

Innovation™ Isn't Optional

The Courage to Evolve Higher Ed with
Students at the Center

COLLEGIS SUMMIT 2025
DISRUPTED
BREAKTHROUGH THINKING. BOLD RESULTS.



Casey Evans,
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An aerial night photograph of a city street intersection. The street is illuminated by warm yellow streetlights, creating a central vertical glow. Buildings on either side are dark, with some windows lit up. The overall scene is a mix of deep blues and oranges.

**Higher education
is at a crossroads.**

43 million Americans: Stuck in higher ed's waiting room.



410M globally

And the global demand for higher education is expected to double by 2030.



'Evolve or Die'

Redefining our purpose, starting with the why.

say about

TRANSCRIPT




US • 4 MIN READ

US high school students lose ground in math and reading, continuing yearslong decline

UPDATED 20 HR AGO

By Associated Press



Forbes

Join: \$1.50/wk


LEADERSHIP > EDUCATION

'Evolve Or Die' — Michael Crow's Challenge To U.S. Higher Education

By Bryan Penprase, Contributor. @...

Published May 01, 2025, 09:00am EDT, Updated May 05, 2025, 01:58pm EDT

Share Save Comment 1



Aerial view of Arizona State University campus in Tempe, Arizona. Includes the Desert Financial Arena and Mountain America Stadium, Home of ... More

CBS NEWS

MoneyWatch | Managing Your Money | CBS News

MONEYWATCH

When is going to college not worth the money?

By Mary Cunningham
Edited By Alain Sherter
Updated on: April 28, 2025 / 5:26 PM EDT / CBS News

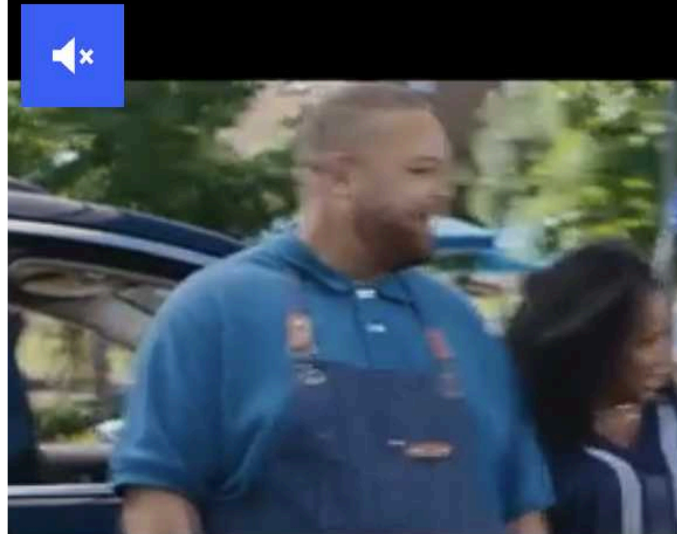
"I just wanted to regain my confidence. With Hers, I have it back."

NBC NEWS

ECONOMY

'A black hole': New graduates face dismal job market

Recent college graduates searching for jobs, degrees, work experience and even connections in a market with sluggish hiring.



Who we include is how **we** **succeed**

We're not in the business of credits and diplomas. We're in the business of shaping the people who guide, protect, heal, discover, create, and inspire.



Growth isn't luck. It's purpose + design.

This past year was our biggest ever. Largest research expenditures, largest fundraising, largest enrollments, largest number of graduates, and most diverse student population.

Design for today's world, not a schedule.



Students Live Differently. We Still Teach the Same.

- Students don't browse like they used to — 60% of searches end in zero clicks.
- Students learn with new companions — AI is part of their study habits.
- Students arrive differently prepared — reading levels are the lowest in 30 years.

The Student Reality

DIGITAL STUDENTS TODAY

44% ARE WORKING

18% ARE PARENTS

26% STUDY FULLY ONLINE

54% TAKE AT LEAST ONE COURSE

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (Oct 2023, The Economics Daily); Institute for Women's Policy Research, NPSAS:20 Student Parents; NCES IPEDS, Fall 2022 Distance Education (Table 3).

