

COLLEGIS SUMMIT 2025

# DISRUPTED

BREAKTHROUGH THINKING. BOLD RESULTS.



# You Can't Personalize What You Don't Understand: Map the Journey or Miss the Mark

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# Meet the Experts

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## Jeff Olsen

Chief of Staff + VP of Marketing and Enrollment  
**Del Mar College**



## Wes Catlett-Miller

Sr. Director Strategy + Innovation  
**Collegis Education**



# How We Got Started

**Admitting You Have a Problem**

# Higher Ed is Just Like Hollywood

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Building an Audience Starts With the Basics

**Competitive Marketing**



**Excellent Experience**

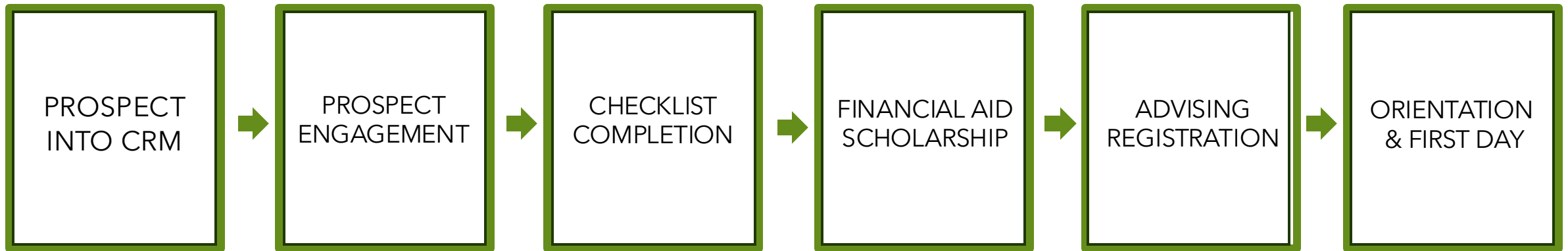


**Stand-Out Product**



# Wait, We Have to Work Together?

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Marketing   Admissions   Foundation   Financial Aid   Registrar   Faculty   Student Affairs

# Mapping the Experience

What is journey mapping and how do you know if you need it?

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## ***Student Journey Mapping***

Journey mapping is examining, in detail, all the steps involved in becoming a student for the purpose of optimizing that experience.

### **1) Evidence of Frustrated Students**

- Social Media Complaints, Anecdotal Evidence

### **2) Misalignment Around Key Definitions**

- Ask Each Department to Define 'Advising'

### **3) The Blame Game**

- Departments Pointing Fingers at Each Other

### **4) Siloed Departmental Interactions**

- Lack of 'Warm Referrals' Leads to Lost Students

# Getting Started

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## Challenge

Prepare the landscape to scale enrollment growth by aligning people, processes and technology around the new student experience across multiple departments and divisions.

## Approach

Breaking down decades of siloes requires a culture shift. Collegis Education was brought in to conduct a multi-day summit to bring people together, heal fractured relationships, define the current state and chart a new path forward.

## Key Considerations:

Culture eats strategy for breakfast.

The journey is the destination.

If you want to go fast, take few. If you want to go far, take many.

