

Know Your Students & Strategic Planning Glossary

A Resource for Faculty & Staff at New York Tech



January 2025

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Introduction to Know Your Students & Strategic Planning Glossary

The purpose of this glossary is to provide a shared understanding of key terms relevant to the Know Your Students initiative and other student-centered strategic initiatives for undergraduate students at New York Tech. We recognize that in some cases the definitions from a reporting standpoint or based on standardized data collection for governing bodies are distinct from our shared understanding of the terms. We note when this is the case. At the end of the glossary, there are also references to other specific New York Tech glossaries and resources that can help with having a shared understanding of terms we use.

Student Matriculation and Outcomes

Attrition: The percentage of students who discontinue their studies at the institution before completing their degree program. This rate reflects the number of students who leave New York Tech during or after a given academic year without graduating. Tracking the attrition rate is essential for understanding student retention and identifying factors that may influence student departure.

DFW Rate: The percentage of students who receive grades of D, F, or withdraw (W) from a course. This metric is used to evaluate course difficulty and student performance, helping to identify courses that may require additional support or resources for students.

Enrolled: The completion of the registration process which includes both registering for classes and satisfying other obligations to the institution, including payment.

First-Year: An entering undergraduate who has never attended any institution of higher education. First-year undergraduate students have yet to complete 30 credits at New York Tech.

Full-Time Student: Full Time Students are classified as: Undergrad Full Time ≥ 12 Credits, Part-Time < 12 credits. Graduate Full Time ≥ 9 Credits, < 9 Credits Part Time.

Graduation Rate: The percentage of a specific cohort of students who complete their degree programs within a set time frame. For instance, for their undergraduate programs, the graduation rate is typically measured over a six-year period. The graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who graduate within this time frame by the number of students in the original cohort. The Research, Assessment, and Decision Support (RADS) office at New York Tech provides detailed breakdowns of these rates by various demographics and types of financial aid received, which include distinctions by gender, ethnicity, and financial aid status [here](#).

Matriculated: A matriculated student is defined as one who has applied for, been formally admitted to, and has registered for one or more courses in the degree or certificate-granting program to which they have been admitted. Matriculation occurs on the first day of the term for which the student has been admitted.

Retention: The process of supporting and maintaining student enrollment until they achieve their educational goals, particularly through graduation. ([RADS](#))

Student Background Characteristics

Ethnicity ([UMN Open Library](#)): Refers to the shared social, cultural, and historical experiences, stemming from common national or regional backgrounds, that make subgroups of a population different from one another. Similarly, an ethnic group is a subgroup of a population with a set of shared social, cultural, and historical experiences; with relatively distinctive beliefs, values, and behaviors; and with some sense of identity of belonging to the subgroup.

Race ([USC Center for Urban Education](#)): Race is a socially constructed system of categorizing humans largely based on observable physical features (phenotypes) such as skin color and ancestry. There is no scientific basis for or discernible distinction between racial categories. The ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture, and is used as a basis for discrimination and domination. The concept of racism is widely thought of as simply personal prejudice, but in fact, it is a complex system of racial hierarchies and inequities. At the micro level, or individual level, of racism are internalized and interpersonal racism. At the macro level of racism, we look beyond the individuals to the broader dynamics, including institutional and structural racism.

Measurement, Ethnicity & Race (NCES): Categories developed in 1997 by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that are used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins.

New York Tech will use the NCES designations for race and ethnicity to better understand the experiences and outcomes of our faculty, staff, and students. NCES definitions cover U.S. citizens, U.S. residents, and other eligible non-citizens as listed below. (Note: Eligible noncitizens include all students who completed high school or a GED equivalency within the United States (including DACA and undocumented students) and who were not on an F-1 nonimmigrant student visa at the time of high school graduation.) Find more information about other eligible (for financial aid purposes) noncitizens.

Individuals are asked to first designate ethnicity as:

- Hispanic or Latino or

- Not Hispanic or Latino

Second, individuals are asked to indicate one or more races that apply among the following:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

Measurement, Ethnicity (New York Tech):

Are you Hispanic or Latino/a/x?