We are still designing our experiences for students from 10-20 years ago.

We're still building for students who don't exist anymore. Human behavior has been rewired by AI, tech, and a global pandemic - yet our models remain relics of another era.



**“What got us here,
won’t get us there.”**

— Marshall Goldsmith

New York Times bestselling author;
executive coaching and leadership

Case Study: The Disney Queue

How technology, innovation and customer
experience go hand in hand

Started ride
High delight



The problem

Wait time was the **#1 guest complaint** at
each of the Disney parks



**“We do not want rides to
be that long. We are trying
to rectify that as soon as
we can.”**

-CEO, Michael Eisner, responding to
complaint of long lines in 1989

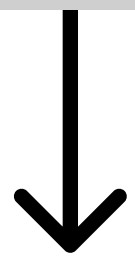
Entered park
Excited



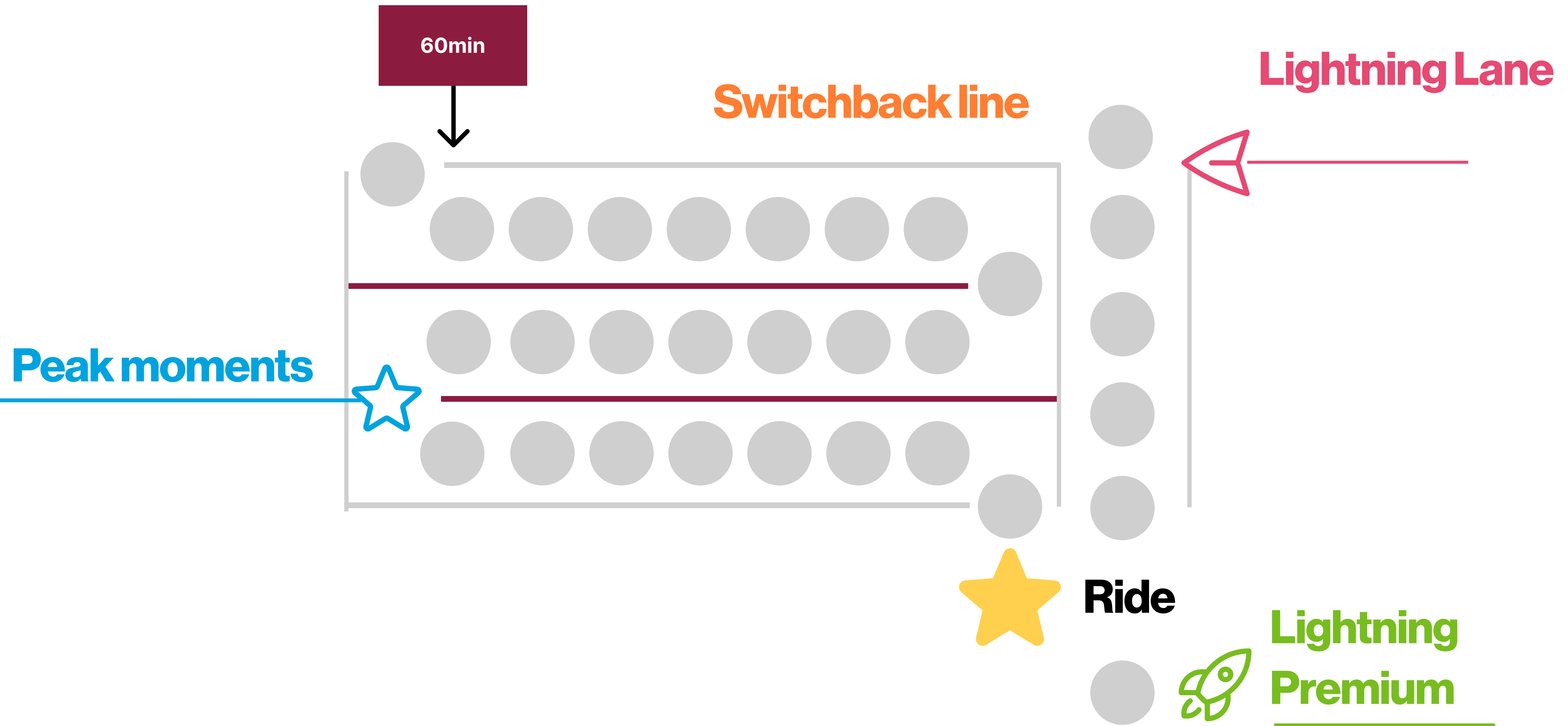
Joined queue
High annoyance



??min



Focused on the ride experience only, but ended up with a 3 hour wait and unhappy customers.



How does this relate to ASU?



Entered
park

The Queue

The Ride



Applied
to ASU

Admissions

Transfer Eval

Financial Aid

Advising

Registration

Orientation



Learning
Courses
Graduation



The Disney Lesson

Don't let the process of creating new things distract you from optimizing the existing customer experience. Put yourself in your customer's shoes. Listen to them and their concerns. And don't accept any level of dissatisfaction—regardless of how necessary it might appear.



Back

Journey Phases

Course Experience

Description

Students engage in courses, balance their workload and personal responsibilities, adapt to online learning, and access support resources as needed.

Themes

- Pace and workload management
- Instructor engagement variability
- Isolation and peer interaction

Top pain point topics

- Time struggles
- Professor interaction
- Course & course materials



Pain points

High severity Medium severity Low severity

Overwhelming workload

Some students feel unprepared for the course workload, find expectations unrealistic for its short duration, and are overwhelmed by the number of assignments.

Time struggles

Balancing responsibilities

Students struggle to manage time effectively to balance academic demands with work and family responsibilities, often facing personal events that disrupt their studies.

Time struggles

Lack of instructor presence

Struggles with instructors having minimal presence in the course due to little interaction with students, slow responses to questions (reason for drops), or lectures from different faculty.

