Tracy Templin, MAT, MSW
Assistant Professor, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Formerly:
Exec. Dir., Strategy and Operations, Undergraduate College, NLU
Director, Strategy and Analytics, Undergraduate College, NLU
Interim Director and Senior Manager, Magnet, Gifted, and IB Programs, Chicago Public Schools

Jennifer Robin, M.A.
Director of Strategy & Operations, Accelerate U at NLU

Formerly:
Director of Transfer Strategy, Undergraduate College, NLU
Director of Student Success, Undergraduate College, NLU
Founding Student Success Coach, Undergraduate College, NLU
Teacher & Department Chair, Chicago Public Schools
NLU Overview

An institution committed to serving diverse students….

- Non-profit university founded 135 years ago to educate Chicago’s immigrants
- 10K students served, incl. 4K undergrads
- 71% Pell-eligible, 65% First-Gen, 54% Black & Latinx; 40% essential workers; Average undergrad age of 29
- 70 programs across 5 colleges
- *Recognitions*: Top 25 Most Diverse Universities, Top 10 Colleges that Make the World a Better Place, #2 Best Bang for Buck in Midwest, #1 Private 4-Year Institution Destination of CPS Graduates

…and now serving the continuum of undergraduates to create multiple paths to economic mobility

Three Models, One Mission: Economic Mobility

- **Pathways at NLU** – driving equity in bachelor’s degree attainment and sustainable employment for *traditional-aged first-time undergraduates*.
- **Accelerate U at NLU** – driving rapid employment through short-term, credit-bearing, stackable credentials for *un- or underemployed adults and recent high school graduates*.
- **Direct to Success at NLU** – driving equity in bachelor’s degree attainment and sustainable employment for *students directly transferring associate’s degrees* from community colleges.
WHOM WE SERVE
Three distinct student populations, all high potential students with unique strengths and experiences

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<tr>
<th>JAIRO</th>
<th>AZAREEL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business major</td>
<td>Education Major</td>
<td>Medical Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>• First-Time Freshman</td>
<td>• Direct Transfer with Associate Degree from community college</td>
<td>• Returning adult student</td>
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<td>• First-gen college-goer</td>
<td>• Assistant Director of Day Care Center</td>
<td>• Now credentialed as a RMA to continue career at Lurie</td>
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<td>• Working multiple jobs</td>
<td>• Worked full-time while in school and parenting</td>
<td>• Raising two sons</td>
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<td>• Thought college was not an option</td>
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<td>• Working part-time as AU Alumni Coach &amp; getting BA in Healthcare Leadership at NLU</td>
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<td>• Graduated in 2019, currently a law clerk, &amp; enrolled in law school</td>
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**NLU’s Pathways (First-time Freshmen) program**

**The Vision:** *Driving equity in bachelor’s degree attainment and employment for traditional-aged first-time undergraduates*

1. **Equity of access for all students** through affordability ($10k/year for first-time freshmen, lowest in IL), convenient blended and online schedules so students can balance school with work and family (no more than 2 days/week on-campus), and broad access admissions (2.0+ GPA, no SAT/ACT requirement)

2. **Clear and well-rounded course pathways to degree completion** – with every student having access to general education coursework and a major, minor, and concentration – to minimize time to graduation and maximize student readiness for a broad range of careers

3. **Active, experiential, rigorous, and personalized classroom experience** – led by dedicated, expert faculty with real-world experience and utilizing flipped design, adaptive curriculum technologies, and data-informed, student-centered instruction – to drive student engagement and learning

4. **Holistic, data-informed support with personalized success coaching**, integrated non-cognitive skills building and co-requisite developmental education, wrap-around supports to meet life needs, and collaboration between faculty and staff to facilitate student persistence and success

5. **Embedded career preparation** – including credit-bearing career readiness curriculum, career coaching, and access to employer partners and work-based learning inclusive of an internship requirement – to help students cross the bridge from college graduation to career success
# NLU’s Direct to Success (D2S) program

## The Vision:
By 2025, NLU will be the top broad access 4-year institution for local community college transfer students.

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<th><strong>Great Value:</strong> 25% scholarship to students who transfer within one year of completing an associate’s degree at NLU partner colleges, and complete their bachelor’s degree at NLU within 3 years; &lt;$15K/year full-time, the most affordable private school in the Chicagoland area.</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Generous Credit Transferability &amp; Seamless Transfer Experience:</strong> Early NLU presence on partner campus to support student persistence and transfer, generous acceptance of transfer credits aligned with Illinois Articulation Initiative, broad access admissions (2.0+ GPA), and streamlined admissions with rapid transfer credit evaluation and early award estimates.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Convenient, Predictable Schedule:</strong> Schedule tailored to working adult students, and blending campus-based and online instruction, with day-time, evening, weekend, and online course options, and full-time students never required to be on-campus more than 2 days per week.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Career Acceleration:</strong> Integrated career development starting in first quarter at NLU, including a dedicated Career Advisor, the opportunity to participate in the nationally-recognized Braven Career Accelerator, and intensive job placement support to graduate with a job offer in-hand.</td>
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<td><strong>Support to Succeed:</strong> Small class sizes fueled by active learning and taught by expert faculty. A structured, co-curricular Third Year Experience, and a Transfer Student Support Hub offering academic and wraparound support with day-time, evening, and virtual hours.</td>
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<td><strong>Inclusive Community:</strong> A diverse and transfer-receptive school community dedicated to social belonging, racial equity, and empowering student voice through engagement.</td>
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We build our training with employers who are eager to hire students in 7-8 months!

Bridge to a great job

Real world clinical experiences

Expert faculty & coaches

Industry credentials + college credit

A positive learning community

Affordable

Students spend 4-6 weeks in a field-based Externship, learning how to do the job.

Each cohort has an instructor and a coach who know the field and work together to support students.

Students earn 30 NLU college credits and a nationally-recognized Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) cert.

Students move through the program as a cohort – getting to know and learning from peers.

Our program costs $7,000. If you’re full Pell/MAP eligible, you’ll pay $0 out of pocket and leave with no debt.
Discussion:
How can we best support students in deciding how to start or continue their post-secondary path?

How do we know if a certificate program, 2-year Associates, or 4-year Bachelor’s degree is the right first step?
Partnerships to Support Student Success

Successes and Challenges
❖ Opportunity to develop relationships between entities, make connections and leverage resources
❖ Feedback loops on what is working and what is not (ex., first cohorts from OneGoal)
❖ Individual and relationship intensive, as personnel transition, relationships ebb and flow
❖ Focused on transition and 1st year of college, but after persisting to 2nd year collaboration falls short

Examples
❖ **K-12 Partnerships**: Conversations and convening with High School counselors, sharing high level data; Dual credit models
❖ **Non-profit Partnerships**: Meetings with local program staff, sharing student-level (with consent) and cohort data, with referrals for support
❖ **Employer Partnerships**: At AU, tracks are launched based on market demand; revisions to course content based on employer feedback on student readiness, which leads to a continuous cycle of innovation.
Your turn:

- In groups, please discuss ways in which your organizations have built partnerships to support student success.

- What makes this work challenging?

Be ready to share out.
Lessons Learned and the Path Forward

- Reinforcing and Expanding Partnerships
- Addressing Equity Gaps
- Innovating Academic Portfolio
- Continuing to Innovate and Support Student Success
- Strengthening Coaching & Advising Model
- Expanding Wraparound Student Supports
- Strengthening Career Preparation & Placement Model