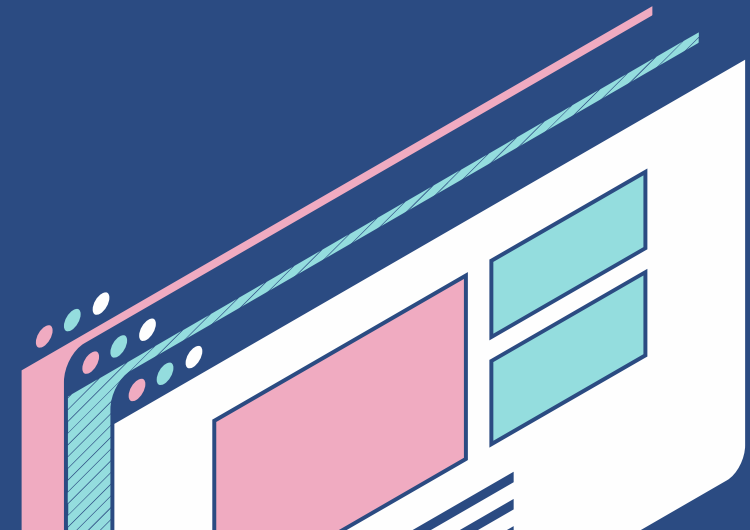
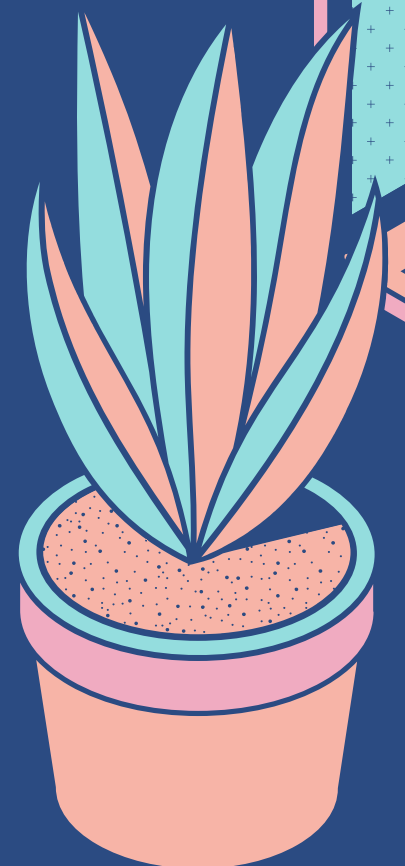
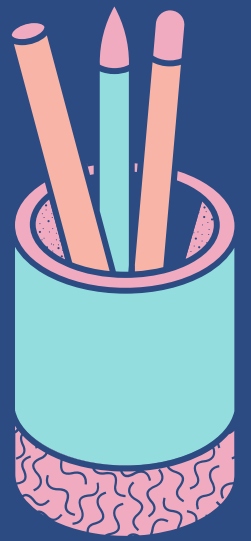


