

Taking a Leap: Making a Comeback



THE GRADUATE |
NETWORK!



Kathy Zandona is Senior Vice President of Network Engagement with The Graduate! Network. She focuses on engaging the business community and providing technical assistance to new member communities.



Bridgett Strickler is Vice President of Network Engagement/Lead Bridging The Talent Gap. Her portfolio includes employer services and supporting the development of new Network communities.

Session Objectives

- 1) Understand how a grassroots approach can work in your community, state or region;
- 2) Understand how effective outreach can bring well-prepared adults to your doors;
- 3) Learn how The Graduate! Network coaching model can provide the returning adult with the confidence and skills they need to go back to and through college.

Taking a Leap: Making a Comeback



THE GRADUATE |
NETWORK!

Systemic Disconnects

- Systems still focused on 18 year olds and traditional college structures.
- Traditionally colleges are unprepared, little connection between workforce and employers and colleges regarding adults.
- No clear pathway back for people with defaulted loans, institutional debt, low GPAs, services that were designed for traditional students.
- Adults need preparation before making a college and degree choice and they need support through college – preferably from within the college but also from an independent resource outside it.

Community by community, The Graduate! Network is leading a growing national movement to increase college completion among adults.

Strategy For Increasing Adult Degree Attainment

We are:

National Network of 30 communities serving more than 30,000 adults nationwide

We know:

There is a need for Talent - and to reach local, regional and state goals -- adults are key

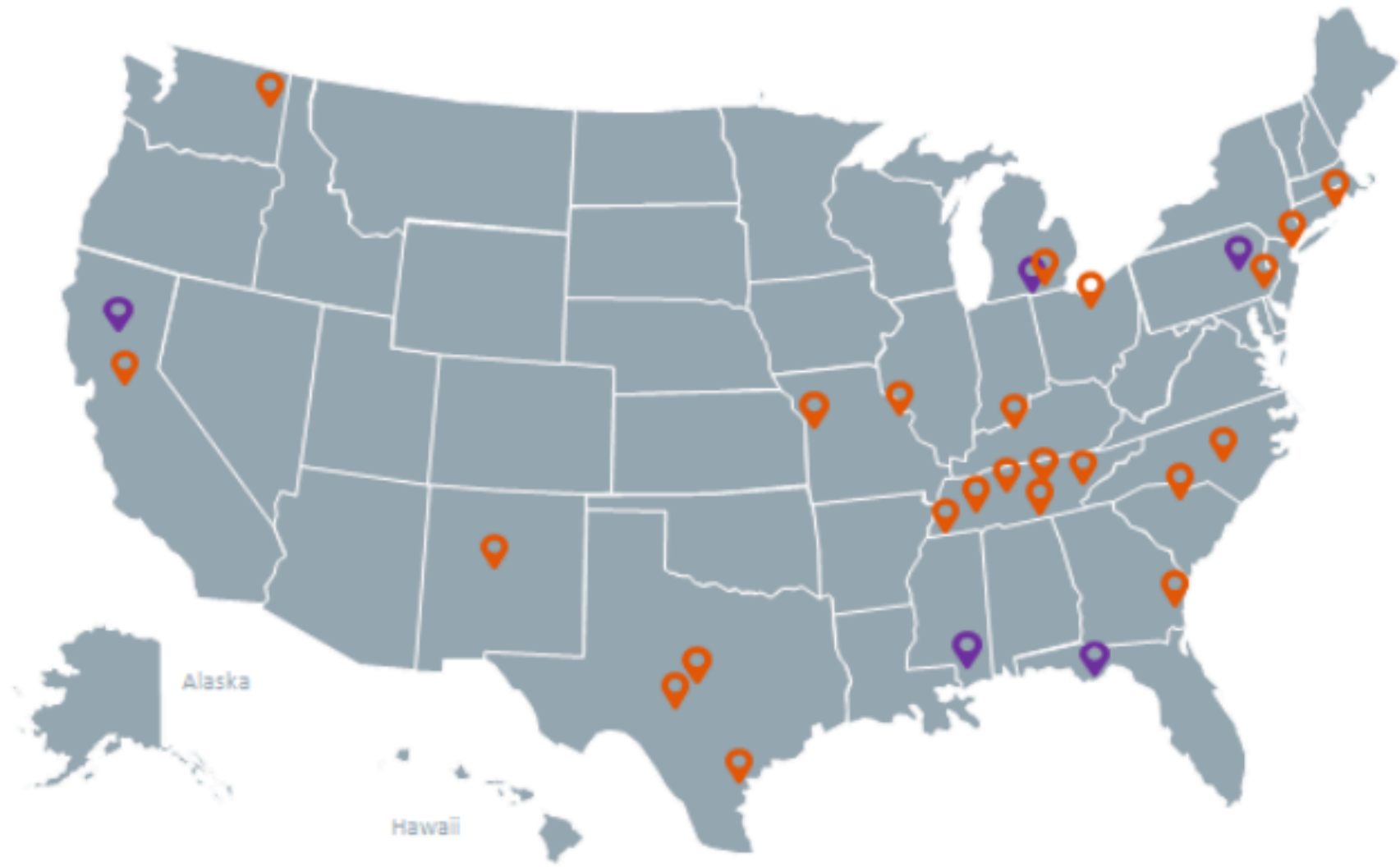
We do:

