



A NEW IMAGE

INCREASING MODALITIES AND ACCESS TO GRADUATE EDUCATION

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**SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY**

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

- State's largest university, 1862 land-grant
- UG enrollment – 10,184
- Grad enrollment – 1,321
- 57 graduate programs
- 39 Master's
- 18 PhD
- 2 Professional Doctorates





***WHAT IS
IMAGE?***

***WHY THE
NEED FOR IT?***



**SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY**

BACKGROUND

Before IMAGE....

- Roughly 10% of graduate programs offered asynchronous online courses
- Approximately half of online students indicated they were not satisfied with overall course experience
- 20% could not enroll in a synchronous online course due to work, childcare, or other obligations
- Graduate students reported need for expanded access to staff (outside 8-5)



EXPANDING THE CIRCLE

Previous work to build capacity at Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs)

- Provided increased access for TCU faculty to enroll in graduate courses to meet HLC accreditation
- TCU faculty required asynchronous online courses due to teaching load and distance to SDSU
- Developed online graduate courses tailored to TCU needs; provided personalized support for onboarding, enrolling and advising
- Created culturally relevant curriculum and syllabi



EXPANDING THE CIRCLE

- 20 TCU faculty have met HLC requirements
- 6 TCU faculty have earned master's degrees
- Created new online interdisciplinary MS program
- 20+ asynchronous online graduate courses developed in need areas
- 15 Faculty involved in project
- Increased cultural competency among faculty/staff



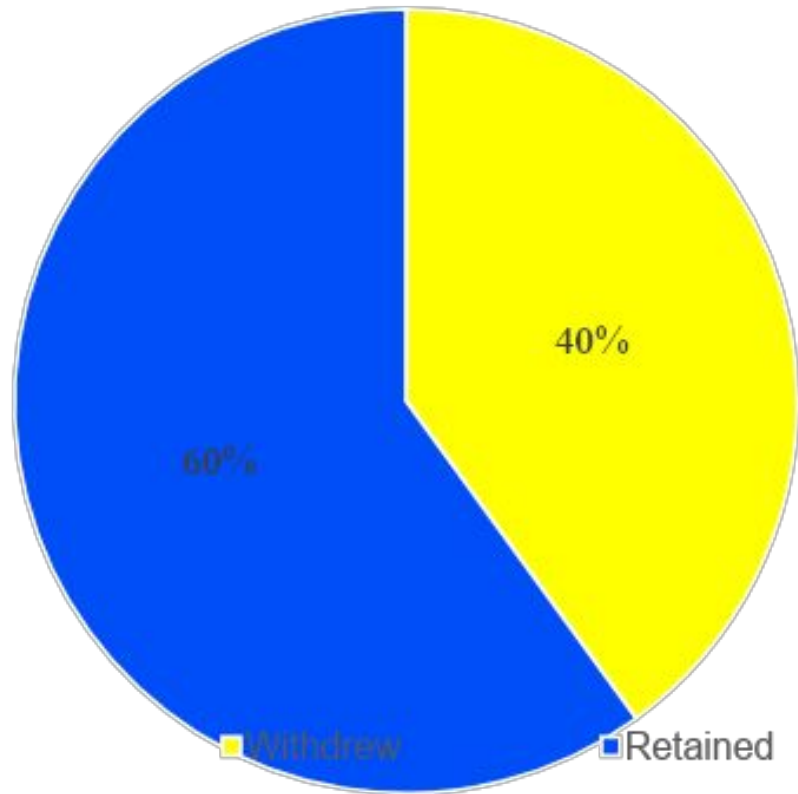
EXPANDING THE CIRCLE

- Provided opportunities to develop TCU student pathways to graduate degrees
- Covered tuition for TCU faculty through Wokini Initiative
- Increased collaborations/partnership opportunities with TCU faculty and students (grant projects, etc.)
- Increased retention of TCU students



