

Draft

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The HERD Student Success Model

The HERD Student Success Model: A Holistic, Empowering, Research-Driven, and Developmental approach for supporting student success at Howard University. The HERD Student Success Model (The HERD) is informed by Howard University's mission, institutional research, Boykin's Talent Development Philosophy, collective feedback on high-impact practices for student success, and evidence-based research from the Boyer 2030 Commission. Overall, The HERD is designed to frame the student development journey from admission up to three years after graduation.

The HERD serves as the foundational framework that guides the work of the Office of Undergraduate Studies. To more effectively integrate services, the Office of Undergraduate Studies was restructured to support The HERD Campaigns, which are 21 structured developmental activities that are designed to complement existing initiatives across the Schools and Colleges. Akin to General Education, The HERD helps to shape "The Howard University Experience" by codifying a foundational level of support that all undergraduate students will receive.

The HERD Campaigns are informed by three themes across three critical matriculation/development periods:

- [Preparing to Launch](#) (Admission through First Year),
- [Coming Into Focus](#) (Sophomore through Junior Years), and
- [Launching Forward](#) (Senior through Early Post-graduate Years).

Undergraduate academic programs are primarily organized by Schools, Colleges, and Departments. Thus, the HERD is organized in a manner that complements our existing structures by organizing students and related programming into seven mutually inclusive Academic and Career Clusters:

- [Artificial Intelligence, Physical Sciences, & Engineering](#)
- [Communications, Arts, & Humanities](#)
- [Health, Education, & Human Services](#)
- [Business & Economics](#)
- [Exploratory Pathways](#)
- [Preprofessional Pathways](#)
- [Social, Behavioral, Life, and Research Sciences](#)

Key components of The HERD Student Success Model are described in the next section.

The HERD Model Components

H - Holistic Support and Guidance

In alignment with Howard University's commitment to preparing students for meaningful contributions to society, the HERD model focuses on a **holistic** approach that recognizes the student as a whole person. Each student receives comprehensive support that includes academic advising, career planning, intra-office referrals, post-graduate education planning, and personal development.

- **HERD Strategy:** Advisors and other student success professionals are cross-trained across academic disciplines and in functions like career advising, referrals to counseling services, learning workshops and tutoring support, fellowships, clinical and non-clinical case management, and student life, minimizing the need for students to navigate multiple offices without the support of an informed professional. Advisors will be equipped with data to inform advising support strategies and service offerings.

E - Empowerment through Consistency and Continuity

Empowerment reflects a commitment to enabling students to make informed decisions and take ownership of their academic paths via **consistent and sustained advising relationships**.

- **HERD Strategy:** The HERD Strategy leverages a "4+1" model where students are assigned a professional advisor for four years and a faculty mentor to build trust and rapport with advisors who understand their journey.

R - Research-driven, Cluster-Specific and General Programming

The HERD model is inspired by the talent development philosophy espoused by our renowned and late colleague, Dr. A. Wade Boykin. Dr. Boykin's talent development philosophy states that "All learners can reach high standards of performance when there is a supportive environment, when all stakeholders manifest high expectations, and when clear accountability measures are widely evident."

Specifically, **The HERD** champions three core values for supporting student success: (1) provide multiple pathways to success, (2) embed strengths-based support, and (3) leverage four dimensions of engagement (cognitive, affective, behavioral, and vocational) (See [Boykin et. al, 2023](#); [Boykin and Noguera, 2011](#) for additional information about the talent development philosophy and related concepts).

The HERD model leverages institutional and student success research to develop cluster-specific and campus-wide offerings that are **tailored to each academic and career cluster** as well as provide broader campus-wide support that is not specific to a given cluster. The mix of targeted and general programming will better align with each student's field and interests.

- **HERD Strategy:** Advising and Career clusters will host specialized events, industry networking opportunities, career workshops, and academic seminars. Students will be exposed to the broader field within their cluster and can engage with faculty mentors, peers, and other professionals in meaningful ways.

D - Developmental Support for Lifelong Learning and Leadership

The HERD model is committed to **developmental support** that fosters lifelong learning, critical thinking, and leadership—core aspects of Howard University's mission. The HERD model shifts away from an overemphasis on prescriptive advising to developmental support that cultivates students' intellectual, personal, and professional growth.

HERD Strategy: Through enhanced technologies, advising communication will be supported through constant contact, cluster engagement, development of academic plans, regular reviews of academic plans, and continuous support through formal campaigns that are inclusive of goal setting, career exploration, graduate school preparation, professional skill-building, and more.