



Community from Day One:

Where Incoming Student Support Meets Institutional Advancement

Presented by:

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Featured Presenters



Eliza LaJoie
Director of Student Success
Shearwater



Talia Titus
Director of Admission
The Bryn Mawr School

The Bryn Mawr School



Current Approach

Pre-arrival experience is focused on admissions and logistics

Limited social and cultural preparation

Students struggle to engage in campus community

“I was nervous about starting school and had trouble getting used to a new school community. I felt lost and didn’t know where to go for help.”



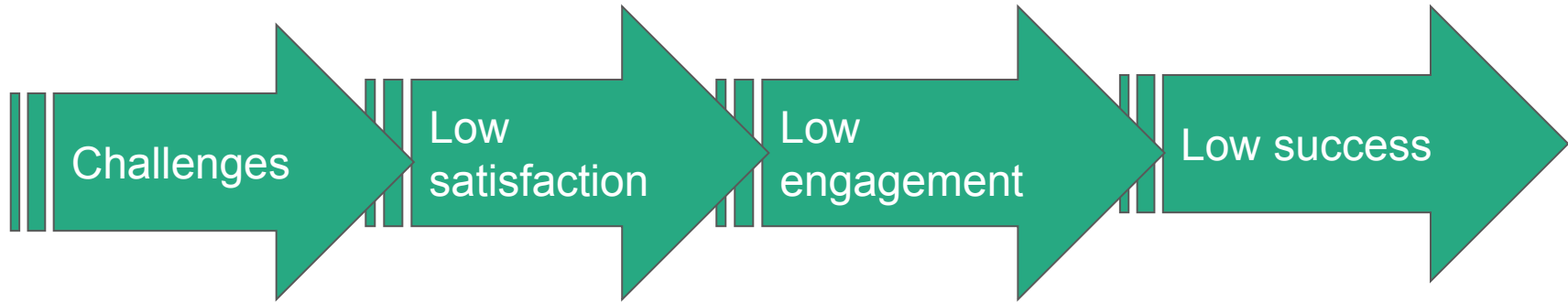
Primary Research

- + >500 student testimonials
- + >100 secondary school teacher and administrator interviews
- + >50 parent interviews

Tip #1: Above all, listen

Survey students, parents, and staff about their first week of school experience. Find out what your school is doing right and wrong.

Secondary Research



-
- Andrews, C., & Bishop, P. (2012). Middle grades transition programs around the globe. *Middle School Journal*, 44(1), 1-18. Retrieved from JSTOR Journals.
 - Blyth, D., Simmons, R., & Bush, D. (1978). The transition into early adolescence: A longitudinal comparison of youth in two educational contexts. *Sociology of Education*, 51, 149-162. Retrieved from JSTOR Journals..

Missed Opportunities

"Our orientation was too short. They tried to cram a ton of information into one week and it was hard to remember much, especially with my jet lag"



