AirPark Columbus College Campus

Student Success and Employment Strategies

April 26, 2022

Community Education Coalition | AirPark Columbus College Campus | Ivy Tech Community College | Purdue University Polytechnic Institute Columbus | IUPUC

AirPark Columbus College Campus

The AirPark Columbus College Campus is a key regional asset that is intended to build a resilient workforce and to enhance regional prosperity through investments in students pursuing education connected to economic opportunity in the South Central Indiana Talent Region.

The AirPark Columbus College Campus aspires to be (and is currently) the first and most equitable choice for students in the region to pursue and achieve post-secondary education credentials linking directly to high-quality regional employment opportunities. The campus is home to three institutions: Ivy Tech Community College, Purdue Polytechnic Columbus, and Indiana University Purdue University Columbus. All three are supported by the Community Education Coalition (CEC), a nationally recognized non-profit, which serves the institutions and their students, employers, and the broader community.

Students come to AirPark seeking additional education to secure well-paying jobs. Over the past 20 years, campus leaders and the Community Education Coalition have worked together to make more than 73 programs (certifications, two-year, four-year, and select master's degrees) available to students while serving the regional workforce needs of employers.

AIrPark Campus Shared Strategies

A series of new spaces designed for student success and connection to employment was planned by the education partners and CEC for the past three years, and is now under construction within the heart of the first floor of the Columbus Learning Center, a one-of-a-kind building in Indiana shared by Ivy Tech Community College, IUPUC, and Purdue Polytechnic.

The strategies and spaces focus on three key objectives: creating access for traditional-age and returning adult students; providing student services and supports along the learner journey; and connecting students to employers and employment opportunities in their area of study.

Experts view the Columbus Learning Center as a model for how higher education partners collaborate to serve the needs of students, businesses, and communities. The CEC (responsible for management of Columbus Learning Center) will provide funding for the construction, equipment, and technology of The Bridge. Ivy Tech, IUPUC, Purdue Polytechnic and CEC will provide funding for personnel. The campus is seeking READI funding to supplement start-up of the AirPark shared strategies.

An exciting new landscape design, developed to increase physical access to the main entrance at the southwest corner of the campus, is a key component of the Campus Student Success and Employment Strategies. The new design will significantly enhance services, programs, courses and events for current and prospective students, employers, and the community. This element of the program is vital to providing much better campus accessibility for all stakeholders, and affords the opportunity to create a deeper sense of campus welcoming and attractiveness for the potential students.

Student Success & Employment Strategies

The comprehensive AirPark Campus Student Success & Employment Strategies are designed to provide a "connection" hub for services shared by all three AirPark Campus institutions that support students throughout their learner journey

1. Physical Space: A welcoming place where anyone can connect to the right education supports and employment resources via a warm hand-off **(The Bridge)**, and inviting spaces **(The Landing)** that foster a sense of belonging on campus

2. Virtual Service: Online presence providing education and employment information and support virtually (https://airparkcollegecampus.org)
3. Welcoming Campus Access: A landscape design that supports the "whole life" of students and community, provides an accessible, healthy and welcoming entrance to make the campus more welcoming and equitable

The strategies will provide specific supports along the learner journey to help students access financial and academic resources that allow them to stay in school and complete successfully.

The program strategies will also create a more welcoming campus and promote a sense of belonging and inclusiveness for all students on the campus. *The goal is for all students, neighbors and community to feel that this campus is truly THEIR campus.*

The Bridge: *Connecting YOU with Education, Resources, & Careers*

The Bridge, a new student success and employment center will provide a welcoming space where navigators greet and assist visitors to the campus. In The Bridge, visitors will find,

- A Lead Navigator working with a team of Student Navigators to greet students, prospective students and campus visitors and connect them to information and resources on campus
- A snack bar with free snacks for students
- Six private, collaborative meeting rooms available to students, employers and campus partners
- A nursing mother's room for students and campus employees
- Office Spaces for:
    - The Career Services Teams for Ivy Tech, IUPUC and Purdue Polytechnic
    - Council for Youth Development Team
    - Community Education Coalition Team

