The Council of Independent Colleges

Welcome!

CIC Networks | Belong

Agenda

- Narratives that work for Equity and Belonging
- Narratives that work for Higher Education
- CIC's Belong supporting these areas

Sincere thank you to the Lumina Foundation

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis that is committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. We envision a system that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results, and meets the nation's need for talent through **a broad range of high-quality credentials**.

PROTAGONIST

Lumina™
FOUNDATION

Mapping and Monitoring Narrative Landscapes

The Concept of Framing:
Beyond Knowledge and Facts to Sense-Making Narratives

Audiences always have pre-existing ideas about any topic; The first thing said about a topic will immediately trigger those prior ideas and can influence perceptions/ judgments, and trigger **emotional responses**

"Framing" a topic effectively means using words, images and symbols that **reflect values and beliefs people already hold,** and which encourage them to support your goal.

To maximize support, speak to values and beliefs that are **meaningful to the majority** in audience. It is important to understand the underlying stories informing people's values and beliefs.

Lumina FOUNDATION

Narratives as Stories

Narratives are the structured stories that animate a public conversation about any given issue. Each story has a causal logic that ties a series of events and characters together and leads to a "call to action." These stories are reflected and reinforced in traditional and social media, and shape how audiences view an issue, which policies they prefer, and even how they behave.

Dataset Overview of Current "Refresh" of Narrative Landscape

Building a Robust Dataset

- **Scope:** Long-form media content that covers discussions around higher education programs and institutions, affordability, access, student needs, workforce training and development, and other education after high school programs
- **Timeframe:** January 1, 2021 – September 31, 2022 (21 months)
- **Query Overview:** Postsecondary education terms and related concepts covering topics such as:
  - Colleges & Universities
  - Community College
  - Workforce Training
  - Credential Programs
  - Educational Attainment
  - Adult Education
  - HBCUS, Tribal Colleges, HSIs
- **Sources: 40,000+** news, magazine, and blog sources reflect the full spectrum to US media sources, including conservative, liberal, and mainstream sources at the national, regional, and local level

Existing Higher Ed Narratives from Lumina's Research

Abridged Narratives (2021-2022)

Narrative	Summary
Higher Ed's Best Kept Secret	We must do more to elevate the profile of community colleges to make sure they get the respect and recognition they've earned.
College is No Longer Relevant	Young people need to find their own way and not rely on the archaic university system to help them find success.
Reinventing College	It's time to pioneer big bold solutions to keep college relevant and make students ready for 21st century jobs.
Saving the American Dream	We must do more to alleviate the burden of student debt and break the model of mortgaging students' futures to pay for a college degree.
Leveling the Playing Field	We must face the reality that we are not a colorblind society on or off campus and there is still a long way to go to create equal opportunities and outcomes for students of color.
Woke-ism Has Come for Higher-Ed	The radical left has seized the university system and launched a dangerous campaign of anti-American indoctrination of college students.
Fairness Under Attack	College only perpetuates privilege. We must restore the principles of fairness, hard work and individual responsibility to the college system.

What existing narrative has the most impact on Higher Ed?

1. Fairness under attack
2. College Is no longer relevant
3. Higher ed's best kept secret
4. Saving the American dream
5. Woke-ism has come for Higher Ed
6. Leveling the playing field
7. Reinventing college

A Divided Landscape

Narratives that *Undermine Efforts to Improve the System*

- Colleges, universities and faculty are often framed as villains
- Bring conservative leaning value-systems to the topic of higher education

Narratives Aligned with Improving the System

- Colleges seen as essential but deeply flawed
- Highlights institutions that have previously flown under the radar in the public conversation (community colleges, HBCUs, tribal colleges, HSIs, etc)