Serve adults through a hybrid approach of technology and a proven advising model to and through education

We show:

Return On Investment

**THE GRADUATE |
NETWORK!**



THE GRADUATE |
NETWORK!

What Have We Learned?

- Coordination along the educational continuum and among partners is essential: no single organization can solve all problems
- Comebackers need navigational assistance and motivational support from a trusted source
- Comebackers need to see the connection between postsecondary credentials and their goals

What Have We Learned?

- Financial aid, maximization of credits earned/transferred, minimize time to degree, flexible courses
 - ⇒ 79% of comebackers graduate within 5 years, or are on track to graduate (5 year study of 1,452 Comebackers)
 - ⇒ 62% of all re-enrolled students enroll consistently (year over year)
- Employers that provide educational benefits are important partners
- Employers want partnerships with postsecondary education providers but don't know where to start, especially small and mid-sized employers

The Graduate! Network Mission

To increase the number of adults going back to and through college.

Messaging



Partnerships



Services



Sustainability





THE GRADUATE |
NETWORK!

Innovative, Replicable Practices for Serving Comebackers

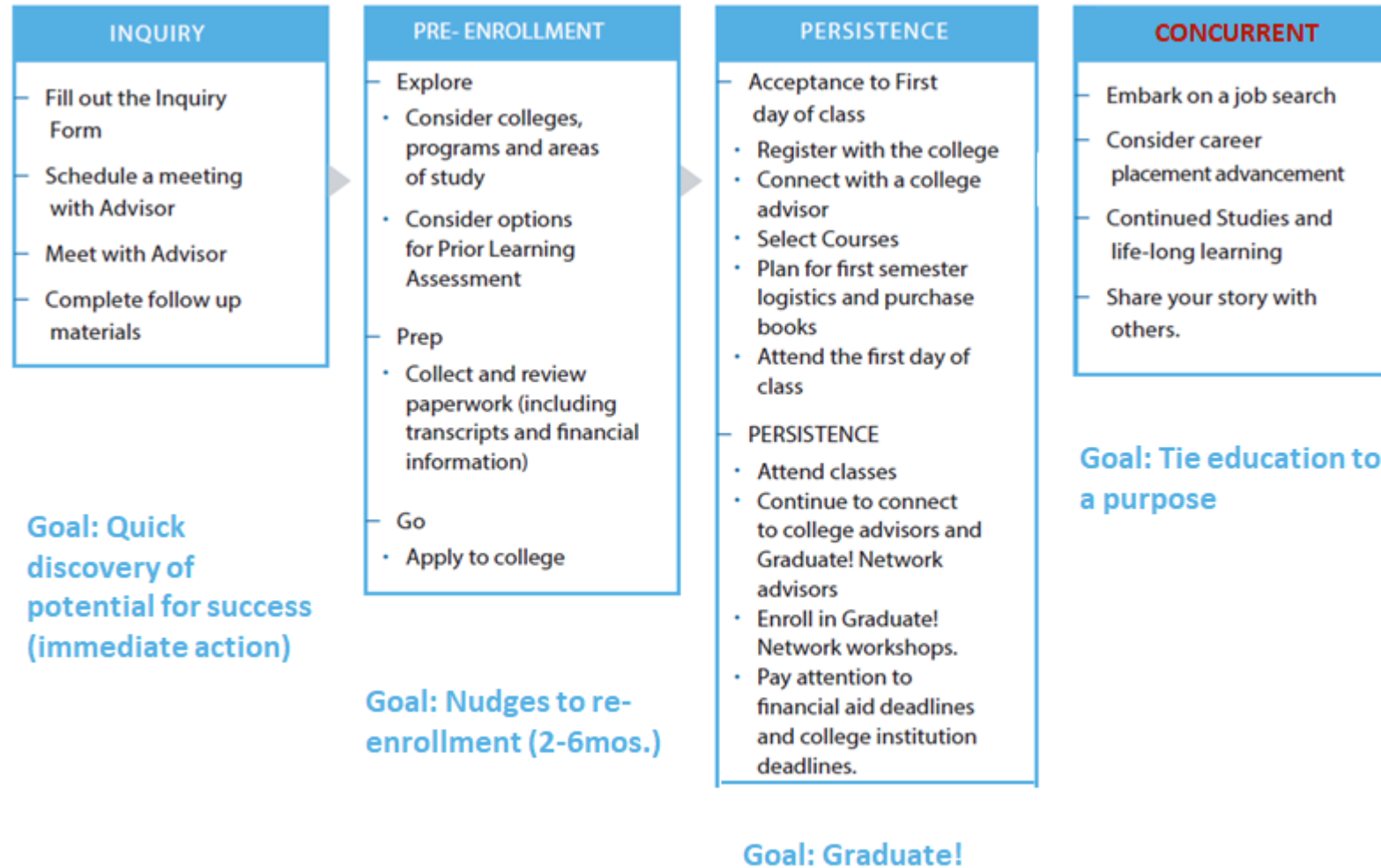
- Dr. Kevin Akin, Faith-based Communities partnering with Graduate! Philadelphia
- Laura Ward, Middle Tennessee Reconnect, “Sorting In” adults at the Reconnect Cafe at Nashville State Community College
- Jodi Strote, Greater Minds and Greater Spokane Incorporated, fueling the nursing pipeline and growing your own teachers

