



# Our Belonging Framework



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS™

We must play our part in creating social connections, mental health and safety, and individual agency that creates a stronger sense of belonging for ourselves and each other.

We conducted a campus-wide study on students' perceptions of belonging. The process included listening to students' stories and experiences. From that process, we developed a framework for belonging, a basic conceptual structure built on the research findings and data points. You can use this information to help cultivate a stronger sense of belonging for everyone.

# Framework

## Campus Study on Student Belonging



# How to use this framework

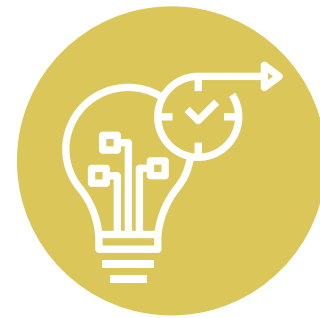
The framework is divided into six parts. You can move through the framework by clicking on the topic that interests you the most or you can choose to read it from start to finish.



**The Start**



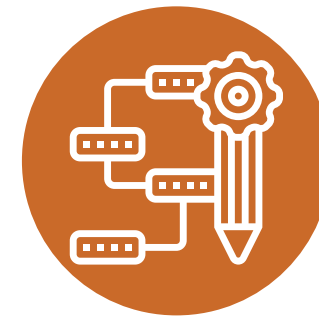
**Campus Engagement**



**What We Learned**



**Focus Areas**



**Let's Do This**



**Moving Forward**



# The Start

## Part One

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In part 1, you will learn about the framework, the campus definition of belonging, and where belonging begins on our campus.

The next step is yours: use this framework as a foundation to cultivate a stronger sense of belonging.



# The Start

## Chancellor's Charge

In May 2021, Chancellor Charles Robinson, who was serving as the provost and executive vice chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, created the Belonging Initiative to develop the foundation to strengthen students' sense of community and culture of belonging.

## Purpose

The purpose of the belonging framework is two-fold: first, to share the findings from the student belonging study; second, to cultivate a stronger sense of belonging by implementing the insights and ideas learned from it.

## The Goal

The goal is for each of us to build on this framework in our respective areas of responsibilities, expertise, and roles to cultivate a stronger sense of belonging for all students. Additionally, the end result is to integrate the conversation about belonging into our daily conversations, programs, services, labs, and classrooms - belonging everywhere.

## Making Meaning

To bring the findings of the study to life in a meaningful way, comments that students made during the dialogue circles are shared throughout the framework. Their voices represent their willingness to share their experiences, which can inspire and create hope for all of us.



**"[Belonging is] to feel comfortable enough to be myself, unapologetically, without feeling the need to act or look a certain way; feels like home."**

# What belonging looks like...

- Smiling at others on campus
- Building connections through common interests
- Being accepted, heard, and valued in a space
- Being recognized by others after meeting them and remembering and using names
- Making connections between students, professors, and staff
- Feeling accepted no matter our beliefs, values, and culture - race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, nationality, religion/spirituality, social status, etc.
- Meeting people and making friends - then seeing those folks around campus
- Getting out of your comfort zone
- Being a part of the U of A community
- Participating in campus events
- Getting involved in a Registered Student Organization (RSO) or other campus organizations (academic groups, student committees, Greek organizations, club sports, etc.)



**"I feel there's a lot of diverse groups. They always have stuff for people who are LGBTQ. I saw they were decorating a rainbow door. Every time I look at it, I'm like, that's great- come along here and you can be yourself."**

EVERYONE  
IS WELCOME  
HERE

# **Belonging** is defined by each of us and connects us **all** as **Razorbacks**

The initial step to feeling a sense of belonging is simply **showing up**.

**Engagement** will vary for each of us and is dependent on so many factors, from our mood, stress level, access to resources, personality, and identities...basically every value and characteristic that defines who we are.

We have a **responsibility** to ourselves and each other to assist one another in feeling a sense of belonging

When belonging happens, you may feel...

- part of something that is greater than yourself,
- empowered to explore yourself and your community,
- your voice **matters** to the community, and
- encouraged to learn from diverse experiences.

Being seen for who you authentically are while not having to hide any part of you is what it means to matter. Feeling that you matter is directly linked to feeling a sense of belonging.



**from**  
**showing up**  
**to**  
**engagement**  
**to**  
**responsibility**



# Campus Engagement

## Part Two

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In part 2, you will learn about the campus study on student belonging and who should implement the findings to cultivate a stronger sense of belonging for all students.





# Campus Engagement

The Belonging Committee engaged our campus from October 2021 through December 2022 in the following activities. All were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) so as to create a safer place for all participants (protocol #2110364546). Afterwards, major themes were identified using the SAS Enterprise Miner software.

## Campus Survey

The 10-minute survey was designed to gauge how students, faculty, and staff perceive their own sense of belonging on our campus. ([more info](#))

## Dialogue Circles

Dialogue circles were an opportunity to engage in open conversations about what belonging is and how to find it. These conversations were recorded and transcribed using Otter.ai.

## Design Workshops

Design workshops furthered the conversation about belonging and explored the themes discovered during dialogue circles. Participants were asked to brainstorm action steps on how to create more opportunities and minimize barriers. ([more info](#))

## Data Collection

The Belonging Committee collected data that represented both on-campus and commuter students. That data showed the same reoccurring themes kept emerging in both the surveys and dialogue circles.



**"The concept of belonging goes far past any specific office on our campus. It's creating and promoting a culture where every member of our campus community looks out for one another and actively works to enhance the sense of community at our university."**

**- Chancellor Charles Robinson**

# Time Line

During the dialogue circles, we heard from students that finding a sense of belonging is cultivated when the Razorback experience:

- Encompasses choices and a variety of options
- Is designed and implemented with intention
- Values all cultures and life experiences
- Includes physical spaces and people that feel familiar, safe, and welcoming

The insights and ideas in this framework honor the stories, experiences, and wisdom of all participating students. These insights also acknowledge the many needs and wants when exploring one's self and developing a sense of belonging.

We ask that you explore the findings and seek to learn how to cultivate belonging with curiosity, empathy, and care.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Summer 2021           | Chancellor's Charge Committee Lays Out Path  |
| Academic Year 2021-22 | Define Belonging<br>Create Website<br>Conduct Campus Survey<br>Facilitate Dialogue Circles |
| Summer/Fall 2022      | Facilitate Design Workshops  |
| Spring/Summer 2023    | Create Framework<br>Lead Campus Campaign   |

**"Belonging to me means a feeling of security. To me, I feel 'belonged' when I feel welcomed and able to be my true authentic self. When the people I am with make it evident that they value my presence and want me to be there."**



We hope every Razorback will take the time to "try on" the ideas and suggestions in the framework during their time on campus.

Each of us is different, which means there is no "one size fits all" approach in feeling a sense of belonging. There might be some findings and action steps that will inspire you, and others that may not. That is okay! Do what feels right to you at this time and what works within your circles of influence to cultivate belonging.

As Razorbacks, all of us have a responsibility to ourselves and each other to cultivate a sense of belonging. We may not always feel that we belong everywhere on campus, but we should all strive to make sure we all find it somewhere among the many opportunities on campus.

