

## NP020 Streamlining the Student Experience with The Higher Ed Geek, Dustin Ramsdell

Katy Oliveira ([00:07](#)):

Welcome to Next Practices Data-informed strategies to Shape the future of higher ed. In each episode, you'll hear from transformational higher ed leaders on how they're tackling today's most pressing challenges to make a difference for their students and institutions. I'm your host, Katy Olivera.

Dustin Ramsdell ([00:28](#)):

There's always people kind of bemoaning administrative bloat or something, and I think it's hard to defend, like, no, all of these are really important needed resources. Students find them valuable. If students don't even know they exist, they're not accessing them readily. You see that that's been something that there's been a lot of people doing surveys and write-ups on in terms of events or whatever else it might be that's going on that an institution is offering. They just didn't even know that that was available or didn't even know how to access career services and these things that would be really valuable. Let's make this academic experience as effective and efficient as possible.

Katy Oliveira ([01:00](#)):

In this episode, I'm talking with Dustin Ram Bell, host of the Higher Ed Peak podcast, where he explores the impact of Ed PET on the student experience with leaders from higher ed institutions, companies, and nonprofit organizations. We discussed interesting trends he's seeing in his conversations with higher ed leaders, common challenges and interesting ways institutions can leverage data and technology to streamline and ease to student experience. But before we dive in, take a moment to subscribe to the show to stay up to date in the latest creative data informed approaches to student success. Justin, welcome to Next Practices. I am really excited to have you on the show today.

Dustin Ramsdell ([01:45](#)):

Yeah, thanks for having me.

Katy Oliveira ([01:46](#)):

So before we get into the nitty gritty, I'd like you to take a moment to introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about your background and your work in higher education.

Dustin Ramsdell ([01:57](#)):

Yeah, yeah. I came up through a very traditional path definitely compared to where I've ended up, but I was a resident assistant for two years at University of Delaware, and I was a history major with a leadership minor. The leadership classes were some of my favorite ones, very influential I think just for my viewpoint as I entered into my professional life. But I went to grad school at Rutgers University studying higher education. I was working on campus obviously throughout being an RA and grad school and every summer in between and all that kind of stuff. So just feel like I really was always aiming to immerse myself in working with students, supporting students, understanding how everything worked and worked best. And after graduating, I worked on a campus as a resident director for two years professionally, and then started my journey into the ed tech world, working at a couple of online program managers and currently working at another tech company that focuses on digital experience stuff.

([02:53](#)):

So I feel like I've been migrating towards a broader viewpoint through those different jobs where my work at the OPMs were just student success coaching for one program, but obviously very influential of just what is those students at that institution's specific experience as an online student and now thinking more broadly of digital strategy and across many, many institutions. But throughout all of that, I know

the undercurrent and through line for our conversation today, I've been hosting the Higher Ed Geek podcast. It's sort of a moniker that I picked up as I was finishing up grad school many years ago. But yeah, it's been an amazing experience for over six years and over 200 episodes talking with folks, whether it's folks that work at an institution, work in a tech, or in nonprofits or other areas, just about their experience, their viewpoint on what's going on, the work that they do and how they do it, why they do it, and just certainly, definitely focusing a lot on the partnership of how technology is sort of augmenting and supplementing the work that folks are doing, the recruit and support students.

[\(03:53\)](#):

So with my background being very much in student support, that's often the lens that I take with the conversations, whoever it is, but definitely always, especially at this stage, trying to find those areas where I feel like I learned as much from the conversations as anybody else. So yeah, it's been a really meaningful journey for me and just this constant through a lot of different jobs and moving and stuff like that. So yeah, it definitely really helps inform my perspective too. I do really learn a lot from the conversation, so it's really great to have opportunities like this to have a little GM session and talk more about it.