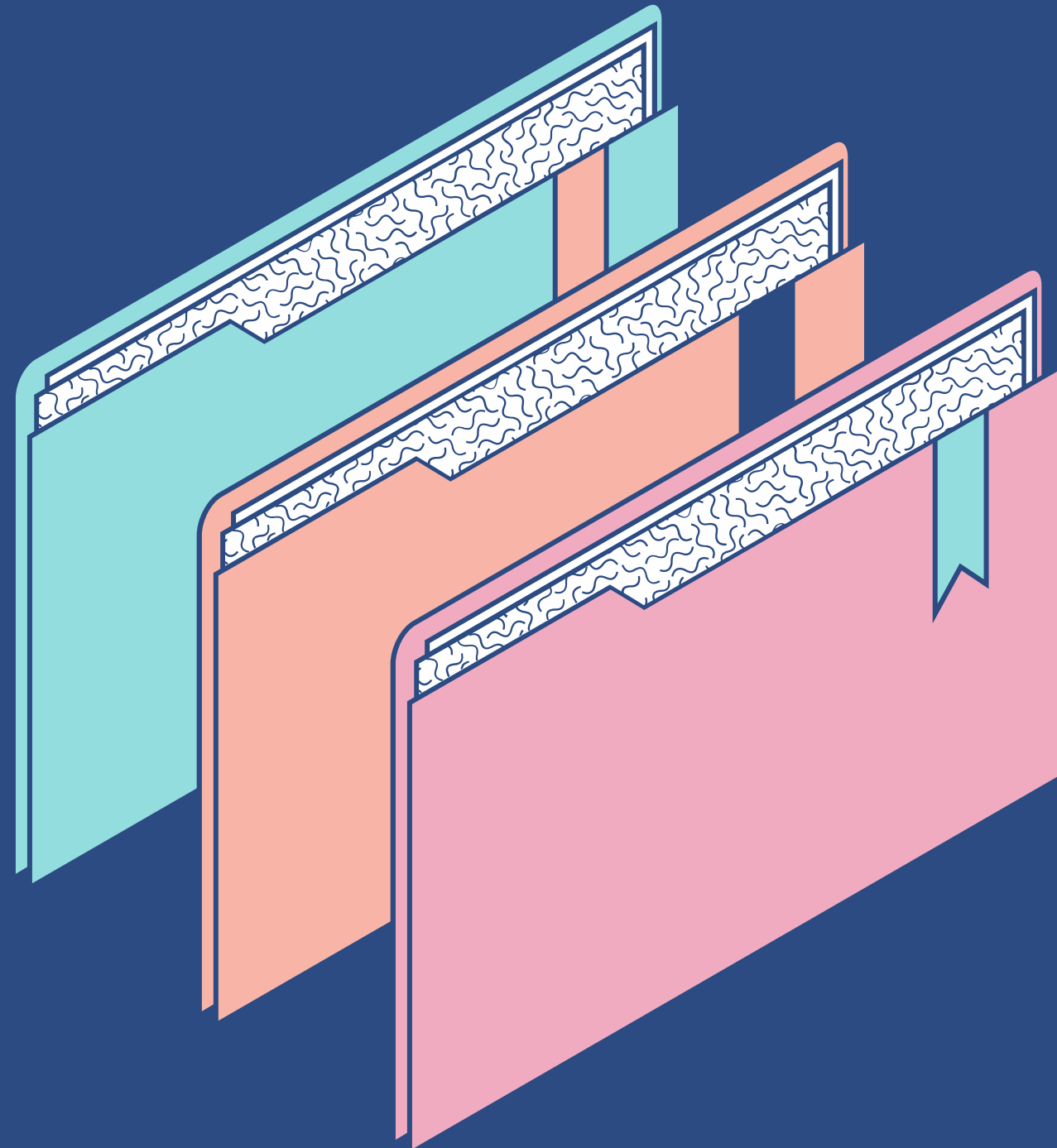


AMIRA MALCOM & ZEBULUN M. WOOD, IU LUDDY SCHOOL OF INFORMATICS, COMPUTING AND ENGINEERING

# Co-Curricular Engagement in Online Learning Environments

A look at the importance of authenticity at the intersection of tech and education

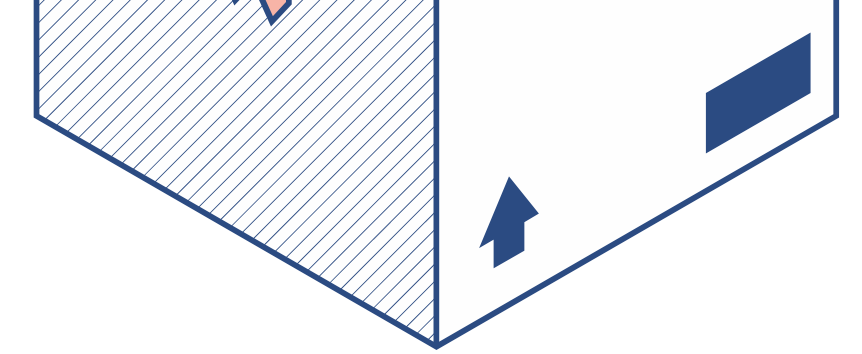
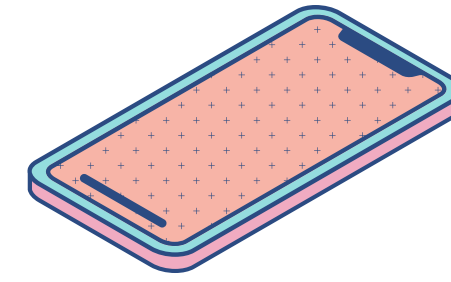
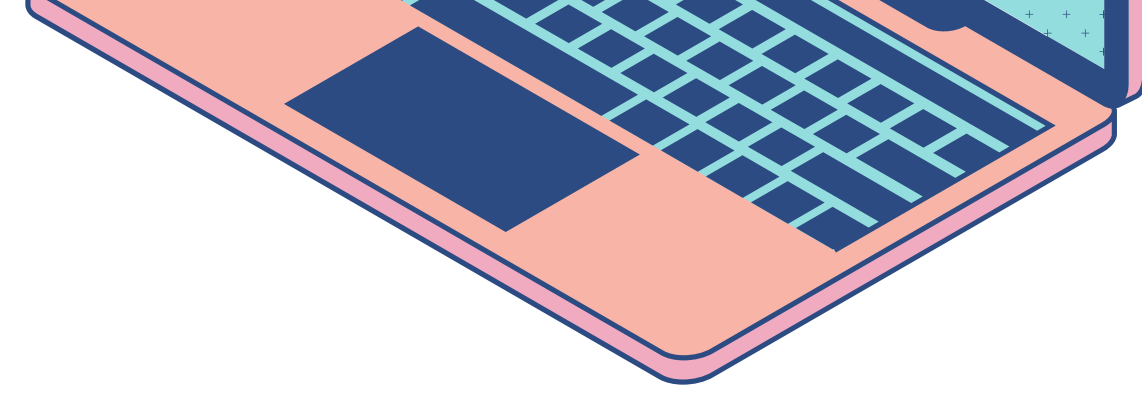
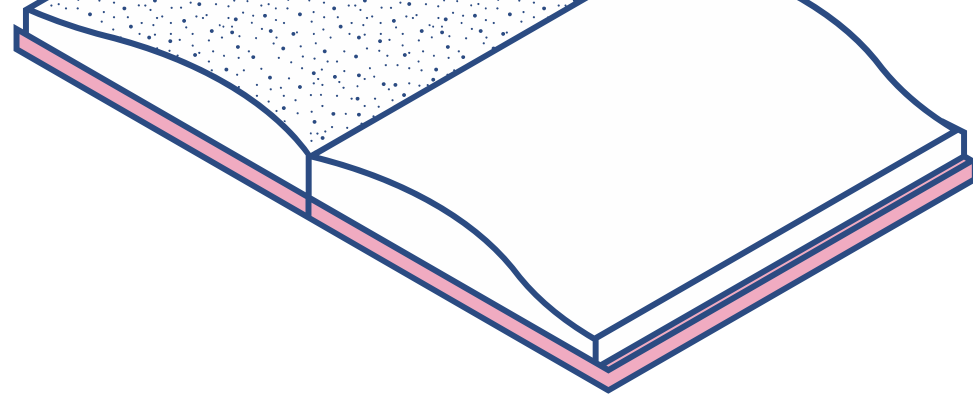