Woke-ism has Come for Higher Ed

Fairness Under Attack

College is No Longer Relevant

Saving the American Dream

Leveling the Playing Field

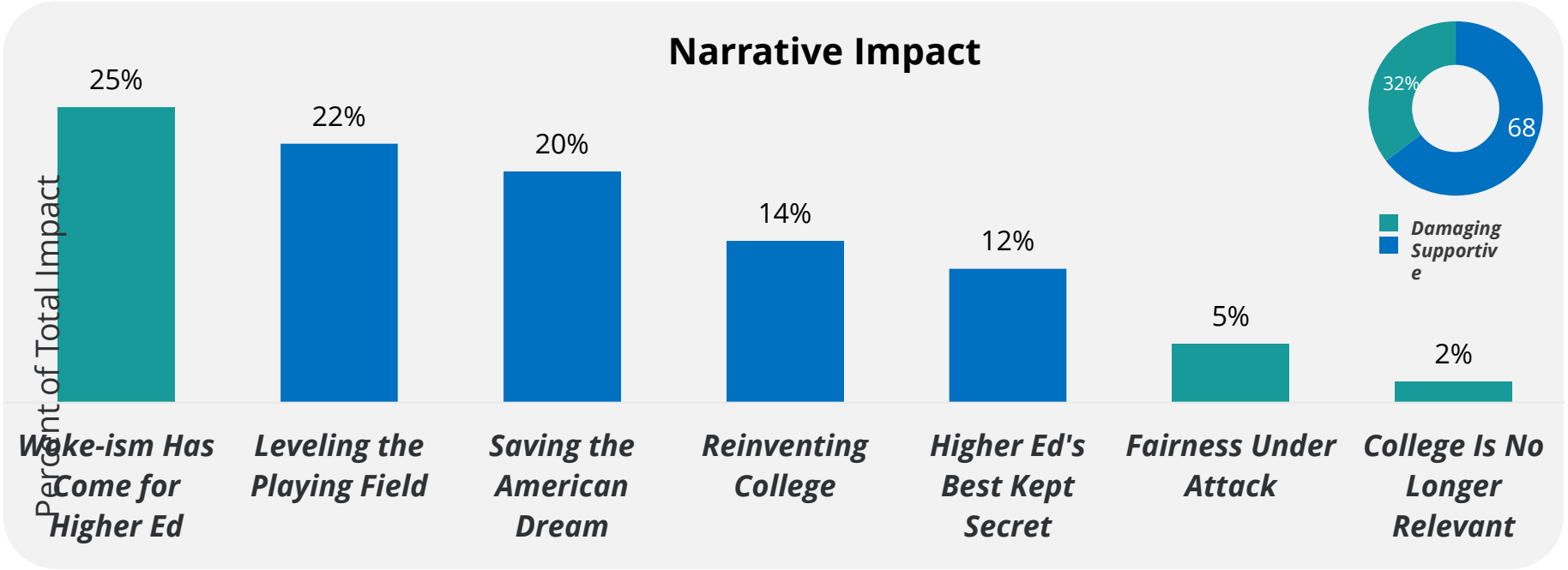
Higher Ed's Best Kept Secret

Reinventing College

PROTAGONIST

Over One-Third of Impact Comes from Damaging Narratives

- Over a third of the impact landscape comes from the three damaging narratives. ***Woke-ism Has Come for Higher Ed*** **is the highest impact narrative in the landscape,** underscoring the extent to which conservative attacks and unfavorable portrayals of colleges and universities have come to drive the discourse. Other damaging narratives are far less prominent.
- ***Leveling the Playing Field*** **emerges as the highest impact supportive narrative** in the landscape, reflecting increased attention to the intersection of race, wealth, and access to higher ed.



Some questions…

1. Would you agree that everyone has a right to real opportunity?
2. Does it make sense that some parts of opportunity depend on who you are and where you are from?
3. Would many people agree that our systems of training and education after high school unfairly hold some people back?

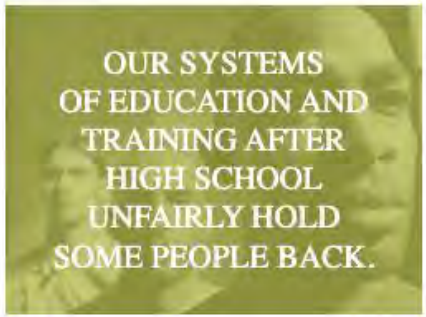
Narratives that work for Diversity and Belonging

The Council of Independent Colleges

A Framework for Equity

No matter where you come from, what you look like, or how much money your family has, everyone should have what they need to learn, grow, and thrive.

Opportunity depends on who you are and where you come from.