Katy Oliveira [\(04:25\)](#):

It's funny, you and I have really similar trajectory. I too started off as a history major. I actually went on to grad school and got my master's in history and went into thinking I was going to be a high school history teacher, did my teacher training and found that high school wasn't for me, and then decided that I really like college age students thinking I'd become a professor and while in my graduate program had the opportunity to have an academic advising position, so worked full-time and went to school and just fell in love with student success and then slowly worked my way through student success and advising and then moved over to doing content and over overseeing content for an ed tech company, Civitas Learning. So it's interesting, our trajectories and how many ways you can still influence my through line is everything I've done, it's always been about helping young people succeed from the moment I graduated college until now, even though it looks like I've done all kinds of different things there. Is that shared reliant sounds like that's the same for you? Yeah,

Dustin Ramsdell [\(05:23\)](#):

Definitely. I mean, thinking about I guess how it looks from the outside looking in, people have told me, I was like, oh, it seems like everything. There's connected tissue, a continuity through things. I think sometimes it is, people kind of fall into things or whatever else, but it's sure, maybe to a certain extent. It sounds like this is the same for you where it's pretty intentional. I don't want to get too far from the student experience. And like I said, most of it has been around digital student experiences and whether I myself or the people that I am overseeing are working and talking with students every day, even now my job is like, okay, what are the problems that students are facing? What are the problems that institutions are facing? How can we find that area of the Venn diagram where it's like, okay, institutions are trying to navigate digital transformation, do more with less, create relevant, engaging experience for students?

[\(06:13\)](#):

What are their demands? How do we find that union and everything? But yeah, that's always the north star and you don't want to, I guess, get too far from that either literally or figuratively, because then I think you just start being overly reliant on, okay, what was my experience as a student or anecdotes or something. You kind of just start to get a little bit. It's been an interesting journey. I think just still feeling like I'm learning a lot. Even just that environment of working with institutions versus at one something that's always just a point of reflection and processing of how best to partner with institutions.

Katy Oliveira ([06:46](#)):

Yeah. Well, your tagline for the higher ed geek is that you've been geeking out about higher ed since 2013. I know that you mentioned that that's giving you opportunity to talk to folks from a wide range of institutions, organizations that are staying really close to what's happening in higher ed. With that in mind, in your eagle eye, so on patterns in front, are there some exciting trends that you're seeing that leaders should be paying attention to or that you find that most leaders are thinking about or leaders should be thinking about?

Dustin Ramsdell ([07:20](#)):

Yeah, I mean, I think for me, because I feel like I've always been kind of on the outskirts of it, and it does feel like we're at kind of a tipping point or inflection point, whatever you want to call it, but with workforce development and working to learn, learning to work, there's a lot of terms that people throw around and everything, but it does feel like we're at this moment where a lot of people are talking about it, focusing on it, thinking about it, and that there seems to be this really unique opportunity to create pathways for students that really are accessible and provide relevant, engaging, useful skills. And everything else I feel like been all this kind of stuff kind of floating in the ether around skills. It's all about skills and then it's all about the work that maybe a guild does to provide funding so that people can't move up or move on or do whatever it is.

[\(08:10\)](#):

So I think there's this union happening of a lot of these trends that end up in a place where hopefully students can quickly obtain a relevant skill to get a job that's gainfully employing that can then fund them to get further education. Just that initial on-ramp, whether that happens on ground or online or hybrid, it is just something that I've been thinking about a lot and I think just it's even opportunities like this to try to start connecting the dots. I feel like sometimes even when I'm talking for episodes of my show, I'm just sort of processing out loud trying to kind of follow this thread because it feels like it's really meaningful where some people have remarks that the work that people are doing around apprenticeships or something and expanding that framework, it's been very slow going for a while, but there's even forces around maybe expansion of Pell for short-term program and just there's horses coming from all sides, whether it's federal, different states or institutions that I think we've seen be more accommodating of bootcamp models for various offerings.