New
student

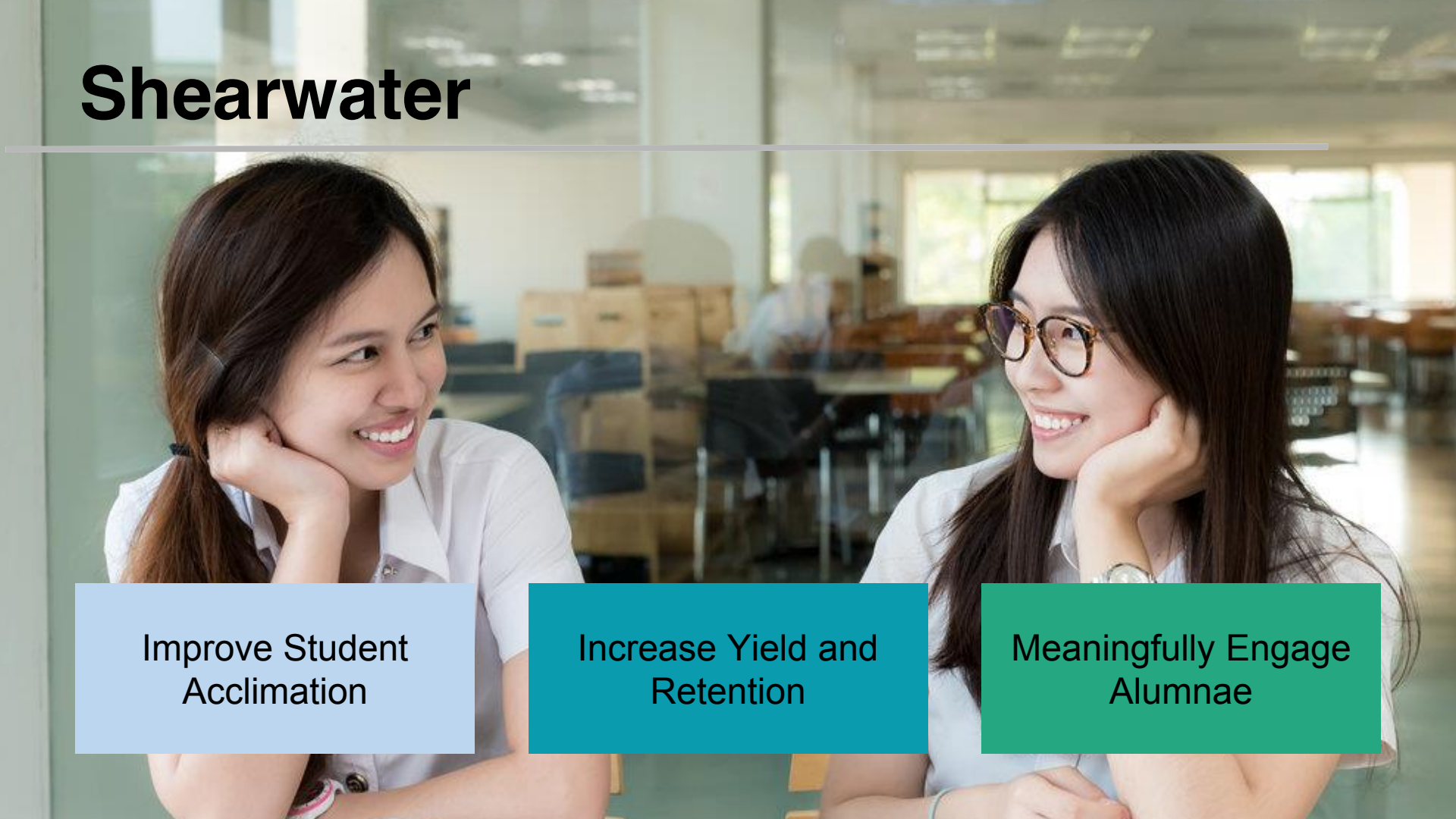
Social Connectedness

Cultural Competency

School Satisfaction

¹ Hendrickson, B., Rosen, D., & Aune, R. (2011). An analysis of friendship networks, social connectedness, homesickness, and satisfaction levels of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*.
² Gomez, E., Urzua, A., & Glass, C. (2014). International student adjustment to college: Social networks, acculturation, and leisure. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*.

Shearwater

A photograph of two young women with long dark hair, wearing white collared shirts, sitting at a table in a library or study hall. They are both smiling and looking at each other, with their hands resting on their cheeks. The background is slightly blurred, showing bookshelves and other people in the distance.