**Who is this  
framework for?**

**Everyone**

- **Students**
- **Student Leaders  
and Organizations**
- **Faculty**
- **Staff**
- **Administrators and  
Deans**



**This framework is not exhaustive - it's just the beginning...**



## Why Now?

It's important to bring the national conversation about belonging to our campus.

The research is showing positive results. It is not about reinventing the wheel, but embracing what we are doing well and making sure it is accessible and effective for all. It is evident, in the aftermath of the pandemic and the current national discourse about social division, that we must engage our campus in the work that connects and empowers us to live up to our shared values and humanity as a Razorback community.

Belonging goes beyond diversity, equity, and inclusion, which focuses on diverse identities and their struggles. Belonging is a feeling we all desire and long for, regardless of life experiences. We all want to find a connection with others in our community. Some of the key components to belonging are: mutuality, open-mindedness, willingness to change, shared purpose, acceptance, acknowledging differences, authenticity, honest curiosity, respect, safety, self-reflection, trust, and mattering.

### **All Razorbacks**

The belonging committee invited those of us who live and commute to the Fayetteville campus to complete an online survey, attend a dialogue circle, and participate in a design workshop:

- Students - undergraduates, graduates, first-year, returning, transfers, leaders, employees, international, non-degree seeking, traditionally underserved, and underrepresented
- Staff - from new to close to retiring, various job responsibilities and titles
- Faculty - non-tenured, tenured, deans, administrators, and adjunct instructors


### **Website - [Belonging.uark.edu](https://belonging.uark.edu)**

The belonging website gives us a place to share the many different stories of how individuals have found belonging and the campus' belonging definition. ([more info](#))

**Throughout this framework, you'll find insights and ideas that cultivate a stronger sense of belonging.**

# Student Voices

"I liked this professor, but they treated us like we were intellectually less... I've been in a lot of courses where I felt that...I'm afraid of sounding dumb... Remind professors students want to learn."



"There are a lot of helpful resources on campus. You just need to be aware of them. We need to promote them more, because veteran students aren't aware of them."

"There hasn't been much encouragement to invest in individual students. We're all under a lot of pressure. It's all a bunch of broken egos trying to work together... Encouraging mentorship would help."

"I got an email saying I was getting another adviser, and I'm graduating next week. I find it to be frustrating that there's a lack of consistency especially because that would be my fourth adviser, and I've only been here for two years."

"I'd look for things like a commuter parking lot that's worth parking in, acknowledgement of nontraditional students, or a History Department that doesn't feel like an American History Department with a few other classes tacked on."

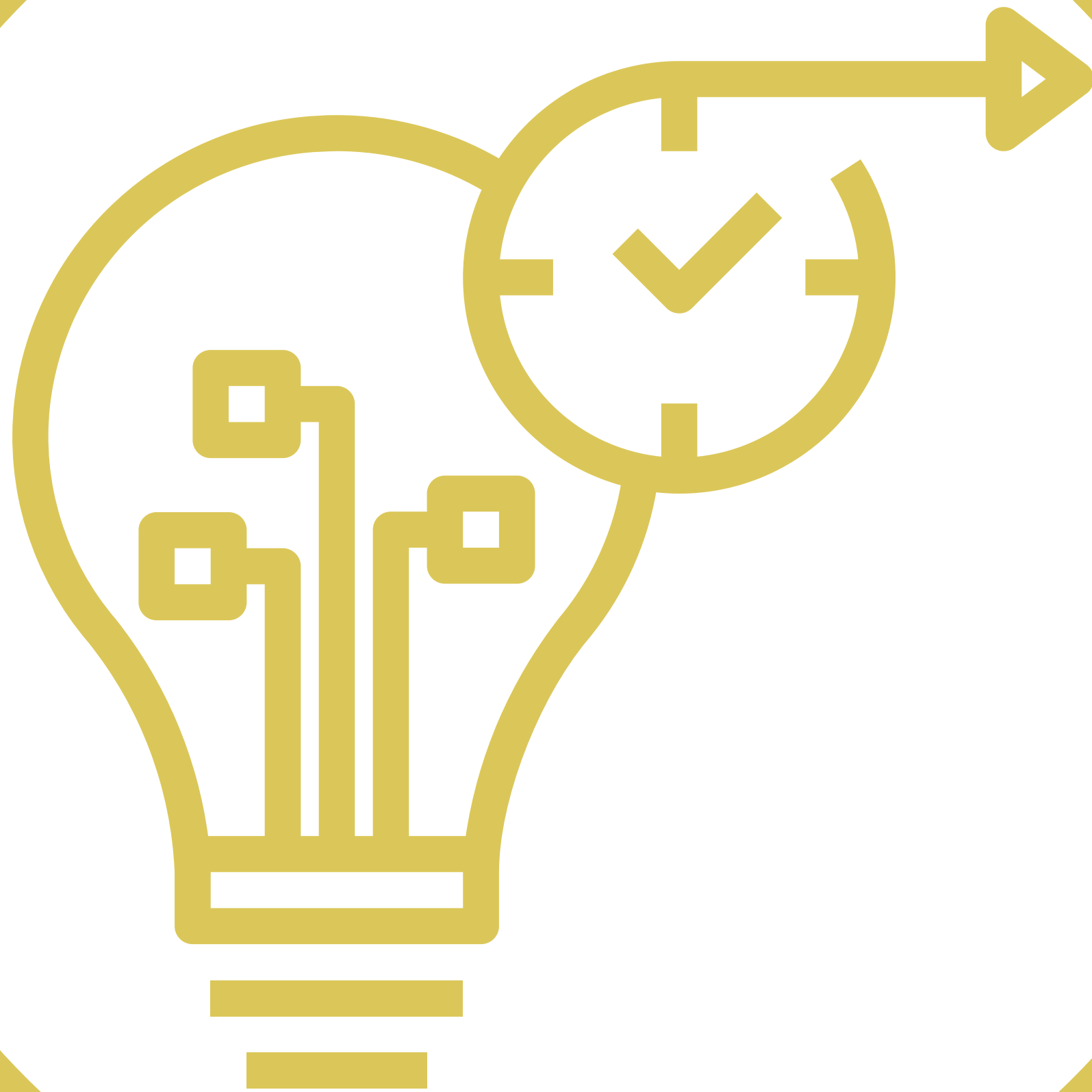
"Belonging is just people willing to make someone's day even if they don't know them. I want to do that, too. I want to be openly nice. You never know what that stranger is going through."

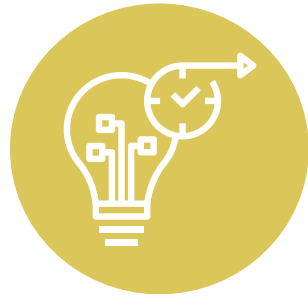
# What We Learned

## Part Three

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In part 3, you will learn about the four main research study questions and findings/themes that resulted from the dialogue circles and survey.





## What We Learned

On the survey and during the dialogue circles, student participants were asked these questions:

### Q1

Describe a time when you felt a sense of belonging.