Professor interaction

Lack of feedback

Students struggle understanding their progress courses and how they can improve due to delayed or lacking meaningful feedback on assignments or exams. 'Meaningful feedback' is rated as very important by students.

Professor interaction

Fast course pace

Concerns about the accelerated pace, feeling uncertain about managing the workload in the shorter sessions, especially in higher intensity courses like math or language.

Time struggles

Toxic course pairings

Students overwhelmed by taking high-intensity courses like Math or English at the same time, harming grades or leading to withdrawals, wishing they received warnings when enrolling.

Time struggles

Excessive reading/writing

Some students perceive excessive reading/writing as busy work. Struggle with multiple readings in a week that are tough to absorb or understand with little visuals.

Course & course materials

Math struggles

Some find courses too fast-paced, and express a desire for a session C option. Students struggle with technical issues in ALEKS, not all math courses offering tutoring, and courses lacking lectures.

Course & course materials

"Teaching myself"

Some are dissatisfied with lecture and course materials quality, finding it difficult to learn. Some feel they have to seek supplementary materials on platforms like Khan Academy or YouTube.

Course & course materials

Busy work

Students feel that many assignments, particularly discussion posts, are tedious or lack value, as they sometimes repeat information from readings and videos without providing new learning opportunities.

Course & course materials

Lack of

3rd party tools

Disconnect with

Delayed grades

Tutoring issues

The future of learning is co-designed.

What if students could complete their lab in VR?

We need to reach adult learners in rural areas.

What's the fastest path to launching a new online certificate?

Let's pilot a research study to test new learning models.

We want to know how to market to online learners.

Faculty are curious about teaching online but don't know where to start.

How can we teach communication skills in an asynchronous format?

Can we redesign our most enrolled 100-level course for online?

We want to explore AI-powered tutors in our courses.

Could we offer a flexible, fully online pre-health pathway?

What if we could reimagine general education as a story-driven experience?

We have a high-demand degree program but no capacity to scale it.

We're hearing from students who want asynchronous lab sessions.

