



Empowering Student Momentum at HBCUs

How a multi-year coaching initiative across
39 institutions strengthened student support,
persistence and completion



insidetrack®

Executive Summary

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) are navigating a defining moment: an era of rising student enrollment and interest, growing philanthropic support and increased attention to student success, rising demand for academic and non-academic student support, and an urgent need to help more learners persist through graduation. As more students look to these campuses for academic opportunity, cultural belonging and a clear path forward, campus teams are being asked to carry more with limited time, staff and capacity. For many students, momentum can be challenged by complex hurdles outside the classroom, including financial barriers, caregiving responsibilities, employment demands and other pressures.

One-on-one coaching helps address this collective challenge by providing steady, sustainable support throughout the learner journey. To serve HBCUs and their learners with consistency, context and care, InsideTrack created a dedicated [HBCU Program Area](#) in 2021 to anchor this work. Led today by Associate Vice President Henri LaSane, Ed.D., this organizational commitment has shaped an approach designed to meet institutions where they are, respect the missions and cultures that already support student success, and extend capacity in ways that remain connected to each campus community.

To support this work at scale, InsideTrack partnered with HBCUs across the country to provide an added layer of individualized support, helping institutions reach learners at multiple points in their journey and turn outreach into sustained student momentum. From Fall 2021 through Spring 2026, InsideTrack's coaching programs reached 43,819 total learners across 39 HBCUs. Support included [Retention Coaching](#) for 11,815 currently enrolled students and [Re-enrollment Coaching](#) for 23,886 stopped-out students.

"Effective partnership with HBCUs starts with respect for the history, culture and leadership already present on each campus. Our role was to add capacity in ways that strengthened, rather than replaced, those institutional relationships — helping more students stay connected to the support, momentum and sense of belonging that keep completion within reach."

— HENRI LASANE, ED. D., Associate Vice President of HBCU Programs, InsideTrack

KEY OUTCOMES AT A GLANCE: FALL 2021–SPRING 2026

43,819

enrolled, stopped-out and prospective learners served across 39 HBCUs

83.8%

fall-to-spring retention rate for actively enrolled students

6.9%

re-enrollment rate, representing **1,343** re-enrolled students — **2.5X** the national average

2,322

HBCU graduates supported by InsideTrack Coaching

\$26.9M

total tuition revenue created for 31 HBCUs*

212%

return on investment for Retention and Re-enrollment Coaching

**As of July 2026, 31 of 39 participating institutions have provided student outcomes data.*

Through an intentional, high-touch sequence of personalized multichannel engagement and one-on-one coaching, coaches built trust, deepened human connection and helped students identify challenges, clarify next steps and build a plan to keep moving forward. This approach prioritized support for learners navigating layered responsibilities and barriers, including adult learners, Black male learners and students managing financial, academic and personal challenges. Together, these coaching interactions surfaced student-centered insights that informed institutional practices. At the same time, coaching extended institutional capacity for individualized student support.

The results of personalized, 1:1 coaching point to the institutional value of sustained, student-centered engagement. Across the cohort of 39 institutions, Re-enrollment Coaching achieved a **6.9% re-enrollment rate — 2.5 times the national average** — helping 1,343 students return to their institutions, supporting renewed academic momentum and more stable institutional outcomes. For actively enrolled students, the cohort also achieved an **83.8% fall-to-spring retention rate**, reflecting the value of steady support during critical moments in the academic year. Over time, more than 2,000 graduates have been connected to this work, extending the impact beyond enrollment and persistence into completion — increasing students' economic and social mobility while strengthening the national workforce. Together, these outcomes show how coaching reconnected students whose momentum was interrupted, helped more learners continue toward completion and strengthened institutional capacity for student support.



Table of Contents

A defining moment for HBCUs	Page 4
Building on momentum while tackling complex challenges	Page 6
The solution:	
Holistic coaching across the learner journey	Page 7
Individual impact:	
How coaching strengthened student outcomes and momentum	Page 11
Institutional impact:	
Strengthening the campus ecosystem	Page 16
Completion momentum across the network	Page 18
Scaling and sustaining:	
Extending capacity and the path to completion	Page 19

A defining moment for HBCUs

Throughout their history, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been models of creative problem-solving, academic rigor and advancing student success amid resource constraints. While they represent only 3% of higher education institutions nationwide, they produce nearly [20% of all Black graduates](#) — an outsized contribution that reflects generations of cultural affirmation, deep belonging and high expectations.

HBCUs remain vital institutions for student momentum, helping learners pursue degrees that carry value for their families, communities and careers. As a nonprofit student success coaching partner, InsideTrack approached this work with student-centered coaching expertise aligned to the missions, strengths and cultures of these campuses.

For InsideTrack, the work began with a simple understanding: every campus carries its own history, strengths and student stories, and the path to completion does not look the same for everyone. Through [collaboration with nearly half of all HBCUs nationwide](#), InsideTrack saw how support had to adapt to the unique priorities and realities of each institution. Across those partnerships, InsideTrack worked to align coaching support with each campus's mission, student population and existing culture of care. For this report, the cohort included **39 HBCUs and 43,819 learners** served through InsideTrack Retention and Re-enrollment Coaching programs from Fall 2021 through Spring 2026.

By exploring the experiences, pain points and successes of these learners and institutions, this report examines how steady human coaching support expanded capacity for campus teams and kept more students connected to the resources they needed to continue toward completion.

