



# Purpose & Strengths

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# Purpose & Strengths

/ Connection and Exploration

/ Opportunities to help students

/ Opportunities for personal development and team development

# What have we heard from students?

- / Grateful, but overwhelmed with the amount of resources on campus; unwilling to go to multiple places to find resources
- / Many interests they struggle to narrow down
- / Social anxiety and community building/relationship building is a concern
- / Wellbeing and fit remain concerns for them
- / Gap in support for “life” conversations

# Research

- / 80% of college graduates affirm the importance of finding purpose in their work
- / Less than 50% of college graduates succeed in finding purposeful work
- / Graduates who align their work with their interests, values, and strengths are 3x more likely to experience high purpose in their work
- / Graduates with high purpose in their work are almost 10x more likely to have high overall wellbeing

# Strengths and Retention

/ As reported in the article “Building a Strengths-Based Campus to Support Student Retention” in the Journal of College Student Development, a large, public research-intensive university found:

“First-year students who took the [CliftonStrengths®] assessment had significantly higher retention rates compared to their peers who did not take the assessment: 91.5% of first-year students who took the assessment were retained compared to 80.8% of students who did not take the assessment.

/ Students’ wellbeing and engagement has a significant effect on their academic career.

# Strengths and Retention

- / About a third of currently enrolled students pursuing a bachelor's degree report they have considered withdrawing from their program for a semester or more in the past six months
- / Emotional stress was cited as the most common reason for stopping out
- / 76% of those pursuing a bachelor's degree who have considered stopping out report they did so because of emotional stress they were experiencing. This is a significant change from 2020 when 42% of students cited emotional stress as the reason for considering stopping out.

# Wellbeing

/ Gallup research shows that graduates who were emotionally supported during college—who had a mentor who encouraged their hopes and dreams and professors who cared about them are 3x as likely to have thriving wellbeing after college

/ We can be honest about where we are and simultaneously pivot the conversation from problems to possibilities. Self-reflection and strengths gives us to explore solutions in ways that are meaningful to us.

# The importance of Strengths to Student Wellbeing

The odds of an undergraduate student thriving in their wellbeing increase by:

/ **4.1x** if they strongly agree, “At school I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.” (Gallup®)

/ **3.6x** if they strongly agree: “I apply my strengths at school.” (Gallup®)

/ **3.3x** if they strongly agree: “I use my strengths in many situations.” (Gallup®)

/ **3.0x** if they strongly agree: “I know my strengths.” (Gallup®)



# Why Strengths at WVU

- / Tool on the journey of Purpose that help students understand more about who they are, their motivations and how they show up for themselves and others
- / Engage students to improve wellbeing, hope, and ultimately academic success, retention and future quality of life.
- / Our own pilot groups saw a 6% increase in confidence among students and an 8% increase in confidence in leading or contributing to a group

# What are we seeing?

- / Over 2200 people on the platform, 1700 students have taken it for the first time since September.
- / Over 100 team sessions for students, faculty and staff have been taught; over 110 1:1 coaching sessions have happened
- / Strengths has been used this academic year in 32 classrooms
- / Multiple touchpoints are important

# Touchpoints

- / Gallup research suggests 6 strengths touchpoints throughout an academic year can lead to an increase in engagement and wellbeing for students
- / Touchpoints don't have to be workshops; simply helping a student reflect on how they have or could use a strength to solve a problem or approach a class can be a meaningful touchpoint
- / Understanding a students' strengths really helps them feel seen and heard; understanding their why can help us connect them sooner with the resources they need

# Students have shared:

/ “I learned the most about what my strengths were and how to go about using them. For the longest time I wasn’t fully sure what I was good at, but now that I know I will be able to better use them when working with others and on my own.”

/ “It taught me how to communicate with others. I hold a lot of leadership positions on campus made up of very different people. Understanding my own strengths and those of others has made communication easier.”

/ “I learned that knowing my strengths helped improve who I am by making decision-making easier. It gives me a look into myself that I may not have seen before.”

# New Student Orientation

- / All FTF will take this through the NSO Portal
- / Adventure WV NSO Basecamp programming
- / In-Person Introduction and Strengths 101 at NSO
- / Parent Session with Book and Opportunity to take their assessment
- / Follow-Up One-on-One Coaching Sessions throughout the summer

# Fall Semester Plan

- / Welcome Week
- / 1:1 Coaching Sessions
- / 191 Classes
- / Academic Advising
- / Student Organizations
- / Variety of Sessions through the Purpose Center in collaboration with Career Services and Carruth
- / Week of Purpose
- / Continued parent opportunities at Fall Family Weekend and through virtual sessions with the Mountaineer Parents Club

# Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors

- / Looking at pod-style options for this group based on some focus group data and student feedback
- / Students would be able to opt in each semester
- / Variety of topics and partnerships

# Measurement

- / We will look at hope, wellbeing, belonging, fit, purpose, engagement and confidence.
- / We will do some internal measurements around recruitment, retention, and GPA ; Opportunities for faculty research
- / Both parties will do some research looking at focus groups and surveys to adjust content
- / We will measure students, faculty, staff, alumni and K12



# How can this benefit your team?

- / Increase engagement among your team
- / Improves communication and provides a common language
- / Can help with overall wellbeing
- / Provides the opportunity for continued personal development both individually and as a team

# Resources

/ Work Groups

/ Purpose worksheets and resources; Gallup resources

/ In-house resources built by WVU Gallup Certified Strengths coaches including resource collaborations with the Carruth Center on leveraging Strengths to manage stress and anxiety and a variety of resources developed in partnership with the Career Services Center

/ 1:1 Coaching and continued learning workshops on a variety of topics through the Purpose Center including general strengths knowledge, strengths and careers, strengths and wellbeing, strengths and leadership

# Upcoming Opportunities

- / Advisor and 191 Trainings (optional)
- / Strengths 101 and continued learning for teams
- / 1:1 Coaching Opportunities
- / Partner with us to create resources and share ideas

**Thank you!**

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