- Yes
- No

Regardless of your answer to the prior question, please indicate how you identify yourself. (You may select one or more)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White

First-Generation: A first-generation student is typically considered a student who comes from a family where their parents/guardian did not complete a four-year college degree. For our purposes at New York Tech, we also include students with parents who completed a four-year degree at an institution outside the U.S. as part of this definition. Source: [First-Gen College Students | New York Tech \(nyit.edu\)](#)

Measurement, First Generation: The measurement of first-generation college students is based on a more standardized approach. If students have a FAFSA on file for the year, then FAFSA data is examined first. If not, admissions data is used.

- For FAFSA: When both parents' education level is [High School, or Middle/Junior High school] then First Generation.
- When one of the parent's education levels is College or Beyond, then Not_FirstGeneration.
 - In addition to the above: When the parents are divorced/single/never married/separated/widowed; if one parent's education level is unknown and the other parent's education level is [High School, or Middle/Junior High school] then we mark the student as FirstGeneration.
If they do not have a FAFSA on file, use Target X/Admissions Data to determine if parents have a four-year degree.
- More specifically – Target X uses the Common App definition: Common App: The Common App uses answers provided within the common portion of the application to generate the

first-generation field, which can be pulled in the data catalog. We use the parent education information to generate a "tag" in the data catalog. If neither parent has a bachelor's degree or higher, the applicant will be identified as first-generation.

Gender Identity: The part of a person's identity that is about their sense of self as male or female, neither or both. ([DEIB Safe Zone training](#))

Gender Expression: The part of a person's identity that is about expressing masculinity or femininity as influenced by society, culture and individual expectations. ([DEIB Safe Zone training](#))

Measurement, Gender: Legal sex refers to the current designation on a person's birth certificate, driver's license, and/or U.S. state identification. In Common App, legal sex is a required single-select question. Starting in the 2023-24 cycle, the options for legal sex will be 'female', 'male', and 'X or another legal sex'.

Non-Traditional Students: Rather than focusing on age or other background characteristics, the criteria chosen to identify non-traditional students pertain to choices and behavior that may increase students' risk of attrition and as such, are amenable to change or intervention at various stages in a student's school life. With this intention, three sets of criteria were used to identify non-traditional students: 1) enrollment patterns, 2) financial and family status, and 3) high school graduation status:

1. Enrollment patterns: Assuming traditional enrollment in postsecondary education is defined as enrolling immediately after high school and attending full time, students who diverge from this pattern would be considered non-traditional. In this study, therefore, students who delayed enrollment in postsecondary education by a year or more after high school or who attended part time were considered non-traditional.

2. Financial and family status: Family responsibilities and financial constraints used to identify non-traditional students included having dependents other than a spouse, being a single parent, working full time while enrolled, or being financially independent from parents.

3. High school graduation status: Students who did not receive a standard high school diploma but who earned some type of certificate of completion were also considered non-traditional. This included GED recipients and those who received a high school certificate of completion. Students who did not graduate from high school or earn a certificate of completion (less than 2 percent) were removed from the analysis due to their limited access to 4-year colleges and universities. [From the NCES website.](#)

Pell eligible: New York Tech defines Pell eligibility as being based on financial need as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Pell Grants are awarded by the federal government to low-income students pursuing their first bachelor's degree or certain post-baccalaureate programs leading to teacher certification or licensure. These grants are need-based, and the amount awarded can vary depending on the student's financial situation. For more detailed information, you can visit the [New York Tech financial aid page.](#)

Preferred Name Policy: New York Institute of Technology recognizes that students, faculty and staff may prefer to use a first name other than their *Legal Name* to identify themselves. These may include, but are not limited to, people who use their middle name instead of their first name, people who use nicknames of a *Legal Name*, people who use an anglicized name, or people who use a name that affirms their gender identity. New York Tech refers to this as a *Preferred First Name*. This is a link to the [Preferred Name Policy | Policies | NYIT](#)

Key Concepts

Basic needs: An individual's basic needs begin with food, water, shelter, and safety. New York Tech conducted a survey to look at security levels students face within those various categories, specifically food and shelter.