### Q2

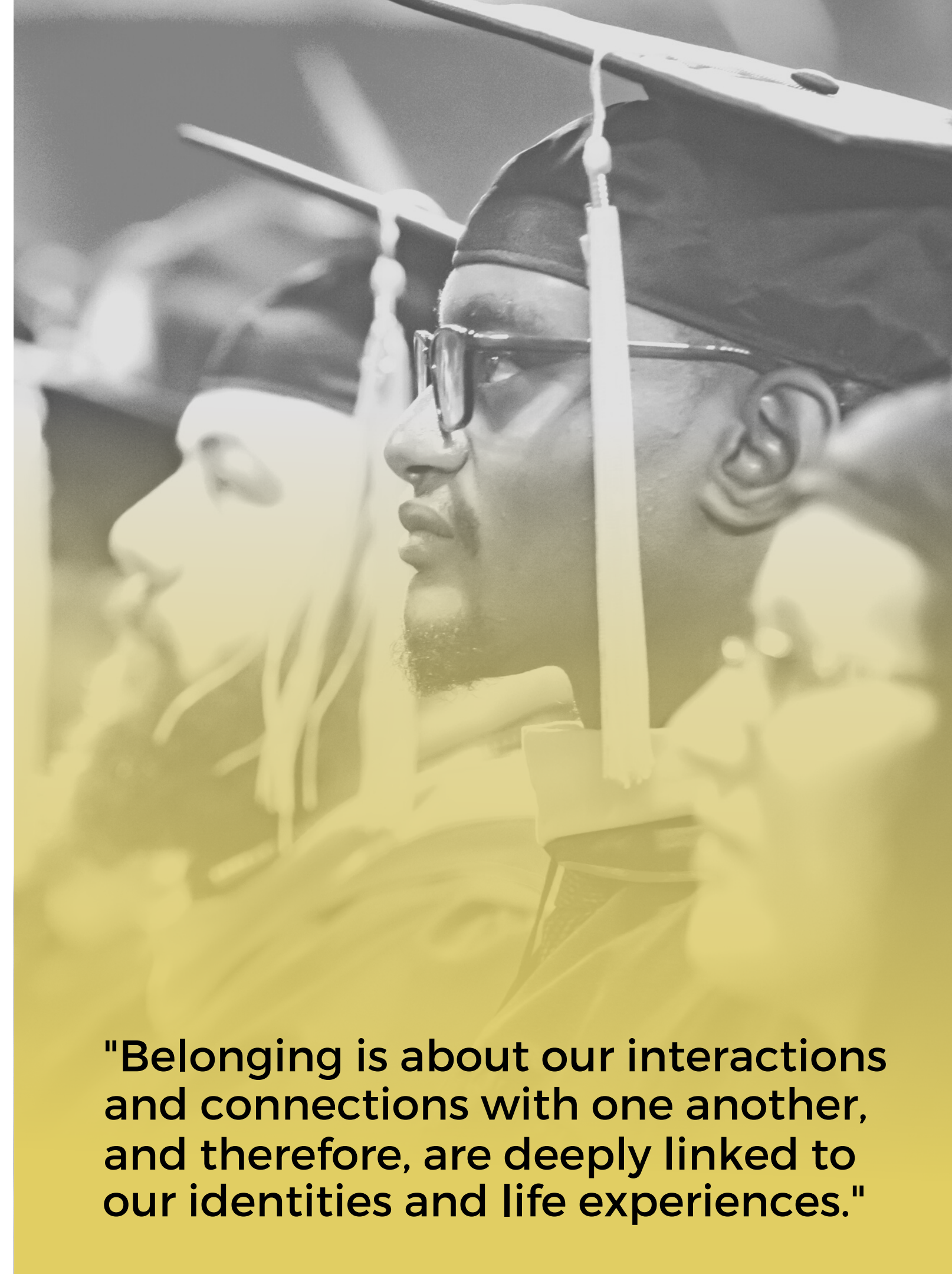
What barriers have kept you from feeling you belong?

### Q3

What responsibility does the University of Arkansas (staff, administrators, professors, teachers, instructors) have in creating belonging for everyone?

### Q4

What responsibility do you have as an individual in creating a sense of belonging for yourself and each other?



**"Belonging is about our interactions and connections with one another, and therefore, are deeply linked to our identities and life experiences."**

# Q1

**Describe a time when you [students] felt a sense of belonging.**

## **Places**

- Attending sporting events
- Spending time in the Arkansas Union

## **University Housing**

- Connecting with roommates
- Connections that happen in the residence hall spaces after hours

## **Registered Student Organizations**

- Engaging with Registered Student Organizations and student groups
- Student organizations' onboarding experiences

## **Classroom**

- Working on projects/assignments with classmates
- Small classes where students can get to know peers
- Professors who are helpful and/or are accommodating and demonstrate care for students

## **People**

- Advisers assisting with academic processes and taking the time to get to know students
- Getting to know fellow students who share in our identities
- Orientation and all programming geared toward new students



# **Successes**



# Q2

**What barriers  
have kept you  
[students] from  
feeling you  
belong?**

## **Parking**

- Costs, stringent rules, safety concerns due to proximity of student parking options

## **Mental Health & Well-Being**

- General concerns about wellness
- Lack of understanding and resources
- Graduate students lack of basic needs (compensation, food security, mentoring, etc.)

## **Lack of Diversity**

- Diversity - particularly amongst faculty, staff, advisers, and administrators on campus
- Non-traditional/transfer students find it hard to feel a sense of belonging
- Feeling uncomfortable with new people and situations
- Language barriers and cultural differences

## **Time**

- Lack of time to join organizations and attend events and activities

## **Greek Life**

- Barriers to entry
- Divide between historically black and historically white organizations
- Divide between Greek and non-Greek students
- Discrepancies in resource allocation



# Barriers

# Q3

**What responsibility does the University of Arkansas have in creating belonging for everyone?**

## **Incident Response**

- Enhance communication about DEI incident responses
- Increase diversity and inclusion throughout campus
- Appropriately communicate and increase campus communication with students about incidents
- Address safety concerns appropriately and hold folks accountable for their actions

## **Student Experience**

- Provide more resources to enhance the student experience
- Value the culture that students bring to campus
- Enhance contributions to student learning
- Create safe spaces and welcoming environments

## **Student Support**

- Answer student questions and be generally helpful
- Increase employee retention and engagement
- More consistency in advising across all colleges
- Acknowledge students have a life outside of the classroom and be accommodating to that and considerate of time
- Know resources and help students find them



# **Growth Edges**

# Q4

**What responsibility do you have as an individual in creating a sense of belonging for yourself and each other?**

## **Self**

- Participate in on-campus events, organizations
- Get out of your comfort zone and take initiative for creating belonging

## **Others**

- Advocate for others
- Treat others well, be kind
- Look for ways to help others
- Talk to other people, engage
- Embrace other cultures and perspectives
- Accept others even if they are different from you
- Show interest in others
- Invite others to join you
- Share and connect others to resources

“Everyone their freshman year thinks that the other person has it all together... I think that nobody actually feels like they do, but they think everyone else does.” ”



# Responsibilities



# Focus Areas

## Part Four

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In part 4, you will learn about the four focus areas that were identified and the ideas shared during the design workshops on how to address them.