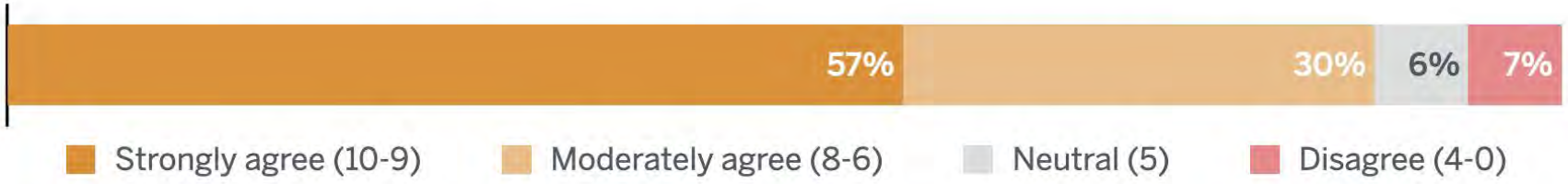
Policies, practices, and beliefs—rooted in history and still affecting people today—keep many Black, Native American, and Hispanic people from the education and skills they need.

We can remove barriers for students to right the wrongs and achieve just and fair outcomes for all.

Sl
id

How much do you agree or disagree with the

Statement 1, current language:
Everyone has a right to real opportunity. No matter where you come from, what you look like, or how much money your family has, everyone should have what they need to learn, grow, and thrive.



Statement 2, current language:
Opportunity isn't equal. Opportunity depends on who you are and where you come from.

Statement 3, current language:
Policies, practices, and beliefs in our education systems unfairly hold back Black, Native American, Hispanic, and Latino people from achieving the education and skills they need.

Getting Specific

Real Opportunity, with Real Outcomes, For All

Everyone has a right to real opportunity. No matter where you come from, what you look like, or how much money your family has, everyone should have what they need to learn, grow, and thrive.

Opportunity **isn't** equal. Opportunity depends on who you are and where you come from.

Our systems of education and training after high school unfairly hold some people back. Policies, practices, and beliefs—rooted in history and still affecting people today— keep many Black, Native American, Hispanic, and Latino people from the education and skills they need.

Real actions with real outcomes can make opportunity real. We can remove barriers for students to right the wrongs and achieve just and fair outcomes for all.

» When you use the frame to craft communications:

Name the kinds of opportunities people seek. (e.g. having a good job, owning a home, saving for retirement, sending their kids to college, etc.)

Name the external factors that influence opportunity to keep from activating the "bootstraps" metanarrative that "as long as you work hard you can succeed." (e.g. financial barriers, lack of social supports, etc.)

Provide specific, tangible examples of "the system" to expose hidden barriers that unfairly affect individual lives. (e.g. credit transfer policies, unequal allocation of resources, negative stereotypes, etc.)

Link the policies, practices, and beliefs that get in the way of real opportunity with the meaningful actions you are taking to remove them. (e.g. financial and social supports)

Narratives that work for Higher Education

The Council of Independent Colleges

Testing Narrative Frames

Lumina researchers tested 8 narrative frames drawing from the Aspirational Communication Model, which suggest that you achieve greater levels of engagement by connecting with people on multiple levels: their **aspirations**, **social motivators**, **emotions**, and **functional benefits**.

Aspirational Narrative Frames Focused on Higher Education's Benefits Resonate

Communities That Work

(78% somewhat/very well describes benefits)

People want to live in communities that function well, and it takes a range of skills, professions, and ideas to make them work for everyone. College is important for equipping people with the array of knowledge, skills, and perspectives that communities need to grow and thrive.

Aspirational Narrative Frames Focused on Higher Education's Benefits Resonate

Contributions

(78% somewhat/very well describes benefits)

People want to contribute to their community in a meaningful way. Through higher education, they can develop skills, build confidence, and use what they learn to help make the world a better place.

Aspirational Narrative Frames Focused on Higher Education's Benefits Resonate

Explore Passions

(78% somewhat/very well describes benefits)

Communities are stronger when people can pursue their unique passions and talents, but it's often difficult to make those passions practical. Higher education can open doors and give people the time and training to translate what they love doing into a lasting part of their lives.

Aspirational Narrative Frames Focused on Higher Education's Benefits Resonate

Security

(77% somewhat/very well describes benefits; 36% very well)

The future is uncertain, but higher education offers one of the strongest paths for long-term financial security, career opportunities, and growth.