Communities of Practice (CoP): Collaborative groups focused on enhancing specific areas of professional practice and learning. These communities aim to share knowledge, strategies, and experiences among members to improve their skills and effectiveness in their respective fields. Here is a link to more information: [Communities of Practice](#)

Data informed decision-making: The process of making decisions based on the analysis and interpretation of data. This approach emphasizes the use of accurate, relevant, and timely data to guide decision-making processes, ensuring that decisions are objective, evidence-based, and likely to lead to better outcomes. Key elements include:

- Collecting and analyzing data to understand trends, patterns, and relationships.
- Using data to identify problems, opportunities, and areas for improvement.
- Integrating data insights into strategic planning and operational decisions.
- Continuously monitoring and evaluating the impact of decisions to refine and improve future actions.

Data informed inclusive practices: Refers to strategies and actions that leverage data to foster inclusivity within an organization or community. This involves collecting, analyzing, and applying data to understand and address the diverse needs and experiences of all individuals. By using data, we can make informed decisions that promote equity, ensure diverse perspectives are considered, and create an environment where everyone feels valued and included.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging:

- **Diversity** focuses on the makeup of the organization — demographics such as gender, race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc.

- **Inclusion** is a measure of culture that enables diversity to thrive, the extent to which those in the organization feel welcomed, valued, and heard.
- **Equity** is the absence of avoidable, unfair or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, geographically or by other means of stratification. Equity acknowledges marginalized experiences and seeks to establish resources and opportunities to equip those in the organization with tools to be successful.
- **Belonging** is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group. It is when an individual can bring their authentic self to work.

Experiential Education: Experiential education is a pedagogy, or type of course, in which instructors purposefully engage with students in direct real-world experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop professional skills, clarify values, and prepare them for careers and their roles as citizens. One experiential education course is required for graduation for all undergraduate students who started in or after Fall 2023.

Holistic Student Success: Holistic student success at New York Tech involves a blend of academic support, personal and professional development, and proactive interventions to ensure students thrive during their time at the institution and beyond. ([Student Engagement & Development](#) and [Advising and Academic Success](#))

Inclusive excellence: An approach to diversity and inclusion that integrates these values into the core functioning of an organization. It recognizes that diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential to achieving excellence in all areas, including education, business, and community engagement. Inclusive excellence involves:

- Valuing diversity as a critical component of excellence.
- Creating an environment where all individuals can thrive.
- Promoting equitable access to opportunities and resources.
- Ensuring that policies, practices, and structures support inclusion and equity.

New York Tech: Innovation in Action / Strategic Action Plan: The title of the current university strategic action plan, which emphasizes making concrete changes that impact our learning and working environments, communities, and society at large. This work includes active collaboration across areas, units, offices, and campuses toward shared goals to optimize student success, drive innovation and discovery with diverse talent, sharpen institutional identity, and fortify institutional viability. Three themes cut across all of the work of the plan – equity consciousness, digital transformation, and operational efficiency & resource effectiveness. ([Action Plan Resources | About | New York Tech \(nyit.edu\)](#))

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs; KPI.org): are the critical (key) quantifiable indicators of progress toward an intended result. KPIs provide a focus for strategic and operational improvement, create an analytical basis for decision making and help focus attention on what matters most.

R+: Shorthand for the ongoing New York Tech institutional goal of increasing and/or optimizing student retention and graduation rates across all demographic groups.

R2 (Carnegie Classifications): Shorthand for the current New York Tech institutional goal of achieving R2 Doctoral University status according to the Carnegie Classification system.

Relationship rich education (from the book “Relationship-Rich Education”): “Decades of research demonstrate that peer-to-peer, student-faculty, and student-staff relationships are the foundation of learning, belonging, and achieving in college...Higher education must act so that all students experience welcome and care, become inspired to learn through interactions in and out of the classroom, cultivate constellations of important relationships, and use those to explore the big questions of their lives.”

Our library has the full text version of this book available here: [Relationship-Rich Education](#) (New York Tech login is required).

There’s also a companion book, intended for students, called Connections are Everything. The book is intended to empower students to make connections at college. A full download is available, at no cost, at [Project Muse](#).

Unconscious Bias: An inherent part of human behavior that can influence decisions and interactions in ways that might not be immediately apparent to individuals. ([DEIB](#))

Yes Culture: This term is a way to summarize a change in culture through the three cross-cutting themes of New York Tech: Innovation in Action, our university strategic action plan. It means we seek to create a culture in which we collectively say “yes” to addressing equity and inclusion in all decision-making and operations, “yes” to using data and technology to add value to what we do, and “yes” to embracing new ideas that improve how we do things.

