



insidetrack



Meet our Symposium Student Panel

What do today's students want? Better yet, what do they need?

We gathered a group of them to share their stories, giving us unique insight into what they want and need to be successful. As institutions strive to become more “student-ready” — rather than expecting students to be “college-ready” — here is what five of today's students have to say.

Diarriou Sow | Ivy Tech Community College — Human Services

WHY ARE YOU PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION?

In west Africa, where she is from, she wouldn't have the same opportunity to attend college. She wants to get her Master's degree and become a social worker.

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU UP AT NIGHT?

“I have a new job and I'm taking care of my little sister.”

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED WITH EDUCATION?

She has had trouble finding out about scholarships. Luckily, she is still close with a high school teacher who helps her find resources.

WHAT HELPS YOU SUCCEED?

Knowing her parents' story and what they have experienced makes her want to make them proud.

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION?

Better information about transfer pathways, and more information about career options.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?

Changing her major to follow her passion — and completing a tough course load while dealing with a lot of family issues.

Lillian Rucker | Ivy Tech Community College — Computer Science and IT

WHY ARE YOU PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION?

"I know that knowledge is power, and I want that power."

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU UP AT NIGHT?

Caring for her aunt and niece, being involved in her church, trying to live a healthy and balanced life.

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED WITH EDUCATION?

Understanding more about career pathways.

WHAT HELPS YOU SUCCEED?

Staying focused on her career goals, despite the tough situations she encounters

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION?

More instruction into situations she will encounter in the "real world" — like how to dress for the office.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?

"Completing my degrees!"

Ellie Ayers | Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) — Health Science

WHY ARE YOU PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION?

Her parents urged her to pursue higher education, because they know the statistics about how a college degree opens doors to success

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU UP AT NIGHT?

She has changed her major, so she is taking a lot of credit hours to catch up. She's also very involved in her sorority.

WHAT HELPS YOU SUCCEED?

Becoming a mentor has helped her out.

"It's important to find a place where you can grow and help people grow at the same time."

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION?

Students don't have a chance to share what's going on in their day or their life with their advisors. Schools should get to know more about students and why they're there. She wants to feel when she walks into an office that the advisor she is meeting with cares about her.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?

Learning what she wants to do and who she is as a person.

Lidsky Gonzalez | IUPUI — Pre-med (double major in Psychology and Spanish)

WHY ARE YOU PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION?

"I'm first-gen and I want to make my parents proud."

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU UP AT NIGHT?

"School is life!"

She is an orientation coordinator and also does shadows with doctors and belongs to associations for premed students

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED WITH EDUCATION?

The summer bridge program helped her become better prepared.

WHAT HELPS YOU SUCCEED?

Having diversity on campus and seeing the orientation team be so welcoming to everyone.

"It makes me feel like this is where I belong and this is where I can find my support and my people."

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION?

She did not have support with finding what she is passionate about. She had to find it herself.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?

Deciding to become premed and following her passion.

Leah Pawlus | IUPUI — Social Work major, Policy Studies minor, wants to be a constitutional lawyer

WHY ARE YOU PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION?

She wants to be an advocate.

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU UP AT NIGHT?

"I'm trying to be a 19-year-old who lives alone. I don't know how to cook!"

She is also taking 18 credits per term and has two jobs.

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED WITH EDUCATION?

She realized that she was smarter and more hard-working than she gave herself credit for.

WHAT HELPS YOU SUCCEED?

"Finding your place, finding people who want to check up on you and know what you're doing. Having a support system of people helping you get where you want to be."

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION?

It can be tough to remember policy deadlines and requirements, and that can set students back.

"We want to get into the real world and be real professionals, not just be college students for the rest of our lives."

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?

"I'm proud of myself for proving that I am someone who can push through hard times."