

# PRACTICES EXCHANGE

## NEWSLETTER

MAY 2022

<https://yeswemustcoalition.org>

Issue 48

*This year the Practices Exchange Newsletter is dedicated with appreciation and admiration to the memory of Dr. Nia Lane Chester, the newsletter's founding editor and program manager of the Yes We Must Coalition.*

**Higher Education in These Times** In order to provide a forum for YWMC members to share strategies and raise questions with one another during these uncertain times, the Yes We Must Coalition will continue the Open Forums begun last year. Each month we will offer a general session, open to anyone at a member school. Information regarding links to these sessions is sent out via the email lists for YWMC Google Groups. We welcome all members who wish to join the conversation.

**Growing the Coalition** If you know a school that should be a member of the Yes We Must Coalition, please connect us with them. Growing numbers make us stronger in the work we do together and the voice we raise on behalf of low-income students. Please get in touch with Gloria Nemerowicz, President, at [glorianemerowicz@yeswemustcoalition.org](mailto:glorianemerowicz@yeswemustcoalition.org).

### YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE: Villa Marie College



Established in 1961, **Villa Maria College** is a private Catholic college founded by the Felician Sisters and located in Buffalo, NY. As a student-centered college, Villa Maria focuses on student success, teaching the skills that are necessary to do well in the classroom, passing on the College's long-held values and ideals of doing good in the world, and lending support to turning aspirations into realities and potential into promise. Villa Maria College joined the Yes We Must Coalition in 2021.

The College is home to 500 students who study in one of three academic departments: music, art, and liberal arts/professional studies. In total, Villa Maria College offers 18 degree programs, including Animation, Digital Filmmaking, Game Design, Community Health and Music Industry, and more. The College's diverse mix of academic programs was designed to meet the growing demands of the local and national job markets. The 9:1 student to faculty ratio means students receive individualized attention that helps them cultivate their unique skill set. The College's Student Success Center offers student advisors, tutors, and mentors who help students to transition from high school to college and guide them throughout their time at Villa. Internship requirements for all students help students gain critical real-world experience.



Villa Maria is proud to be a diverse and inclusive community where individuality thrives, everyone has the freedom to be themselves, and students are defined by their potential. The College is home to the highest percentage of both African American students and Pell-eligible students of any private college in Western New York. Sixty-eight percent of the student body are first-generation college students; 19 percent are Say Yes students, and 16 percent have a documented disability. In 2021, Villa was ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as the leader in Western New York for increasing social mobility.

Villa is home to the Achieve Program for Students with Learning Differences. This one-of-a-kind program combines one-on-one tutoring, group sessions, technological resources, exclusive facilities, experienced faculty and many additional on-campus resources to ensure

that students with learning differences are prepared to succeed. The College also includes an Honors Program to support students who excel academically. And, the College has eight intercollegiate athletic teams that compete in the United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA).

In an effort to make higher education equitable for all students, Villa Maria introduced its Free Books Program. The full cost of books and supplies is now included in the price of Villa Maria College's tuition. Students no longer have to spend valuable time and money shopping for books and supplies each semester; they can come to campus and get to work on Day One of each semester. Many books are now delivered electronically and can be read online on computers, tablets, and phones.

For more information about Villa Maria College, please contact Ryan Hartnett, Vice President for Academic Affairs, at [hartnettr@villa.edu](mailto:hartnettr@villa.edu).

## Submissions for Future Issues

YWMC members are encouraged to submit examples of policies, practices and/or resources that you have found to be effective in promoting student success and that you would like to share with your YWMC colleagues. We are particularly interested in examples of how members are addressing issues of social and racial justice. Send ideas for the newsletter to Barbara Kirby, Operations Manager, [barbara@yeswemustcoalition.org](mailto:barbara@yeswemustcoalition.org).

## Yes We Must Change

We all recognize that the structures, processes and policies within the system of higher education that we inherited were put in place to serve a homogeneous population of learners who were very different from the learners we seek to educate today. It is these structures, processes and policies we seek to identify and change to make college accessible and achievable for all students. The Yes We Must Coalition developed the following contrasts between the students whom higher education historically served, those sometimes referred to as "traditional" students, and the students we are privileged to help educate today, the New Student Majority. Yes We Must Coalition members know the excitement that the diverse, culturally rich, and highly motivated New Student Majority brings to our campuses and how they enrich the learning environment for all.

This list is in no particular order, and it is not all-inclusive. We invite you to edit and expand on it to make it useful as you go about the work of change.

*[Table follows on next page]*

## Comparison of the Idea of the “Traditional” Student, for Whom 4-Year Higher Education Was Designed, with the Reality of the New Student Majority

“Traditional” Student	New Student Majority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend college right from high school where college prep and AP courses are available/the path to and through college made clear</li> <li>Attend full-time for 4 years as singular focus of energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Might enter the higher ed system at any age and through a variety of channels such as two-year and bridge programs, micro-pathways, employment, military, as well as right out of high school</li> <li>Attend both part-time and full-time and may vary semester to semester/may include stop-outs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socialized throughout life to the expectation of college, with abundant college student and college graduate role models</li> <li>Residential student with possibility of off-campus living alone or with other students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often first in family to attend college; although education is valued, few models of and knowledge of college-going; identity as a college learner not reinforced by society</li> <li>Often live off campus with family or alone or homeless/commute into campus when necessary/ transportation is an issue</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campus may be hundreds of miles from home; may be away from parents/home for the first time/on own for first time although some experience with camps and other enrichment programs very possible</li> <li>Campus community reflects a familiar culture, the dominant culture; content of courses has familiar, positive references Campus must be within commuting distance of work and residence, inclined to select online options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campus must be within commuting distance of work and residence, inclined to select online options</li> <li>Campus and academic cultures, language, expectations largely unknown; references to the richness of own community and experience of origin sparse or negative</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financially not necessary to work to pay for college expenses; summer can be used for “enrichment” or academic catching up</li> <li>Encouraged to explore various disciplines of study/know that graduate study is a viable next step</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finances are a #1 constant concern and include paying for college and supporting self and family; work for pay outside of college is essential</li> <li>Focused on the ROI and selection of major influenced by knowledge of marketplace potential</li> </ul>

For more information, please contact Gloria Nemerowicz, President, Yes We Must Coalition, at [glorianemerowicz@yeswemustcoalition.org](mailto:glorianemerowicz@yeswemustcoalition.org).