Programs

Achieving Collegiate Excellence (ACE): The [Achieving College Excellence \(ACE\) program](#) is designed to provide holistic, personalized support to eligible undergraduate students who need to raise their cumulative GPA in order to meet scholarship requirements. Students are assigned an academic coach – the majority of whom are trained New York Tech faculty or staff – who provides them with individualized support and encourages them to explore their academic and personal goals to improve barriers to their academic success.

Bear Bytes: The [Bear Bytes](#) initiative provides food and other health and wellness resources and information to students at our New York campuses. A collaborative effort among campus partners—New York Tech Campus Dining Services, Student Engagement and Development, School of Management Student Advisory Board, Office of the Bursar, and community resources—Bear Bytes promotes and supports proper nutrition and wellness that are essential to academic success. Bear Bytes consists of two programs: Smart Meals and Grizzly Cupboard.

Consultants for the Public Good: [Consultants for the Public Good](#) connects New York Tech students, faculty, staff, and alumni with non-profit organizations for community-based, project-based and/or skill-based volunteer opportunities. This can be particularly exciting for students studying on a visa as they can gain vital US workplace experience, without fear of interrupting their time here. Additionally, since the program is project-based, the time commitment is less than an internship, which makes it easier for busy students to gain experience each semester.

Engineering Honors College: The [College of Engineering and Computing Sciences](#) at New York Tech provides top-performing students in the School of Engineering and Computing Sciences with enriched academic experiences. It focuses on developing critical thinking, leadership, and advanced research skills. This program allows students to engage in high-level engineering projects, often with industry collaboration, while offering a more personalized academic experience with faculty guidance.

- **Eligibility:** Open to academically strong students within the School of Engineering, typically based on GPA and faculty recommendation.

First-Gen Student Support: New York Tech strives to provide resources and services that help [first-gen students](#) to succeed academically and ultimately professionally, beyond New York Tech. Some of those resources and services include personalized academic advising, financial aid counseling, mental health and wellness support, and career development.

Grizzly Cupboard: [The Grizzly Cupboard](#), New York Institute of Technology's food and resource pantry, is a welcoming, inclusive and confidential on-campus location that offers free, wholesome, and healthy nonperishable food items and other resources. The Grizzly Cupboards are located on both New York campuses.

New York Tech Honors College: The [New York Tech Honors College](#) offers an enhanced academic experience for motivated, high-achieving students. Through interdisciplinary, project-based learning, Honors students collaborate with peers and faculty on real-world challenges, with a focus on leadership and personal growth. The curriculum includes specialized seminars linked to global issues, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Students also have access to dedicated resources, mentorship, and extracurricular opportunities designed to complement their academic journey.

- **Eligibility:** Once a student has been admitted to New York Tech, the Honors College application will be made available to qualifying students via their Admissions Portal.

Students must demonstrate strong academic performance, leadership, and community engagement, and submit a personal statement as part of the application process.

Smart Meals: The [Smart Meals program](#) offers individualized and confidential assistance to students at the New York campuses, helping to identify and explore potential financial resources to be used to purchase food items.

Student Employment: Student employment includes several opportunities for undergraduate students.

- **Federal Work Study (FWS):** These positions are fully funded by the U.S. government and are awarded to eligible students as part of their financial aid package. Funds are earned by working on- or off-campus for an hourly wage. To receive funds, students must file a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and indicate they would like to be considered for this program. After the FAFSA has been filed, New York Tech's Office of Financial Aid determines their eligibility and level of funding. Student Veterans may be eligible to work in positions serving Veterans on campus or at approved off-campus organizations. on the makeup of the organization — demographics such as gender, race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, etc.
- **Veteran Work Study:** Student Veterans may be eligible to work in positions serving Veterans on campus or at approved off-campus organizations.
- **Student Aid:** New York Institute of Technology funds a number of on-campus student aid positions. These hourly jobs are open to any matriculated student regardless of their financial aid package.
- **International Students Employment Fund (ISEF):** The ISEF provides additional on campus employment opportunities for international students who would otherwise not be able to obtain employment opportunities. Students must apply and be selected in order to be eligible for ISEF roles in Handshake, applications are open the first week of each semester. Students are paid at an hourly rate funded by the Office of Student Employment. Students with ISEF awards “own” this money so if they leave a position before earning their full award amount, the remaining funds go with them to be earned in another role within a fiscal year (July 1- June 30).