SELECTED HBCU PARTNERS REPRESENTED IN THIS WORK



OUR NETWORK PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

This work [originated in 2021](#) through a centralized network partnership model designed to build a culture of transformation and bring coordinated coaching support to HBCUs. This landmark initiative was made possible by foundational philanthropic support from Blue Meridian Partners as part of the [HBCU Transformation Project](#) — a collaborative effort that seeks to improve student outcomes and increase the health and sustainability of these vital institutions.



blue meridian
partners

“Despite historic underfunding and an array of systemic barriers, HBCUs have a remarkable track record of creating pathways to socioeconomic mobility for students of color and first-generation students. Scaling the impact of HBCUs requires equipping them with individual supports and services that build on the strengths of the schools, that are financially sustainable, and that improve the student journey to successful outcomes. Individualized coaching will support HBCUs in ensuring students can set and achieve their own goals, and capacity building will allow this work to continue into the future.”

— JAMES RUNCIE, CEO and
Co-founder, Ed Advancement



Building on momentum while tackling complex challenges

For the HBCU partners represented in this report, the promise of momentum also brought a practical challenge: how to meet growing student demand while supporting learners with increasingly complex academic and non-academic needs. As these institutions worked to build on student interest and strengthen support across the learner journey, campus teams were often asked to carry more with lean staffing, compressed timelines and long-standing resource limitations. For these institutions, the challenge has never been lack of care or commitment. It was capacity.

A team member focused on enrolling incoming students might also have been the person trying to reconnect with learners who stepped away before completing their degree. When currently enrolled students needed immediate support, the steady follow-through that stopped-out learners often needed could become harder to maintain.

Across this cohort, the path back to enrollment or forward to completion was just as layered. Many students were motivated by clear goals for their lives and futures, while also managing work, caregiving responsibilities and life outside the classroom. Then came the steps that could slow momentum: financial aid questions, registration requirements, unresolved holds or uncertainty about whether returning still felt possible.

Amongst the 43,819 learners in this cohort, those moments told a larger story about how progress could stall. The issue was not that students lacked ambition or that institutions lacked commitment. Re-engagement often depended on steady follow-up and support through barriers at the very point when both students and campus teams were carrying the most.

Together, those conditions made sustained coaching support a vital way to extend capacity without replacing the care already present on campus.

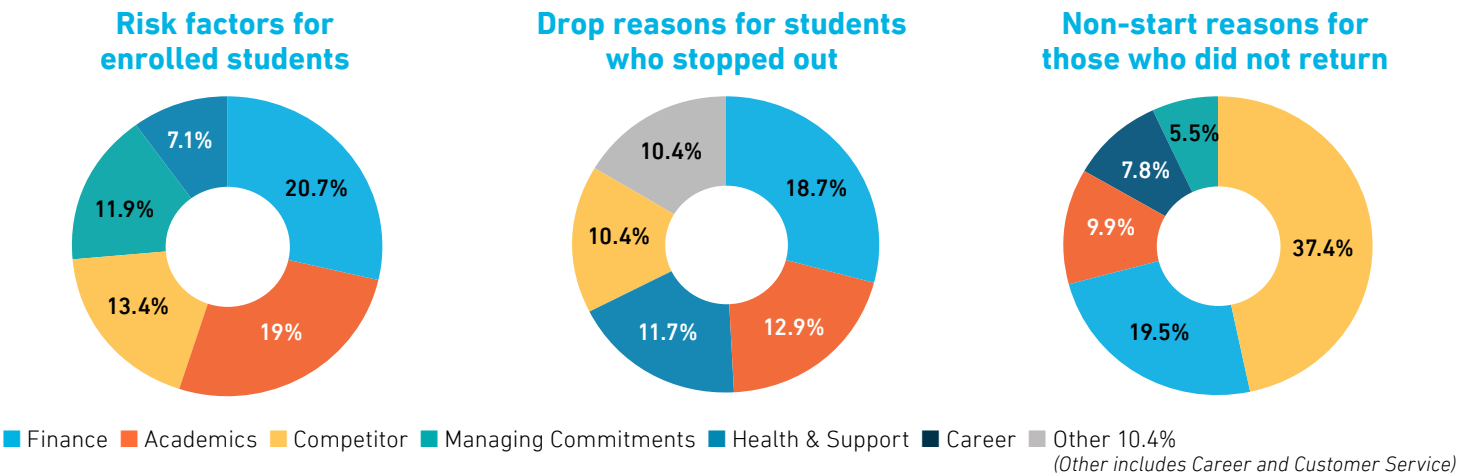
"I've come so far to give up. I know that my time to complete school is well overdue, but I believe the opportunity is going to present itself. I want to finish school, and I have every intention to move forward. I just have to find the resources needed to keep myself moving in the right direction.

My college experience was rocky. Not knowing who to talk to regarding the right information needed to graduate, constant changes with advisors, and needing support but not getting much communication to help me understand...

My success coach stayed involved and never let me think she was just interacting with me because it was her job. Her involvement was amazing."

— STOPPED-OUT LEARNER from a Mississippi public HBCU

LISTENING TO LEARNERS: COACHING REVEALED STUDENT SUCCESS BARRIERS



The solution:

Holistic coaching across the learner journey

Proven coaching methodology: Building trust before action

To meet the needs of HBCU learners and institutions, coaches used [InsideTrack's research-proven methodology](#) and rigorous coach training to provide proactive, individualized support. This multi-year coaching initiative was designed and delivered by InsideTrack's dedicated HBCU Program Area leadership, 7 partnership directors and 28 [professionally trained success coaches](#). Nearly all were HBCU alumni, bringing not only InsideTrack's cultural competency training but also, in many cases, shared lived experience that helped them understand the context of the learners they coached and the campus teams they worked alongside.

The work included helping students clarify goals, identify barriers and take next steps toward enrollment, persistence or re-enrollment. Coaches built trust before moving to action, using holistic assessment techniques to understand each learner's context before identifying a path forward. Through open-ended dialogue and guided problem-solving, coaches helped students name their goals, identify key barriers and build the Knowledge, Skills and Beliefs (KSBs) to strengthen their own agency.