# Agenda

## KEY TOPICS DISCUSSED IN THIS PRESENTATION

- The impact of isolation on online participants
- Setting up an authentic communication space, and acknowledging the role of "now-ness"
- Applications and outcomes at Luddy
- New trends to watch out for and ideas for educators and practitioners



## Library Information Science (LIS)

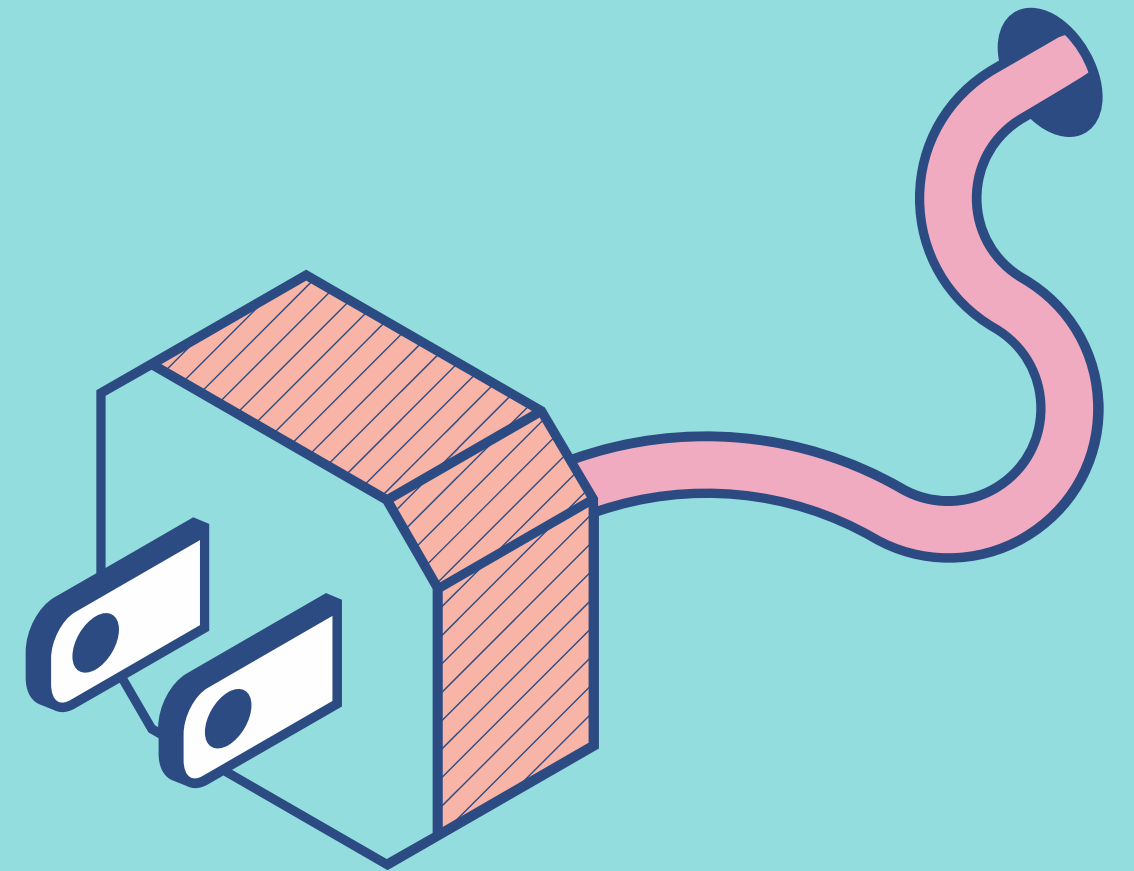
- Online-native program
- Low culture of community pre-pandemic
- Previous approaches to engagement included community posts and alumni lecture series

## Media Arts & Science (MAS)

- In person only classes (few exceptions)
- Strong student community in extracurriculars
- Meeting students where they already hung out casually for gaming (Discord).