[\(09:12\)](#):

And so I think that's definitely one big trend line. I almost don't even want to say AI because I think we all acknowledge that is going to be an influential force in the years to come. That one I feel like is where a lot of this stuff that I'm mentioning AI is now where workforce stuff was a few years ago where it's just like, yeah, it's still really early stages where we are seeing this barrage on the horizon or something where it's just sort of like, I don't know. Is it real? I don't know what's going to happen and we've got to make our way there. But with all of those trendlines and forces, it's also that breaking point of students feeling like colleges too expensive, it's not relevant for me, it's going to take too long, and all that. That is really, I think now bearing out to see that it's having an impact on how institutions are developing their strategy, developing their offerings, choosing what programs to cut and downsize and right size and adjust what type of experience they're offering to their students.

[\(10:05\)](#):

It could be like, okay, let's get more towards a three. Let's get more towards a competency-based education. Let's get more towards closer partnerships with these companies in our area that are looking for a certain type of skillset. And if we can do a shorter certificate program or associates or something else, it gets them in there and then that company can kind of further them along with their studies at this institution or elsewhere. So I think all that to say partnerships is going to be a very big trend line that

I'm watching. It's not even going to be like, oh, there's going to be one company that's doing this and they're going to be the end all be all, but it's a big complex issues. It's going to take a lot of organizations and people working at this to move things along and get to a new paradigm and status quo where higher education is able to plug in with what students want to learn and the way that they want to learn it and doing all that in a cost-effective way.

Katy Oliveira ([11:02](#)):

Yeah, it's so interesting. I'm seeing a similar trends. I think there's a multifaceted approach to helping students persist to on-time graduation within budget, not go and have starts and stop and drop out and then still have the student loan, but not the credential to show for it or feel that it's overwhelming to access it in the first place because it costs a lot of money and a lot of time or going through the process and that process becoming very expensive and taking a long time. What can we do to streamline the student experience and make it approachable and make it something that students can navigate and navigate clearly so that they can stay within the confines of their time and budget? And that I think it's interesting because one way to do that is the more structural approaches that you're talking about. Can we make there be support and funding for micro-credentials?

([11:59](#)):

Can we shrink down the bachelor's degree? Can we create interesting student experiences that make getting education more accessible and translate into gainful employment? And then on the flip side of that is how can we remove systemic barriers to completion? How can we make sure students understand their degree requirements? How can we make sure students can succeed in their courses? How do we make sure that students enroll in the credit hours that they need to persist to on time graduation? So I think it's very interesting what you're saying. It aligns with a lot of what I'm seeing as far as efforts to remove those barriers to completion by fostering really user-friendly academic planning processes, making it really easy for students to make schedules that fit their complex lives. Most students aren't necessarily just only doing college. They're working, they're maybe caregivers. They're juggling a lot of different things, and they may have limited times when they can go to college or go to classes, and then you have two institutions delivering an academic product that students centered that students can access classes and the modalities at the times that they need to, I think is a big part of it too.

([13:10](#)):

So I think that's super interesting, seeing something really similar, and I think there's a lot of different things that institutions and technology companies are doing to get at it from all sides.

Dustin Ramsdell ([13:22](#)):

Yeah, definitely. Yeah, I think that's, like you said, a lot of stuff that I mentioned was sort of this existential systemic structural kind of forces, and it does feel like that's maybe it's two kind of 30,000 feet point of view, but you do have to exist in the world that we're living in and these are the forces of the trends that are happening. And then some of the more tactical things that you mentioned can help achieve the goals or follow the trend line of like, oh, students want more relevant or engaging or efficient academic experiences and everything, and it's like, yeah, it's everything from what are you teaching? How are you teaching it, and then what is the environment that they're doing that in? That's what's sort of the digital experience that you're creating. How user friendly is it? How easy is it to navigate different support resources because I feel like there's always people kind of bemoaning administrative bloat or something, and I think it's hard to defend.

([14:07](#)):

No, all of these are really important needed resources. Students find them valuable if students don't even know they exist, they're not accessing them readily. You see that that's been something that there's

been a lot of people doing surveys and write-ups on in terms of events or whatever else it might be that's going on that an institutions is offering. They just didn't even know that that was available or didn't even know how to access career services and these things that would be really valuable. Let's make this academic experience as effective and efficient as possible. It's not belabor the point and have someone spend their time and money for longer than they need to, but then during whatever time they're studying the institution that's get them the help that they need when they need it, how they want it. The idea of working as a coach where it's like, okay, they can access it, they can text their coach, they can call their coach, they can email their coach or whatever.