In practice, this equipped students to navigate financial, academic or administrative systems, ask the right questions, make informed decisions and advocate for themselves. Just as important, coaching strengthened confidence and belonging, so barriers were less likely to feel like proof that a student did not belong and more like challenges that could be named, navigated and worked through.

Because coaches were not the people assigning grades, administering aid, or making disciplinary decisions, they could create a different kind of conversation with learners. That relationship-centered space gave students room to speak openly about personal, financial, or administrative hurdles, while remaining anchored to institutional goals for their success. For many HBCU learners, shared cultural context helped deepen trust and strengthen connection, while the coaching methodology itself remained grounded in empathy, active listening and student-centered support.

"Higher education spaces can sometimes feel intimidating or disconnected from a student's lived experiences. In coaching, we work to eliminate those walls so students feel comfortable showing up as they are, judgment-free. Using relatable language and shared cultural understanding — like African American Vernacular English (AAVE) — creates comfort, trust and connection. It changes how students feel interpreted, respected and supported."

— **BRIA ANDERSON**, InsideTrack
Success Coach

"My coach has helped me to be more vulnerable, to be more trusting and helped me believe in myself and not be so hard on myself."

—**MOET EVANS-HOLLOWAY**,
Johnson C. Smith University Student

[WATCH MOET'S STORY »](#)



Supporting students when momentum is at stake

Students moved through the learner journey in different ways, with support needs changing as their circumstances and momentum changed. Some needed support before their first day of class, while others were building momentum on campus or navigating a change in circumstances. [Enrollment Coaching](#) supported prospective students early, helping them move through the administrative hurdles that can stall a journey before it begins. [Retention Coaching](#) helped enrolled students stay connected when academic, financial and life responsibilities began to compound, building the confidence and proactive agency they needed to keep moving forward. [Re-enrollment Coaching](#) reached learners whose momentum had been interrupted, providing steady support as they stabilized their path, returned and continued toward completion.

COACHING ACROSS THE LEARNER JOURNEY



While Enrollment Coaching represented a vital point-of-entry service for the prospective-student cohort, this report focuses its analysis downstream to examine how sustained coaching stabilized momentum for currently enrolled students and cleared a path back to completion for those who had stepped away.



Aligning coaching to student and campus needs

The 43,819 learners in this cohort represented many stories, each shaped by distinct goals, responsibilities and paths toward completion — as well as an array of ages, life circumstances and academic journeys. Of coached learners with school-provided demographics, adult learners accounted for 39.7% of the population, representing a large group of learners who are balancing the return to the classroom with the multifaceted responsibilities of adulthood. For many adult learners, Re-enrollment Coaching served as a bridge back into the academic rhythms, requirements and decisions that shape momentum. At the same time, Black male learners represented 33.1% of the learner population, underscoring the importance of relational trust and culturally responsive support in helping [Black male learners enroll](#), persist and stay connected at critical points along the learner journey. Across a group of 13 public HBCUs, this support proved to be a powerful equalizer for re-enrollment: **Black male students who engaged with a coach achieved a 15.1% re-enrollment rate — reflecting a 10.8 percentage-point lift over unengaged peers, effectively closing the baseline equity gap.**

39.7%

adult learners

33.1%

Black male learners

+10.8% pts.

higher re-enrollment rate for Black male students who met with a coach

HOW PARTNERS SHAPED COACHING ROSTERS

Rather than deploying generic outreach, InsideTrack collaborated with HBCU partners to shape coaches' rosters around local data, student needs and institutional priorities, including:

Stopped-out Students:

- Stop-out recency between 2019 and 2023
- Outstanding-balance thresholds between \$1,000 and \$5,000
- Credits remaining to graduate

Enrolled Students:

