



NUDGE CAMPAIGNS

Sophomore Start - Matterring Spring



CIVITAS
LEARNING

Driving Student Success Through Nudges

A **nudge campaign** is a communication strategy, built upon a data-informed insight, that an institution designs to nudge a targeted group of students to achieve a specific, measurable outcome.

Nudges are small pushes in the right direction that do not require prescribed actions, but encourage certain behaviors. When students are presented with a nudge sent from a trusted person at your institution, they have the freedom to make their own choices with information about behaviors we know are more strongly associated with positive persistence and graduation outcomes.

- Kuh, George D., et al. *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

An important part of being in a community is feeling the sense that you **matter** to the people in the community. If you feel like others in the community are interested and concerned about you, it can influence your behavior within the community. It is common, especially at large institutions, that students do not feel like they matter to the community. This affects students' sense of belonging.

- Schlossberg, N. K. (1989), *Marginality and mattering: Key issues in building community*. *New Directions for Student Services*, 1989: 5–15. doi:10.1002/ss.37119894803

About the Nudge Campaign

Opportunity

For many institutions new sophomores have significantly lower persistence than average providing a clear opportunity to improve persistence with a nudge.

Goal

The goal of this nudge campaign is to nudge new sophomore students into behaviors that will aid in their success within the current term, and persistence into the next term.

Students

The target student group for this nudge campaign is new sophomore students, e.g., students with 2 terms completed and about to start their Sophomore year.

Owner

The owner of the the nudge campaign is the person responsible for sending the nudges to the students and receiving and acting upon replies from students. Choose the most appropriate person at your institution to send the nudges. Remember, emails sent from a person the student knows are most likely to be read. Advisors or faculty are often appropriate owners for a nudge campaign.

Strategy

This nudge campaign is a series of mattering nudges designed to help new sophomore students build a sense of belonging within their learning community. The nudges are intended to build upon each other and can be reinforced through a call-to-action.

A nudge is sent prior to the start of the academic term and four nudges are sent during the term. The nudges utilize the following mattering principles:

- Mattering
- Belonging
- Empathy
- Normalizing

First Two Weeks of the Term

Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: Welcome back from break

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Welcome back from break! I hope you got some time to rest and relax.

It's time to get rolling again. Your contribution to the learning that occurs in your classes is so valuable. Going to class and taking an active role in engaging what's going on is important for success.

I'm glad you're back and I'm excited to see what is to come for you this [TERM/SEMESTER].

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION - See the Call-To-Action appendix at the end of this document]

[SIGNATURE]

Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: Welcome back from break

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Welcome back from break! I hope you got some time to rest and relax.

Your contribution to the learning that occurs in your classes is so valuable. Going to class and taking an active role in engaging what's going on is important for success.

I'm glad you're back and I'm excited to see what is to come for you this [TERM/SEMESTER].

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION - See the Call-To-Action appendix at the end of this document]

[SIGNATURE]

Prior to Midterm Exams

Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: We didn't forget about you

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Sometimes our sophomores tell us they feel a bit "forgotten" given all the attention that new students on campus receive. I want to tell you that you're not forgotten by me!

How are things going? Your success here is important to me, and if there is something I can help you with along your learning journey, I would love to assist.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION - See the Call-To-Action appendix at the end of this document]

[SIGNATURE]

Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: We didn't forget about you

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Sometimes our sophomores tell us they feel a bit "forgotten" given all the attention that new students on to campus receive. I want to tell you that you're not forgotten by me!

You're a critical part of our learning community here and your contributions matter! Don't forget that I am here to help you along the way.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION - See the Call-To-Action appendix at the end of this document]

[SIGNATURE]

After Midterm Exams

Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: What made you come to college?

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Despite midterms being over, it's a natural point in the [TERM/SEMESTER] to feel tired. Feeling a bit burned out? It's super natural at this point in your academic career.

Think about what brought you here in the first place. Do you remember that goal? After this [TERM/SEMESTER] you're one step closer to that goal.

Don't lose sight of the prize! I am glad you're in this community and your success is part of my own success.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION - See the Call-To-Action appendix at the end of this document]

[SIGNATURE]

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Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: What made you come to college?

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Feeling a bit tired with the [TERM/SEMESTER]? It's natural if you are. The academic calendar is a bit grueling.

Remember what brought you to [SCHOOL NAME] in the first place? Keep that prize in mind, this [TERM/SEMESTER] will bring you one step closer to that goal!

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION - See the Call-To-Action appendix at the end of this document]

[SIGNATURE]

Last Two Weeks of the Term

Nudge for Very Low, Low and Moderate Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: Exams are here. Take it one step at a time.

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Exam season is busy. Break down your goals into short-term commitments. Each day take one step closer to those commitments.

We are here to help make your dreams your reality.