# Unplugged: The Experience of Online Students

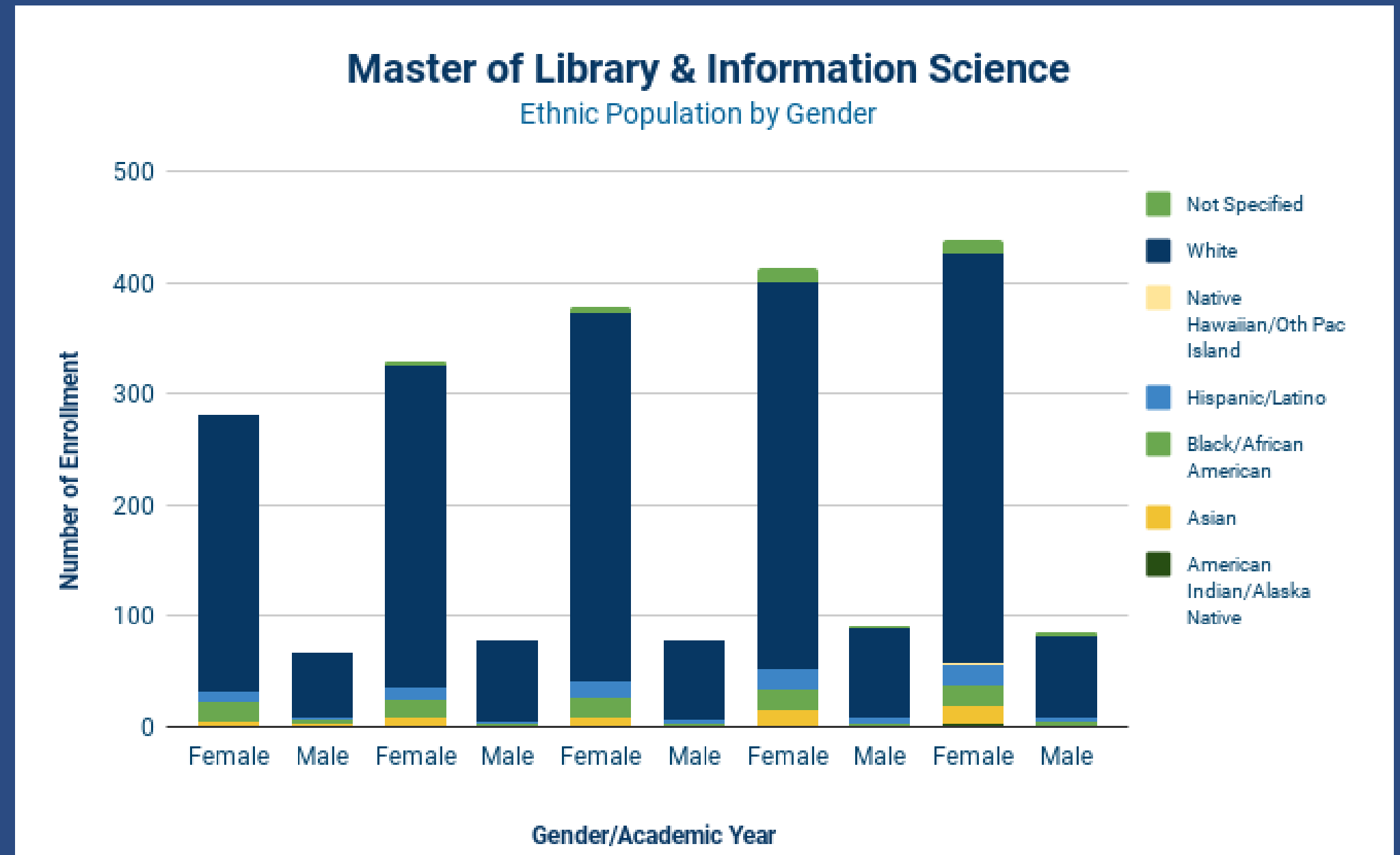
"Before this server, I mainly interacted with classmates on class discussion boards. It was all very professional and even competitive. It did not foster a sense of community. I felt very isolated from my cohort."