EXPANDING THE CIRCLE

Retention Prior to ETC



Retention After ETC

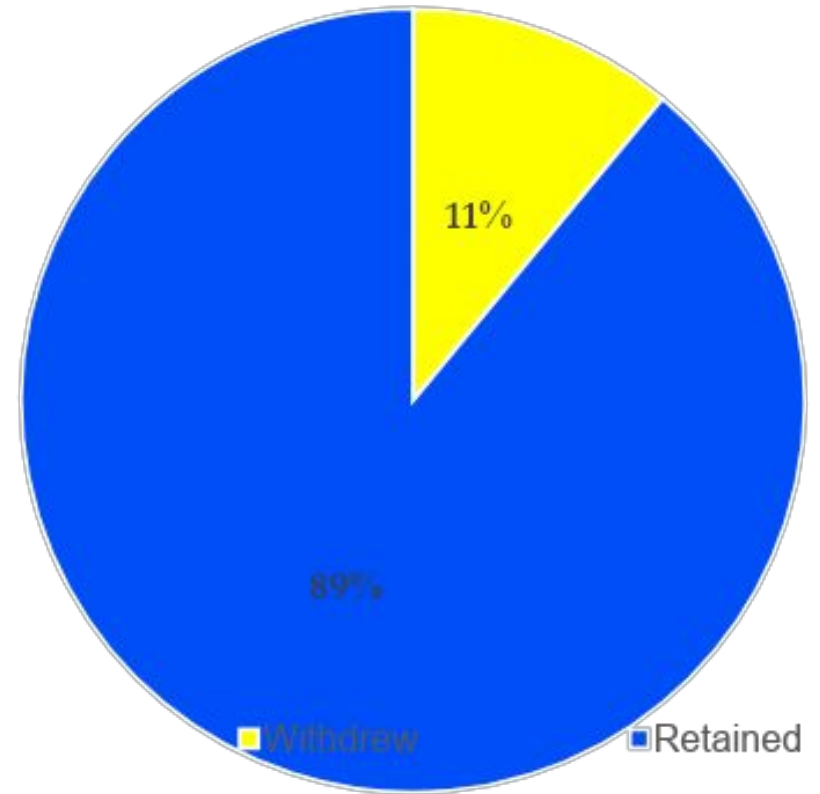


IMAGE PROJECT

- Identified need for asynchronous online graduate courses and expanded access for diverse learners
- Incorporated prior work with Expanding the Circle
- Submitted proposal to SDSU Connect Challenge grant competition, SP23
- Awarded \$80,000 grant – *Increasing Modalities and Access to Graduate Education*, late summer 23
- Project start: FA23



IMAGE GOALS AND OUTCOMES

GOAL:

- Increase asynchronous online graduate course offerings

OUTCOMES:

- Remove barriers for students unable to attend synchronous online or in person
- Offer fully asynchronous online graduate programs
- Attract and retain larger and more diverse graduate student population



IMAGE GOALS AND OUTCOMES

GOAL:

- Promote and implement flexible, adaptive online graduate course design that incorporates diverse learner needs, culture, and lived experiences

OUTCOMES:

- Attract & retain larger and more diverse population of graduate students
- Help faculty grow & foster supportive learning communities
- Faculty have ready-made framework that provides student support & accommodations, increased cultural competency



IMAGE GOALS AND OUTCOMES

GOAL:

- Expand communication and increase access to information and support for prospective and current graduate students

OUTCOMES:

- Higher persistence rates
- Increases in graduate enrollment
- Immediate responses to common questions
- Accommodate non-traditional work hours
- Strengthen connections