- Academic standing
- Learning modality
- Residency

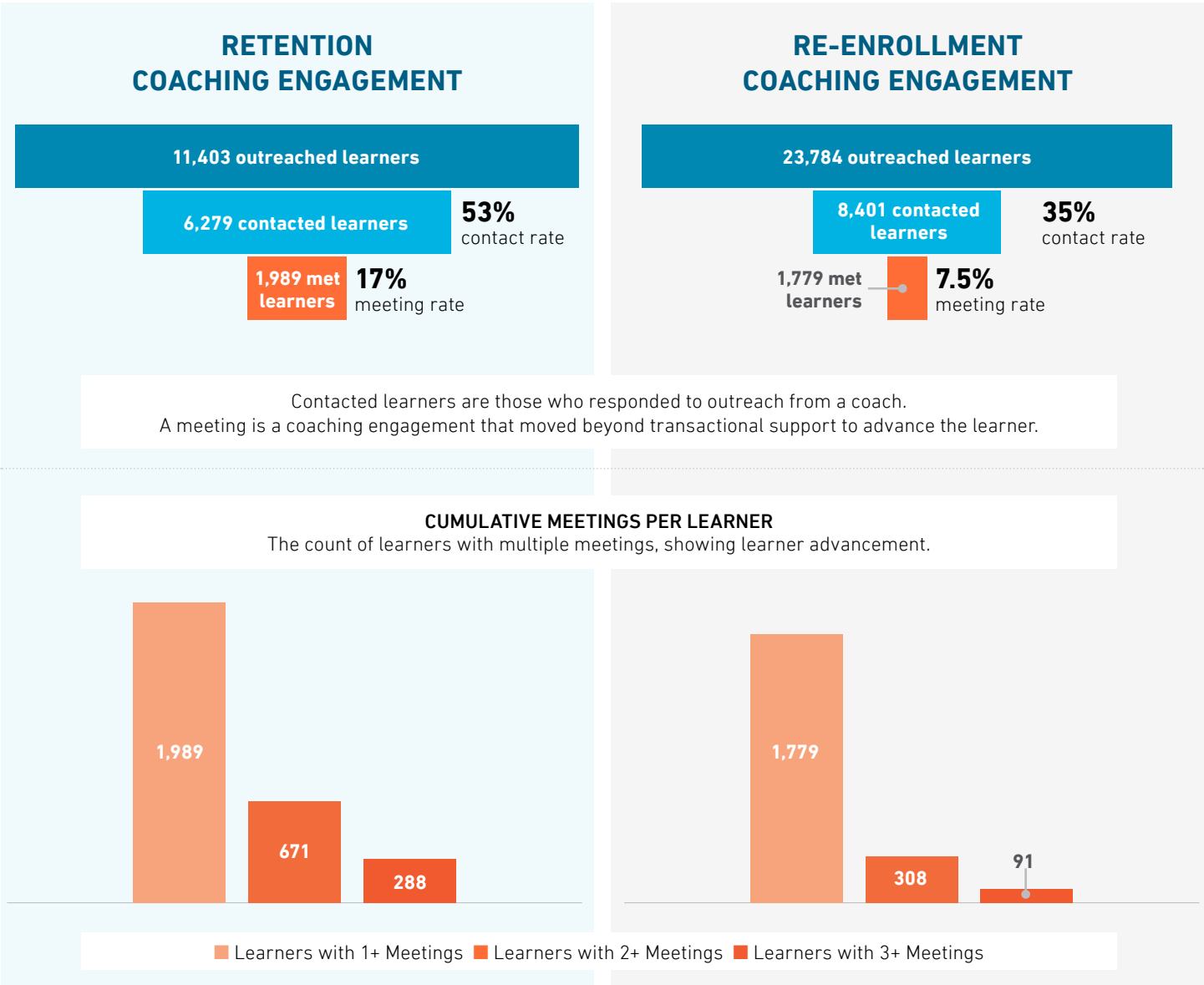
Once engaged, coaches helped students navigate underlying administrative friction and connect with campus resources already built to support their progress, including First-Year Experience programs, fee waivers, early alerts, tutoring and predictive analytics. In this way, coaching extended the reach of the support systems campuses had already put in place, helping those investments reach students at the moments when added support could keep momentum from slowing.



Measuring coaching activity: From outreach to engagement

Once rosters were created, the activity data showed how coaching supported HBCU capacity across the learner journey in two distinct ways. Across Re-enrollment Coaching engagements, **more than one in three stopped-out learners (35%) responded to coaching outreach** — a strong signal of the sustained outreach capacity required to reopen a path to enrollment. The meeting patterns added another layer to that story, showing how coaching could flex from a single point of reassurance to multiple sessions for learners navigating more complex barriers. For campus teams already pouring their energy into the students right in front of them, maintaining this level of repeated follow-up is less a question of commitment and more about the structural realities of limited time.

Retention Coaching tells a different story, shifting the value from sustained outreach capacity to specialized coaching expertise. Among currently enrolled students, **the 53% contact rate and 17% meeting rate show what happened when support was close at hand**. Coaching engagement relied on an adaptable, multichannel strategy to meet learners where they were with text messaging as the primary door-opener for initial contact and phone calls for deeper coaching sessions. A first message might have resolved an immediate administrative hurdle, but the repeat-meeting patterns revealed something much more durable: a steady accumulation of trust. These recurring conversations gave students the space to reflect, build confidence and take an active role in shaping their own persistence strategy. Over time, that continuous connection helped students build the KSBs they needed to overcome obstacles, advocate for themselves and continue toward completion.



Individual impact:

How coaching strengthened student outcomes and momentum

Strengthening the Knowledge, Skills and Beliefs behind student success

After outreach opened the door, one-on-one coaching conversations gave students space to pause, sort through what was in front of them and name a practical next step connected to their goals.

Through regular, individualized meetings with their coach, students had space to build and strengthen their KSBs. That work supported the capacities students draw on as they move through college: self-advocacy, resource navigation, a clearer sense of belonging and the confidence to ask questions or take the next step. Peer-reviewed research [published in the *International Journal of Mentorship and Coaching*](#) reinforces the value of safe, supportive coaching environments where students can build resilience, self-belief, accountability and a growth mindset — skills that can help sustain motivation when the path forward becomes difficult.

That growth became visible in what students did next. Partner feedback from program delivery discussions pointed to students taking independent action after connecting with a coach, including reaching out to professors, contacting campus offices, navigating financial aid or registration steps, and resolving administrative holds. As students practiced using campus resources and moving through complex institutional processes, confidence became more than an idea; it became something they could act on. The outcomes that follow begin there — with students better equipped to take the next step, use the support around them and continue moving toward completion.

“We often see students transition from feeling uncertain to taking decisive, independent action when they have a consistent and supportive environment to address their challenges. For instance, a learner may begin a coaching session feeling overwhelmed by financial requirements or an administrative hold. However, by collaboratively breaking down the process, they can develop the self-advocacy skills and confidence necessary to identify the appropriate campus resources, formulate their questions, and take empowering next steps with greater independence.”

— MICHELLE SMITH, Senior Program Director, InsideTrack



KNOWLEDGE

Coaching empowers students to understand themselves, their institutions, and the resources that will support their goals

- Strengths, goals, and values
- Strategies for achieving goals
- School culture and expectations



SKILLS

Coaches support students as they identify and develop the abilities that will promote their goals

- Goal Setting
- Self-Advocacy
- Problem Solving



BELIEFS

Coaching celebrates and reinforces beliefs that serve students' values and goals.

- “I am here for a reason.”
- “I have the knowledge and skills I need to succeed.”
- “I am part of a community that supports my goals.”

Supporting term-to-term persistence through Retention Coaching

Coaching strengthened student confidence and navigation skills, which mattered when students moved from one term to the next. For enrolled students, persistence depended on more than completing a single semester — it called for steady progress through academic requirements, financial decisions and personal responsibilities that could shift as deadlines approached. Coaching provided a consistent point of contact during those moments, giving students space to connect their long-term goals to immediate choices and stay engaged with the campus resources around them.