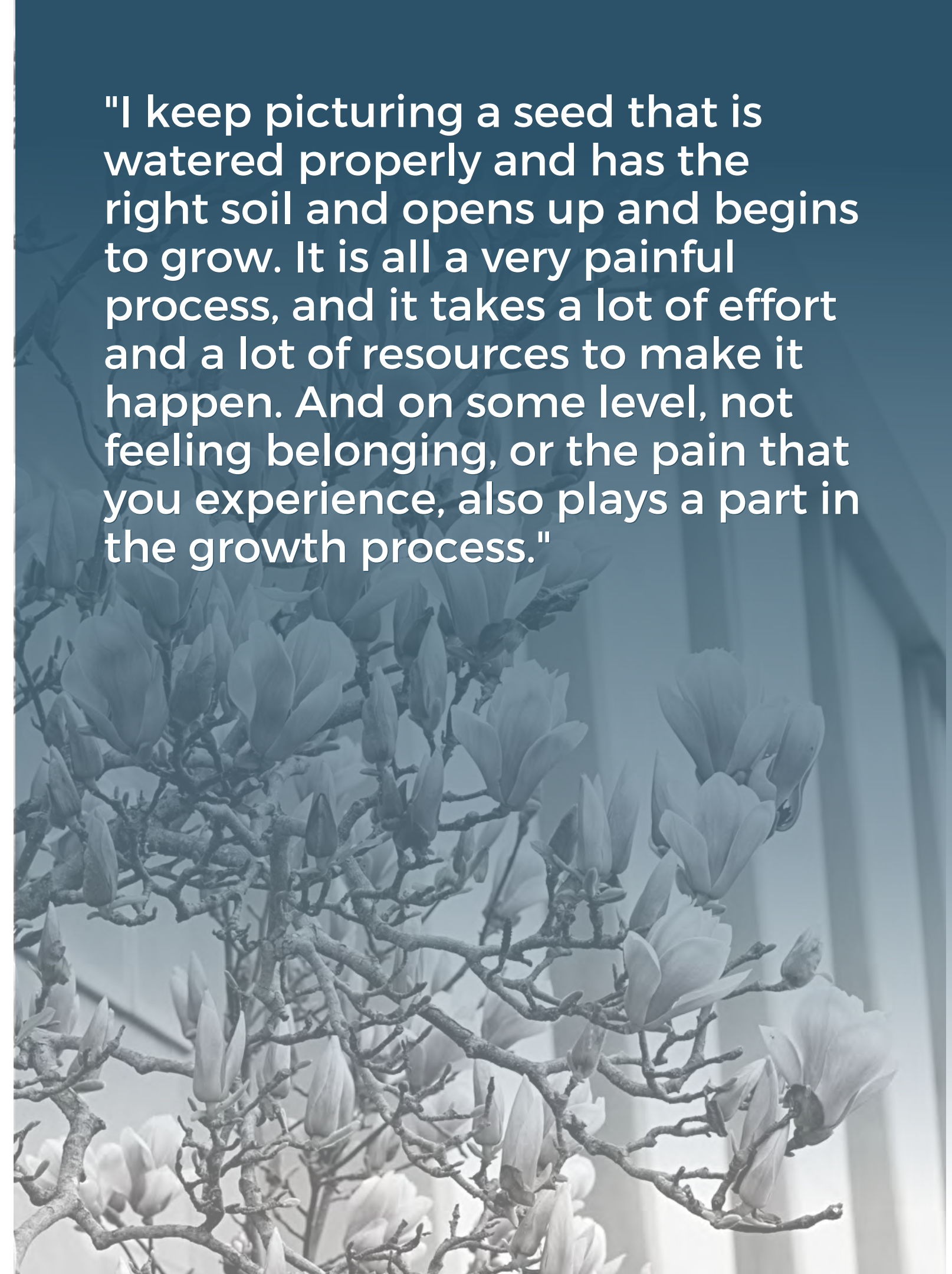


## Focus Areas

- 1**  
Comprehensive New Student Welcome
- 2**  
Access to Campus
- 3**  
Culture of Care and Connection
- 4**  
Support for Underrepresented Students

In the design workshops, participants shared their suggestions about how to address each focus area.

"I keep picturing a seed that is watered properly and has the right soil and opens up and begins to grow. It is all a very painful process, and it takes a lot of effort and a lot of resources to make it happen. And on some level, not feeling belonging, or the pain that you experience, also plays a part in the growth process."





# Focus Area One

## Creating a Comprehensive Welcome to Campus

- Freshmen/Undergrad - connection between summer orientation, A-Week, DABA, and first year seminar courses
- Transfer/Undergrad - Intention and integration to the Razorback culture: focus on academics & learning campus resources
- Graduate - Intention around support and understanding how to blend course work, research, and mentoring

**ORIENTATION** - Increase and enhance group-specific sessions (transfer students, international students, graduate students, etc.)

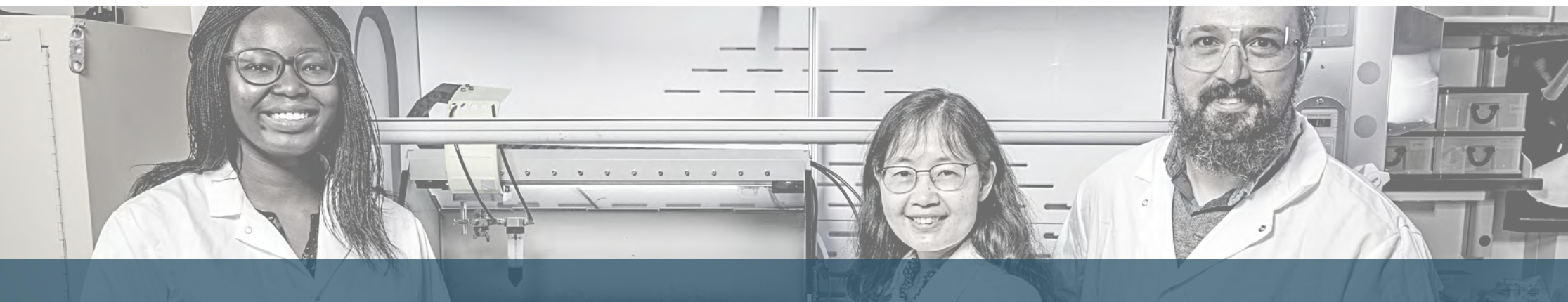
**CONNECTIONS** - Between students and faculty; more often and earlier

**PROGRAMMING** - Move activities that go where students are instead of asking them to travel to the activities

**MENTORS** - Offer one for all first-year students

**RESOURCES** - Enhance communication (beyond DABA, or rework DABA to be more comprehensive)

**SCHEDULES** - Adjust so that A-Week and Greek Recruitment do not conflict





# Focus Area Two

## Creating a More Accessible Campus for Everyone

- Parking & proximity
- After dark classes & safety
- Attending after-hours events
- Bus schedules
- Permit flexibility
- Mobility and physical obstacles

