

# A Human-Centered Approach to the IBHE Data Dashboard

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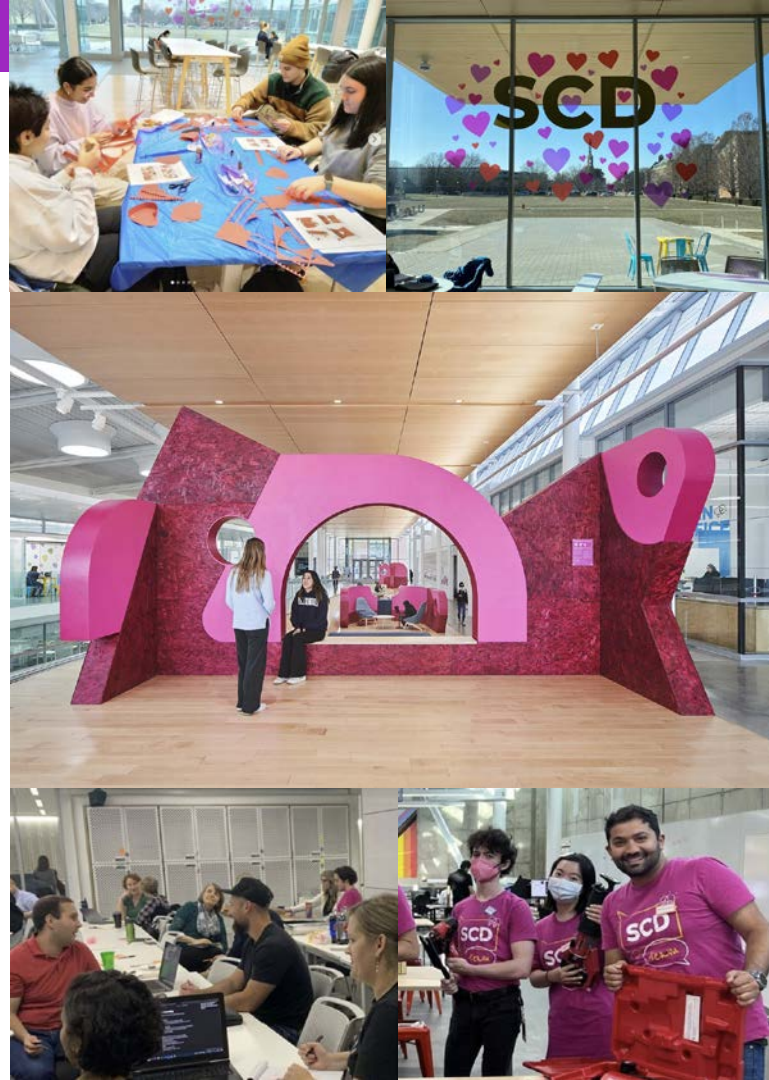
**Siebel  
Center  
for  
Design**

OUR MISSION IS TO:

Practice, model, and teach design thinking, using human-centered design to reimagine our campus, community and collective world.

WHICH WE BELIEVE WILL:

Create a world where everyone is an interdisciplinary, creative, empathetic problem-solver.