[\(14:49\)](#):

Let's be just as available as possible, them needing that support and just giving up because they're hitting friction or hurdles and stuff. So you want to create that environment where it aligns with the modern simple way. What courses do I have left in my program? Everything from that to I'm having a really tough time right now. How can I get mental health support from institution? How could I maybe plan out potential leave? I know working with students, they'll just kind of muscle through it and be really stressed and burnt out and everything. It's like, Hey, you take one term of leave, take a break, go take that vacation or whatever else, and it's like you come back, rip it and roaring, you're do amazing and you're just way more sort of balance that does take a series of conversations with an advisor, with a coach to do that the right way and not get to that point where you're so burnt out, you just bail out. And like you said, some credits, no degree, but a bunch of debt. That's the situation that plays out for so many students right now. Hopefully situations like that give a compelling urgency to be like, okay, let's be really thoughtful about the experiences that we're creating for our students to retain as many as possible.

Katy Oliveira [\(15:53\)](#):

On the flip side, we see that opportunity to streamline the experience, the student experience on the whole. But on the flip side, are there trends as far as concerns and challenges that you see continually rising to the top of people's minds as you're having your conversations with them?

Dustin Ramsdell [\(16:10\)](#):

Yeah, I mean, I think I'll just sort of bold and underline circle the one around a lack of student awareness of resources or the things that are going on in campus. That's a big concern where it's again, that idea that the institution has built it, so they assume that students will come, we're putting in all the work to do all these things, but we can have this sort of great infrastructure and support system, but the modality of delivery matters. It might be we have a physical space that's open during regular business hours or there's an email address and that's about it, but then so everything kind of gets bottlenecked there. You want to have a wide array of availability and accessibility for these resources. I think it's that idea of the sense of community, the sense of belonging for students that that's very much lacking and still kind of in the rebuilding stage after the isolation of the pandemic, and that students just don't know maybe how to navigate building that for themselves.

[\(17:00\)](#):

So there's just that much more need for support, but then students are struggling to get access to the resources, whether it's again, the modality of delivery of what is available or the bandwidth of what the institution has available, but that loneliness, that sort of lack of awareness, certainly just stress and a lot of these things are the thing we're just seeing and thankfully a lot of research to validate. I think a lot of institutions will be like, oh my gosh, so many students are coming for counseling or saying stress out. And it's like, okay, now we definitely have the hard data to back it up. And just the understanding of certainly, okay, well if you're just all work and no play, it's like, yeah, that's get stressful. You don't even

know any fun things that are going on campus, so you're not really having these opportunities to build connections with your peers or even mentoring relationships with faculty or staff.

[\(17:45\)](#):

There's just not an environment that's making that availability very open because it's faculty often and all this is like, well, you can come to my physical office for my office hours twice a week or whatever. It's like, well, maybe at least also offer that virtually. Some people did it only because they had to and now they aren't doing it. You just have to really think through with intentionality, all those details, because I think it is like you're seeing these sort of stubborn problems and challenges right now that I think, again, just take a wide variety of solutions to address on that institutional level what the campus culture and climate is that is working to address those problems.

Katy Oliveira [\(18:24\)](#):

Yeah, it's interesting. I think understanding your particular unique mix of students and your institution specific levers and opportunities to help those students and challenges and barriers to success as well is a really important piece of that because like you said, if you build it, they will come.

Katy Oliveira [\(18:45\)](#):

This podcast is brought to you by Civitas Learning. Civitas Learning empowers colleges and universities to achieve transformative levels of student success to reshape higher education for decades to come. Student Impact Platform brings institutional data together for a clearer picture of each student and situation, equipping institutions to take data informed action and lead with a new purpose to impact student success, ready to help students succeed every day. Visit [civitaslearning.com](http://civitaslearning.com) to get started.