Across the cohort, students achieved an **83.8% fall-to-spring retention rate and a 63.5% fall-to-fall retention rate**. Active coaching engagement was associated with even stronger fall-to-spring persistence: **students who met with a coach had a 90.4% retention rate**, compared with 82.4% for students who did not complete a coaching meeting — **an 8.0 percentage-point difference**.

For participating campuses, stronger term-to-term persistence also carried institutional value. The additional students retained beyond each school's historical retention baseline represented an estimated **\$15.9M in additional tuition revenue and a 102% return on the initial coaching investment**. More importantly, these outcomes pointed back to the student story at the center of the work: when learners stayed connected through key term transitions, they were better positioned to remain on the path toward completion.

83.8%

fall-to-spring retention

63.5%

fall-to-fall retention

90.4%

fall-to-spring retention for students who met with a coach vs. students who did not complete a coaching meeting (82.4%) — an 8 percentage-point difference

\$15.9M

increased tuition revenue

102%

return on investment

"I've worked closely with first-year students and have seen how coaching can really help them stay on track. By having honest conversations, setting goals, and truly listening, students became more aware of their actions and started making better choices to help them gain confidence. Many students started the program feeling unsure about college, but over time, took control of their progress and began using helpful campus resources that they never knew existed. I've seen many of them push through personal and academic struggles. I'm proud to be part of a program that helps students grow, stay focused, and succeed."

— **DR. DENISE VAUGHN**, Director of Academic Labs and First and Second Year Experience, Alabama State University

NOTE: Revenue is calculated from school-reported retention outcomes and supplemented with [College Scorecard](#) public data including net tuition per term and historical retention rates by school. Total Retention Coaching revenue reflects single-term tuition for students retained above each school's historical rate. ROI represents net revenue divided by the initial coaching investment cost.

"Looking back to where I was before I started with my coach and where I'm at right now with her, I'd say my perspective has done a 180° shift."

—**YAFREYSY MORA**, Johnson C. Smith University

[WATCH YAFREYSY'S STORY »](#)



Restoring paths to degree completion through Re-enrollment Coaching

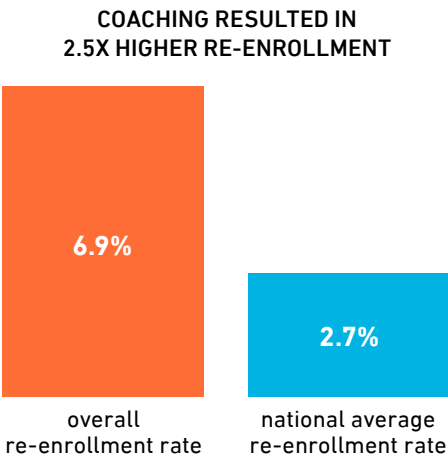
For stopped-out learners, returning to school often required more than a reminder that re-enrollment was possible. Many still carried the goal of completing their degree, but the path back seemed difficult to navigate after time away. Students needed support to understand which steps remained, resolve administrative or financial questions, reconnect with campus offices, and gain enough clarity to act. For students across the cohort, collaborative outreach helped create that path back by giving them a clearer point of contact as they considered returning to their institutions and continuing their education.

Among 30 HBCUs reporting student outcomes, **the overall re-enrollment rate was 6.9%, 2.5X the national average of 2.7%**, with multiple schools reporting return rates as high as 12–13%. Individualized coaching supported **1,343 students in returning to their institutions** — learners who were able to reconnect with an interrupted degree path, take the next step toward completion and move closer to the future they had been working toward.

For participating institutions, re-enrollment also carried a meaningful operational and financial case. Many campus teams did not have the bandwidth to sustain repeated outreach to stopped-out learners at scale, even when those students remained close to a possible return. Coaching added focused capacity to help reconnect former learners who already had a relationship with the institution, making re-enrollment a meaningful opportunity for both student success and institutional sustainability. Of the 30 HBCUs reporting outcomes, the returns represented an estimated **\$11M in recovered tuition revenue and a 1,254% return on investment**.

“You reached out to me a couple of months ago about coming back, and I was put off coming back. But I actually am returning this fall, and I just wanted to let you know. I think I was too focused on the negative reason and forgot the goal, which is to get my degree. Ultimately, I believe it was the conversation I had with you that made me open my eyes to that. So I appreciated that so much.”

— STOPPED-OUT STUDENT, Wilberforce University



6.9%
re-enrollment rate —
2.5X the national average

10.9%
re-enrollment for students who made contact with
their coach — 6.7% points higher than students
who did not respond

\$11M
increased tuition revenue

1,343
students returned to
30 HBCUs

17.3%
re-enrollment for students who met with a coach —
11.4% points higher than students who did
not complete a coaching meeting

1,254%
return on investment

NOTE: Revenue is calculated based on school-reported re-enrollment outcomes data and net tuition price per term from [College Scorecard](#). Total Re-enrollment Coaching revenue includes tuition for all learners re-enrolled in the target term. To calculate ROI, net revenue is divided by the initial cost of the coaching investment.

Sustaining momentum past the point of return

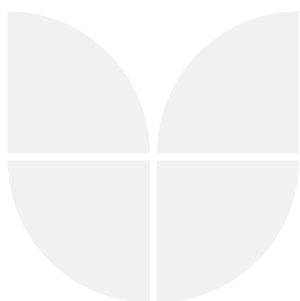
Coaches continued working with students after the initial re-enrollment step, providing a reliable point of contact during the transition back into active enrollment. As learners returned to the rhythms of being enrolled — including managing coursework, financial obligations, time management and personal responsibilities — this steady support helped them clarify next steps, navigate issues as they arose and stay connected with enough momentum to continue into the next consecutive term.