# LIS Program Demographics

AS OF JANUARY 2023

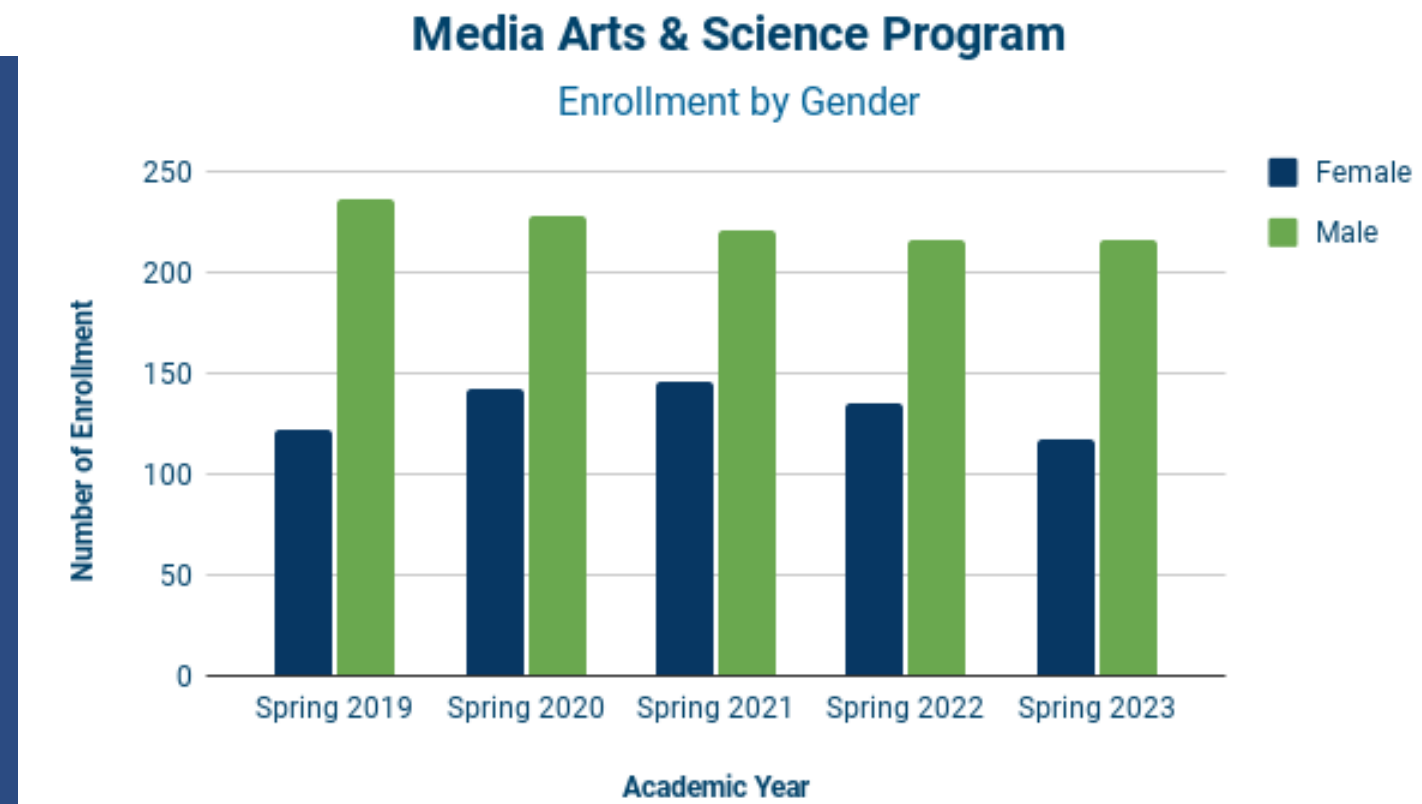
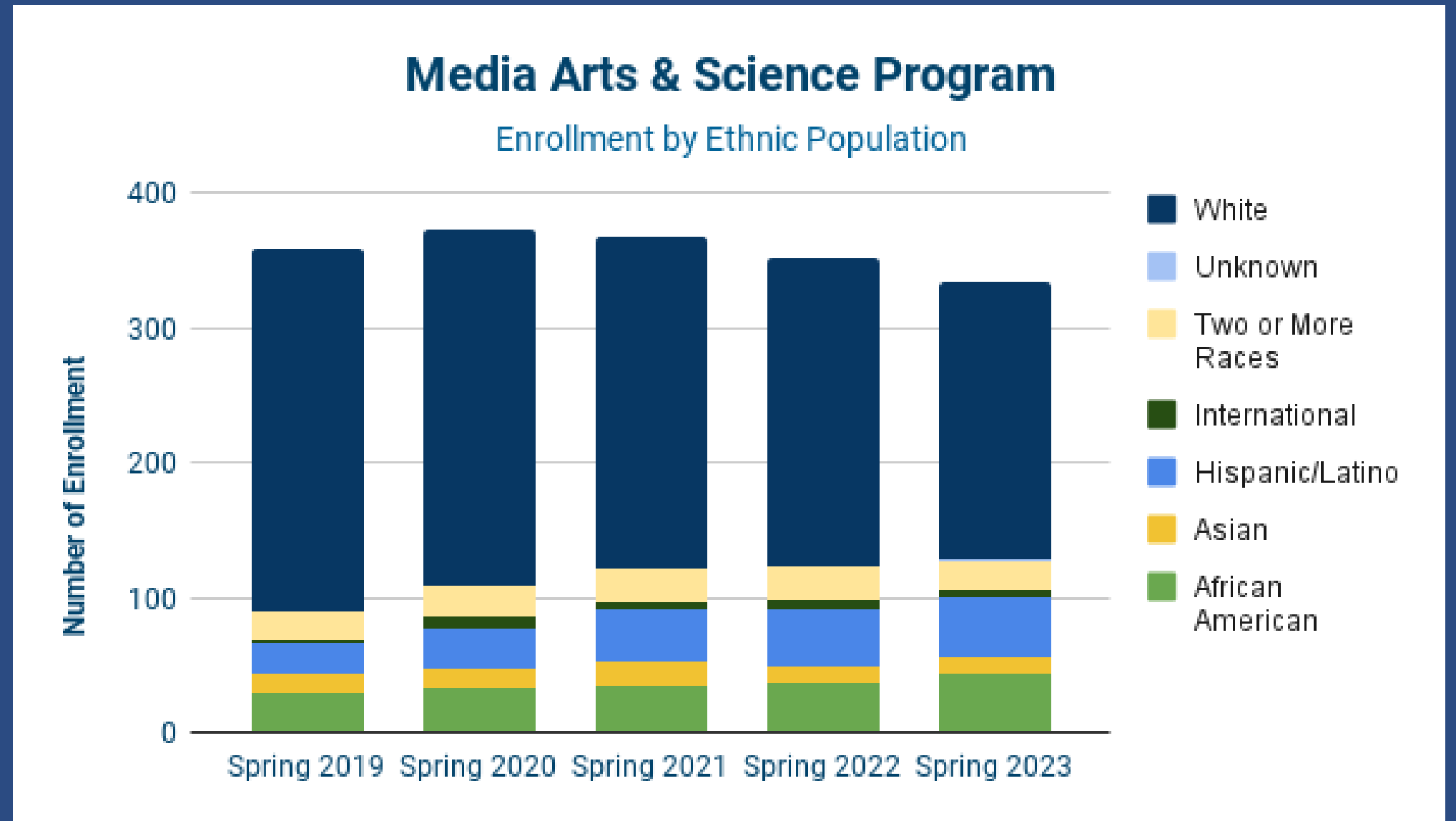
Within the Library Information Science as a whole, students who identified as white were the vast majority. This metric differs a bit more in the female population.



# MAS Program Demographics

AS OF JANUARY 2023

Within the Media Arts and Science program as a whole, students who identified as white were the vast majority.