A New AirPark Lead Navigator Position. An exciting and unique element of the student success strategies is the new AirPark Campus Lead Navigator role. This new full time position will reside within The Bridge (Student Success and Employment Center). This position will,

- Be responsible for day-to-day operations of The Bridge and managing Student Navigators, while also providing hands-on support to visitors
- Be a full-time employee of the Community Education Coalition (CEC)
- Serve and support all three institutions acting as a neutral third-party
- Be funded by the CEC in year one through a grant, and then co-funded by CEC and AirPark Campus institutions starting in year two

The Landing: *Welcoming Students to Collaborate, Recharge, & Belong*

The Landing is a space specifically designed for AirPark Campus students. The Landing will provide comfortable seating for students to hang out, to meet and connect with each other. The Landing has spaces to support the many student clubs and organizations on the AirPark Campus, providing a place for them to hold club meetings, host events, and to be a place they can call their own. The Landing will include,

- A Student Board Room for student clubs to meet
- Space for programming centered around diversity, equity, and belonging
- A student safe space for private, quiet conversations
- A campus food pantry accessible to all students from Ivy Tech, IUPUC, and Purdue Polytechnic
- Offices for the Student Affairs Teams and shared office spaces for student club leaders or interns from Ivy Tech, IUPUC and Purdue Polytechnic

An Innovative, One of a Kind Campus: *A Best Practice in How Higher Education Can Collaborate in Service to Students, Community and Employers*

The AirPark Campus is the only place in the state of Indiana where IU, Purdue and Ivy Tech are sharing facilities and developing shared student success strategies with this deep level of engagement and commitment. In developing these shared strategies over the last three-plus years, we benchmarked other student success centers across the country. We could not find an example where three state institutions were working together in this way. We believe this campus is a one-of-a-kind example of postsecondary collaboration.

In Columbus, we know that when we collaborate on the "things we can do together that none of us can do alone", we can accomplish more, and we can truly make an impact on student success. One of our goals is for the AirPark campus to become well known across the region as the place where the campus works with YOU to ensure your educational success, and where all students can connect with great, local jobs.

How Progress Will Be Measured

The elements of the AirPark Campus' Student Success and Employment Program are designed to boost the economy by increasing the region's educational attainment rate aligned with workforce demand - growing and retaining local talent.