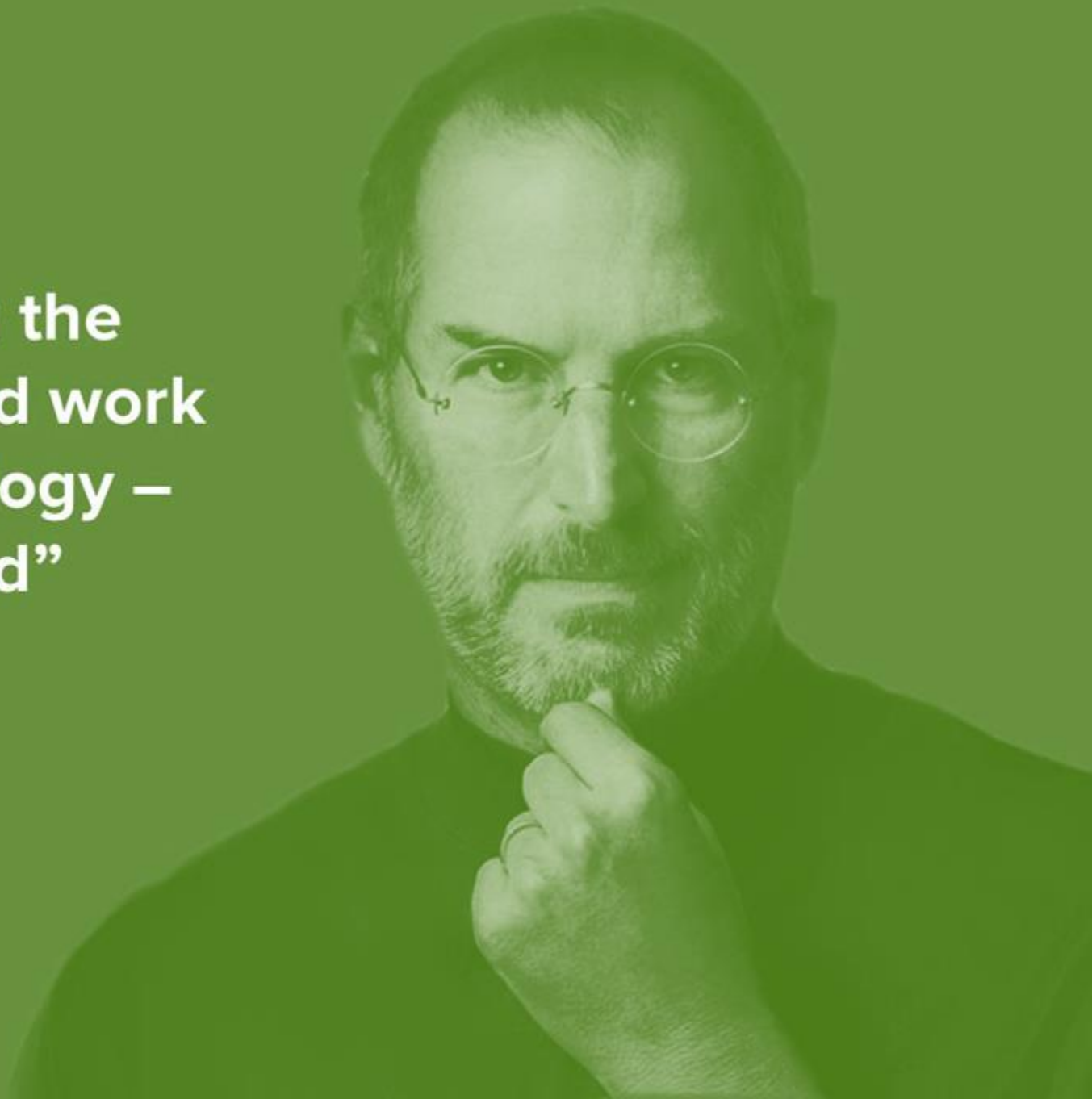


# How We Did It

Design Thinking in Action

**“You’ve got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology – not the other way around”**

Steve Jobs



# Don't start with legacy systems or processes.

## Start with the student.

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*"Push more campaigns to hit inquiry targets."*