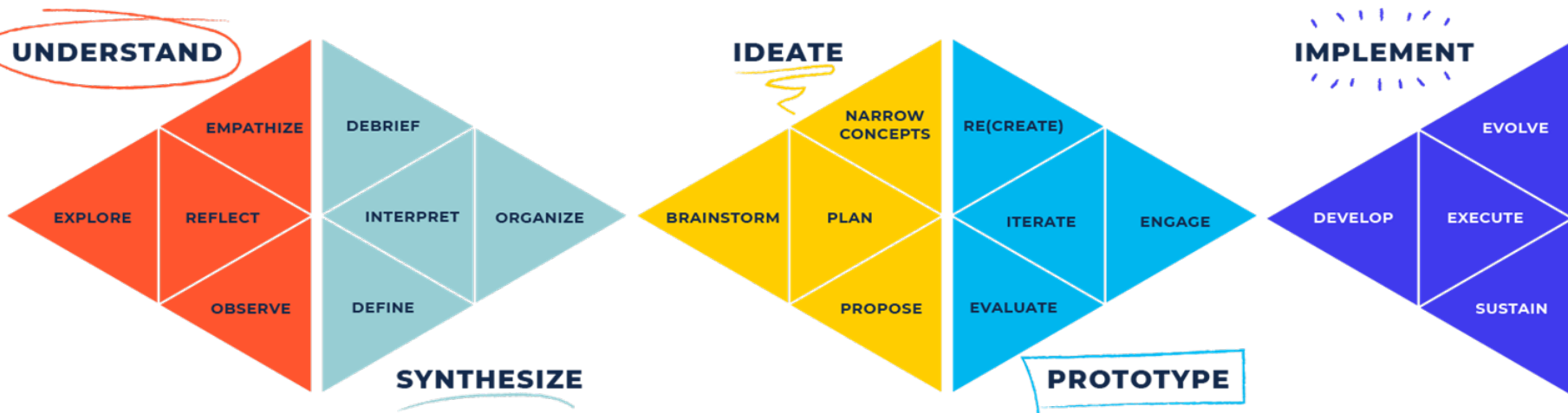


**Human-Centered Design** is a creative and interdisciplinary approach to problem solving that uses design thinking methods to uncover the unmet needs of a population.

It emphasizes collaboration and iteration to develop solutions that are both meaningful and relevant to the people they serve.

*(Brown, 2008; Dorst, 2011; Dorst & Cross, 2001).*

# THE HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN PROCESS



Setting up  
the design challenge

I've made  
observations - how  
do I really flesh out  
my knowledge?

How do I take my  
knowledge and tackle  
the problem?

What do I need to  
make my solution  
tangible?

What would I do next  
to improve upon my  
idea?







# Siebel Center for Design + Illinois Board of Higher Education



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Who succeeds  
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HOW MIGHT WE...

help different types of users (such as policymakers, media professionals, and community stakeholders) use the same dashboard in ways that work for them?

Why use human-centered design (HCD)?

### Empathy-Driven

HCD begins with understanding the needs, goals, and frustrations of real users—not just what data we have, but how people use it.

### Context-Aware

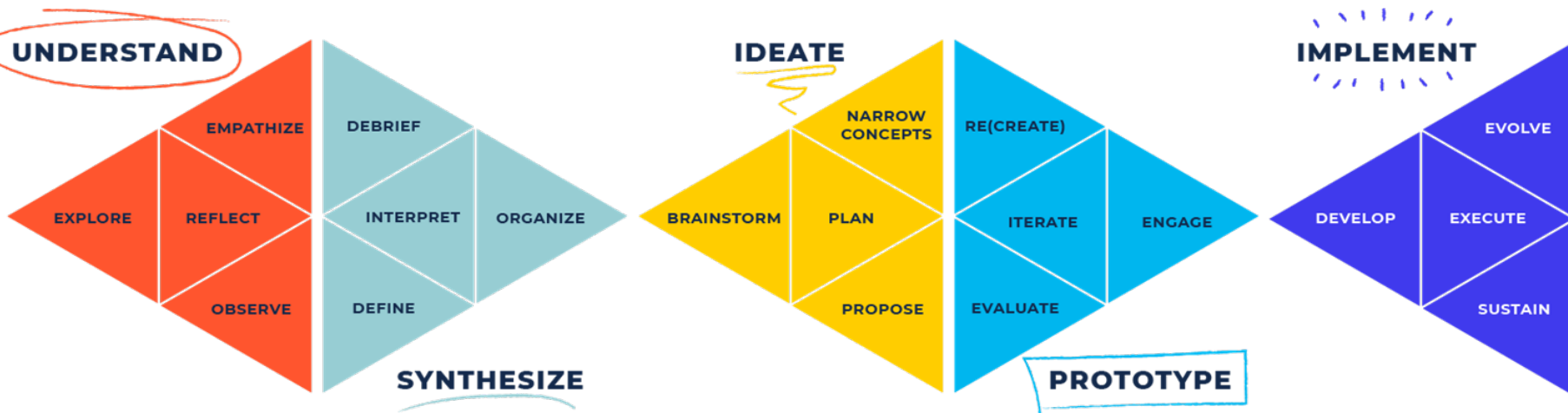
HCD helps us design for relevance, recognizing that different audiences need different kinds of context to make data meaningful.