You can do this! It's totally normal to feel overwhelmed. I want you to be able to do the best you can, and there are awesome opportunities right here today that a great part of your personal student success strategy.

Lean into this time, and take advantage of an important student success opportunity today.

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION - See the Call-To-Action appendix at the end of this document]

[SIGNATURE]

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Nudge for High and Very High Persistence Predictions

Subject Line: Exams are here. Keep up the hard work.

Dear [STUDENT FIRST NAME],

Exam season is busy. Keep up your hard work and know that I think the work you have been doing is creating an amazing foundation for all your future success both here and after graduation.

Press into this season of learning. Know that I believe in you and I'm committed to your success!

[INSERT CALL-TO-ACTION - See the Call-To-Action appendix at the end of this document]

[SIGNATURE]

Call-To-Action

A nudge campaign is intended to encourage student behaviors that lead to an increased likelihood of success. To have an impact on students' likelihood to persist and graduate, the nudge must alter students perspectives or illicit actions that increase their chances of meeting their educational goals.

*A nudge can be reinforced with a request for a student to think or behave in a way that will likely improve their educational outcomes. This is a **Call-To-Action**. Including a call-to-action in a nudge is optional, but highly recommended. Nudges that ask a student to do something specific make it significantly more likely that they will do it and it will have an impact.*

It is important not to overwhelm the student by including a long list of resources or choices. Include just one call-to-action and make it specific to the target student population.

Four calls to action are described below along with examples of each.

Types of Calls-To-Action

1 Thought Exercise

Students' attitudes and beliefs can be changed simply by asking them to think about a question or reflect on a hypothetical situation. For example, asking students to remind themselves about the reasons they are going to college can reinvigorate a sense of determination to help carry them through a tough point in the term.

Thought exercises have the benefit of being powerful yet not requiring any additional resources beyond sending the nudge. They also provide students cognitive tools they can use anytime to increase their resilience when facing challenges.

2 Link to a Resource

Your institution has resources available to support students throughout their academic journey. You may also know of resources outside your institution that would be helpful for certain student groups. Provide a link to a resource related to the purpose of the nudge or to the targeted student group. This call-to-action leverages existing resources without requiring additional time or new initiatives.

3 Request to Signup or Attend

Your institution has a variety of support activities already in place for students, such as orientation sessions and student clubs. Ask students to signup, attend, and participate in one of these events or activities. This also has the benefit of not requiring any additional resources to support students beyond what is already allocated.

4 Schedule an Appointment or Visit

Ask students to schedule an appointment with someone in their academic support network. The call-to-action may be especially impactful for students in need of acute intervention such as students with Very Low and Low persistence predictions.

Asking students to schedule an appointment or visit an advisor, faculty, success coach, mentor, or academic support center requires the capacity to handle the influx of students wanting to utilize those resources. This is especially important to consider when using this call-to-action in a nudge campaign with a large targeted student group.

Thought Exercise Examples

Remember goals and aspirations

Think about the reason you applied to [INSTITUTION NAME] in the first place. Remind yourself about those goals and aspirations; you can achieve your goals here.

Use good habits

Good habits you discovered as a first-year student are the ones you can re-use to experience success this year. What habit will you use this week to prime yourself for success in your classes?

Address challenges

Now is the perfect time to consider a *new* way to tackle a *new* challenge. Working through new challenges is how we all learn. What new challenge are you facing? What is one way you will address this challenge today?

Link to Resource Examples

Study tips

Final exams are coming up. Click here for tips on how to beef up your study skills.

Time management resource

Juggling life and school is challenging. Here is a link to a guide on time management that may help.

Getting around

Getting around campus can be tricky. Here are links to campus maps and shuttle routes.

Learn about support services

Did you know that you have access to [WRITING CENTER/TUTORING/SUCCESS CENTER] to support you while you learn and grow at [INSTITUTION NAME]? Click here to learn about how you can take advantage of these services.

Request to Signup or Attend Examples

Join a student club

At [INSTITUTION NAME] we have a variety of student clubs you can join to meet students with similar interests as you. They are a great way to get connected to your learning community. An information session with representatives from the various clubs will be held at [TIME AND LOCATION]. Come to the session and meet student like yourself.

Attend orientation

It's important to attend one of your upcoming orientation sessions. They provide information that will help you be successful as you start your journey as a [MASCOT NAME].

Signup for an activity

A bunch of your fellow [MASCOT NAME] are volunteering at a local school this weekend. There are lot of opportunities to get involved with your peers and give back to the local community. Signup for an upcoming volunteer opportunity.

Schedule an Appointment or Visit Examples

Advising appointment

Schedule an appointment with me so we can review your plan for next term.

Tutoring center

[COURSE NAME] provides foundational information you will need in future courses. Like many students, if you feel like you need support learning the material, visit the tutoring center.

Office hours

Making a connection with your professors is important. Make a goal to visit all of your professors at least once this term.