Aspirational Narrative Frames Focused on Higher Education's Benefits Resonate

Communities That Work

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Contributions

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Explore Passions

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Security

The future is uncertain, but higher education offers one of the strongest paths for long-term financial security, career opportunities, and growth.

FRAME IT FIRST

Start with a positive vision of
the world you're working to create, the people we are trying to serve, and the values that undergird our mission.

DEFINE YOUR TERMS

Communicate clearly and explicitly about what terms like diversity, equity, and inclusion mean in our context, and what these terms looks like in practice. Point to
the systems that need to change, and the solutions
that Leaders and Practitioners can help support.

MEET AUDIENCE WHERE THEY ARE

Communications need to reach people where they already are with language they already understand and tapping into moral values that are shared and strongly felt—such as fairness, opportunity, freedom of thought and expression, equitable democratic participation, inclusive and effective workplaces. Many believe in these shared values, but they need examples of how these values are threatened and of how solutions like more community based civic learning can strengthen these values.

Do This

- **Start with a positive vision of the world you're working to create.**
- **Be specific about who faces unfair and unjust barriers.**
- **Name specific policies, practices and beliefs that hold some people back.**
- **Point out unfair disparities in the resources students receive, and unjust outcomes as a result.**
- **Show how students' lives are directly and meaningfully changed.**

…Not That

- ***Avoid* negative framing and deficit language.**
- ***Don't* repeat the negative challenge**
- ***Avoid* talking about "the system" in general, without describing how systems adversely affect students.**
- ***Avoid* language or data that frame the student as the problem.**
- ***Avoid* listing solutions without connecting them back to students' lives and the broader impact of higher education on societal strength, vitality, community.**

Belong Overview

- It's fast & easy
- It's effective
- It's affordable

Belong Offerings Overview

1. *One-of-a-Kind Push Resources*
2. *Community of Practice*
3. *Cornerstone Webinars*
4. *Nationally Recognized Credentials*

In concert with your unique mission and values

Belong Investment = $7,500

…For the same cost as sending 2-3 people to a conference

…For less than half comparable communities in our sector

...For less than a one-day campus workshop

Professional development for your entire campus

The Council of Independent Colleges

The Belong Push Resource Library

- Shareable with all faculty and staff
- 2 Resources a month, 24 a year
- Templated and customizable
- Curated and proven

Push Resource Library Examples

- 88 Page 2024 Election Guidebook for Campus
- Frederick Douglass Speech Recited by Descendants
- Campus Inclusion and Belonging Assessment Tools
- 5 Line Poem Exploring Mental Health

Sent: Monday, July 1, 2024 12:58 PM
Subject: Belong Push Resource 7.01.2024

Hello Campus Lead –

For this push resource, we thought it appropriate to share one that connects with the Fourth of July, especially following the Juneteenth resource from 2 weeks ago. We found a timely resource that presents a thought-provoking angle on America's Independance and some contradictions associated with it. The resource is Frederick Douglass' 1852 speech "*What to the Slave is the Fourth of July*?" This resource provides an overview of the speech, a video of Douglass' descendants reciting parts of the speech, and the full text to the speech for if you would like to take a deeper dive.

As always, we are providing two options for templated language. Pick the one most suited for this moment on campus. (As always, you are welcome to use the language verbatim, edit it for your audience, or disregard it entirely.)

Best,

Sabrina Sturgeon
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Council of Independent Colleges
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Office: (202) 552-8968
ssturgeon@cic.edu

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VERSION #1 – With exposition

Subj: Belonging July Resource

Dear _____,

As we approach the Fourth of July, a time when our nation reflects on its history and values, I want to share with you a resource from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. This resource outlines Frederick Douglass' 1852 speech "*What to the Slave is the Fourth of July*?" This resource provides an overview of the speech, a video of Douglass' descendants reciting parts of the speech, and the full text to the speech for if you would like to take a deeper dive.

You can access the resource here: The Nation's Story: What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?

This resource not only provides historical insights but also invites us to consider the complexities of freedom and equality in our own time. Reflecting on Douglass' words helps me better appreciate the diverse experiences that shape our community and reinforce our commitment to belonging.