### Iterative & Inclusive

HCD invites users into the process—through testing, feedback, and co-creation—so that the dashboard is shaped by the people it's meant to serve.

Activity time!

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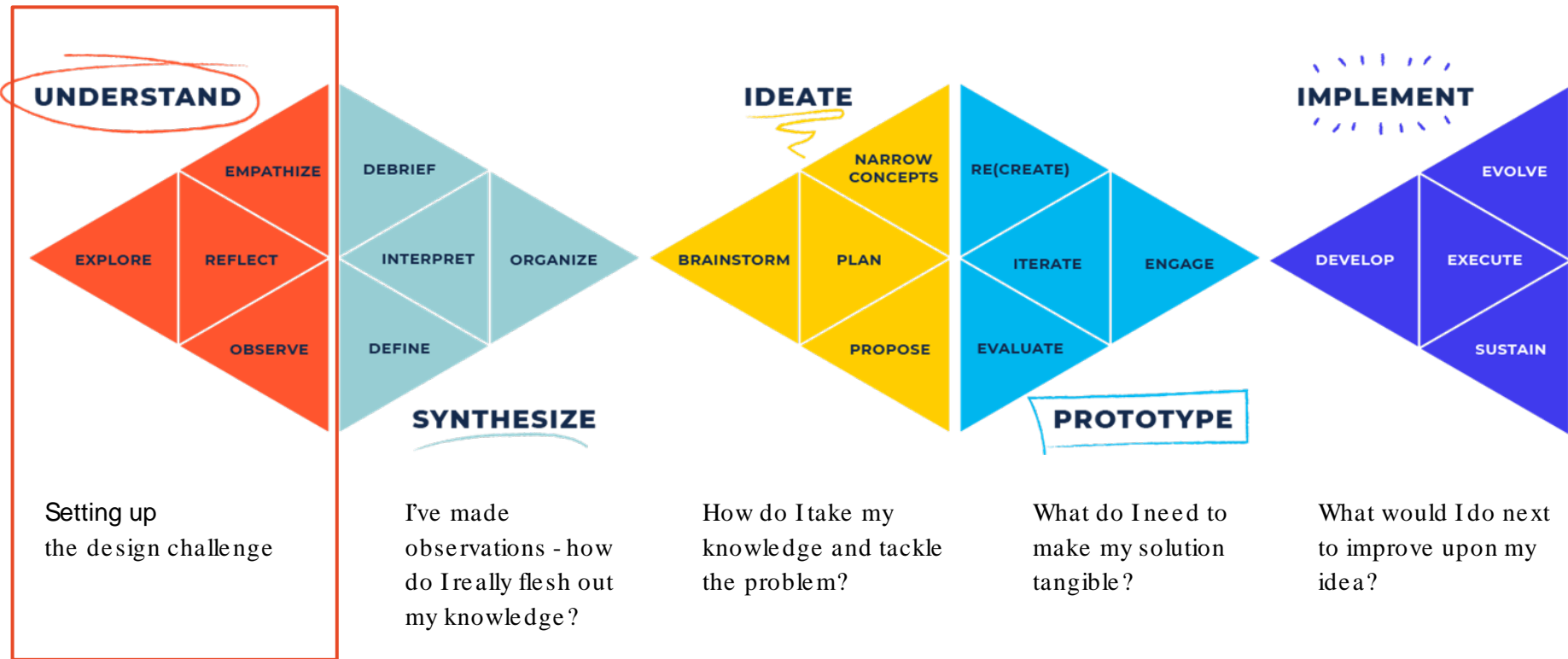
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# THE HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN PROCESS



LET'S TALK ABOUT  
TRANSPARENCY.

Think of the last time you had  
a great transparent experience.

Why did you like it?