Katy Oliveira [\(19:22\)](#):

There is now many, so many students out there that they have other things in their life that are competing with their college experience and their education is important to 'em, and they want to be successful, but they have lives that are more complicated than maybe in a previous generation of students, especially as the population of students becomes more and more diverse across many different demographic factors. And I think too, sometimes students don't even know. I think a challenge we talk a lot about with the folks that I talk to from higher ed is that there are students that are well equipped to advocate for themselves or are hand raisers. They know to go to the resources on campus, they will do it. They're brave enough to raise their hand and go to the tutoring or to go to the advisor for support or whatever the resource is.

[\(20:13\)](#):

And often that student isn't the student that's at most at risk for not persisting through the college experience. They have a sense of how to navigate it. Maybe they've learned from family members, maybe they had gone to a good high school that prepared them for the experience. And then you have students who just don't know to advocate for themselves. They feel intimidated, they aren't aware, they can't make it work in their schedule. They don't know what to ask. They don't want to look stupid when they show up in their professor's office that they need and benefit from proactive, tailored outreach and proactive connection with the resources that are going to be relevant to them. And they need that to be something that they can access and that can make really big difference. I think that's interesting. I'm seeing a really similar trend in that student. There's a gap between all of the resources and apparatus that institutions have for student success, a huge investment in student success, and still there's a gap in students outcomes. And I think it's because sometimes those resources are there, but the students who need the most aren't necessarily ones connecting with those resources or those experiences, and that can cause a bit of a gap.



Dustin Ramsdell (21:31):

Yeah. Well, yeah, I think that's a big, hopefully that's kind of ringing in some people's ears is sort of the passiveness versus the proactiveness. Just a big sort of paradigm shift of, again, we built it, we're here super welcoming in terms of website pages or flyers or these sort of things, but it's like you have to kind of move beyond just doing that, try to be a little bit more proactive. And certainly my work as a coach, it's like I had expectations to be reaching out to all of my students within a particular timeframe. So I think that always made sure that I could catch that student a quick 15 minute phone call where they're like, I've been meaning to talk to you. Thank you so much for reaching out. Or if you ask good questions, you can kind of uncover where it's like, oh, okay, you're feeling a little stressed out, burnt out.

(22:10):

This is a little bit too much for you. There are options to slow down or adjust your schedule. I have all this stuff in my head. I'm not expecting you to memorize and know all this stuff. There's opportunities to make it easy for them to benefit from my insights or of my information, my resources, or being like, Hey, yeah, you've got a super unique situation going on. Let me look into that for you. Is that idea where, yeah, they don't know how to advocate for themselves or they don't know how to find what they're looking for if it even exists or whatever. So yeah, I think that's a big thing. And I think how even structurally maybe at the institution you can adjust the hours that your staff are available. Is it maybe going like a hybrid model or what are the various digital tools you're using for outreach or scheduling or just different communication stuff. So yeah, all really important stuff to be thinking about.

Katy Oliveira (22:55):

And I think you started to set us up for a good segue, and that part of it too is frontline staff that is supporting student advisors, coaches, mentors, career, your services, their wide array of folks that are on the campus to support. Students often have capacity constraints because they have so many students that they're supporting and helping. And so using technology and data to help them make it feasible for them to have proactive go from reactive to proactive, I think is a big opportunity as well. So with that kind of in mind, I know you talk a lot about EdTech and leveraging data and leveraging technology. In your conversations on the higher ed geek, are you seeing interesting ways that folks are using data and technology to tackle some of these student success challenges?

Dustin Ramsdell (23:43):

Yeah, I mean certainly the moment we're in chat box has existed for a while, and I think we're seeing now that they're being empowered with AI to be even more sort of knowledgeable and helpful. So I think it's making sure that you have a good strategy for something around that where sometimes it's like, okay, if you have a mobile app, it's embedded in that experience, embedded in a web experience, and maybe students can even just text it as well, that sort of thing. That gives you this ubiquitous 24/7 conduit to hopefully get questions answered or funnel them and sort of escalate them to the right folks. And then hopefully having just a more integrated digital experience on both the front end or the back end. You might have a bunch of amazing tools or different things, but they're not speaking to each other or there's just kind of silo to the people that work in their day to day.