Improve Student
Acclimation

Increase Yield and
Retention

Meaningfully Engage
Alumnae

Program Goals



- + **Pre-arrival orientation:**
Ensure new students are prepared to be successful upon campus arrival
- + **Young alumnae engagement:**
Connect young alumnae to Bryn Mawr via authentic, non-monetary avenue
- + **Student support and acclimation:**
Increase sense of belonging by engaging participants in activities, sports, and clubs, and answering what it means to belong in the Bryn Mawr community
- + **Innovate on personalized learning:**
Use technology to bring personalized mentorship to students and alumni at unprecedented scale

"It's nice to have someone detached enough from current Bryn Mawr business, yet who still understands what it's like because they went there"

-Weiyi

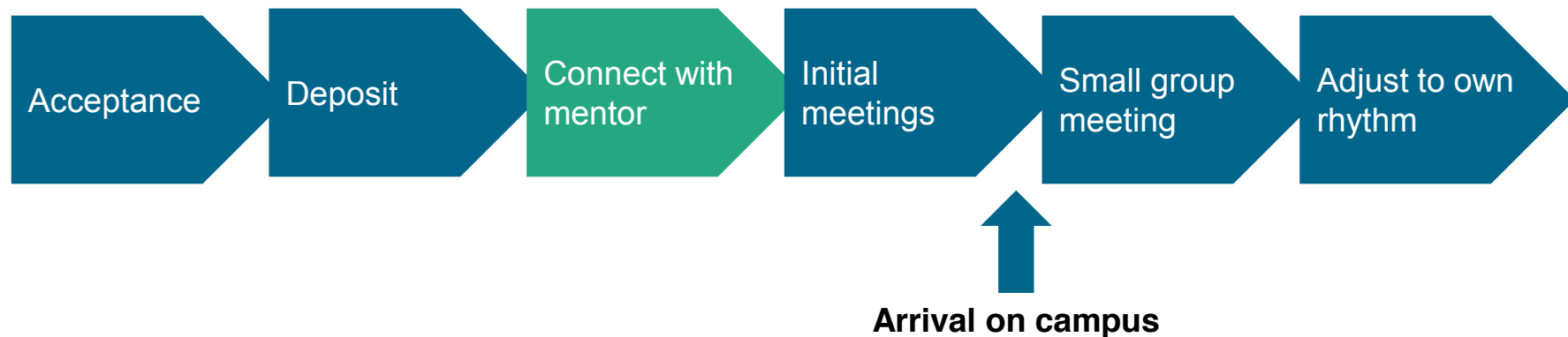
Mentorship

- + Essential elements of mentorship in this context:
 - + Matching
 - + Training
 - + Curriculum / Online Discussion Guides

Tip #2: Give students tools to drive their mentorship

Help students understand how an 'expert friend' can help, and empower them to determine the exact timing, topics and mode of their mentorship.

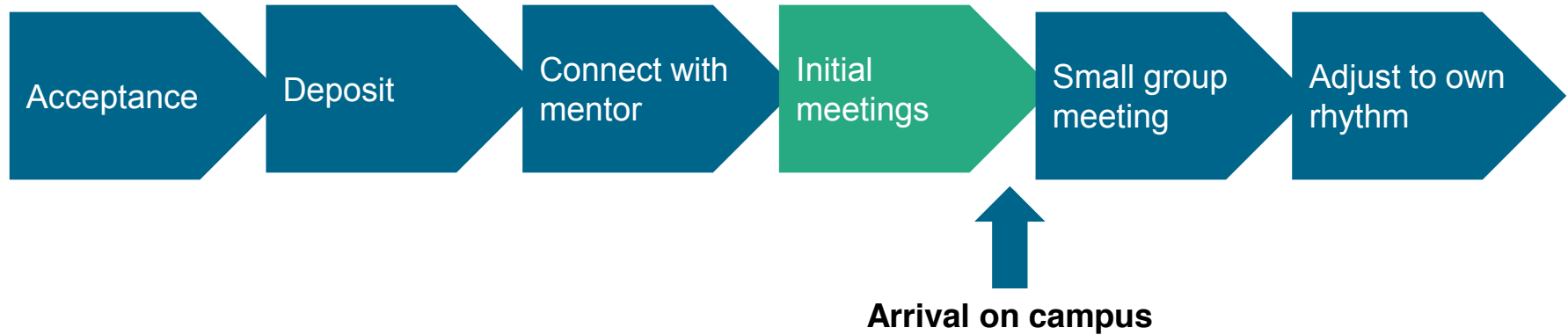
Mentorship at Bryn Mawr



Tip #3: 21st Century Pen Pals

Help mentors forge initial connections in channels that feel comfortable to the student, like SMS or WeChat.