Graduate! Network Advising Principles and the Lifecycle Model

Lifecycle Model

- The Lifecycle model for tracking Comebacker progress
- Markers of progress and advising tasks by Lifecycle Role

The Graduate! Network Lifecycle Model



Key Components of Advising Model

Theories that inform Graduate! Advising

- Fixed vs. Growth Mindset
- Behavioral Economics Insights
- Appreciative Advising
- Active Listening
- Nudge

Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

Fixed

- Believe ability to succeed is hardwired & unchangeable.
- Believe in accomplishment and less in the process.
- Need external validation.
- Judging own self.
- Can lead to cheating, fear of failure, procrastination, choosing low achieving peer groups, & blaming.

Growth

- Believe in the process that leads to success.
- “Grit”, perseverance.
- Take on challenges.
- Ask how can I do better.
- Can take and learn from criticism.
- Ask for help & use resources and strategies for improvement.

Behavioral Economics Insights

- Explores how we make choices and what influences us
- Decisions influenced by impulses and “shortcuts” in our thinking
- Decisions are influenced by “hassle factors”
- Choice paralysis

Appreciative Advising

Six “D’s” of Appreciative Advising

- Disarm
- Discover
- Dream
- Design
- Deliver
- Don’t Settle

Active Listening

5 ways to listen better

- Take just 3 minutes each day to sit in silence.
- In a noisy environment listen for the number of sound 'channels' you can hear.
- Listen to any mundane sound, like a coffee grinder, and pay attention to the sounds it makes.
- Do a personal check in and pay attention to whether you are listening more actively or passively.
- Use the acronym RASA to improve your listening

Nudge

Repeating small touches, or nudges, to help people make decisions and meet their goals.

