



***Creating a Transparent Student Experience:
Best Practices to Improve
Graduate Student Success***

Fri, Dec 9, 4-5pm PST



A large, stylized blue hand graphic is positioned on the left side of the slide, with fingers pointing towards the right. The hand is rendered in various shades of blue, creating a sense of depth and movement. The word "Description" is written in white, sans-serif font over the hand graphic.

Description

As graduate programs evaluate the best practices required to drive higher levels of student engagement and improve success rates, providing transparency in the student experience is critical.

This session will discuss modern approaches to drive transparency, how technology can aid in this process, and draw on the collective audience experience to share successes which can be applied in your organization.

Today's Learning Goals

Define: What do we mean by a transparent experience?

Describe: The obstacles that impact transparency

Participate: Discuss best practices that have improved transparency

Learn: What is working at Illinois State, and what is to come

Collaborate: What can you start doing on Monday to assess & improve

Speaker Introductions



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What do graduate students expect today?

New levels of societal stress, COVID and generational change have changed student expectations

- Clear expectations
- Programming that considers their unique characteristics
- Partnership with their advisor / committee
- Resources that are accessible when they need them

Graduate students want to learn in an environment that bolsters their academic confidence and positions them for success during the most challenging components of their program of study.



What do we mean by a “transparent experience”

What does transparency mean....what does it look like in practice?

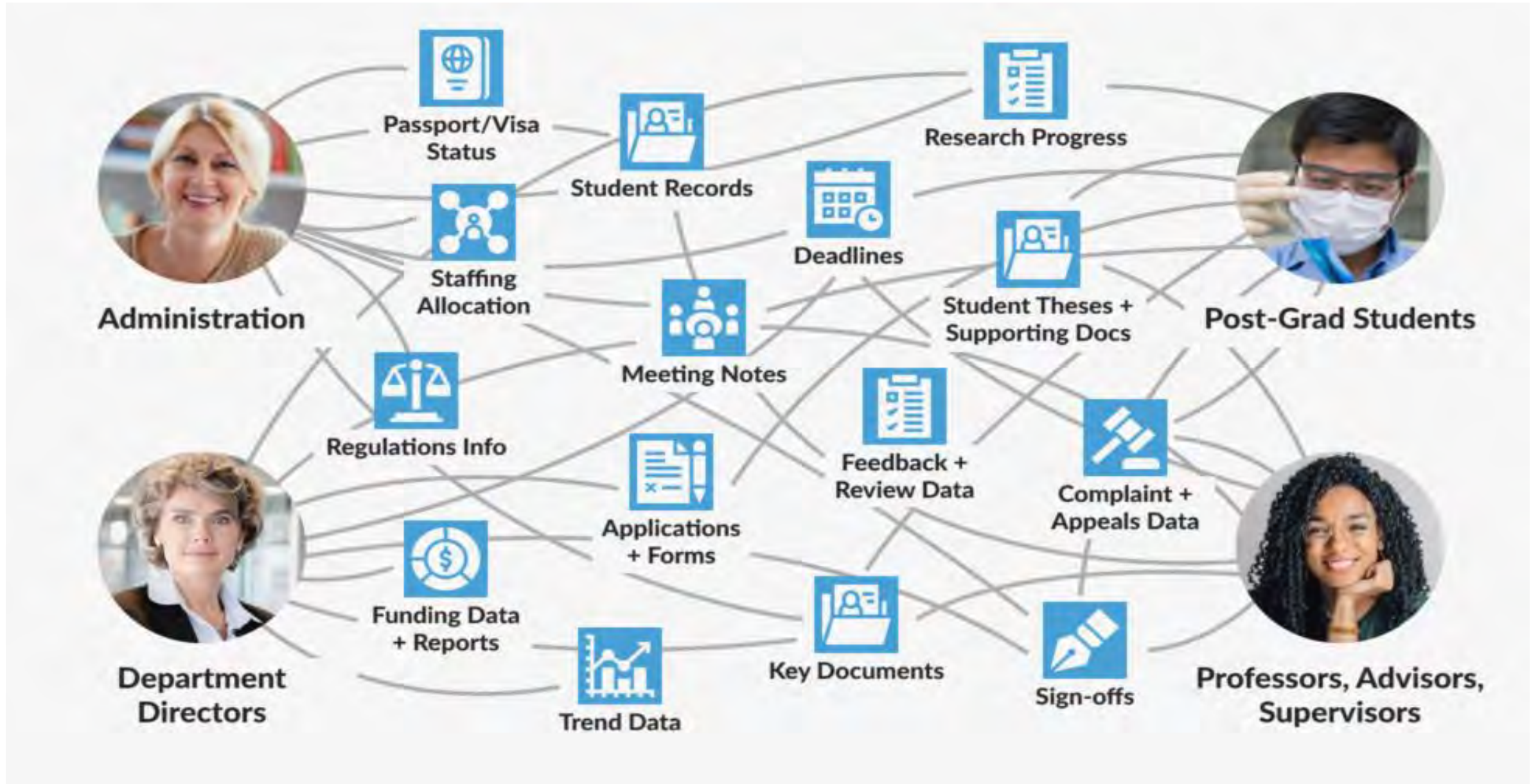
trans·par·ent

/tran(t)s'perənt/

- easy to perceive or detect
- open to public scrutiny



What are the inhibitors of transparency?