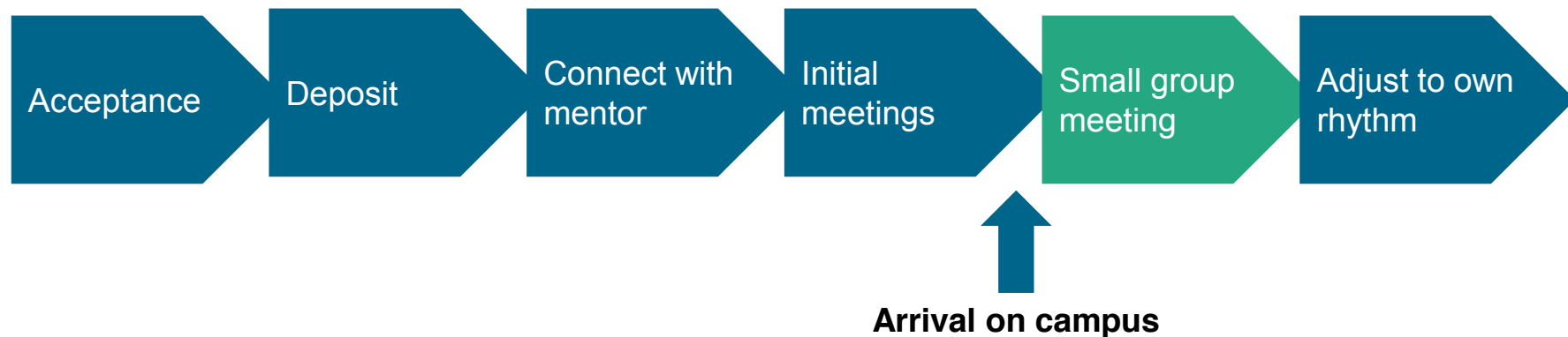
Mentorship at Bryn Mawr



Tip #4: Guide and Grow

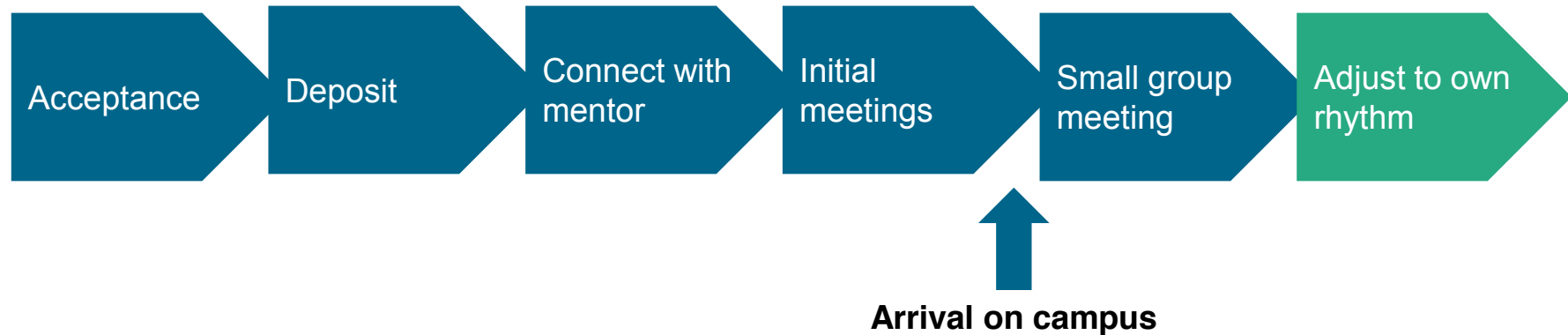
Curriculum guides discussion and drives learning.