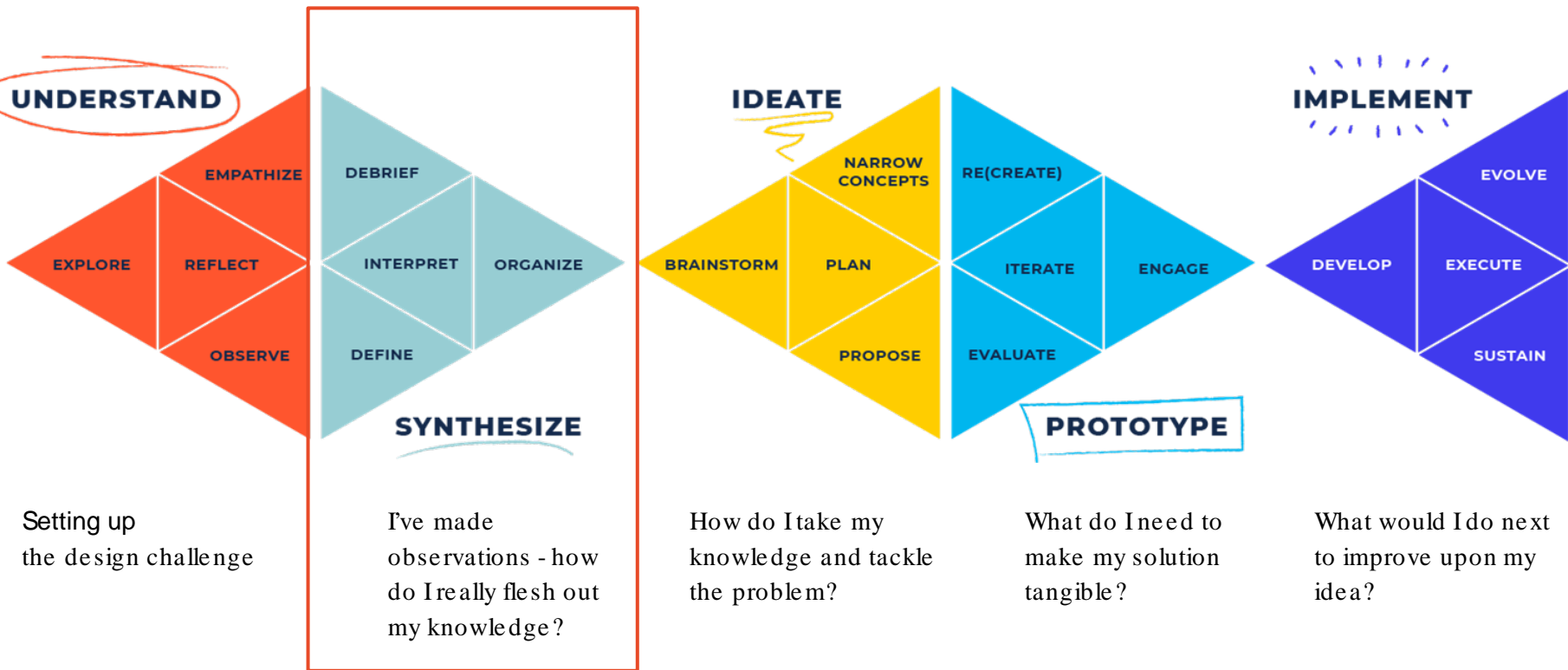
How did it affect your trust?

Now, think of a time when  
you lacked transparency  
in an experience.

What made it unpleasant?

What were the consequences?