We want to support learners who are caregivers or working full time.

What if students could start from YouTube and finish with a degree?

Collaboration is the system

Higher ed celebrates milestones — the application, the enrollment, the diploma. But students don't live in milestones. They live in the journey. And the journey is the system we have to design for.

True impact comes when we design for the entire student journey, not just isolated milestones.



Feedback From Students: Legacy App

I cannot

I try

A problem

Invalid

Restarting

Error

“I try to make an account and whenever I click start my application it instantly sends me back to the Create an Account page.”

“Keeps restarting page saying sorry the page you are trying to visit does not exist”

“I cannot access the application process. Every time I attempt to log in, I get an error code 500. This has happened on my laptop, my phone, and my tablet.”

“Too many unexpected errors made it impossible to apply”

“Terrible. Can't get past the log in process. How am I supposed to apply”

“Each time I complete my account set up and go to log in to start my application it will not allow me. States invalid email and or password. Even though I am using password auto fill.”

“I get an error every time I submit. Multiple browsers, multiple computers and even starting over with a new email address.”

“Not so good. Entering grades and all of the sudden everything is gone. Spent over an hour. And, when I try again I get pushed directly to the residency page.”

“Pathway is prompting me to search for another major as a back up but every time I try to search by any of the categories I receive an error message saying - An error has occurred.”

“The error, "Error: 0315: There was a problem. Please try again." Persist and I cannot complete my application. I've been trying for days on multiple browsers, multiple computers, multiple platforms, and various operating systems. Please fix.”

Feedback From Students: New App

Easy

Straightforward

Helpful

Fast

Smooth

Sleek

“Thanks! It was really clear, I understand all the steps, the registration is simple and easy for everyone around the world!”

“The application process was very efficient. It did not take long, was easy to navigate and overall helpful where needed.”

“This was so easy! I was expecting a long drawn out and confusing process but everything was so intuitive that I was able to do it **during one Bluey episode!**”

“One of if not the easiest college applications I have ever submitted...”

“Extremely well made, website was very thorough and direct to the point! It was a very simple application and a well designed website that made for an enjoyable application!”

“It was easy to navigate and straight forward! I wish applications were this user friendly when I was applying in 2015.”

“This has been the best registration experience I’ve ever had.”

“It was amazing how easy it is to apply to ASU”

“One of the easiest applications I have filled out and gives you step by step instructions on how to submit my transcripts.”



Impact

July 30, 2024 - June 13, 2025 Analysis

CSAT

Customer satisfaction score

73/100

NAA

44/100

Legacy

Login Errors

Login error rate

13%

NAA

59%

Legacy - Pre-migration

CVR

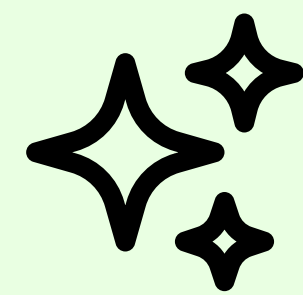
App start to submit CVR

69%

NAA

52%

Legacy



The new experience is significantly better for our students, with higher satisfaction, fewer login errors, and stronger conversion.

“Easiest application process I’ve experienced among other universities. I enjoyed how well everything was streamlined.”

AI SHOWCASE: PROSPECTIVE STUDENT JOURNEY

Student Exploration Tools

Find your future.
Discover custom program matches.

Personalized online program exploration is only a few questions away.

[Take the quiz](#) ✎

5 min to complete

DegreeMe an AI-powered tool that helps match prospective students to degrees by taking a simple quiz about their interests and goals.