53%

continuous term-to-term persistence
among re-enrolled students with
post-return tracking

350

out of 660 tracked returning learners
continued into the next
consecutive term



“The impact of the coaches working with our students to re-enroll at Wiley has been life-changing. The relationship they’re able to build with the student to remove barriers allows the student to communicate their very needs. We don’t want our students to be seen as a number. We want them to really engage and graduate. Coaching is the guiding plan of action addressing the issue or the concern that was presented the first time. So we’re able to re-engage and re-enroll that student, and there’s a win-win.”

— **DR. HOWARD GIBSON**, former VP
Academic Affairs and Strategic Retention,
Wiley University

“Coaching helped me handle the challenges that I faced by getting me to realize that I need to put forth effort and vouch for myself in any situation.”

— **KAYLA HALLMAN**, Student, Florida
A&M University

[WATCH KAYLA'S STORY »](#)

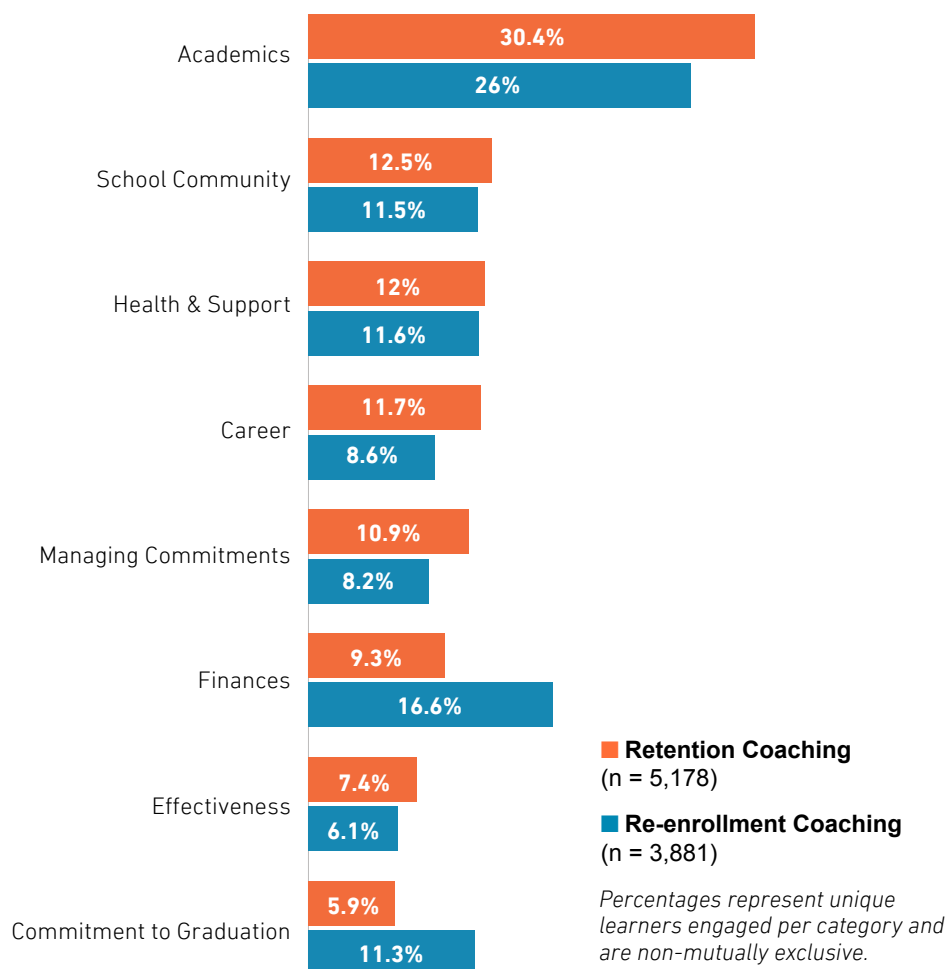


Strategic coaching insights: Surfacing patterns of student support

The learner outcomes tell one part of the story. Analysis of coaching conversations by focus area offers another: a clearer picture of the topics students most often raised as they sought clarity, connection and navigation. Across participating campuses, those conversations revealed patterns of shared needs and meaningful differences at each stage of the student journey.

Academics was the primary focus area for actively enrolled and stopped-out students, underscoring how often learners used coaching conversations to work through academic expectations, requirements and next steps. From there, the patterns shifted in ways that offered useful insight for campus leaders. **For actively enrolled students, school community emerged as one of the most common themes**, reinforcing the importance of belonging, cultural connection and campus engagement in ongoing student support. **For stopped-out students, finances was a leading focus area**, pointing to the practical barriers that could shape whether returning felt possible. These conversations included questions about balances, holds, payment steps or other financial processes. Together, these patterns showed how coaching conversations helped institutions identify where student needs were concentrated and where policies, processes or resources needed closer attention.

WHERE STUDENTS SOUGHT SUPPORT IN COACHING CONVERSATIONS



INSIDE THE COACHING SESSION: Turning support into a practical plan

For one third-year music major at Johnson C. Smith University, coaching became a place to turn academic goals into a practical plan for the term. In conversations with her coach, she focused on time management, motivation, planner use and a daily schedule spreadsheet that helped her organize assignments and stay connected to her goals. The work was practical, but the relationship also mattered.

As the student told her coach, "I did say my friends and my family are my backbone, but also I really feel like you are going to be a big help and a part of my backbone as well while I'm going through school. I appreciate you and your support."

