

Adult Transitions, Learning, and Success

A Congressionally Directed Spending Project Overview



UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT AUGUSTA

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Overview

- Who are ATLaS scholars?
- History of Development
- Mission & Principles
- Features & Activities
- Outputs: Persistence & G.A.S.
- Outcomes
- What ATLaS is not
- Partnership with MAE

Who are ATLaS Scholars?

- Adult learners age 25+
- In a first- or entry-year at their institution
- Enrolled in or seeking an employability credential
- Resident of Maine
- Not already a graduate of a bachelor's degree program

History of Development

- ATLaS is 100% funded by an FY23 \$945,000 Congressionally Directed Spending Grant
- U.S. Department of Education
- Secured by Maine Senators Collins and King at the request of the University of Maine System.

ATLaS Mission

ATLaS helps adults in their first- or entry-year of university feel strong, balance the work, and return in their sophomore year.

ATLaS Guiding Principles

BELONGING: Addressing Impostorship

Adult learners are susceptible to feelings of impostorship when they enter college believing the notion of the “normal college student.”

The ATLaS Program fosters belonging and reinforces the new traditional college student.

Students Speak: Connection

“The COL 123 with Professor Flowers and Professor Brann taught me a lot. What I enjoyed the most about the course was the live zoom class we had twice a week. It gave me a chance to let people know a little bit about me and my future goals. The course also showed me how to properly use Brightspace, write an essay, and how to properly address my future Professors.”

ATLaS Guiding Principles

RELATIONSHIPS: Employing the Cohort Model

While adult learners experience a higher degree of internal motivation than younger learners, research holds that a cohort model offers the supportive factor of community around critical tasks.

The ATLaS Program gives adult learners a socially reinforcing experience that addresses their needs and limitations as people who experience complex demands on their time.

Students Speak: College Material

“I had always heard that college was for a certain type of person, and thus avoided it until I was 41. I have a 4.0 and have not only learned a new career but I am using what I have learned in my first year to teach and help others change their lives around.”

ATLaS Guiding Principles

CONTACT: Intrusive Coaching Model

Adult learners require coaching and advising that matches their profiles as adults.

The ATLaS Program integrates student support services into the cohort experience.

Intrusive Coaching

- Invite conversation
- Proactively asking questions
- Practice transformational advising rather than transactional advising
- Motivational interviewing
- Listen to learn



Student Speak: Comfort Zone

“The only defining factor of you being college material is if you are willing to learn and step outside of your comfort zone.”



ATLaS Guiding Principles

ANDRAGOGY: Faculty Training and Commitment

Adult learners thrive in academic environments where instructors demonstrate the difference between pedagogy and andragogy.

The ATLaS Program incorporates strong faculty buy-in and support, and works with instructional staff who are eager to affirm and promote andragogy and adult learner success.

Students Speak: Grit

“At forty-five years old I never imagined myself going back to school. I worked dead end job after dead end job trying to make ends meet. I knew something had to change. I am grateful for the COL 123 course for preparing me for my future of learning. I learned a lot about myself, others, and what this college thing was all about. I learned valuable skills to help me advance in the college world. I learned I have grit and determination that has led me to a 3.7 GPA and even made the dean's list.”

ATLaS Guiding Principles

ECONOMICS: Leveraging Financial Programs and Resources

UMS sponsors a number of scholarships and financial programs to assist students but students are not always aware of processes, deadlines, requirements, or how to pair opportunities.

The ATLaS Program liaises this process for participants to make college as low- or no-cost as possible for the adult learner.

Students Speak: Confidence

“After the class ended, I had significantly higher confidence in myself as a student than when I entered it.”

ATLaS Guiding Principles

TECHNOLOGY: Investing in the Digital Experience

Adults learners with complex responsibilities thrive on systems that are straightforward, well designed, and efficient.

The ATLaS Program encourages digital literacies, explores opportunities to access high quality devices, and collaborates with the UMA FDC and participating content area classes to achieve a high quality digital experience.