**PARKING** - More options closer to the campus core for students who commute daily, and adjust permit options for student employees and those who have classes/activities into the evening

**ROUTES** - Better visibility and training on accessible routes, and extend transit routes to end with classes, and provide transportation within the campus core after dark

**RESTROOMS** - Build more single occupancy restrooms and publish locations

**SAFETY** - More notifications and follow-up on past incidents

**TECHNOLOGY** - Enhance the campus app with resources, safety information, and campus events. Use closed-captioning and language translation as a standard practice





# 3 Focus Area Three

## Creating a Culture of Care and Connection

- ▶ Mental health care and overall well-being
- ▶ Classroom opportunities for students to engage one another
- ▶ Re-thinking faculty and student interactions
- ▶ Faculty care of students - flexibility in classroom management

**RELATIONSHIPS** - Strengthen between students and professors (rethink office hours, be more personable so students are comfortable, engage outside the classroom)

**UNDERSTANDING** - Increase faculty's awareness of the power they have in the students' experience (from email response to reducing the culture of fear)

**MENTAL HEALTH and WELL-BEING** - Emphasize education and training for all and increase access to resources, acceptance for mental health breaks, class attendance, and late assignments

**EDUCATION** - More inclusion and belonging training and resources for faculty and staff

**ACCOUNTABILITY** - Simplify incident reporting structures and ongoing communication with students' faculty concerns







# Focus Area Four

## Supporting Underrepresented Students with Intention

- ▶ Intentional & consistent communication about priorities and initiatives affecting underrepresented students
- ▶ Faculty developing group assignments, projects, and research using culturally responsive pedagogy
- ▶ A sense that underrepresented students' contributions to the campus community matter
- ▶ Learn more and communicate more about students' safety and security concerns
- ▶ Provide resources and guides to identify communities so underrepresented students can see their culture and life experiences represented on campus

**OPPORTUNITIES** - Increase programming & networking events designed for underrepresented students to share their culture and life experiences

**RESOURCES** - More specific resources and representative staff to support and advocate for minority and international students

**EDUCATION** - More inclusion training for faculty and staff (specific themes for trans support/resources)

**FACILITIES** - Explore what makes spaces feel safe and reflect that in design and other decision making

**COMMUNICATION** - Better reporting systems for campus issues, more accountability and trust when something is reported



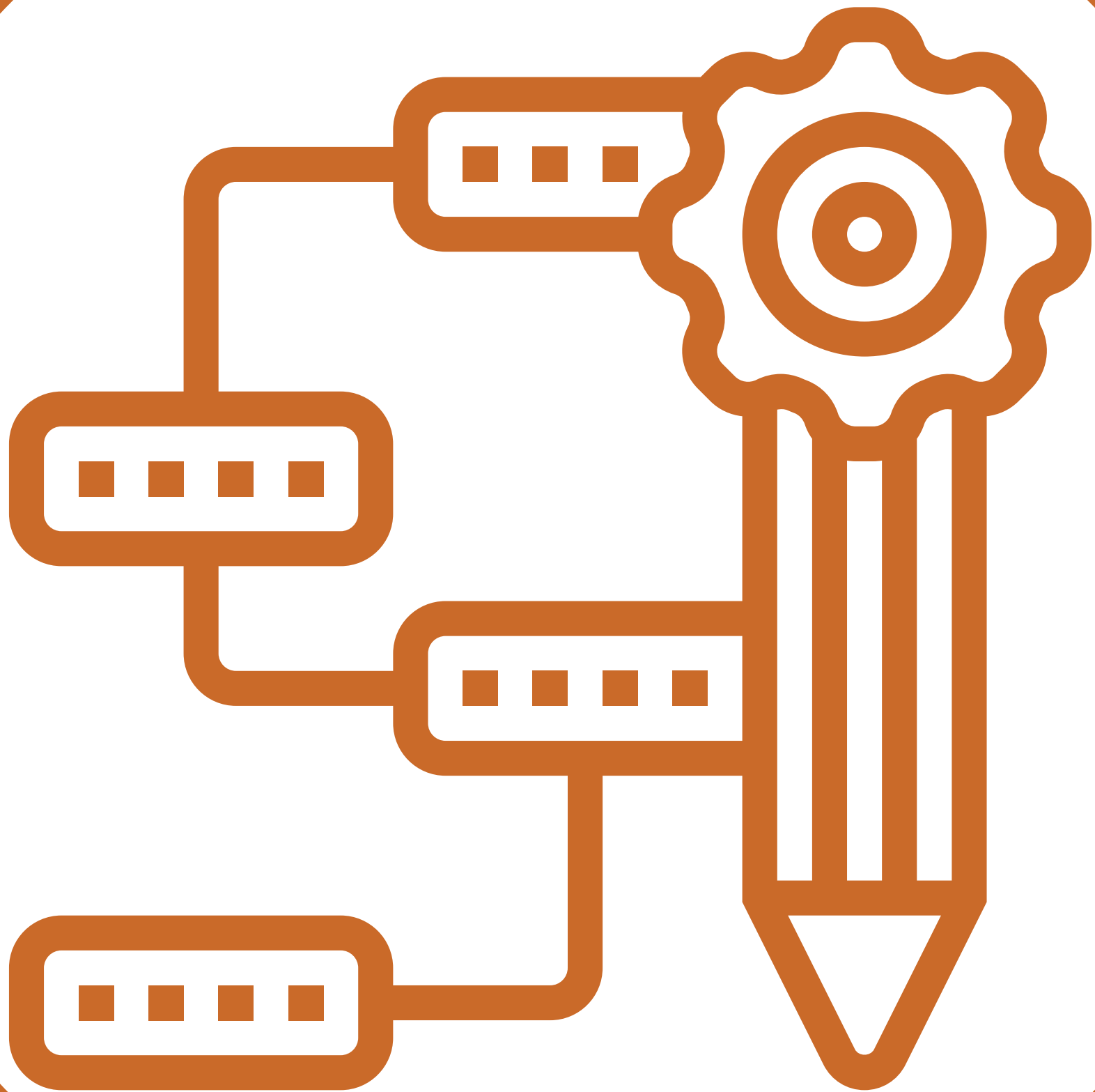
# Let's Do This

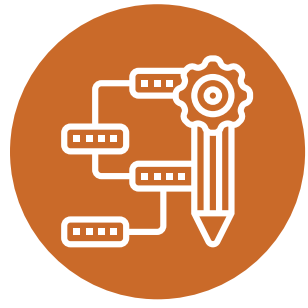
## Part Five

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In part 5, you will find suggestions on what you can do to cultivate a sense of belonging based on the general categories of roles and responsibilities we each have on campus.

You are encouraged to read all the suggestions and learn about the multiple roles we each play. You might find that you identify with more than one.





## Let's Do This

During the dialogue circles, it became evident that participants agreed that we are all responsible for each other's sense of belonging.