Institutional impact: Strengthening the campus ecosystem

Extending capacity while keeping campuses at the center

Once students had a plan, the next challenge was helping them stay connected long enough to act on it. That work often unfolded during high-demand enrollment periods, when campus teams balanced several priorities at once. At one participating institution, staff were supporting new-student recruitment while also managing outreach to stopped-out learners considering a return. Coaching added a coordinated layer of support during those moments, helping maintain student follow-up and seamlessly extend the reach of campus teams. The work was designed to strengthen existing campus efforts, not shift student relationships away from the institution. As coaches stayed in contact with learners, they also created another point of visibility for campus leaders, helping identify barriers that could otherwise be hard to see in real time, from financial holds and administrative questions to personal concerns that required timely connection back to campus resources.

InsideTrack provided regular coaching updates so campus leaders could see where students were engaging, what questions were coming up and which focus areas were most active. Over time, those updates helped connect coaching insights to enrollment, advising and student-success goals, building impact in the partnership as the work continued. These partnerships stayed aligned because coaches remained connected to campus priorities — students received consistent outreach and planning support while institutions remained at the center of advising, enrollment and student success. The larger lesson was not just that more outreach was possible, but that coordinated support was strongest when students, coaches and campus teams stayed connected to the same path forward.



Partnership success factors for effectiveness and alignment

Strong partnership alignment depended on more than a shared commitment. Across a multi-campus network, coaching was most effective when it met institutions where they were, with tailored strategic guidance and support connected directly to the people, priorities and student-support systems already in place.

Participating campuses brought their own advising, enrollment and student-success expertise to the work. The partnership was strongest when that campus expertise shaped coaching plans, the cadence for collaboration and the way insights were connected back to student-facing teams.

Across these partnerships, three recurring conditions helped the work stay aligned: proactive implementation planning, consistent data sharing and cross-campus coordination. Proactive implementation planning helped campus and coaching teams begin with clear roles, shared timelines and common expectations. Consistent data sharing gave leaders a clearer view of where students were engaging, which focus areas were most active and what support needs were surfacing. Cross-campus coordination helped connect coaching to existing advising, enrollment and student-success workflows, keeping the work aligned with institutional priorities rather than operating separately from campus systems.



Plan implementation proactively

Clear roles, shared timelines and early coordination helped campus and coaching teams begin with the same expectations.



Share data consistently

Regular updates gave campus leaders visibility into student engagement, active focus areas and emerging support needs.



Coordinate around campus priorities

By meeting institutions where they were, coaching stayed connected to existing advising, enrollment and student-success priorities rather than operating separately from the institution.

Applying student insights and strategic recommendations to improve future support

The outcomes throughout this section showed how sustained student momentum could support both learner progress and institutional health. The engagement patterns behind those results offered a deeper look at where students sought support as they navigated the learner journey. Across areas such as academics, finances and school community, learners showed where they most often needed guidance or connection. Looking across these trends helped campus leaders consider where future learners may benefit from earlier communication, more direct next steps or stronger visibility into the resources already available to them.

Rather than suggesting rigid administrative mandates, these patterns highlighted where student-facing teams could refine communication timing, clarify requirements and documentation steps, and make academic, financial and belonging-related resources easier to find. They also brought the story back to the central purpose of the work: helping more students stay connected to the support they needed to continue toward completion.

Align communication with student decision points

Use focus-area patterns to consider when students most need reminders, deadline clarity or guidance before key academic and enrollment actions.

Clarify steps related to holds and documentation

Help students understand what is needed, where to go and what to prepare when administrative or financial requirements affect their next step.

Improve visibility into existing resources

Make academic, financial and belonging-related resources easier for students to find early enough to support timely action.

Completion momentum across the network

Completion is the defining long-term outcome of the student journey and a key marker of coaching's impact, with the potential to expand access to career opportunity, economic mobility and community impact. A network-wide analysis verified through [National Student Clearinghouse](#) (NSC) data confirmed that 2,322 unique learners supported across the Retention Coaching and Re-enrollment Coaching tracks completed their degrees. That milestone builds on the momentum tracked throughout this report: learners staying connected, addressing immediate barriers and continuing from one term to the next.

The milestone also aligns with [Early Momentum Metrics research](#), which emphasizes that near-term persistence measures can serve as leading indicators of longer-term student success. In that context, the term-to-term progress shown throughout this report reinforced the same principle: early momentum mattered because each kept connection, resolved barrier and completed transition could strengthen the path toward degree attainment.

2,300+
coaching-supported
graduates across
the network

NOTE: Data reflects verified degree completions confirmed through the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), matched to learners supported through the initiative across the Retention Coaching and Re-enrollment Coaching tracks.



Scaling and sustaining:

Extending capacity and the path to completion

A shared foundation for continued student success

The value of this work extends beyond the metrics. It lives in the students who reconnected with their goals, the learners who kept moving from term to term and the campus teams that kept support within reach. Across the network, coaching served as a supportive layer aligned with institutional priorities, helping students understand their next steps, develop agency and stay connected to the people and resources already around them.

InsideTrack's HBCU partners remain the academic, cultural and mission anchors of this work. Their leadership, student-facing teams and existing support efforts helped make shared momentum possible. The partnership between these institutions and InsideTrack added coordinated outreach and student-level insight in service of that foundation, carrying forward the central purpose of the initiative: helping more learners remain connected long enough to continue toward completion and the opportunities that follow.

These completed milestones bring the narrative back to the long-term destination of the work: supporting student pathways all the way to completion.

Building the infrastructure to sustain student support

While the direct coaching phase delivered immediate student outcomes and institutional insights, HBCU leaders and student support staff also began a multi-year InsideTrack [Coaching Development and Training \(CD&T\)](#) initiative designed to build coaching capacity for longer-term student support. The initiative extended the work from direct coaching support into campus-based capacity building, helping participating institutions develop coaching skills, apply evidence-based methodology and strengthen learner-centered support through their own teams. As the training continues, participating institutions like [Johnson C. Smith University](#) are building toward more sustainable in-house coaching capacity, including models that can help staff reinforce coaching practices, support future coaching implementation and scale student support beyond the direct coaching phase. Future reporting will show how participating institutions apply these skills after the development phase concludes in late 2026.