+22K
completed quiz

3.8/5
CSAT in degree matches

80/100
usability score

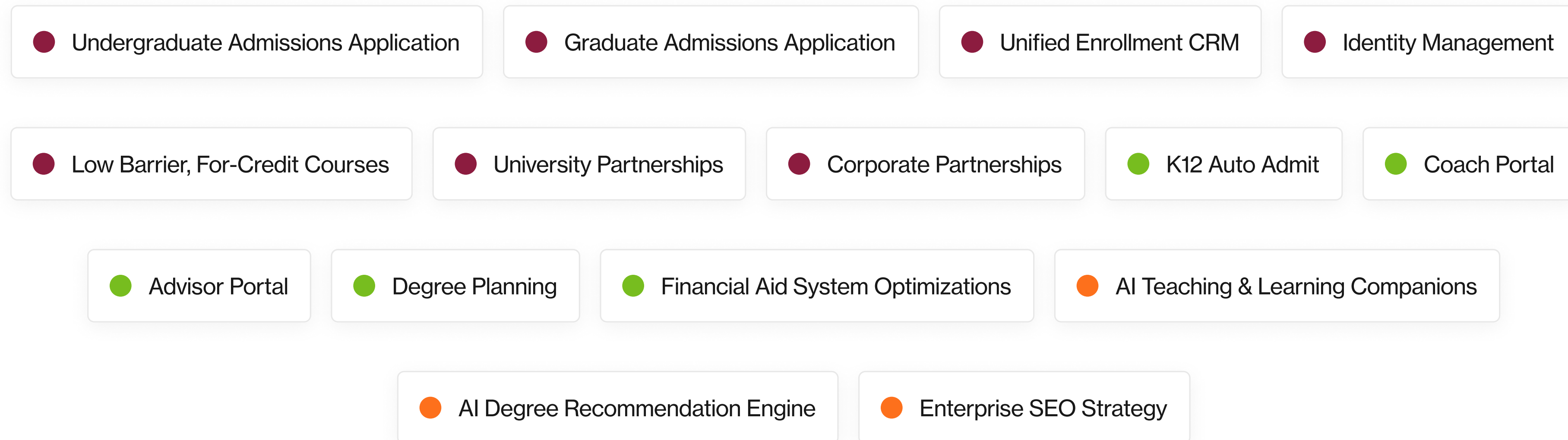
Teaching & Learning AI Companions

The image shows a screenshot of a web application interface for 'Dreamscape LIT testing'. The interface includes a sidebar with navigation options: Home, Account, Dashboard, Courses, Calendar, and Inbox. The main content area shows a list of modules under 'DSL Testing', including 'Dreamscape Learn Waiver' and 'Dreamscape User Account Creation'. An AI chatbot overlay is positioned on the right side of the screen, featuring a robot icon at the top and a text input field at the bottom. The chatbot is displaying a message: 'What is going on in my current tab?'. Below the input field, there are two buttons: 'Excel homework help' and 'Tell me about yourself'. At the bottom of the chatbot, there is a text input field with a microphone icon and a send button. A blue circular logo with a stylized 'M' and stars is overlaid on the chatbot interface. A 'Web browser plugin' label is located at the bottom right of the image.

The Dreamscape Learn AI Chatbot is an in-class AI companion that enhances the 2D Dreamscape Learn experience by providing real-time support and guidance to students, for course content both inside and outside the alien zoo.

Web browser plugin

Examples of Experience Transformation



STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA

● **Access & Enrollment Growth**
Driving reach and scale across ASU's learner pipelines

● **Student-Centered Experience**
Enhancing the student journey through design, personalization, and efficiency.

● **Innovation & Feedback Loops**
Driving iteration through UX research, real-time feedback, and data-informed experimentation.