(24:29):

Because I know as a coach, I at least could view into courses that were in my program so you could see and not just take it out of a student's word of like, yeah, everything's going great, everything's perfect, and sometimes you need to play COI at least to start or something just to be like, how are your courses going? And you can be like, oh, I know that you've not submitted an assignment in a month, or you didn't do so well on the midterm, but sometimes you just lead with that. You make it more clear that hey, and the joke I think is like, Hey, I'm a big brother watching you. It's like I'm a big brother in a good

way. I'm watching you because I care about you and I want to help you try to alleviate any of those concerns. But I think sometimes students expect that you can look up everything and know everything and all that, so it's like you don't want to, I guess almost lose credibility because the institutional culture is saying, no, you can't access that.

[\(25:14\)](#):

Or it's like, I've always the advocate for if you can give role-based access of view only or whatever, or just knowing it's you couldn't break anything, even if you trip. So have at it go peek around, do whatever. That kind of transparency, that accessibility on the staff front is good. And then again, on the front end, integrations around the digital experience as well I think is helpful to be thinking about because yeah, I think the better that things are integrated with one another. If you have a CRM kind of platform or SIS, whatever you're using, depending on how sophisticated it is, you hopefully could not have to do too much manual digging or hopping around different systems to understand, okay, is this student active in the LMS when was their last login? And you can see that as a data point. What is grades and currently enrolled courses or overall program GPA or these just quantitative data points where it's like you pull up something, you see all this data.

[\(26:05\)](#):

And again, I'm speaking very much from what my life was like as a coach, but I think it's sometimes helpful whoever it is on campus who is working with the student, you understand what's going on and you don't have to necessarily go ask somebody else and wait and make them have to look it up for you and send it to you or just do without, you at least are having your staff work within a digital ecosystem that allows for them to have whatever they need at their fingertips to help inform them about what's going on with the student. Those are things that I think about a lot. It's just I guess a cohesive integrated digital ecosystem, both for the student experience but also for the support staff experience. And then hopefully you can see if it's like, okay, who didn't retain or who dropped out.

[\(26:45\)](#):

It's like, okay, these are students who weren't logging into LMS as frequently as other students or something. You can start to really back up things that I feel like sometimes the gut check makes us feel like, oh, this has got to be right. This is just what I feel, and this is informed maybe from my background or my education, but I think you're getting at this too, is you want to make sure that you're understanding, well, what is happening at University X? How are students navigating this space? Because it might tweak a little bit in terms of what is actually happening in front of you versus the theoretical anecdotes or different things or the headlines that you're seeing elsewhere. So I think that's even just a caveat for everybody listening is sort of like, don't just take our word for it, confirm what the nature or the extent of what's happening at your institution is, and that'll help you to navigate better of like, okay, we should invest in a different tool or restructure how our staffing is set up or whatever. Because yeah, it's something unique to how your institution is.

Katy Oliveira [\(27:41\)](#):

Yeah, it's interesting, right? What you're saying is interesting. If we think about it like there, back in my day back a long time ago when I first started in higher ed, best practice and benchmarking to your peer institutions was, I think it still is a really important piece of the puzzle, but I think that that gives you contextual and foundational experience. And where I'm seeing institutions make huge headway is when they can couple that traditional practice of best practices and benchmarking with information and data around their own student body and their own institution, and what are the opportunities for success and persistence and retention at their institution? What are the barriers to those things at their particular institution? And they can start to invest in the experiences that supports students. And it's not even just



across the board. These particular groups of students benefit from these kinds of opportunities and they can start to get really precise and also really focused in their efforts.