*"I'm bombarded with generic emails that don't feel relevant to me."*

*"It integrates with our current CRM."*

*"Requires me to create yet another account just to get information."*



*"One universal app for all programs keeps things consistent."*

*"This app asks irrelevant questions and takes forever to complete."*

*"Advisors are scheduled to maximize efficiency."*

*"I can't meet with my advisor until weeks after I need to choose my classes."*

When thinking about your school –

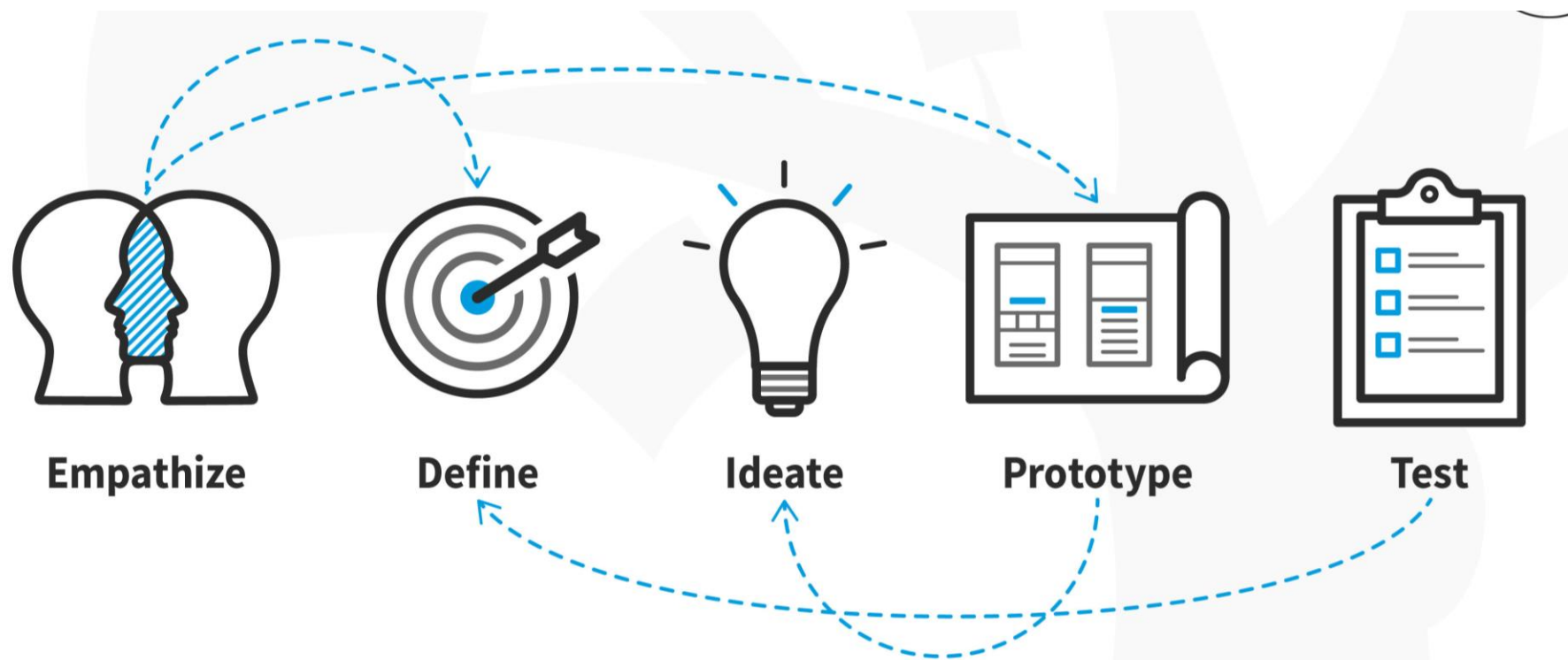
Are you prioritizing what's easiest for the operation?

**Is it at the expense of your students?**

# Design Thinking

## Solutions in the service of people **above all else.**

- Design thinking is a repeatable, activities-based **approach that focuses on people** – whether the challenge is making a better product, process, service, or anything else.