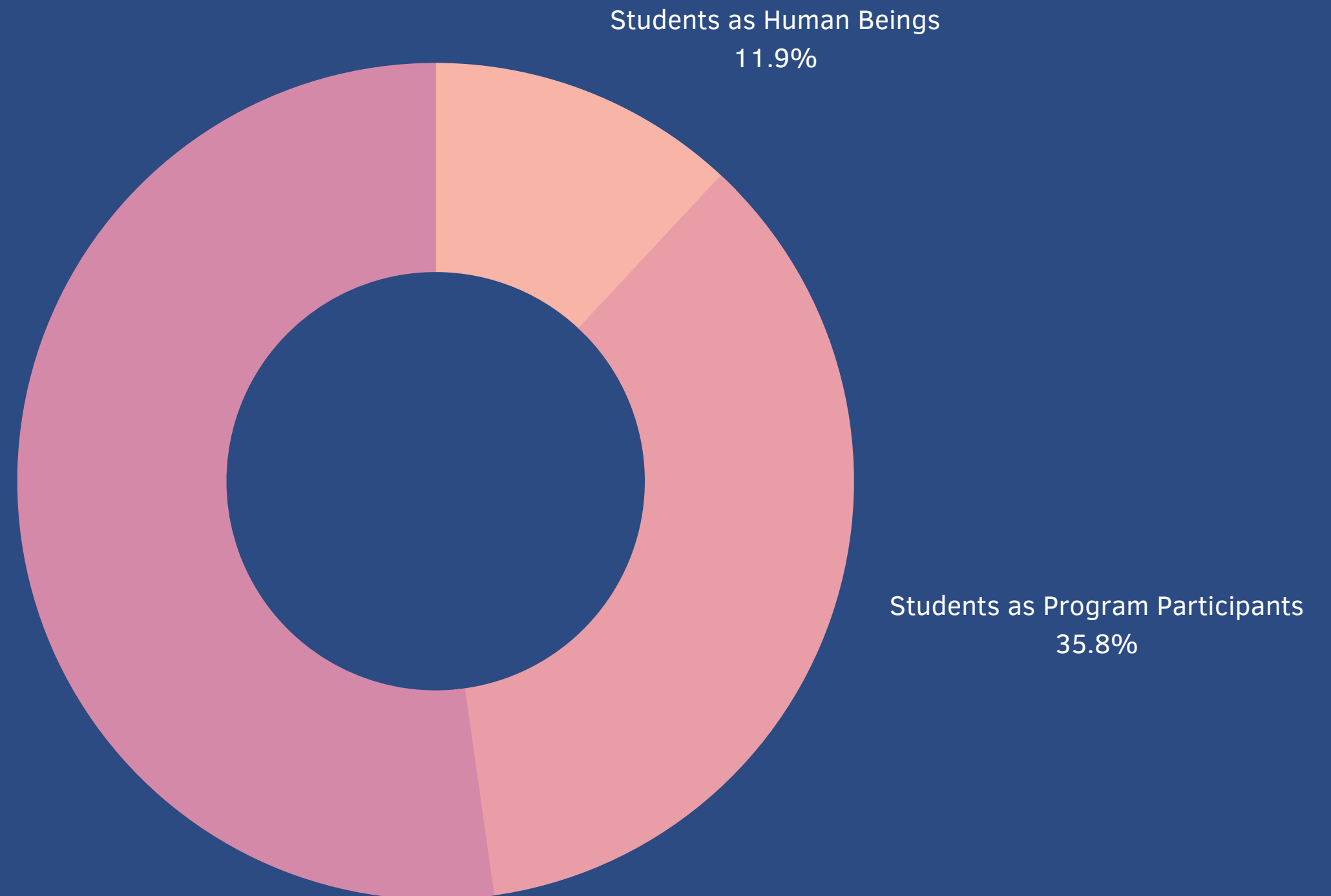


# Addressing the "now-ness" gap

## EXPLAINING AUTHENTICITY

Students are constantly expected to inhabit ever-future bearing personas, especially in graduate programs. Students recognize urging from practitioners to get "out" instead of through their chosen program.