[\(28:47\)](#):

So they become much more scalable and they start to sort of accumulate small wins. They save percentage of students over here and they save another percentage of students over here, and that starts to have accumulated effect over their overall students success. And they're making really, really great gains because most institutions have done the low hanging fruit of the big best practices programs. Now where they are is who are my students? Like you were saying, how do I get my staff across institutions to coordinate their efforts so that every time a student comes into an office, they don't have to repeat themselves? I think what you're saying, I hear quite often that students, especially from their high school experiences, expect you to know, because in high school, everyone could see all of their business. They expect that people at a college campus know their business, know their grades, know how doing in their classes, and oftentimes are surprised that not necessarily everyone knows or that they're not all connected, that there's not a repository of information around the student.

[\(29:50\)](#):

I think there's opportunities using student success analytics as well to help to forecast and predict and help to prioritize students who are at risk and might benefit from intervention. So I think what you're saying is so true, and I think the power to really refine approaches is having that data and information more connected and more diffused across the institutional apparatus, not having it siloed. And so where leaders see the reports and they kind of know the trends and then they have recommendations on high, I think there's a multifaceted approach where leaders can look at data, they can make informed decisions on where to invest, what to allocate resources to, what's working, where to organize, how to coordinate, and also front time users can have information to know, how can I help this particular student? What student do I need to reach out to, which student needs engagement? And those things together can be really powerful.

Dustin Ramsdell [\(30:52\)](#):

Well, and I think even just it will be contextualize or informed by, because the idea is okay at risk, what does that mean? It's like it means whatever you want it to be. You can sort of understand that in a sort of benchmarking level and then adapt that or refine it to be more applicable to your institution, your culture, and your approach of how you're going to try to support those students. We want to at least base things in best practices, but then a lot of institutions want to put their own touch on it, and it's like, yeah, there should be flexibility in this and not feeling like you're backed into a corner. And again, that there's one only way to do any of this kind of stuff. It's like you do just want to at least base it and we're talking about and then make sure that you're orienting it in the right direction for your students.

Katy Oliveira [\(31:33\)](#):

Yeah. Well, we've covered a lot of ground, and so I want to give time before we sign off, anything that you see interesting that leaders should be taking advantage of other opportunities. Anything else you'd like to share before we sign off?

Dustin Ramsdell [\(31:48\)](#):

Yeah, I mean, I think from my own experience, I've worked remotely for a long time, so I'm always looking for good opportunities to get out and about and be in community with fellow higher ed folks. So I would definitely encourage just trying to get out to events, I think, because I think some people maybe are just more keen on that than others. So I think trying to find those right communities where that gives you the opportunity to talk, shop and benchmark with your peers, get some new ideas and different

strategies. I think it's a beautiful thing in higher education that people are just willing to at least show their work and be helpful to each other because I think it's just we share obviously the same core values of support students and their academic goals. So I found some good different unique events that I just didn't even know existed a few years ago.

[\(32:28\)](#):

I think just with the hiatus that everyone was going through with conferences and events emerging from that and various organizations, I'm thinking Times higher education is one that didn't really see much from stateside, like they're being UK based historically, certainly with their acquisition of inside higher ed, just doing a lot more events around student success, digital universities and all that. And I found them to be just very relevant where other organizations just maybe are for better or worse, just more generalized. So I think that's kind of some of my parting words, call to action that I always like to end my shows with is to look into those things because I think that can help maybe give you a little bit of a shot in the arm, a little inspiration, motivation as you're tackling these very complex issues.

Katy Oliveira [\(33:09\)](#):

Yeah, I think this is why our podcast exists, right, is to create dialogue and practice share and to think through these ideas, build community across higher ed to help solve these challenges. Dustin, thank you so much for coming on Next Practices. I really appreciate it. Yeah,

Dustin Ramsdell [\(33:25\)](#):

Yeah, it was really great chatting with you.

Katy Oliveira [\(33:29\)](#):

Next Practices is produced by Civitas Learning Access More Next Practices and learn about how transformational leaders are moving student success forward by visiting [civitaslearning.com](http://civitaslearning.com). And if you enjoyed this episode, be sure to share it with a friend and subscribe anywhere you listen to podcasts to stay up to date on the latest data informed approaches to student success.