Independence Day is a cherished holiday for many of us. Douglass's speech, while a powerful critique of America's contradictions, also carries a message of hope. He acknowledged the potential for change and the quest for a brighter future rooted in the nation's foundational ideals. Douglass's belief in the potential for progress reminds us that, even in divided times, we can strive for an equitable community for our students.

Thank you for your dedication to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. I look forward to our continued efforts in making our campus a place where every individual can thrive. Happy Fourth of July!

Sincerely,

Signature

VERSION #2 – With less exposition

Subj: Belonging July Resource

Dear _____,

As we approach the Fourth of July, I want to share with you Frederick Douglass' 1852 speech "*What to the Slave is the Fourth of July*?" This resource provides an overview of the speech, a video of Douglass' descendants reciting parts of the speech, and the full text to the speech for if you would like to take a deeper dive.

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Sincerely,

Signature

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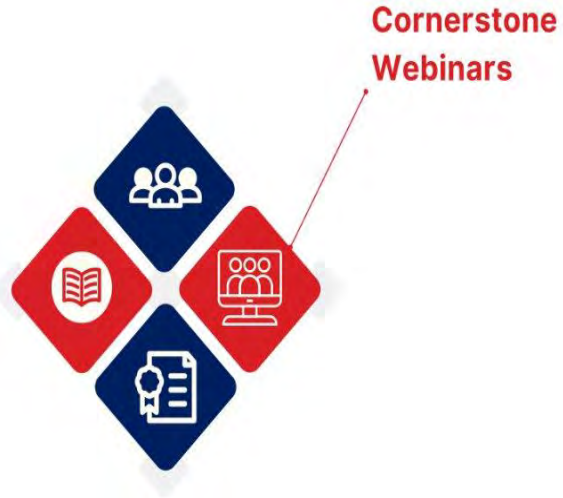
Cornerstone Webinars

- Live (& recorded)
- Open to all faculty and staff
- Real takeaways that can be implemented immediately
- 2 in the Fall & 2 in the Spring