Students as Professional Ambassadors  
52.2%



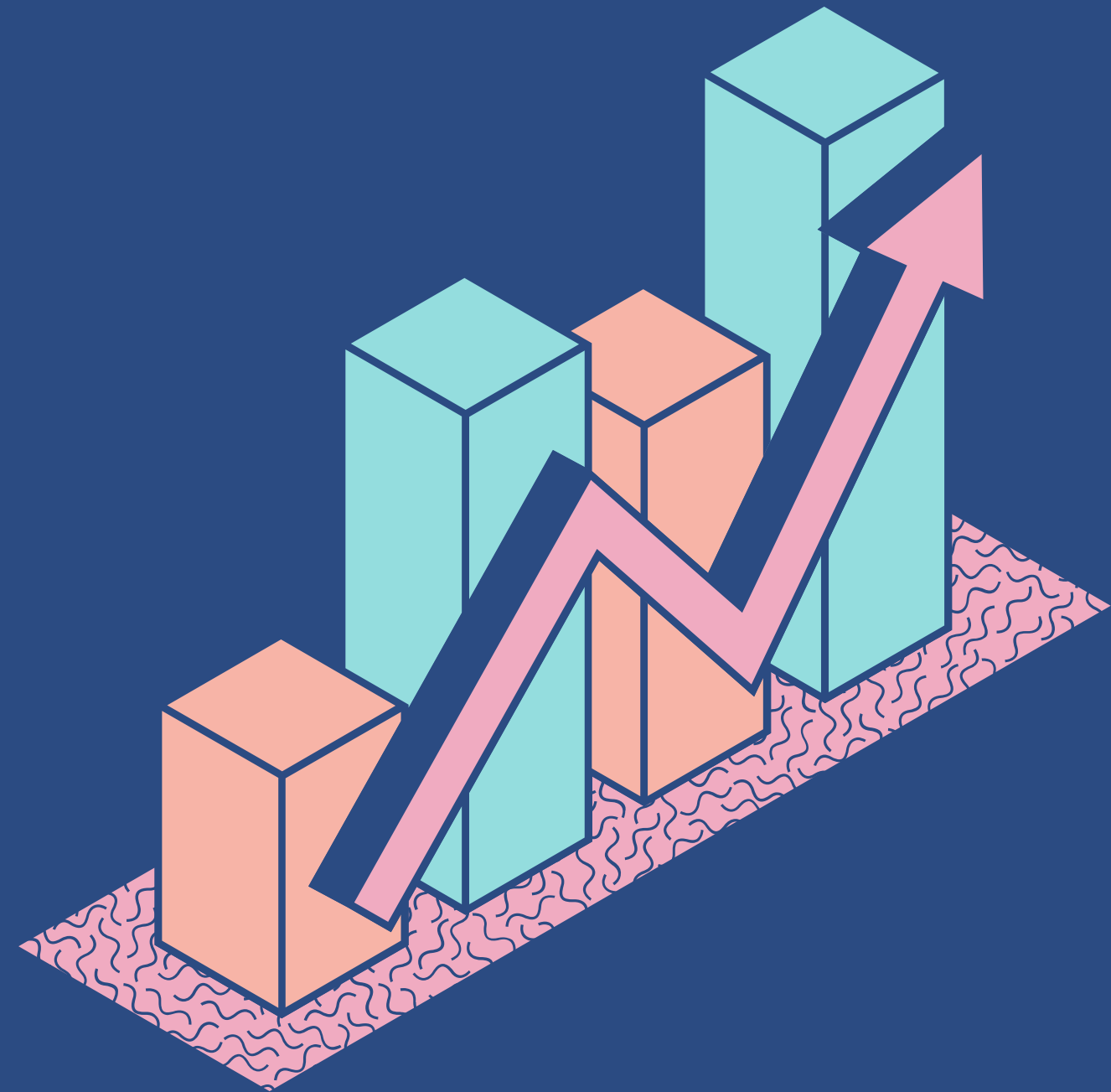


## Our Goals for Engaging Students

- Creating access to meaningful digital learning for everyone.
- Improvement in the quality of blended learning
- Our approach aims to bridge the gap of now-ness within student populations by meeting students where they are
- Greater investment on authentic interactive technology in solving the digital divide



# Case Studies: Online Engagement in Undergraduate and Graduate Programs at Luddy



# Media Arts & Science Discord Servers preCovid Student Groups

- MacGuffin Media – Video & Audio
- ACM SIGGRAPH – Game and 3D
- Game Dev Group @ IUPUI – Game
- Gamers Hall – Esports
- Web Design and Development Association – Web & Full Stack