AirPark Campus Program Measures of Success

Outputs: In-Process Measures

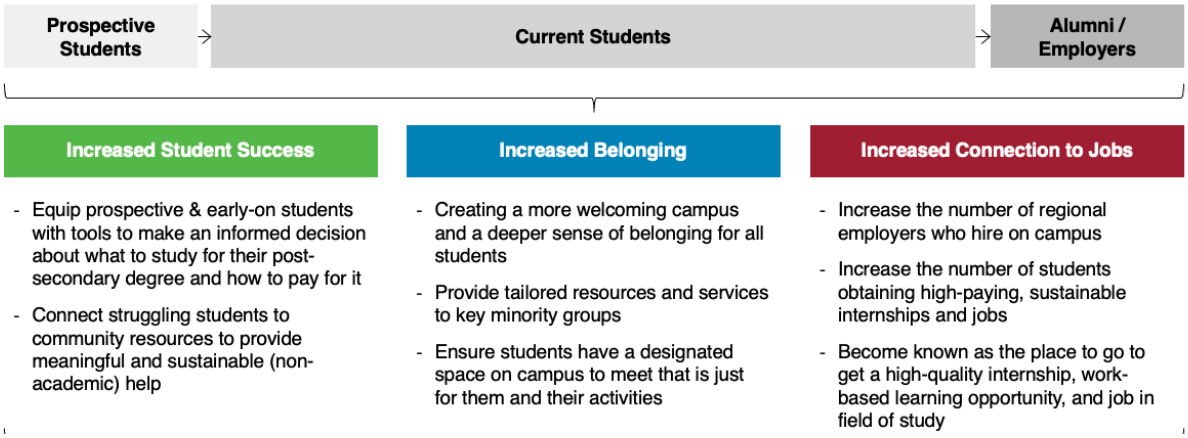
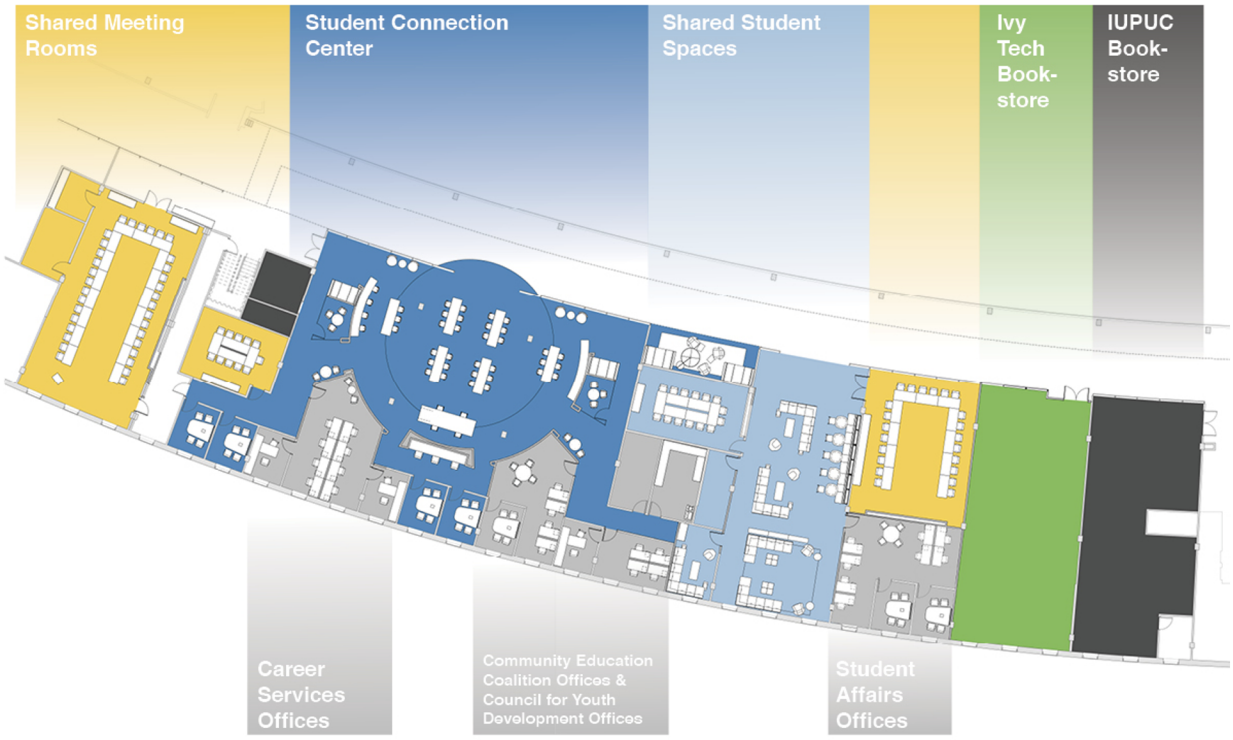
- # students and visitors served by The Bridge Navigator
- # of employers actively engaged in campus activities and events

Outcomes: AirPark Campus and the Region

- AirPark Post Secondary enrollments
- AirPak Post Secondary completions

- Educational Attainment Rate for the 8-county service area

AirPark Student Success & Employment Strategies Along the Learner Journey



Physical Spaces Designed for Student Success and Employment