This white paper is about responsive change in higher education where integrative engagement replaces silo-centric traditions and all constituent voices are part of the transformation as they co-create a new educational landscape that leads with the student experience. At Plymouth State University, designing, building, and engaging the integrated cluster initiative invites students, faculty, staff, alumni, business partners, community partners, and partners beyond our local borders to co-create our future citizens, leaders, the educational landscape, local and global communities, and the local and global marketplace. By leading with the student experience, we are learner centric in all aspects of academic and administrative experiences. This provides a framework for how we get there. Working from the book length manuscript, ETHOS vision: Commitment, action, and self-transformation in higher education (Nancy Puglisi and Cheryl B. Baker, 2016), ETHOS stands for: E –Education, T-Teaching, H-Habitat, O-Organizations, and S-Society.

We advance two conceptual lenses in this manuscript that we believe will help us envision our individual transformation as we engage organizational transformation. The first conceptual lens has to do with becoming an Educateur, which is a transformational professional within the academy, facilitating learning in the classroom, and actively engaging in the change processes within the organization. An Educateur is responsible, not only for the learning of their students and their own learning but also the environment within which they teach. It is essential that faculty embrace dualistic, Educateurial roles of teacher and organizational transformation emissary. The Educateur co-creates innovative venues in the classroom and within the organization to accomplish an imaginative, reflective, and contemplative environment. The focus for the changes within the classroom and the organization should include: experiential, integrative, community-based and transformational practices restructuring the classroom and the institution to meet the needs of students and the larger external community.

The second conceptual lens involves shifting our approach to our teaching methodology from teaching children to teaching young adults. Using the landmark work of Malcom Knowles that identifies six assumptions about the adult learner, we can begin to envision new approaches to teaching and learning that shifts from a teacher-centric model typical with teaching children to a learner-centric model that facilitates learning by self-direction, building on student previous experiences, enabling the learner to co-create their learning, and instead of learning for a test, the learner learns with a different purpose such as to solve a problem or to touch the world around them. By seeing our students as young adults instead of children, we can better meet their diverse learning styles and needs, enhance their learning experience, enable them to own and co-create their educational experiences, and cultivate a mindset of lifelong learning.

For further consideration of these ideas, we hope the attached paper is helpful. This paper is not intended as an exhaustive exploration of approaches to teaching. We are intending to identify two significant dispositions that are aligned with our current organizational life, the Educateur and teaching young adult learners.