# Change enablement – Fresh voices help build consensus.

## Facilitated Conversations

- Create a safe space for candid input
- Enables courageous conversations across titles and roles.
- Transforms detractors into co-creators
- Builds ownership and accelerates adoption

*“No,  
because...”*



**Skeptics**

*“Yes, and...”*



**Advocates**

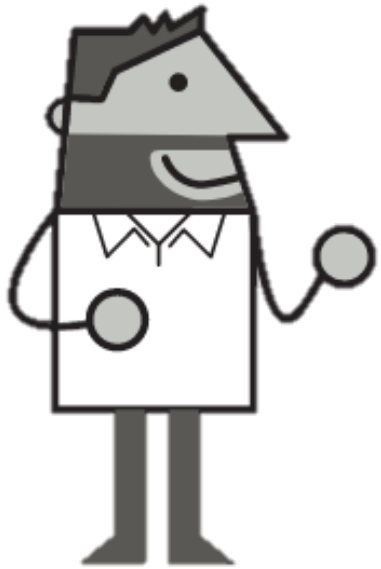
Teams are more likely to  
**champion a solution they helped create.**



# Our Workshop Recipe

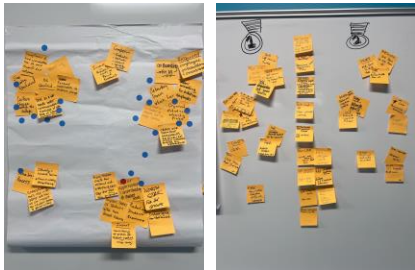
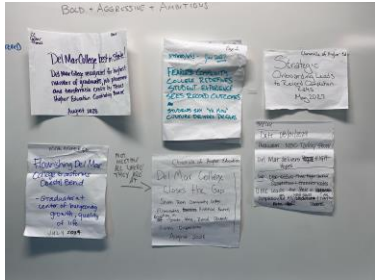
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Exercises and activities that surface insights, enable brainstorming, and build end-user empathy and team consensus along the way.



- **Write the headline** – helps envision the desired future state and identify what you want to impact.
- **Look outside higher ed** – who's doing it well and why? What can we learn?
- **Map it out** – whiteboard the tech and data flows, diagram the student experience.
- **Objectively evaluate the current state** – what works, what doesn't, what's yet to be explored?
- **Build for what's next** – brainstorm solutions and rapid prototype new models.

# Collaboration in action



**Collegis**  
DMC DEL MAR COLLEGE

**Student experience design**

**SHARK TANK** DMC DEL MAR COLLEGE



**Ideate solutions and iterate against points of failure**  
Using your how might we statement, in small groups start to build out a solution that address the statement starter and helps Dc primary goal of delivering exceptional, student-centered experiences.  
30 minutes



# The LUMA System: Practical, Flexible and Versatile



## Looking

Methods for Observing  
Human Experience

### ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

- Interviewing >
- Fly-on-the-Wall Observation >
- Contextual Inquiry >
- Walk-a-Mile Immersion >

### PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

- What's on Your Radar? >
- Buy a Feature >
- Build Your Own >
- Journaling >

### EVALUATIVE RESEARCH

- Think-Aloud Testing >
- Heuristic Review >
- Critique >
- System Usability Scale >



## Understanding

Methods for Analyzing  
Challenges & Opportunities

### PEOPLE & SYSTEMS

- Stakeholder Mapping >
- Experience Diagramming >
- Concept Mapping >
- Persona Profile >

### PATTERNS & PRIORITIES

- Affinity Clustering >
- Bull's-eye Diagramming >
- Importance/Difficulty Matrix >
- Visualize the Vote >

### PROBLEM FRAMING

- Problem Tree Analysis >
- Statement Starters >
- Abstraction Laddering >
- Rose, Thorn, Bud >



## Making

Methods for Envisioning  
Future Possibilities

### CONCEPT IDEATION

- Thumbnail Sketching >
- Creative Matrix >
- Round Robin >
- Alternative Worlds >

### MODELING & PROTOTYPING

- Storyboarding >
- Schematic Diagramming >
- Rough & Ready Prototyping >
- Appearance Modeling >

### DESIGN RATIONALE

- Concept Poster >
- Video Scenario >
- Cover Story Mock-up >
- Quick Reference Guide >

# How to Get Started

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## 1. Define your goal

What are you trying to impact?