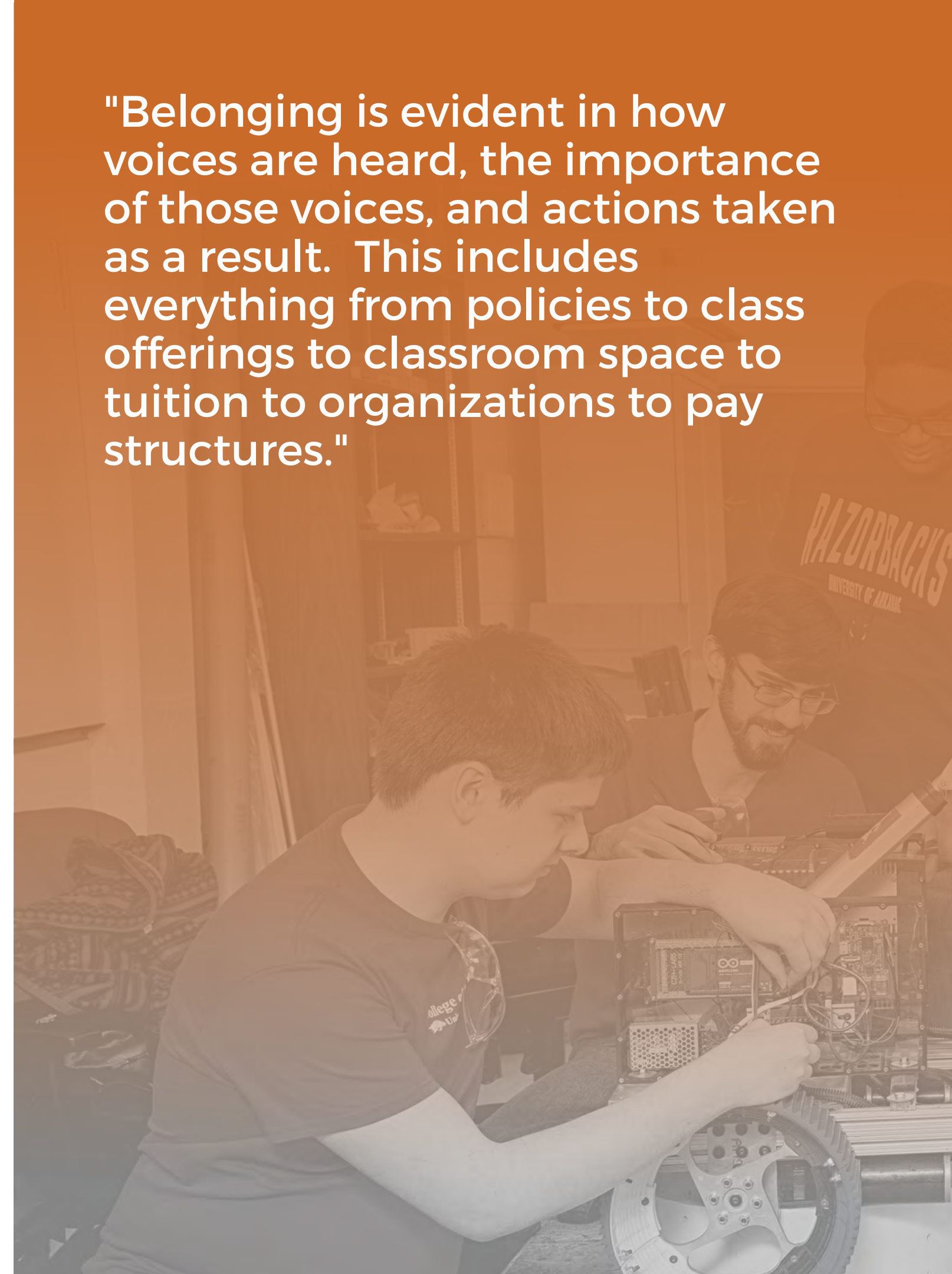
The student experience was at the forefront of this initiative, but it's important to acknowledge that staff and faculty also want to feel a stronger sense of belonging.

It is difficult for staff and faculty to assist students in feeling a sense of belonging when they themselves don't have that feeling. It was suggested that this be part of the employer of choice initiative.

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**Some "let's do this" suggestions will resonate with you and others won't. Nevertheless, give them a try and challenge yourself to engage at the edge of your comfort zone and beyond your safe space to cultivate a sense of belonging for all Razorbacks.**

"Belonging is evident in how voices are heard, the importance of those voices, and actions taken as a result. This includes everything from policies to class offerings to classroom space to tuition to organizations to pay structures."



# Students

## SHOW UP

Take the first step by leaving your room or apartment. First, show up to an event or RSO meeting, then ask how you can get involved. Hang out in common spaces - Mullins Library, Arkansas Union, Chartwells food venues, Old Main lawn, UREC, etc.

## EXPLORE AND DISCOVER

Learn who you are. Believe there is something for everyone, and if not, it can be created; just ask. Learn about the involvement opportunities at [HogSync.UARK.edu](https://HogSync.UARK.edu).

## BE CURIOUS

Open yourself up to see the world in new ways. Push against assumptions and ingrained patterns. Seek valuable knowledge and express that desire. Live a meaningful life, find your place in the world, and contribute to society and progress.

## ENGAGE

Introduce yourself to the person next to you at activities and programs, in class, while standing in line, at athletic events, at a table in the food court, on the bus, and in the residence halls. Give a head nod, wave to those you meet walking on campus, put your phone away, hold the door open for others, and remember names.

## BE RESPONSIBLE

Ask for help from your peers/faculty/staff and offer to help others.

## MAKE FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS DIFFERENCES

Be intentional about making connections and build friendships with others who are different than you.

## BE FAIR-MINDED

Listen to different perspectives and give others the benefit of the doubt.



**Let's  
do this**

# Student Leaders and Organizations

## **WELCOME and GET TO KNOW MEMBERS**

Be intentional about how you acknowledge and get to know each other. Set expectations and talk about how to find belonging as a Razorback in your meetings.

## **COLLABORATE and PARTNER WITH ALL**

Build bridges and connections with other leaders, organizations, and administrators. Plan events together - Communicate across areas of interest. Invite other organizations to attend your activities. Use [HogSync.UARK.edu](https://HogSync.UARK.edu) as a communication tool.

## **CHOOSE SAFE LOCATIONS and WELCOMING SPACES**

Find locations that are safe for all members. Space is more than physical, but is also about making room for all voices and ideas. Ask for feedback and involve members in the organization's business and decision making.

## **MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE**

Engage others to explore who they are and accept them for who they are without judgement. Learn about those who are different than yourself. Understand that we don't all have to agree, but we do need to engage with respect and care.

## **BE INCLUSIVE**

Look around with curiosity and notice who isn't part of your organization and ask why. Find ways to invite and welcome them.

## **VOLUNTEER and GIVE BACK**

As an organization, give back - volunteer with the Center for Community Engagement (Union 2nd floor) and find an opportunity through [GivePulse.UARK.edu](https://GivePulse.UARK.edu).

## **PARTNER with your ADVISOR, STAFF, and ADMINISTRATORS**

Engage and ask for assistance in planning events and achieving goals.



# Staff

## **KNOW STUDENTS**

Develop and attend trainings that increase your understanding of the multitude of student identities and life experiences. Educate yourself and be aware of the happenings on campus and in society that affect students.