Illinois State's Challenge



New leadership and a President Office focus on improving the Graduate experience are driving change

Barriers to transparency at Illinois State

- Legacy policies and procedures
- Inconsistent management of student milestone activity between graduate programs
- No common system for management of forms during the graduate student lifecycle
- Limited student access to information
- Sparse data on student progress toward degree, inhibiting effective intervention & communication



Quick Facts:

- Established in 1857
- Public University
- 100+ graduate programs
- 2,700 graduate students
- Current Cayuse customer

Illinois State's Approach

New leadership and a Provost Office focus on improving the Graduate experience are driving change

Barriers to transparency at Illinois State

- Legacy policies and procedures
 - **Policy review**
 - **Shared governance**
- Inconsistent management of student activity between graduate programs
 - **Student success dashboard with risk ranking**
- No common system for management of the forms necessary during the graduate student lifecycle
 - **Process, workflow and form review**
 - **Search for technology solution to automate form routing**
- Student access to information
 - **Weekly newsletter communicating key dates**
 - **Process, workflow and form review**
 - **Using enrollment data to trigger communication**
- Limited data on student progress toward degree, inhibiting effective intervention / communication program
 - **Identify data requirements**
 - **Review with IT org for existing solution**
 - **Search for new technology option**



Supporting Graduate Student Mental Health and Well Being

A Report by the Council of Graduate Schools and
The Jed Foundation

Transparency as a Value:

“Graduate programs best support students when they offer clear program guidelines, policies and expectations that help students understand what is required for success.”

Student Success Dashboard- Illinois State Example



Power BI Graduate Student Success Dashboard | Graduate Student Success | Data updated 12/2/22

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
Illinois' first public university.

Graduate Student Success Dashboard

Contains current term enrolled graduate students. Student Count : 16

EMPLID	UID	First Name	Last Name	Primary Plan	Academic Standing	GPA	GA Indicator	# of Hours Completed	Current Term Enrolled	Contact Priority Group	Next Term Registration
				Kines and Rec MS		0.00	N	0.00	Y	Highest	
				Kines and Rec MS		0.00	N	0.00	Y	Highest	
				Kines and Rec MS	Good Standing	4.00	Y	18.00	Y	High	
				Kines and Rec MS	Good Standing	3.83	N	18.00	Y	High	
				Kines and Rec MS	Good Standing	4.00	N	18.00	Y	High	
				Kines and Rec MS		0.00	Y	0.00	Y	High	
				Kines and Rec MS	Good Standing	3.67	Y	18.00	Y	Medium	
				Kines and Rec MS	Good Standing	4.00	Y	18.00	Y	Medium	
				Kines and Rec MS	Good Standing	3.83	Y	18.00	Y	Medium	
				Kines and Rec MS		0.00	Y	0.00	Y	Medium	
				Kines and Rec MS	Good Standing	3.83	N	18.00	Y	Low	
				Kines and Rec MS	Good Standing	4.00	Y	18.00	Y	Low	
				Kines and Rec MS	Good Standing	4.00	N	18.00	Y	Low	
				Kines and Rec MS	Good Standing	4.00	Y	18.00	Y	Low	
				Kines and Rec MS	Good Standing	4.00	N	19.00	Y	Lowest	
				Kines and Rec MS		0.00	Y	0.00	Y	Lowest	

Filters on this page: Advisor is Selkow,Noelle Marie, Filter type: Basic filtering, selkow, Selkow,Noelle Mar... 16

Student Details | Grad Tracks Summary

Go back

Contact Priority based on risk factors

Group Exercise

Identify common barriers and approaches that have worked in your Graduate programs

What your team will need to accomplish:

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Identify Scribe / Spokesperson
- 3) Identify 3-5 common barriers to transparency in your group
- 4) Identify 3-5 successful approaches to dealing with those barriers

10 Minutes for group activity



Technology Enablement for Transparency



One of Illinois State's strategies is to use technology to deal with several key transparency barriers



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Graduate Education Manager

Why Graduate Education Manager

1. Allow programs to retain individual requirements, remove excel sheets
2. Allow Graduate School to collect data, address concerns earlier
3. Keep student files in one place, with time stamp
4. Communication between student and committee members, submission of forms
5. Easy platform to navigate

Gaining university buy-in

1. Utilized small group to provide feedback and ask questions over several months
2. Piloting GEM with 5-7 program during first year of implementation
3. Not replacing a system



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Presenter Recommendations

Commit to take action and improve the focus on systems that support transparency

- 1) Review incoming email requests or other feedback channels from student and faculty for common gaps in communication / process

- 1) Policy review with a filter on “what in these policies is inhibiting transparency”
 - i) if you are granting similar exceptions frequently, does the policy need to be changed?
 - ii) COVID policy/procedure changes that should be made permanent?

- 1) Engage in listening sessions with graduate council, students and faculty asking the question “what inhibits transparency in our graduate programs today?”

Group Exercise- Action plan for next 90 days

Identify three activities you can undertake in the next 90 days to assess and impact transparency

What your team will need to accomplish:

- 1) Identify for yourself 1-3 actions you can take in the next 90 days to assess and impact transparency in your graduate program
- 2) Share your ideas with the group
- 3) Spokesperson prepare to share 2 of the actions from the group

10 Minutes for group activity



Thank you!



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