Students Speak: Scaffolding

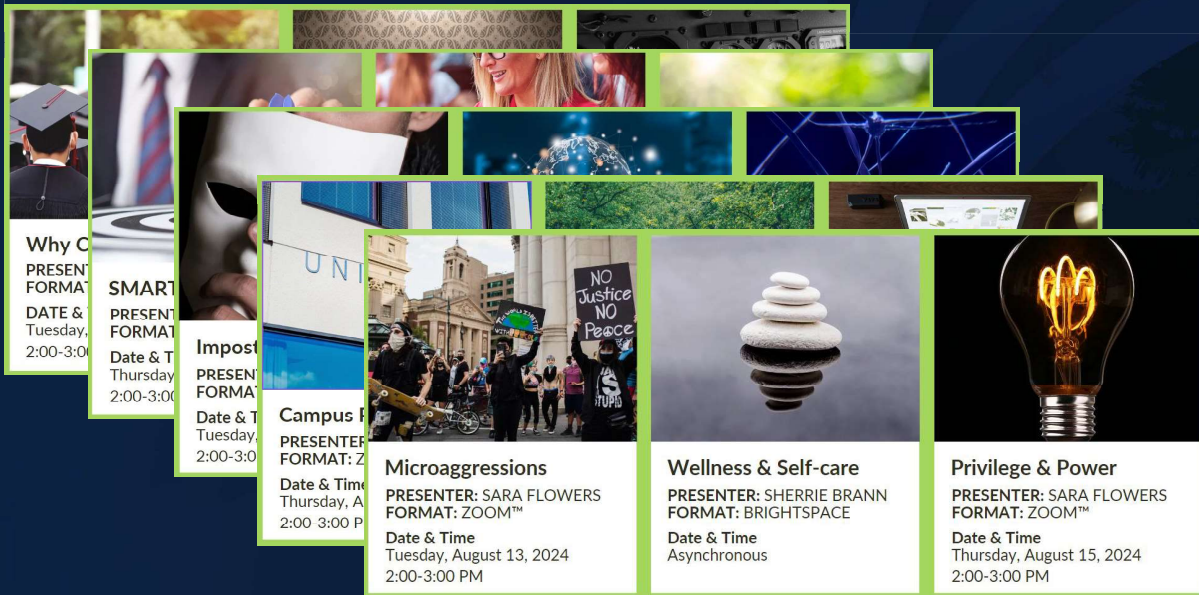
“I had been procrastinating a 20-page essay for another class because it had to be done in APA format, and I didn’t know how. At the same time, I was assigned a smaller APA essay for COL 123, and doing that small essay helped me realize that doing the long essay wouldn’t be so scary.”



Features of ATLaS

- ATLaS Community Workshops
- Credit-bearing Course Work
- Coaching for Adult Learners
- ATLaS Activities (sync/async)
- System and Institutional Influence

ATLaS Workshops



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Microaggressions
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FORMAT: ZOOM™
Date & Time
Tuesday, August 13, 2024
2:00-3:00 PM

Wellness & Self-care
PRESENTER: SHERRIE BRANN
FORMAT: BRIGHTSPACE
Date & Time
Asynchronous

Privilege & Power
PRESENTER: SARA FLOWERS
FORMAT: ZOOM™
Date & Time
Thursday, August 15, 2024
2:00-3:00 PM

ATLaS Activities

- ATLaS Community Space (non-credit)
- COL 123 Learning and the College Community (3 cr)
- COL 100 Introduction to the College Experience (1 cr)
- Adult Learning Passport in Engagement (ALPinE)

- Coming Soon! COL 314 Professional Career Planning
- In development: Economic Literacy for College and Career
- Keep an eye out: Professional Communication and Networking

Outputs of ATLaS

- 1.) Persistence to Second Year: Has the student enrolled and stay enrolled past the add/drop period in the fall semester after joining the ATLaS Scholars community?
- 2.) Good Academic Standing: Does the student have a GPA at or above the institutions' "good academic standing" cut mark? Usually 2.0*

Outcomes

- Increasing student confidence
- Forming meaningful relationships
- Strengthening help-seeking behaviors
- Fostering positive interactions with faculty and course materials
- Navigating financial aid procedures
- Maximizing aid > reducing after-school debt
- Becoming a digital citizen
- Using communications technology responsibly

What ATLaS is Not

- Counseling or Mental Health Services
- Content Area Tutoring
- Student Life Activities
- Disability Accommodations
- Financial Aid Management
- Student Conduct or Academic Integrity Services

Partnership with Maine Adult Education

- Investing in over-excluded populations
- Bridging the secondary-to-postsecondary transition
- Intentional on-boarding with AE experience
- Encouragement to operate on both sides of the bridge



Next Class Starts 10/29/2024!



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