Student Research Opportunity Center (SROC): The SROC is a clearinghouse on which faculty members can post opportunities for New York Tech undergraduate and graduate students to engage in scholarly research and to work with faculty on research and grant projects. It is housed on the Handshake platform and students are able to search for available positions.

Supplemental Instruction: [Supplemental Instruction](#) is an academic support program that offers free, regularly scheduled, sessions for select undergraduate courses. The program targets historically challenging courses with high rates of D, F, W, grades. SI sessions are led by students who have previously taken the course, are recommended by the faculty of the course,

and have demonstrated mastery in the subject area. They work closely with the faculty of the course, attend each class meeting and prepare structured supplemental sessions to review the material covered in that class.

Tech Threads: [Tech Threads](#) provides New York Tech students with free access to new and gently-used professional clothing and accessories for interviews, career fairs, networking events, and the workplace, as well as other career-related experiences.

Tech Threads seeks to help students make the best impression possible as they explore and enter the professional world. It removes financial barriers that may prevent students from looking and feeling their best during professional experiences. The inventory may include suits, dresses, skirts, button-down shirts, dress pants, ties, belts, scarves, jewelry, and other accessories.

Clothing and accessories have been donated through the generosity of New York Tech staff, students, faculty, and community members. Items and sizes available will vary due to donations.

Surveys

Basic Needs Survey

Invitees: All students on NY and Vancouver campuses; does not include medical students.

Purpose: New York Tech conducted a survey to look at security levels students face within various categories, specifically food and shelter.

Links: [Building Support for Academic Success | New York Tech \(nyit.edu\)](#);

HEDS Diversity and Equity Survey

Participants: All students, faculty, and staff across NY, Vancouver, and Jonesboro campuses

Purpose:

- Gain a better understanding of the experiences and perceptions of students, faculty, and staff with regards to diversity, equity, and inclusion both in aggregate across the university and individually on each of our campuses and locations.
- Acquire a baseline for DEI perceptions and a benchmark against which we can measure future progress.
- Identify the areas where improvements need to be made and where they can have the greatest impact.
- Compare ourselves to other higher ed institutions to better understand what issues are unique to New York Tech and which are shared across other colleges and universities and how they are being successfully addressed.

Links: [New York Tech Climate Survey | Administrative Offices | New York Tech \(nyit.edu\)](#)

National Survey of Student Engagement

Participants: All undergraduate freshmen and seniors

Purpose: The [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (administered every three years, in rotation with the Noel-Levitz survey) provides benchmarked information about student participation in activities that support learning. It was administered for the first time at New York Tech in the spring of 2008 in an effort to increase information from and about students for the purpose of institutional planning.

Links: [About NSSE: NSSE: Evidence-Based Improvement in Higher Education: Indiana University](#)

Ruffalo Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory

Participants: All current undergraduate and graduate level students (excluding NYITCOM)

Purpose: The [RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory](#) is a survey instrument that measures student satisfaction and priorities. It assesses both the level of importance and the level of satisfaction that students assign to a variety of statements about their experience.

Links: [Student Satisfaction Data From the RNL Satisfaction-Priorities Surveys \(ruffalonl.com\)](#)

Reference Glossaries

1. Data Dictionary: https://web.nyit.edu/app/data_dictionary/
2. New York Tech Glossary for Students: https://www.nyit.edu/administrative_offices/new_york_tech_glossary
3. New York Tech Financial Aid Glossary: https://www.nyit.edu/admissions/financial_aid_glossary
4. College Unbound Workshop Glossary Exercise: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1igRP-w7AsB57djGz0hByuowlgZ0tqYr-ApLnBBGlaqs/edit?usp=sharing>
5. College Unbound Link: <https://4.files.edl.io/71ba/05/09/22/181826-dc49509e-3500-4be0-9af0-f5b2fa97f1e3.pdf>
6. Student Handbook: https://www.nyit.edu/policies/collection/student_handbook_us_edition

Community Note: *This glossary is a living and collaborative document that we anticipate will evolve over time. If you would like to make a contribution or recommend a revision, please email Erikka Vaughan evaughan@nyit.edu or Jessica Triola jtriola@nyit.edu.*