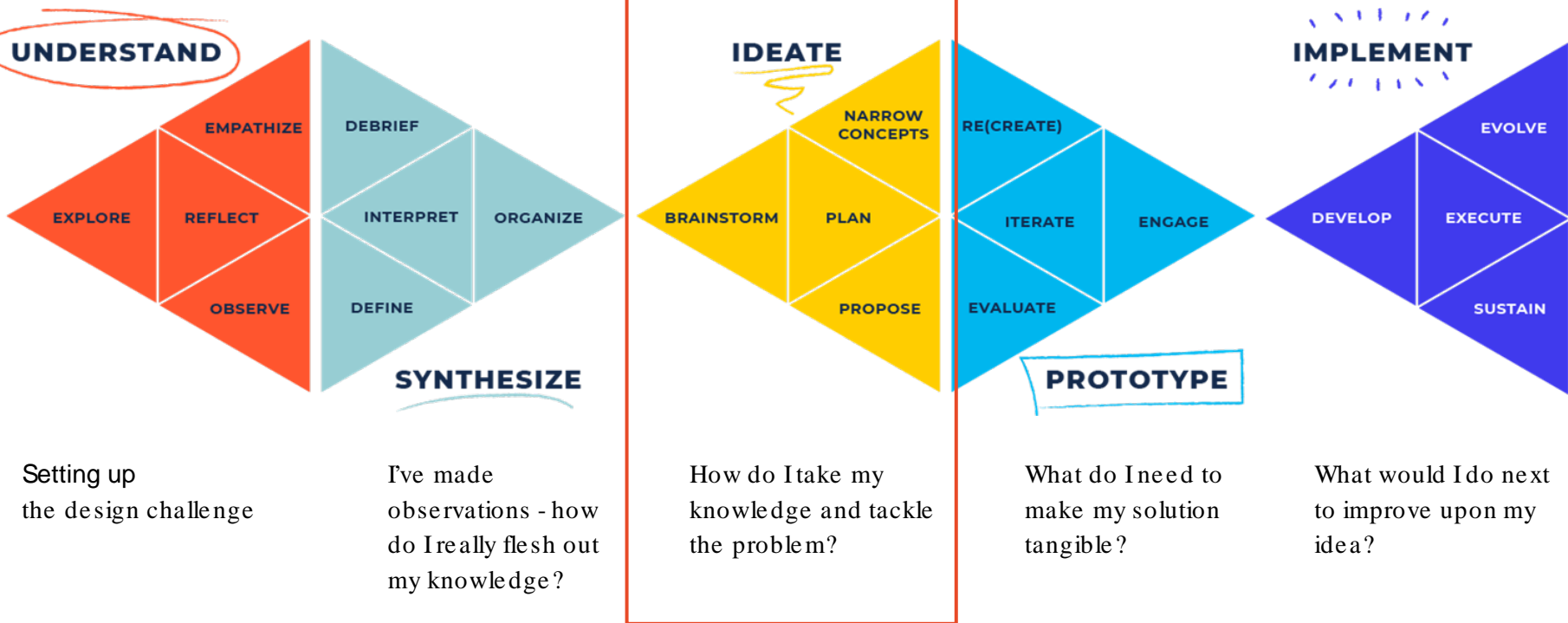
# THE HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN PROCESS





Let's look at what patterns have emerged  
from our stories...

# THE HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN PROCESS



Let's improve upon some of the bad experiences that you described!

# Our dashboard project

HOW MIGHT WE...

help different types of users (such as  
policymakers, media professionals, and  
community stakeholders) use the same  
dashboard in ways that work for them?



Our goal isn't to build one dashboard for everyone.

It's to design a tool that makes information accessible, actionable, and relevant across audiences—without compromising trust or clarity.

## **Phase 1: Immersion and Insights (this summer)**

SCD will conduct in-depth stakeholder research to understand user needs, assess existing data platforms, and explore best practices in data storytelling and visualization.

This phase will synthesize findings into actionable insights that shape the next stage of design.

## Research questions include:

Who are the primary users of the dashboard and what are their use cases?

What challenges do users face when accessing or interpreting data on the current site?

What types of data and metrics are most meaningful and why?

How do users contextualize data in decision-making or public communications?

What design features enhance or hinder users' understanding of complex datasets?

What expectations do users have for interactivity, filtering, accessibility, and storytelling?

## Who we will be speaking with:

### *Internal stakeholders*

- IBHE & ICCB senior, data, and systems teams
- Illinois Postsecondary Profiles (IPP) team

### *External stakeholders*

- Postsecondary education researchers and data analysts
- Governor's Office staff and legislative representatives
- State and local policymakers
- Journalists and media professionals
- Community-based equity and education advocates

## **Phase 2: Concept Development (this fall)**

Using insights from the research phase, SCD will conduct a series of design sprints to develop and refine dashboard prototypes.

These sprints will focus on usability, accessibility, and visual clarity, ensuring that the final concept aligns with user expectations and institutional goals.



# Questions?

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