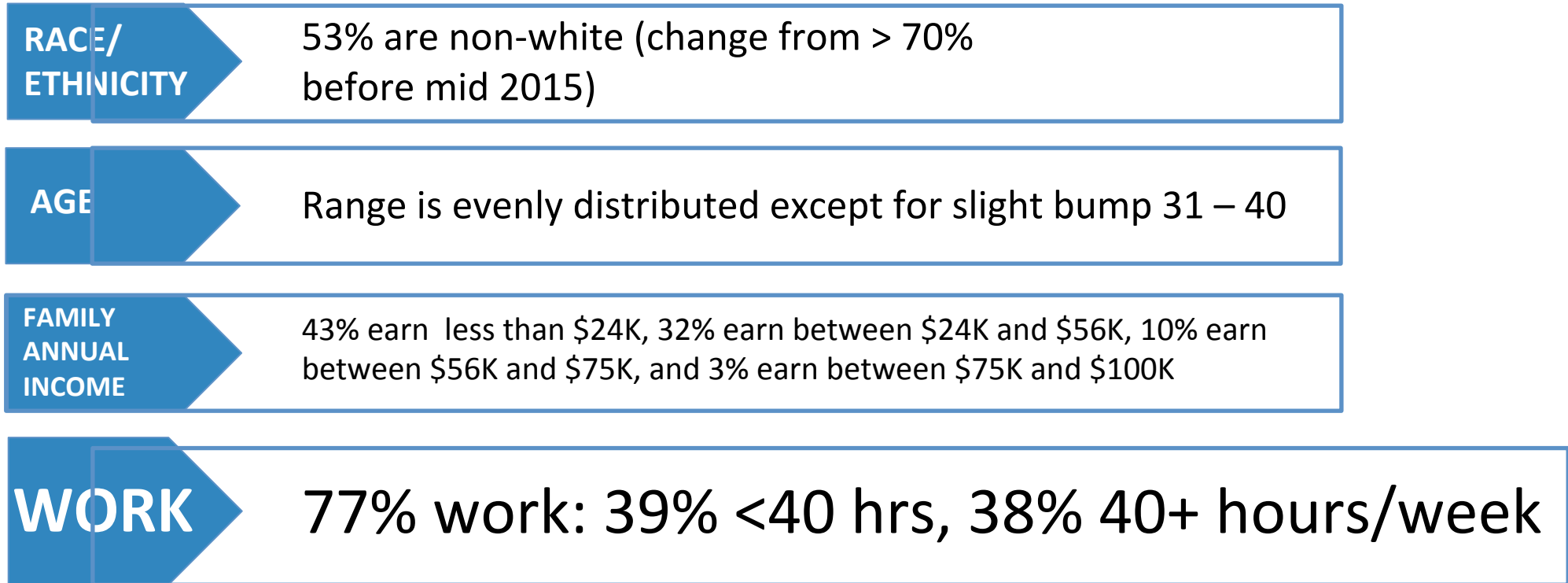
- Deadlines
- Notifications
- Moments of encouragement
- Reminders

Nudge

Nudges should be:

- Focused and short (one action per nudge)
- Timely
- Personalized
- Motivational
- Outline an action
- Include a deadline

Who are Comebackers?



Who are Comebackers?

EDUCATION LEVEL AT INTAKE

2/3 have earned credit but no degree
22% have earned a degree or post-secondary certificate

DRIVE

53% say employment or career oriented (better job, increased earning potential, career change); another 42% are motivated by personal goals

READY

48% say they're ready to start right away. 36% say in 3-6 months

Who are Comebackers?

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

30% of CBs have defaulted student loans or are unsure of their financial standing with their school/lender of prior enrollment

WHAT'S KEEPING YOU FROM RETURNING?

- ✧ Finances: 36%
- ✧ Logistical challenges: 27%
(work schedule, transportation, childcare)
- ✧ Needed guidance: 20%
(lack of ad. support sys., unsure of career goals)
- ✧ Life challenges: 11%
(fear of failure, disability, "I don't know")
- ✧ Academics and learning: 6%

ACADEMIC UNCERTAINTY

1/5 are "undecided"

What leads to success? (PREDICTIVE MODEL)

VARIABLE	PREDICTIVE VALUE/CORRELATION
HIGH TOUCH CONTACTS	Positive correlation
AGE AT INTAKE	36 is “peak age” for greatest likelihood to enroll
WHEN DO YOU WANT TO START?	Today or within 3-6 months
HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT US?	Most predictive: Flyer, College Advisor, Poster or Billboard, Referral Least predictive: Television
DEFAULTED STUDENT LOANS?	Answering question was predictive of enrollment
EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT INTAKE	Employed up to 40 hours

Join The Movement!



THE GRADUATE |
NETWORK!

Professional Development Opportunities

- Weekly action idea newsletter, the Lightbulb
- Twice monthly professional development webinars and sharing
 - Cross Country Conversations for navigators
 - Solution Sessions for directors
- Quarterly coaching calls with Network staff
- Annual Advising Summit
- Annual Learning Exchange
- Data That Move Us
- Bridging The Talent Gap

Questions?

Kathy.Zandona@Graduate-Network.org

Bridgett.Strickler@Graduate-Network.org

Thank you!