 **WOMEN OF MAS**  
Media Arts and Science Female Alumni Panel | April 2, 8-10pm, Zoom



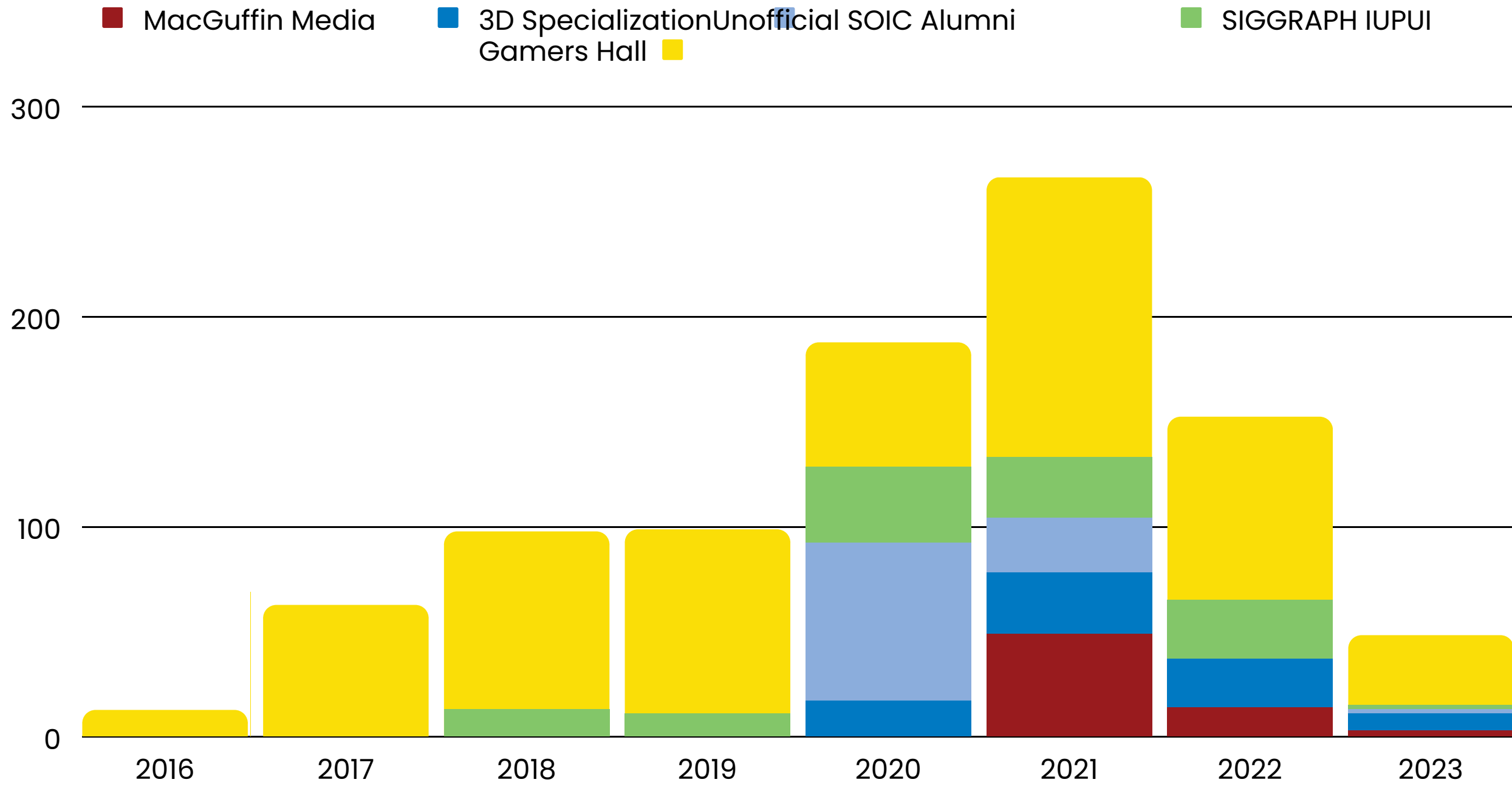
# Media Arts & Science Discord Servers

## duringCovid

- Student groups moved entirely to Discord, FB, Instagram
- Fa20- Sp21 = SIGGRAPH IUPUI
  - (16) Industry Leaders, Panels, and talks
  - (16) Late Night Labs
- Remote Jobs sharing, Contracts, Open Critique of Digital Artwork
- 194 student & alumni interacting with no faculty input, Creating community
- Entirely ungraded



# Media Arts and Science Discord New Users



- **Gamers Hall:** oldest server, 7 of highest 10 counts of annual new users
- **MacGuffin Media:** newest server, new users have decreased 94% since 2021.
- Overall new users up 300% since 2016, but decreased by 43% from 2021 to 2022.
- Note: 2023 data is incomplete.

# Media Arts & Science Discord Servers

## Post Covid

- SoIC – 9 active discords (known)
- IUPUI has – 100's
- Range from study abroad, to special interest, to projects with teams, to student government groups.
- Online communities are here to stay.
- Classes are back in person
  - some students come back to campus
  - many stay online for community building.



# Luddy Library Mice

A DISCORD SERVER FOR THE MASTERS STUDENTS OF THE LUDDY LIBRARY INFORMATION SCIENCE PROGRAM

In order to create more community within the library information science masters program, Luddy MAS alum and current LIS student Amira Malcom created a Discord server just for students to interact, get help with homework, and feel connected in the online program. “I’m taking all of my classes online, and I had this moment while working on homework like – I should have someone to talk about this with!” Malcom shared. “I made the server so that other students could connect and find community – especially since a lot of us aren’t local to Indy.”

**Approximately  
37% of the MLIS  
population is  
using Luddy  
Library Mice\***

**\*SINCE SEPTEMBER 2022, NOT  
COUNTING NEW ALUMS**

**#mental-health-  
hangout, #research-  
assistants, #book-  
recs, #class-search**

**POPULAR CHANNELS IN THE  
SERVER**

**"Wow, leave it to  
library students  
to create the  
most organized  
and well thought  
out discord  
server I have  
seen! Glad to be  
here!"**

**AFTER EXPANDING THE  
HOMEWORK- HELP CHANNEL TO  
SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL COURSES**

# Outcomes of Alternative Student Engagement Models





# Benefits to Students

FEEDBACK FROM LUDDY  
LIBRARY MICE DISCORD  
SERVER

## Allows for a more personalized learning experience

"This server singlehandedly created a sense of community for me with my peers in the program. Prior to joining, I was not in anyway connected to peers from course to course."

---

## Improves students' communication skills

"I really like the way we encourage each other. The support has been something I've missed since I started the program in Fall 2019, and I'm so glad that I finally found this community even though it happened in my last semester. I plan to stick around and continue to support and encourage."

---

## Helps students prepare for the future

"I enjoy having access to all the resources you've put together- job search, class information, etc. I also like having people from my courses to actually talk to and bond with... before the server I was just taking courses "alone;" now I feel like I actually have classmates."



"Younger college graduates are less likely than older ones to see value in their college education. For example, **only a third of college graduates younger than 50**, compared with 45% of those 50 and older, say their college experience was **extremely useful** in helping them develop skills and knowledge that could be used in the workplace."

Parker, K. (2021, November 8). What's behind the growing gap between men and women in college completion? Pew Research Center; Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/11/08/whats-behind-the-growing-gap-between-men-and-women-in-college-completion/>

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER, OCTOBER 2022**

# Improving University-Level Student Engagement Methods

1

STEP

Avoid the "landfill" model  
Study the system so you can maximize its use.

2

STEP

Review all online learning materials.  
Stay prepared and know how to use the materials students are working with.

3

STEP

Consider nominating a student ambassador  
Having someone who students can relate to can be important to retaining increased engagement

4

STEP

Select a secure and personalized platform.  
Choose a robust platform that can help with your objectives. Allowing students a level of self-expression in these spaces is important

5

STEP

Choose methods that foster collaboration.  
Create a learning environment that encourages teamwork.

# Burning Questions Returning from Covid

- Have on-campus communities reformed? Was it better or worse than before?
- How can we consider barriers that keep students from interacting in online modalities? Who isn't finding community off campus?
- What ideas or frameworks can we use to go about quantifying how co-curricular engagement helps students make meaning of their academic experiences?
- Are certain demographics less or more likely to engage online vs in-person?  
What engagement protocols help us access those student?
- What is success? How to we improve, how do we measure?

# Do you have any questions?

Send it to us! We hope you  
learned something new.

[amsimalc@iu.edu](mailto:amsimalc@iu.edu)

[zwood@iu.edu](mailto:zwood@iu.edu)

