The main concept that our group was asked to interview students about was: Place all students on a positive career track journey, including mentoring connections with alums. As a group we came up with interview questions and have listed them below and our summary of responses. We were able to get seven student interviews for this.

1) Has NIU met your expectations? All 7 students commented that NIU has met their expectations academically so far. One senior said the general education classes were lame but his business classes were great. Some had mentioned that the social aspect was not as good as they hoped. One student said in her cluster in New Hall, students don’t really hang out with each other much and many go home for the weekend. Another student commented that her first year she had a bad advisor but now her advisors are great.

2) What do you think about when you hear Career Success? The student responses generally honed in on being able to get a job when you graduate and then stay in the job. Some mentioned the importance of having transferrable skills from college to be marketable. One student spoke about being confident in your job and proud at what you chose for a career.

3) Do you have a mentor at NIU? Only one of the seven students had an official mentor as part of the faculty/staff mentor program. Four others identified informal mentors such as advisors, faculty member, fraternity brother and older student in similar program.

4) What resources are you familiar with on campus regarding service learning, internships and other services? All students mentioned a few resources they knew about such as writing center, advising, tutoring, career services, Greek organizations, and other student groups. One student was an orientation leader and has also been a Student Success team leader. Another student was part of the CHANCE program. A third student utilized services in the College of Education.

5) What student organizations are you a part of? All 7 students were part of at least one student organization. Two were mostly involved in music and theater as part of their majors. Another was involved in special education student organization. Others listed a student group, Greek organization or academic club. One was part of the Huskie Marching Band.

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6) What student services have you used? All students have used some student services including the writing center, career services, recreation center, and late night van rides. Two students elaborated on their advisors as great resources and one identified MAP Works as being helpful.

7) What opportunities can NIU offer you to be more successful and stay at NIU? One student highlighted that he thought every sophomore should have a career readiness class as part of their curriculum. Other students talked about how advising has been critical to their success and to keep up access to good advisors. Two indicated that mentoring from alumni would be helpful to them and they would welcome being paired up. A few students mentioned that more activities on the weekend at NIU would be helpful to keep students here and build more community. A few students highlighted that their leadership experience in student organizations or in the performing arts has kept them more engaged and feel this should be promoted more. One student felt scholarships and mentoring are important to keep students.

8) Other comments regarding campus climate and student engagement. A few students were asked about campus climate. One student (minority) mentioned that she felt there was a bias among campus police on what parties to shut down right away and yet others are left alone (black vs white). Another student noticed some anti-Greek biases among some students. Three other students said they felt the campus climate was good and they viewed diversity as a good thing. One student mentioned how neat it was in the College of Education that undergraduate and graduate classes were combined so a wide range of ages and experience share with each other. A few students who were part of Student Success teams indicated that peer mentoring will really be helpful for every student particularly in the first and second years of school.