Community of Practice

A space for conversation within our community of 75+ institutions

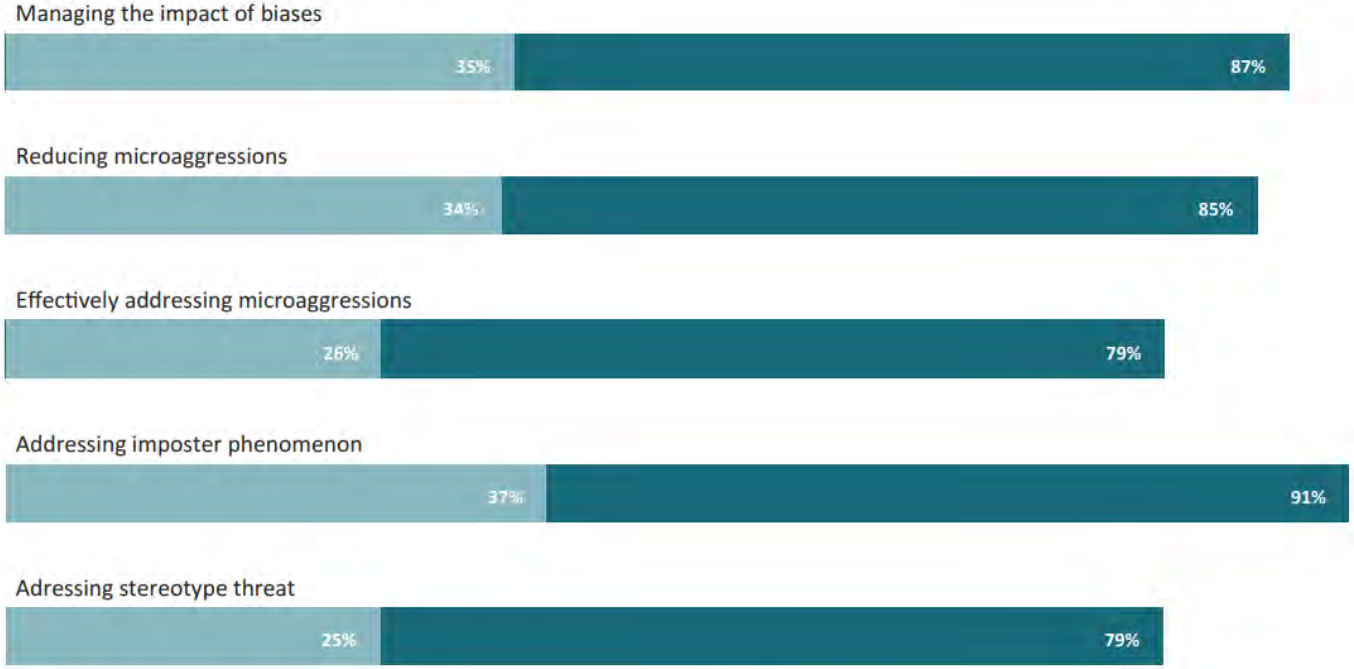
- Staff supported & tech enabled

ACUE Credentialing

- Research-backed microcredentials for 6 faculty or staff
- Opportunity to go campuswide
- NEW offerings this year

100%

increase in number of **course-takers reporting confidence using evidence-based inclusive practices**



% of course-takers reporting confidence **before** taking the course

% of course-takers reporting confidence **after** taking the course

Quick Study Courses in the Learning Lab

ACUE
Learning Lab

Quick Study Courses in the Learning Lab

More Courses Coming Soon!

ACUE

More Courses Coming Soon!

Coming In 2025

- Preparing Students for Experiential Learning
- Integrating Open Educational Resources (OERs) Practices
- Embedding Career Guidance into Your Course
- Design Authentic Assessments with Real-World Tasks in Mind
- Integrating a Learning Community Approach into Your College Classroom
- Encouraging Informed and Reflective Deliberative Dialogue in Your Course

Narratives that work for Higher Education

The Council of Independent Colleges

Two Years in the making...

Belong Community Outcomes:	Your campus experience...
75+ campuses in the community	Strength in Numbers: Belong Connects You with a Supportive Community
5,400 signed up for webinars	One campus alone had over 120 people signed up for a webinar that they didn't have to plan, source, develop marketing materials
Reaching 11,000 faculty and staff	Two professional development resources provided every month, prepared and ready to share with your community (24 resources a year)
120,000 students within reach	As each additional campus joins our community, more students have an opportunity to be impacted.

Belong

The Council of Independent Colleges

Members & Networks | Events | Programs & Opportunities | Insights & Research

About Belong

The Belong Community is a national network of CIC member colleges and universities dedicated to making their campuses more welcoming and inclusive. Designed in partnership with the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE), Belong offers a suite of professional development resources for faculty and staff to support student belonging in class and campus-wide.

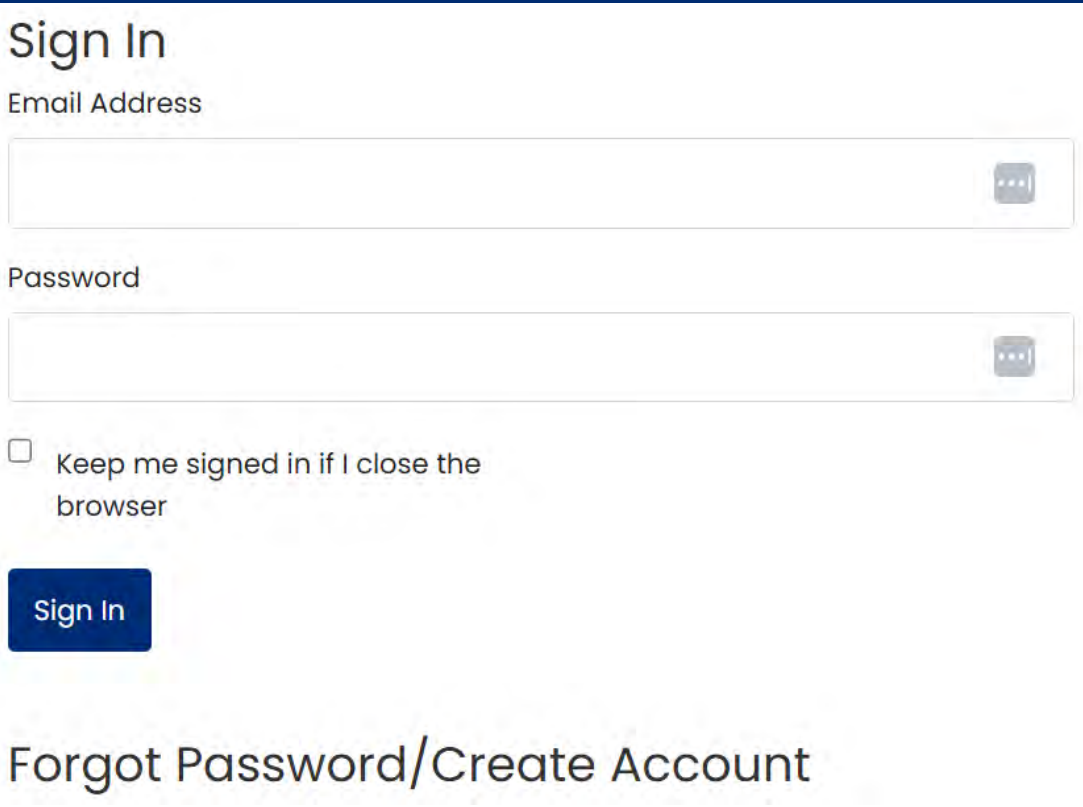
Belong works in concert with **your campus's** distinctive mission and values, equipping faculty and staff with evidence-based skills and knowledge that increase student belonging and advance campus retention efforts.