"With the InsideTrack coaching methodology, there are various areas that our coaches focus on with their daily or weekly interactions with their students. Essentially it touches on every single area of a student's life from the way that they manage their commitments to their interaction with family, their finances, health and wellness, effectiveness, and commitment to completion. With our coaches in place, drawing from this InsideTrack framework, they really take time to identify barriers to our students' success and how they can balance their time across various commitments."

— DR. ANGELA WHITE, Senior Vice President for Strategic Enrollment and Retention Management, Johnson C. Smith University

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Direct Success Coaching (43,819 learners supported across 39 HBCUs)					
	Coaching Development & Training (233 leaders and staff participating from 21 HBCUs)				

Carrying student success onward and upward

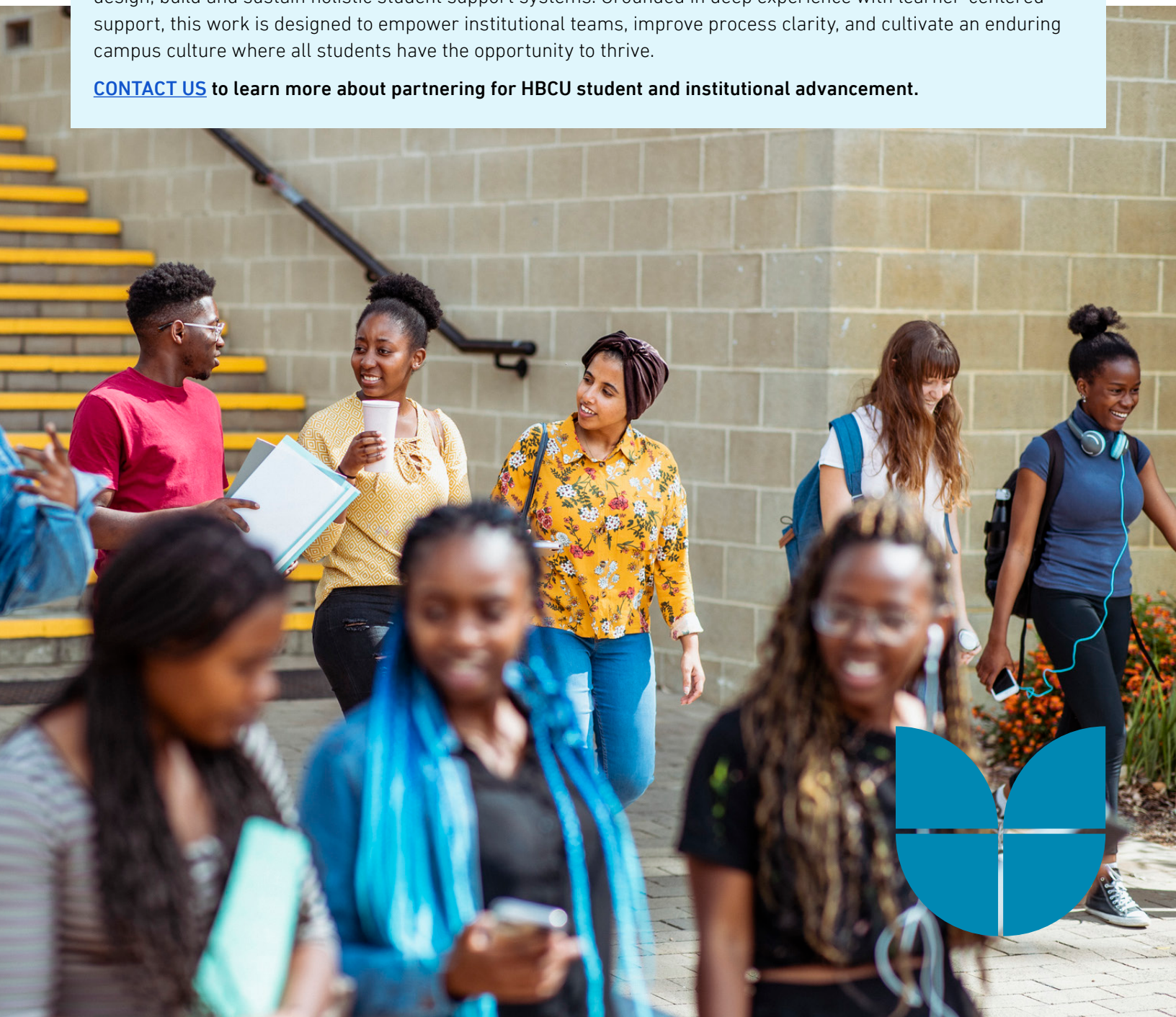
The final measure of this work is not only what students and institutions achieved during the reporting period, but how continued connection can shape what comes next. As learners advance toward completion and beyond, they carry their talent into communities, careers and the institutions that helped support their path. HBCUs and PBIs remain central to that story, with academic and cultural missions that continue to support student success. Through timely guidance, clearer pathways and accessible support, the shared work across the network points toward a future where more learners can remain connected to the people and resources that help sustain momentum and keep completion within reach.

insidetrack.

ABOUT INSIDETRACK

[InsideTrack](#) is a student success coaching nonprofit on a mission to partner with colleges and universities to design, build and sustain holistic student support systems. Grounded in deep experience with learner-centered support, this work is designed to empower institutional teams, improve process clarity, and cultivate an enduring campus culture where all students have the opportunity to thrive.

[CONTACT US](#) to learn more about partnering for HBCU student and institutional advancement.





insidetrack[®]

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT: insidetrack.org/hbcu