## **CELEBRATE ALL STUDENTS**

Recognize all students and acknowledge their success in overcoming obstacles.

## **ENGAGE STUDENTS**

Increase opportunities to interact with students, attend student events, and encourage students to interact with one another.

## **CREATE INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Design activities for both introverts and extroverts, and all identities and types of students (students with children, nontraditional, etc.).

## **MAKE DECISIONS**

Be intentional about the why. Use data to make decisions about how you design programs. Involve students in the program development and decisions that directly affect them.

## **COMMUNICATE AND REACH OUT**

Respond quickly and follow through with students in a timely manner. Support students by finding the solution instead of referring them to another office. Work to be more knowledgeable of resources, programs, and policies so that you can answer more questions.

## **FIND NEW WAYS TO COMMUNICATE WITH STUDENTS**

Increase communication, especially about well-being and advising resources.



**Let's  
do this**

# Faculty

## CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT

Provide opportunities for students to get to know each other in the classroom (introductions, sharing contact information, in-class activities).

Include belonging resources in your syllabus (accessibility, inclusive language, student success resources, belonging statement).

Give opportunities to learn through mistakes. Teach to all learning styles.

Think outside the traditional learning environment (go outside, be mindful, change it up).

Embrace technology (Kahoots, Polleverywhere, gamify the learning, etc.).

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Meet students where they are (campus coffee shops, open Zoom meetings, student events, RSO meetings). Create ways to engage students beyond Blackboard and email (Teams, Apps, text, etc.).

Engage students before classes start (send emails, open virtual meetings, attend A-week events).

## GET TO KNOW STUDENTS

Acknowledge students have lives/demands outside the classroom by being flexible with assignments (families, jobs, mental health, religious/spiritual holidays, etc.).

Keep in the know about student culture (join HogSync & follow social media that engage students, be aware of content they are engaged in).

Learn about students' desires, struggles, and dreams.



**Let's  
do this**

# Administrators & Deans

## **LEAD INTO THE NEXT STEP**

Implement the ideas from the four focus areas that were brainstormed during the design workshops and recognize and celebrate the successes related to the Chancellor's 150 Forward priorities ([more info](#)).

## **BUDGET MANAGEMENT**

Allocate the resources needed to support students and the campus experience that leads to student success. Contain the cost of attendance.

## **CHANGE THE CULTURE**

Make it an expectation to support belonging. Have conversations at meetings, make it part of the evaluation process, and reward it.

## **CONTINUE THE BELONGING RESEARCH IN YOUR COLLEGE/DEPARTMENT**

Engage and learn more about the student experience in your college and departments that influence the students' sense of belonging.

## **LISTEN to STUDENTS and LEARN MORE ABOUT THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

Offer learning opportunities to enhance faculty's understanding of the student experience (belonging, mental health, well-being, career readiness, academics, and student success). Be open to feedback and be willing to make hard changes for today's students.

## **ENHANCE COMMUNICATION**

Increase communication by clearly and consistently defining policies, procedures, and expectations throughout the student experience (advising, crisis management, and resources). Build trust with transparency.

## **CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY**

Enhance the reporting system for campus issues with more accountability and trust.



**Let's  
do this**



# Student Voices

**"It's important to see yourself in the people who are succeeding here because that sets the tone for your career. That's a big deal. And I will say one step further, I think it's important to see the university supporting those people."**

”

**"I think for a lot of international students, there are great obstacles that we have to jump over if we want to stay in this country. So if we do have a sense of belonging at the University of Arkansas, then the next things that we have to also overcome are all of these hoops if we want to continue working in the US...if we do feel a sense of belonging, sometimes we are rejected."**

**"For me, not only will the institution make its mark on me, but I'll make my mark on the institution."**

“

**"Teach us assertiveness and how to ask questions, and you should celebrate when a student comes and asks you questions. I mean, that takes guts, from wherever we are in our lives."**

”

**"Students should think the sky is the limit, but if you are in a confined space where you see other people have reached for the sky and met resistance, it creates a mentality of 'what's the need of me adding my input if the input would not be accepted or respected.' If the university is not going to support students, it's just gonna stay in the same space."**

**"Belonging on campus should look like inclusion by all faculty and students. No matter if you are a traditional student or nontraditional student or newly hired faculty. Everyone should make an attempt to be professional in all forms of communication. Drama should be left behind at the door."**

**"Give the students the benefit of the doubt and be fully engaged and present in whatever your job is. Professors should respect the time of students; they should not think their class is the biggest priority. "**



# Moving Forward

## Part Six

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In part 6, you will learn about our hopes, opportunities, happenings, and acknowledgements.

Most importantly, you will find a call to action!





# Parting Notes

## Hopes

The committee hopes the insights we've shared from our research provides some useful and thoughtful context on how we can cultivate a stronger sense of belonging for all Razorbacks. We hope the ideas we've suggested give you a starting point to continue the belonging dialogue about how we define and find a sense of belonging. You are encouraged to look through a lens of belonging in everything you do. It is our intention that those who utilize this framework do so with care.

