection of primary data.

Implementation Science Framework

To help focus our exploration of implementation consistency, we drew on the emerging and growing body of knowledge referred to as implementation science. The National Implementation Research Network⁴ and Fixsen et al.⁵ provide the basis of this knowledge. Implementation science helps close the science-to-service gap by providing evidence related to key drivers of successful implementation, where implementation means a specified set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program.⁶ Examples of implementation drivers include staff training and coaching, decision support data systems, and leadership to address barriers that require technical or adaptive change.⁷ Implementation science holds that while

⁴ <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/>

⁵ Fixsen, D.L., Naoom, S.F., Blasé, K.A., Friedman, R.M., and Wallace, F. (2005). Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature. University of South Florida, available from <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/sites/nirn.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/NIRN-MonographFull-01-2005.pdf>

⁶ Definition by the National Implementation Research Network, <https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/>

⁷ <http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/users/p/padilla/www/435-Leadership/Heifetz%20and%20Laurie%20The%20work%20of%20leadership.pdf>

evidence-based programs are interesting, they are not much help unless they can be put into practice and produce the same good results in practice that they produced under pilot or clinical conditions, such as those achieved under the College Possible flagship program. To produce the desired educational (and other) outcomes, the model must be effectively implemented within institutional contexts that are adaptable and open to change (enabling context).

Figure 1

Visualization of Process for Producing Desired Outcomes Through Implementation Science



Source: Adapted from the National Implementation Research Network

Data Sources

Document Review

The first Catalyze data collection activity was a document review. We systemically reviewed College Possible Catalyze guiding documents (both publicly available and those provided for the purposes of this study), including those available through the online Learning Management System. Document review establishes how a program is *intended* to be implemented, whereas stakeholder interviews, the implementation survey, and site visits reveal how Catalyze is implemented in real-world contexts at the organizational, institutional, and programmatic levels. Document analysis, using our data capture tool, was a grounding research activity which allowed us to:

1. Understand the context within which Catalyze is implemented
2. Suggest additional questions that need to be answered or situations that need to be observed through other data collection activities
3. Supplement/triangulate other data sources
4. Track model change and development
5. Produce an activities and inputs list to underscore development of the logic model and program theory

Key Stakeholder Interviews

We interviewed multiple key stakeholders at the organizational and institutional levels. Qualitative interviews were an exploratory step before designing more quantitative, structured questionnaires—in this case, the implementation survey—to help determine appropriate questions and categories. Initial interview areas of inquiry were informed by the document review. The reality of day-to-day programming is much richer and more nuanced than a document or survey can reveal;

interviews provided context and detail to flesh out the Catalyze activities. The information shared during the interviews both stood alone and helped us shape the implementation survey.

Key stakeholder interviews offered opportunity for systematic and structured reflection. Since people—organizational and institutional staff, as well as students and coaches—are the core of Catalyze, their perspective was invaluable. We conducted semi-structured in-person and/or Skype or telephone interviews with key stakeholders at the organizational and institutional levels. Areas of inquiry varied by position and interview timing; the approach we took was iterative, so questions answered during the organizational key stakeholder interviews informed those posed during institutional key stakeholder interviews.

Online Implementation Surveys

Since it was expected that activities at the institutional and programmatic levels would vary, especially during initial implementation, we built and administered a series of online implementation surveys (called an implementation index) to capture and catalogue key Catalyze activities from the perspective of multiple stakeholders: champions, supervisors, coaches, and students (four surveys total). To measure these activities, the evaluation team constructed a survey with measures derived from the document review, key stakeholder interviews, and the literature on implementation science and coaching models.

The surveys identified a range of key activities or processes associated with Catalyze, and users responded through both close-ended (Likert scale) and open-ended responses about the implementation level of the activity and/or their perception of the activity's importance or relevance. Some survey questions were administered to all respondents, while other questions were position-specific.

The survey was administered online once during the one-year process evaluation. We had a 100% response rate from coaches, 78% from champions, 63% from supervisors, and 22% from students.

Site Visits to Catalyze Partner Institutions

Following the implementation survey, we conducted 1-2 day site visits to four sites identified by the Catalyze team. In-person site visits included interviews with Catalyze students and interviews and/or focus groups with coaches, and interviews with supervisors and champions. Site visits allowed us to capture in-person institutional and programmatic staff perspectives, and to vet and reflect together on findings from the implementation survey.

Data Analysis

The evaluation team used a variety of tools to track and analyze the process evaluation data. Interview data were generally entered into the Dedoose qualitative analysis software system. The online implementation surveys were administered through HSRI's survey portal and then analyzed using SPSS and Dedoose. Institutional-level

qualitative, contextual data from interviews and document review were incorporated into the implementation survey for descriptive analysis.

Participant Protection

HSRI's certified Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved the overall project and each data collection activity, ensuring participant protection and that the rights of students, coaches and institutional staff were respected.

Appendices

Appendix A: Catalyze Logic Model

Problem: One-third of college goers are low-income students, but they graduate at rates significantly lower than their high-income peers