## 2. Identify your stakeholders

Who needs to be in the room? And it isn't always the most senior people.

## 3. Create and pressure test your statement starter

Are you solving for the right problem, at the right level of focus?

## 4. Make the "recipe"

Pick the right methods in service of your goal

## 5. Execute 😊

# Turning Recommendations into Action Items



Invest in and leverage technology to drive efficiency and outcomes.

- Invest and implement a new CRM solution and integrate the CRM with Colleague.
- Consolidate forms and applications to standardize the entry of student data into a CRM system.
- Implement an online student portal for students to self-serve through the enrollment process.
- Automate the import of the Texas Common App into the CRM.



Create a cohesive, interconnected, and geo-agnostic student experience across all brick-and-mortar locations.

- Set up a front desk and implement a kiosk-style solution at each campus location.
- Facilitate virtual and in-person advising and enrollment center (walk-in and scheduled) appointments at each campus location.
- Utilize Bookings as the required scheduling tool for applicable DMC staff and faculty.



Revisit the organizational design to support a centralized advising function.

- Restructure communication, enrollment, and advising underneath the same leadership umbrella.
- Restructure program advisors (reallocate existing resources) underneath an administrative leadership structure to set-up a generalist advising model that serves all students.
- Define and document developmental education course pairings, eliminate corequisite approvals, and implement in Colleague.



Address the manual lift and withdrawal issues present in the financial aid office.

- Document and align on the requirements to automate parts of the financial aid process (downloading of ISIRs in Colleague and automate emails when ISIRs are linked with student accounts).
- Evaluate the risks and return on investment for proactively withdrawing students after the first half of each semester for nonpayment.

# The Impact We Enabled

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**11,805**

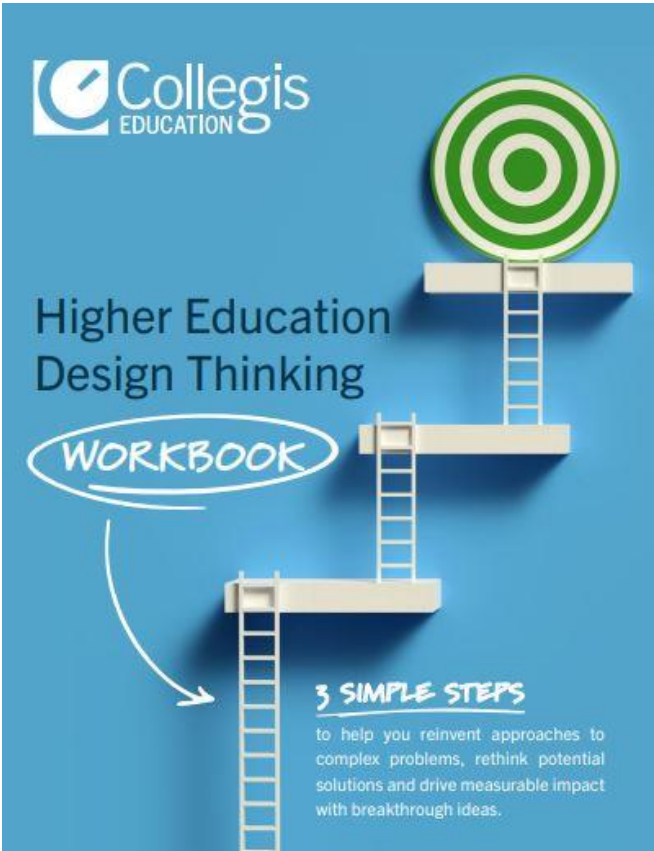
Fall 2025 headcount

a **15% increase** compared to the certified Fall 2024 headcount.

- Dual Credit headcount is **up 20%** – an **all-time high for DMC!**
- Contact hours are **up 24%**
- Fall 2025 FTE **7,787**
- Combined Credit and CE numbers up by about **10%**



# Tools to Get You Started



**Thank You!**

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