## Stuff is Happening

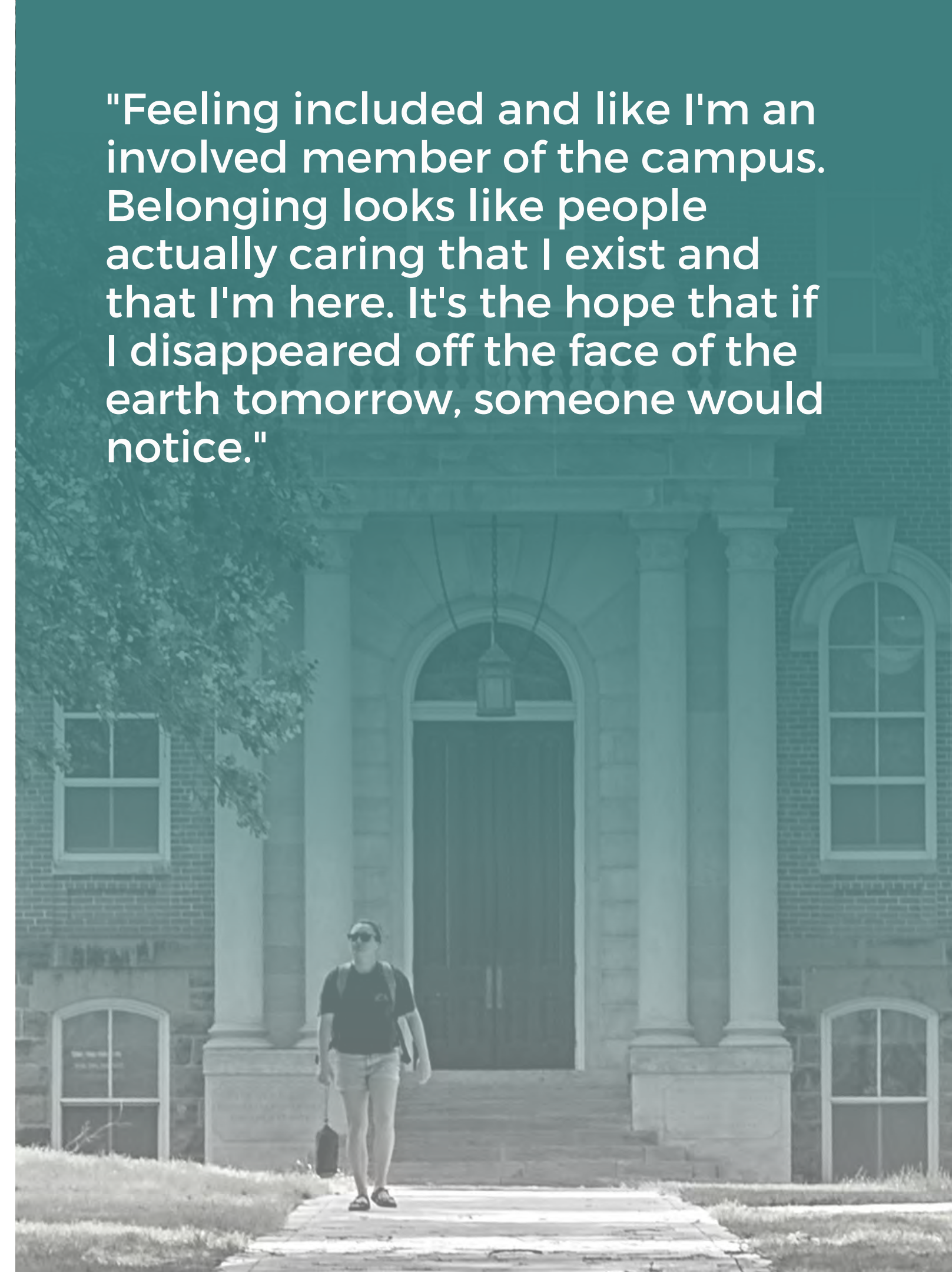
This data is already supporting the enhancement of many programs, services, and resources, for example, creating the first-year seminar course, belonging dialogue ambassadors, using this data to support the HLC Quality Initiative proposal, and redesigning the student organization spaces in the Arkansas Union.

## Opportunities for Further Study

Although this framework focuses on the students attending classes in Fayetteville, it can be generally helpful to all members of the Razorback community (faculty, staff, global campus, alumni, parents, stakeholders, donors, etc.).

This initiative should expand to further explore the online student experience and the faculty/staff experience. This study could be used as a future template to deepen our understanding of belonging.

"Feeling included and like I'm an involved member of the campus. Belonging looks like people actually caring that I exist and that I'm here. It's the hope that if I disappeared off the face of the earth tomorrow, someone would notice."



# Words Matter

## Why “belonging” is not a campaign or theme

This initiative is an exploration of belonging on this campus. Campaigns & themes typically have a shelf life or timeframe. This concept is timeless. We should always be finding out if and how Razorbacks feel they belong and spread the message of belonging to everyone across campus.

## Why it is important not to say, “You belong”

Because belonging is a feeling, we cannot tell others how they feel or that they DO belong. Belonging occurs in as many ways as there are people. We cannot force belonging. How would you feel if you were told you belong without someone even knowing anything about you?

## What is the difference between culture and community?

Community is a group of individuals with shared interests, values, beliefs, etc. Culture is a part of an individual's identity; it is the manifestation of a collective group of individuals. As a campus community, we must take note of each person's culture, identities, lived experiences, and more by seeing them as a uniquely singular human being.

**W** "Something I've noticed is when students feel like they're a part of the change-making process, they are much more invested, whether it's a class group project or anything. I think the university doesn't do a great job of letting students know that they can actually influence change on campus."

**W** "I have a lot of friends, who post on Instagram the programs the university is putting on. There is such a big variety. They do a good job of setting the scene to meet others who have similar interests."



# Sustained Belonging

## Action Steps

### PARTICIPATE

Explore and support yourself and others in finding belonging

### ENCOURAGE

Ask all Razorbacks to engage by recognizing and celebrating belonging

### LANGUAGE

Talk about this in your conversations with faculty, staff, and students

### GET GRANULAR

Do not avoid the 1:1 approach - get to know each other as a person

### INCENTIVIZE

Make it easy and exciting for people to join in this exploration

### ADAPT

Make this specific to your college, department, and program

### Let us know...

If you don't feel the sense of belonging you want.  
If you want to share your thoughts or have feedback about the framework.

[Belonging@uark.edu](mailto:Belonging@uark.edu)

# Acknowledgements

Work on such a complex and important initiative was made possible by Chancellor Charles Robinson. Special thanks to the Belonging Committee members ([more info](#)) and the countless other individuals who joined the initiative over the past 18 months.

The biggest thanks go to all the participants who completed the survey and shared their stories on the belonging website ([more info](#)), in the dialogue circles, and during the design workshops. You have laid the foundation for cultivating a stronger sense of belonging for all Razorbacks. THANK YOU!

Co-chairs: Lori Lander, PhD (she/her/hers), assistant vice chancellor for Campus Life, and Anthony DiNicola (he/him/his), inclusion liaison/coordinator of Cultural Communities.



"I hadn't been in class in two weeks. My professor texted, 'Hey, I want to know why you're not coming to class. You're a good student. If something's going on, let's talk, I'll understand. It'll be okay.' It really made a difference. I was actually going to drop the class..."

"I'm a communication disorders major. My department is small, and we all have the same teachers and classes. The professors and advisers care about our passions."

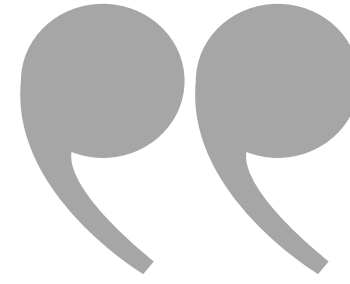
"I've been dismissed before with a hand wave and 'I'm too busy for this... ask the TA or something;' or told, 'If you don't understand this, I don't know what to tell you.' Thankfully, most professors are constructive, somewhat relaxed, and friendly."

Thank You

# Student Voices

“I transferred in my sophomore year, and I remember my first class. Everyone was wearing sorority shirts, and I wasn't. Everyone was talking to each other about that, except for me. It felt really isolating.”

"I lived on an all-girls floor my freshman year, which I absolutely thought I would hate. I was very wrong. And like, I got really, really close with my neighbors. I'm a junior now, and we're still like super close friends; we go to breakfast every week."



"I have a responsibility to create an environment for my residents to engage and feel as if someone is there. As an individual, I have a responsibility to reach out. "

"Not everybody wants to be treated like you want to be treated. "



"Being a partner in development and change. Not having silos and power issues through the staff and faculty levels."



"Having an expectation that we will help those we can and not just 'pass the buck' off to someone else."

"I think I'm just a very introverted person. So I'm not willing to go out of my way to talk to someone; I feel like in that sense, I kind of hinder myself from having a sense of belonging."

"There's several different avenues where you can find ways to belong, but you have to put in the effort and actually look for them. And if they don't exist, you have to put in the work to create those spaces where you feel like you belong."