Reimagining Reach: Toward a Unified, Flexible Learning Ecosystem

LEGACY MODEL

One-time enrollment, linear path, with fractured systems

Marketing
↓
Application
↓
Admissions
↓
Enrollment
↓
Graduation

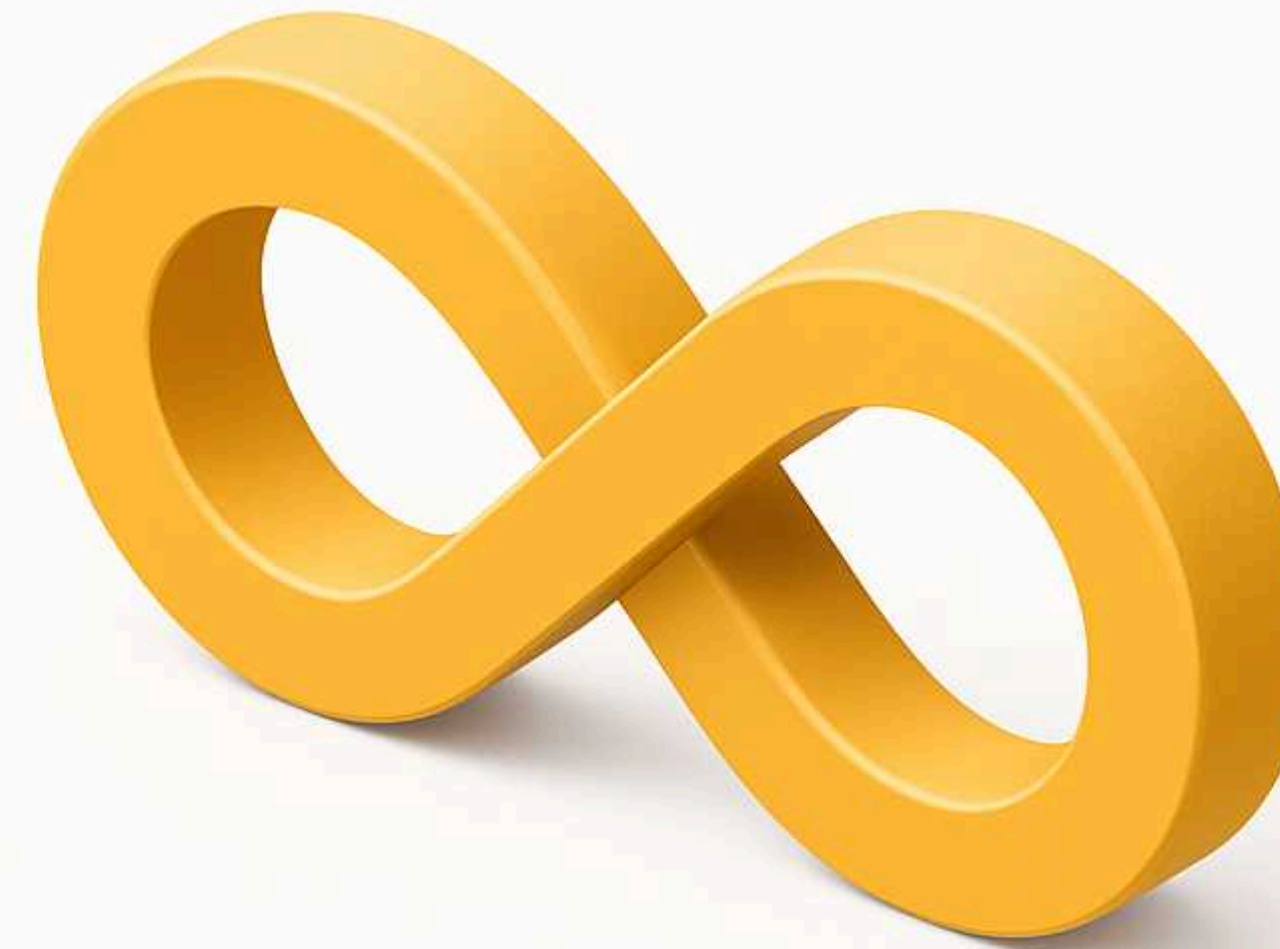
Increasingly costly and inflexible to sustain at scale



ONE ASU VISION

Modular, lifelong engagement within a continuous learning loop

Curiosity / discovery
↓
Low-friction on-ramps
↓
Degrees or credentials
↓
Career application
↓
Return to learn



We are evolving from a one-time, front-loaded enrollment model to a continuous, learner-centered ecosystem designed for flexibility and lifelong engagement.

**Open.
Bold.
Brave.**

Thank You!

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DISRUPTED

BREAKTHROUGH THINKING. BOLD RESULTS.