



## **Closing the Perception to Practice Gap Can Improve Equity Across Student Lifecycle**

*A family of reports from Tyton Partners examine how academic institutions can implement practices that increase equitable outcomes in higher education*

**BOSTON, June 23, 2021** - Tyton Partners has released the annual updates of [Hitting their Stride](#), [Time for Class](#), and [Driving Toward a Degree](#) which collectively examine the evolving gap existing between the perception and practice of equity<sup>i</sup> across the higher education student lifecycle.

Historically, only 40 percent of degree-seeking Black students have graduated from a four-year institution within six years, 55 percent of Latinx students compared to 64 percent of White students<sup>ii</sup>. Equitably-designed developmental education policies, gateway courses that use high-quality digital learning at scale, and holistic student advising are all powerful accelerants that can close this persistent equity gap.

“For the first time, we conducted a coordinated examination of trends across our three annual reports. What we found is that faculty, staff, and administrators understand the significance of fostering equity at their institutions,” said Gates Bryant, Partner at Tyton Partners. “However, perceptions of the prioritization of equity and the critical connection to evidence-based practices very much depend on the communities in which a respondent sits and how they identify.”

### **Key insights from the reports:**

- Nearly two thirds of faculty, administrators, and staff who work more traditionally at the heart of issues related to equity, such as developmental education, reported equity as a priority at their institution.
- Respondents who work at institutions with higher proportions of poverty-affected student and students of color are more likely to say equity is a priority and is connected to institutional goals.
- While most respondents agree that their institutions are working toward an ideal learning environment and prioritize equity, implementation of key equitable practices such as disaggregating student data by race, are not common.
- About half of respondents agree that technologies, policies, and infrastructure are being scaled at the same rates in developmental education and advising. But there are differences in implementation of key specific practices, indicating that not all students are benefitting equally.
- Advisors across all institutions<sup>iii</sup> believe representative diversity across support staff reflective of the student body would be impactful.
- Faculty at institutions serving higher rates of students of color and poverty-affected students say their institution is achieving an ideal digital learning environment, but on-the-ground equitable digital learning enablers lag - such as access to instructional designers, information technology support, and centers for teaching and learning.

“While considerable effort has been placed on increasing access to higher education for student of color and those affected by poverty, implementing the most effective practices that build a more inclusive environment throughout the student lifecycle is neither obvious nor easy,” said Kristen Fox, Managing Director, Tyton Partners. “We believe this research contributes to helping institutions take important steps in the right direction to closing crucial equity gaps in educational outcomes.”

This research was conducted in coordination with [Strong Start to Finish](#), the [Every Learner Everywhere Network](#), and the [Advising Success Network](#), organizations focused on reducing race and income as predictors of postsecondary success. More than 8,900 respondents at over 2,000 higher education institutions addressed issues of perceived prioritization, definition of equity at their institution, and perception that their area of focus has played a role in systemic racism.

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### **About Tyton Partners**

[Tyton Partners](#) is the leading provider of strategy consulting and investment banking services to the education sector and leverages its deep transactional and advisory experience to support a range of clients, including companies, foundations, institutions, and investors.

Founded in 2020, the firm’s Center for Higher Education Transformation helps college and university leaders around the world navigate the rapid changes to the delivery and sustainability of higher education.

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<sup>i</sup> For the purposes of this research, Tyton Partners and its partner network defined equity as the provision of resources necessary for all individuals to reach their educational goals and examination of equity is viewed only through the lenses of race/ethnicity and socioeconomic background.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://nces.ed.gov/>

<sup>iii</sup> This includes schools serving both high and low populations of Pell-eligible students and schools serving primarily students of color and primarily white students.