Why Identity & Representation

"This action theme is about closing the gap between the promise of acceptance and the lived realities of many at Smith by expanding the community's appreciation of diversity and understanding of intersectionality, and finding more ways in which to uphold the value of difference at Smith." (Inclusion in Action Working Group Report)

Smith is committed to being a community that is welcoming to people of diverse identities and backgrounds. However, many members of the campus community have expressed lived experiences that vary from that image. A commonly conveyed reason for this is that not all members of the Smith community feel equally valued; this is indicated by too few people of color in the faculty, staff, and administration as well as reports of various macro and micro aggressions across campus.

- "Diversity equals different points of view. To have a healthy discussion about any issue, the variety of people has to be proportional, and it's not. Staff at Smith is predominantly white, especially management." (a staff voice)

- "...desire a space in which I am comfortable being myself and I don't censor my sexual, religious, or ethnic identity." (a faculty voice)

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Hypothesis

As a group, we discussed many issues that all constituencies face on campus as a result of their identity. A few included: loneliness, marginalization or tokenization, and lack of resources.

Ultimately, we identified that a lack of resources can exacerbate feelings of isolation and disempowerment.

Our hypothesis is that a more central, universal way of applying for resources would alleviate financial concerns for students. Therefore, making it easier for students and marginalized constituencies to access the funding process.

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Experiment

Via Instagram Stories and Poll Everywhere we polled about 40 students, asking the following questions:

1. **If you need financial support on campus, do you know how to find it?**
2. **Where would you go first to find out about available resources on campus?**
3. **What makes it difficult to find available resources (especially funding) on campus?**
4. **Would a universal funding form be beneficial to you?**

With these questions, we were able to access the need for more central and accessible funding for students as well as determine what barriers keep students from finding and receiving resources on campus.

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What makes it difficult to find available resources, especially funding on campus?

It is not advertized- I am a senior and stil learning about the existance of new funds. I can't look for funds that I don't know exist.

There are a lot of specific details about each kind of resource which sometimes gets confusing when you're trying to figure out if you're eligible for some kind of funding or not

Resources do not seem to be in a specific place, and it is unclear how many of those resources have loopholes. In addition, asking for funding still feels like a stigmatizing act and it feels like if you've asked for something once, that you cannot go back and negotiate for something else, even if it is an emergency. Whether this is true or not, is unrelated. If you feel limited and restricted, you end up not using the funding in hope that it will be there when you have your worst emergency.

It's much less of a hassle if I look online instead of going to the dean/my advisor, but actual information is usually hidden/vague on the website, which makes finding/getting any resource difficult.

100%
of students find a universal funding form beneficial

57%
of students don't know where to look to find financial support

55%
of students use the Smith Website to find resources

40%
of students ask friends or classmates to find resources

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Recommendations

We recommend adopting (1) a universal form for resources as well as (2) a separate section on the portal for OEI related links, especially funding sources. This will ensure that resources are easily accessible for those who need them.

Welcome to the Smith Portal!

FOR CAMPUS EMERGENCY CALL 800
From a cell phone or from off campus: dial
(413) 585-2490

Useful Links
Smith Website
Workday
BannerWeb
Campus Center Cafe
Change Smith Password
Computer Help: Tara
Directory
Grecourt Gate News
Libraries
List of Offices
LinkedIn Learning *(Lynda.com)* Logoff
Moodle
Net Partner (Financial Aid 2019-20)
Residence Life Self-Service
Smith Student Employment
Smith Student Class Schedule

Planning and Events
Catering
Events Management and Planning Tools
Smith Social Network
Submit eDigest Announcement
Submit Event Request

Calendars:

Smith Academic
Smith Events
Five College Events
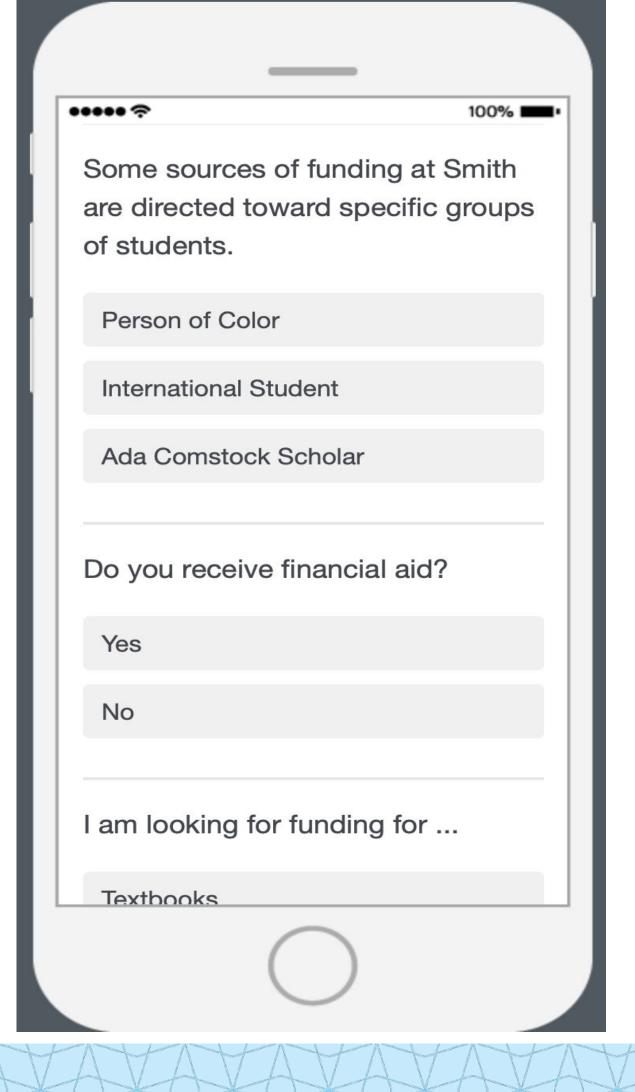
Office for Equity & Inclusion

Grid of Availible Funding
Online Reporting
Emerson-Lewis Fund (Staff)

Some sources of funding at Smith are directed toward specific groups of students.

Person of Color

International Student

Ada Comstock Scholar

Do you receive financial aid?

Yes

No

I am looking for funding for ...

Textbooks

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Thank you.

- R. Jordan Crouser, Assistant Professor of Computer Science
- Raven Fowlkes-Witten, Office for Equity and Inclusion Program and Outreach Coordinator
- Dana Olivo, Assistant Director of Residence Life for Residential Education
- L'Tanya Richmond, Dean of Multicultural Affairs

- Jillian Schuman 'AC
- Becky Shaw, Associate Dean of Students
- Rachel Siegel, Faculty Recruitment & Appointment Specialist
- Anne-Marie Szmyt, Associate Vice President for Human Resources

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