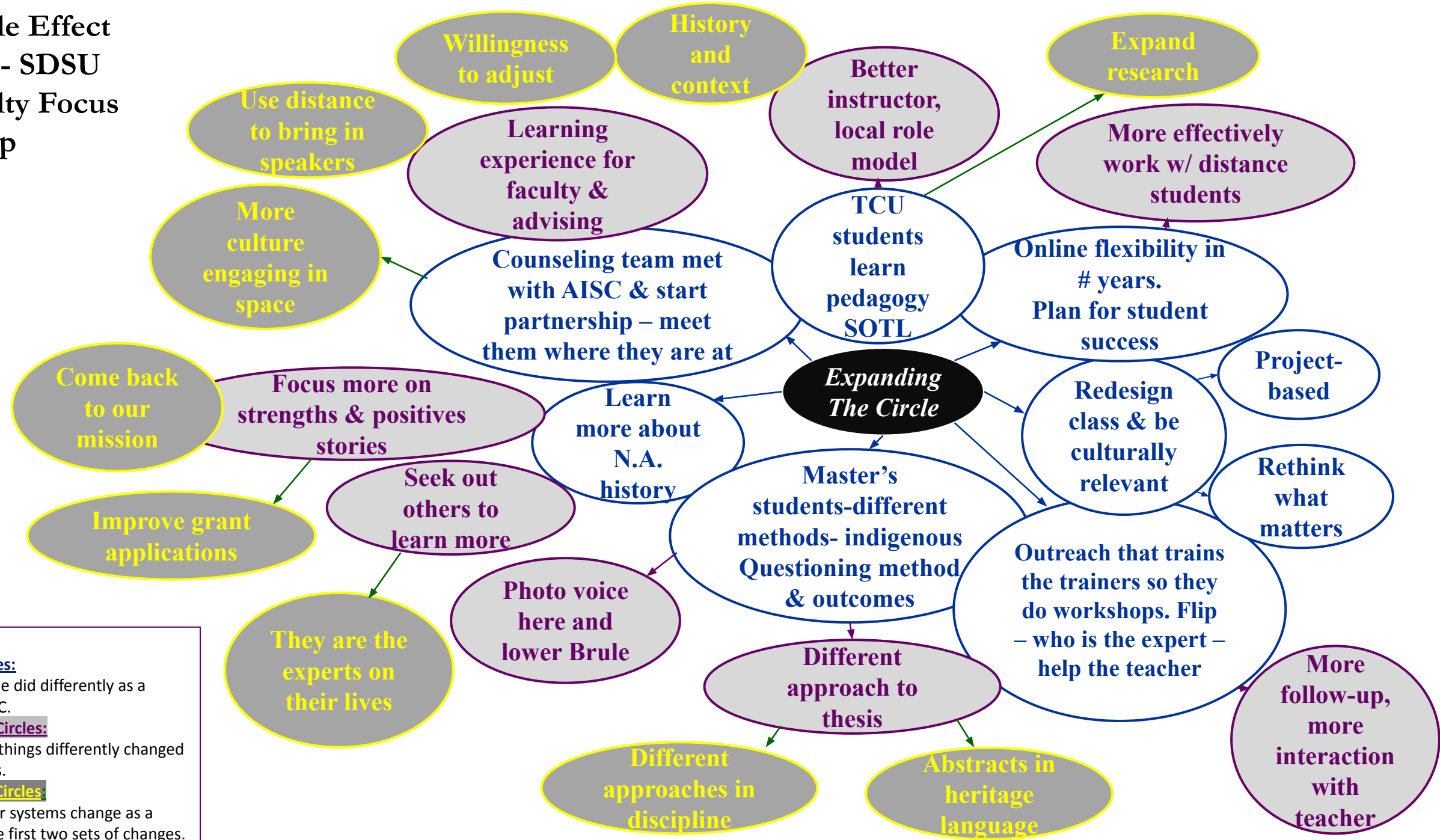


EVALUATION PLAN

- Administered QuestionPro survey to all graduate students enrolled prior to implementation
- Will administer survey to same group post-project
- Survey questions focused on type of learner, experience with instructor/course, experience onboarding, experience with Grad School and relevant satisfaction of access and experience
- Will hold both graduate student and graduate faculty focus groups
- Ripple Effect Mapping technique



**Ripple Effect
Map - SDSU
Faculty Focus
Group**



Key:
White circles:
 What people did differently as a result of ETC.
Light Grey Circles:
 How doing things differently changed interactions.
Dark Grey Circles:
 Potential for systems change as a result of the first two sets of changes.

RIPPLE-EFFECT MAPPING

- ***Changes in thinking leads to changes in action***
 - Redesign courses to be culturally relevant - Indigenous methods
 - Increase interaction with students thereby increasing knowledge
 - Rethinking what really matters – what is the goal?



RIPPLE-EFFECT MAPPING

- ***Changes in action leads to engaging with others on processes & policy***
 - Develop outreach that flips who is the expert
 - Adjusting policies (apps, attendance, deadlines, exams)
 - Realigning onboarding process (lengthy emails, complicated websites)
 - Relationship-based model for recruitment and retention



WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED THUS FAR



ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE DEVELOPMENT

- 17 courses are in development to be offered Summer and Fall 2024
- 15 faculty are participating in the project, will receive \$2,000 or \$1,000 stipend upon completion
- Met with Deans, Directors, Graduate Coordinators and Graduate faculty to identify gaps in online course delivery
- Faculty received training in digital pedagogy and adaptive course design, opportunity to complete PD certificate



EXPANDED CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Implemented expanded office hours starting FA 23
 - 6-8am and 5-7pm
- Tracked phone calls, walk-ins and email exchanges
- Data indicated that most calls were from 7:30-8am and walk-ins were from 5-5:30pm
- Spring semester - revised hours to 7:30-5:30pm
- New CRM will provide option for Chatbot
- Received unsolicited feedback from students, applicants indicating appreciation for expanded hours



PERSONALIZED ONBOARDING

- **Data indicated that over 20% of online students were not satisfied with onboarding experience**

Reasons why:

- Lengthy emails
- No human contact or personal assistance
- Non-traditional students not familiar with platform
- Enrolling process is complicated and lack of instructions

- **Our response to increase student satisfaction:**

- Online orientation in D2L
- Virtual Student Union
- ConnectState access to advisors
- One to one assistance with finding and enrolling in courses
- Created step by step instructional videos
- Utilized videos embedded in personalized emails



WHAT'S LEFT TO DO

- Complete student survey post-project
- Finish course development and offer courses Summer/Fall 2024
- Cultural competency training for faculty
- Hold focus groups with students and faculty
- Implement new CRM Chatbot feature
- Recruit additional faculty to develop more courses
- Disseminate results and project sustainability



LONG-TERM PROJECT GOALS



Asynchronous
online graduate
programs



Enrollment
increases



Student
Satisfaction
increases



Higher
persistence
rates



Better overall
student
experience



Faculty employ
new teaching
techniques that
incorporate
flexible, adaptive
design for
diverse learners



Increase access
to graduate
education for all



QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!

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