Sign Up to Belong

Current Members

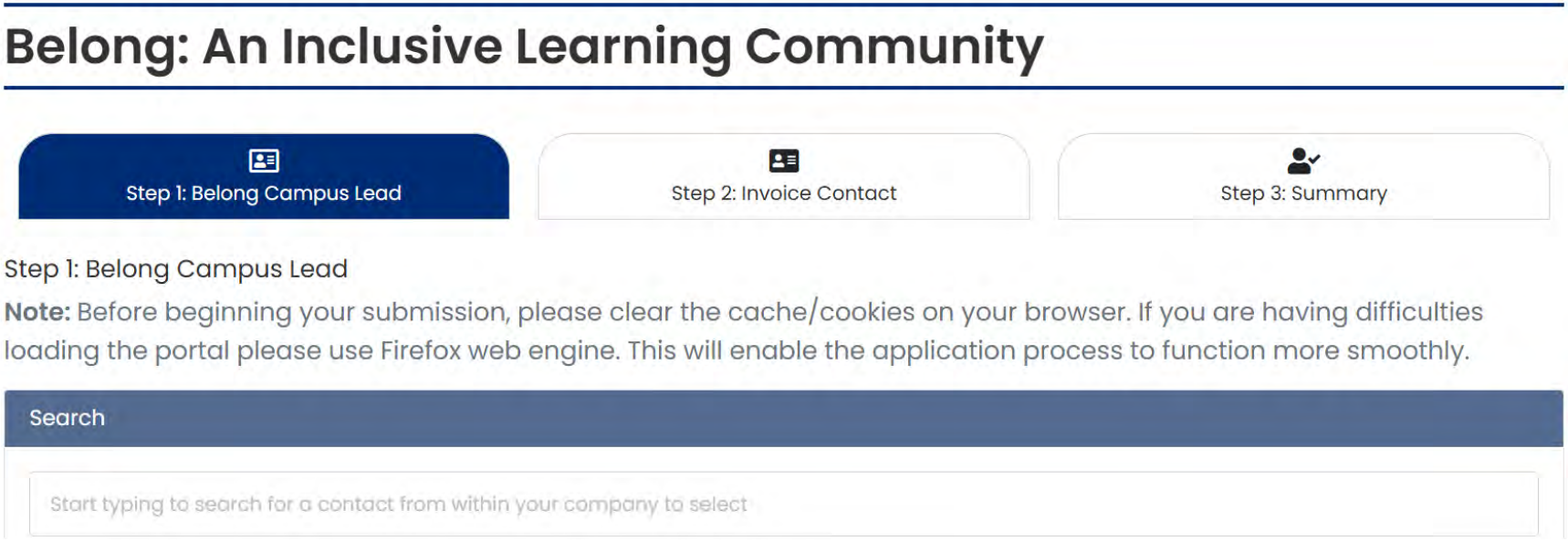
The Council of Independent Colleges

Belong



The Council of Independent Colleges

Only three questions!



Want to learn more?

Matt Trainum
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https://cic.edu/networks/belong