Mentorship at Bryn Mawr



Tip #5: Utilize alumnae with a range of experiences

Mentorship at Bryn Mawr



Tip #6: Validate participants' experience

Recognize that success means different things to different students

Voices of Bryn Mawr Students

"Are grades more important than to truly learn things from classes for the freshman year? [My mentor] said it is important to learn and gain experience in order to have a strong foundation for the next several years. Making progress is the key to win!"

— Weiyi

"I want her to know that she's pretty neat. We've got a good thing going here"

—Tabi

"I asked her how can I make friends with US students. She said that I have to find a person who has the same interest with you and ask them to hang out. Also, she said be brave to ask people to sit together during lunch time, etc."

— Yu

"Logan told me the importance of talking to my teachers. She helped me answer it by giving me examples of why it would help me to talk to them."

— Brianna

"It was cool to talk to someone about school that I can really relate to."

— Mya

Voices of Bryn Mawr Mentors

I was able to help Mya come up with strategies for working in a team setting. I am able to let her know that she is not alone and that the challenges she faces are not impossible to overcome.

— Sharon

Noran is very passionate about social justice, and we were able to have a meaningful discussion about that.

—Nia

I could have used a program like this when I came to Bryn Mawr. It was a tough academic and social transition and while I eventually figured it out, I'd like to do what I can to make that transition a smoother one for another student.

— Alexis

I love giving back to Bryn Mawr and I would love to do more mentoring! Tabi has taught me that we all have the capacity for empathy and understanding no matter our age or background.

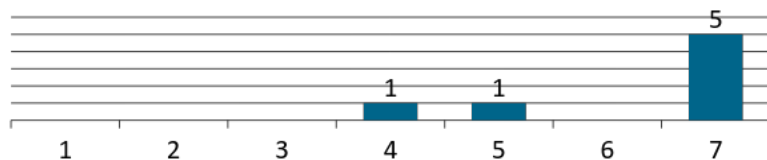
— Christine

Effects on Alumnae

Volunteering as a mentor helps me improve my communication and leadership skills.

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

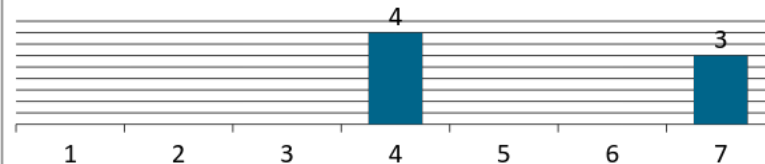
6.3



Volunteering as a mentor is encouraging me to donate to Bryn Mawr in the future.

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

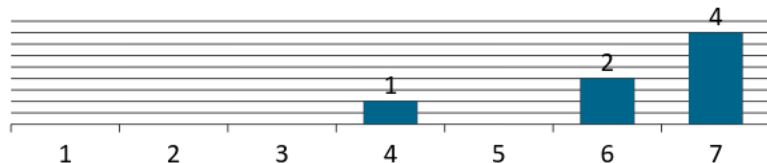
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Volunteering as a mentor helps me feel more connected to Bryn Mawr.

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

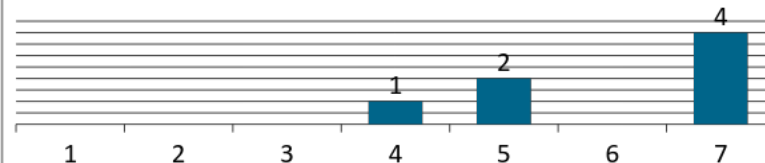
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Volunteering as a mentor encourages me to visit Bryn Mawr.

(1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree)

6.0



Mentor engagement will help drive Bryn Mawr's long-term fundraising goals

Key Challenge: Logistics



Tip #7: Real talk for mentors

Prepare them not only for the joys, but also the challenges of mentoring.

Key Challenge: Motivation

Tip #8: Power comes from within

Build intrinsic mentee motivation before and after match.

Key Challenge: Personalization



Tip #9: Above all, listen.

Gather feedback often, and expect to be surprised.

Questions?

