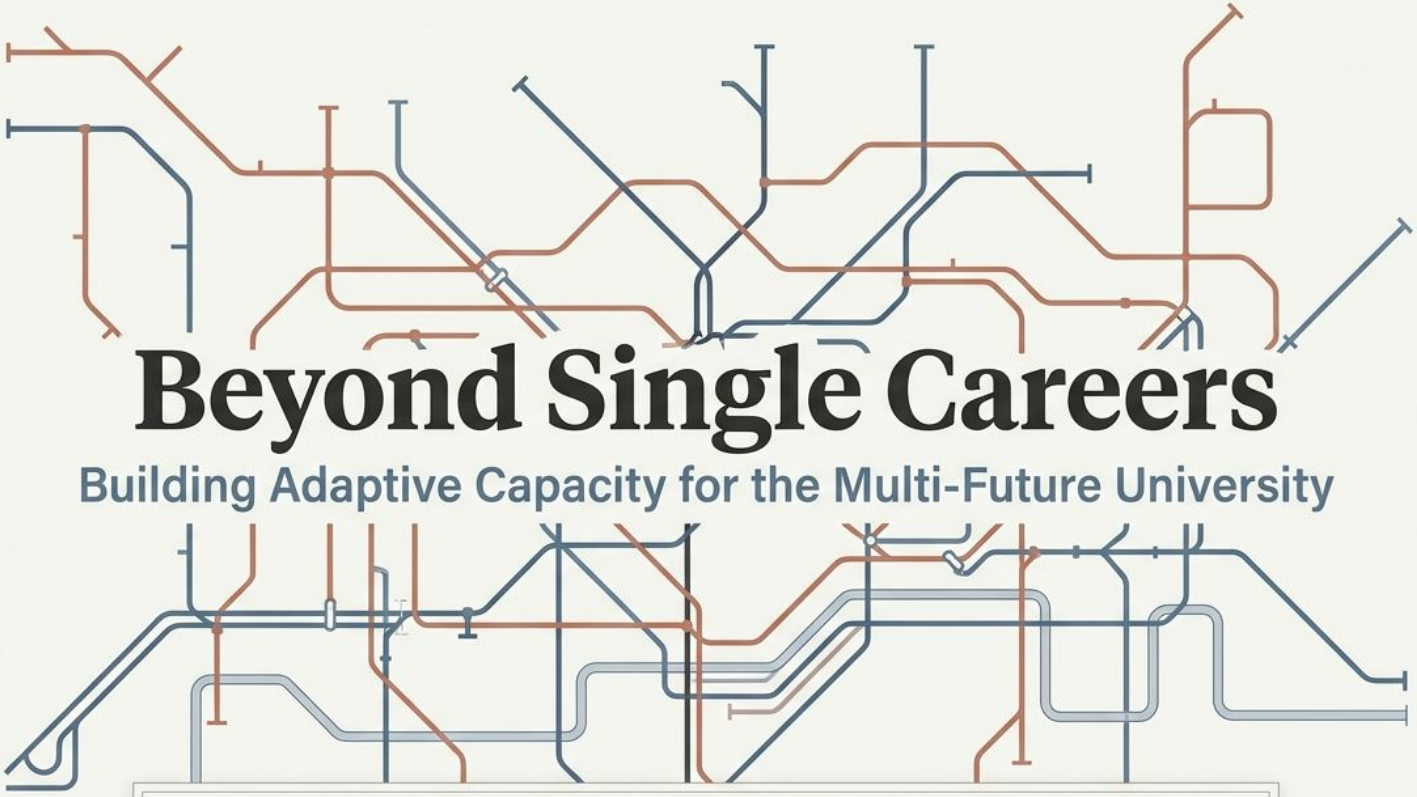
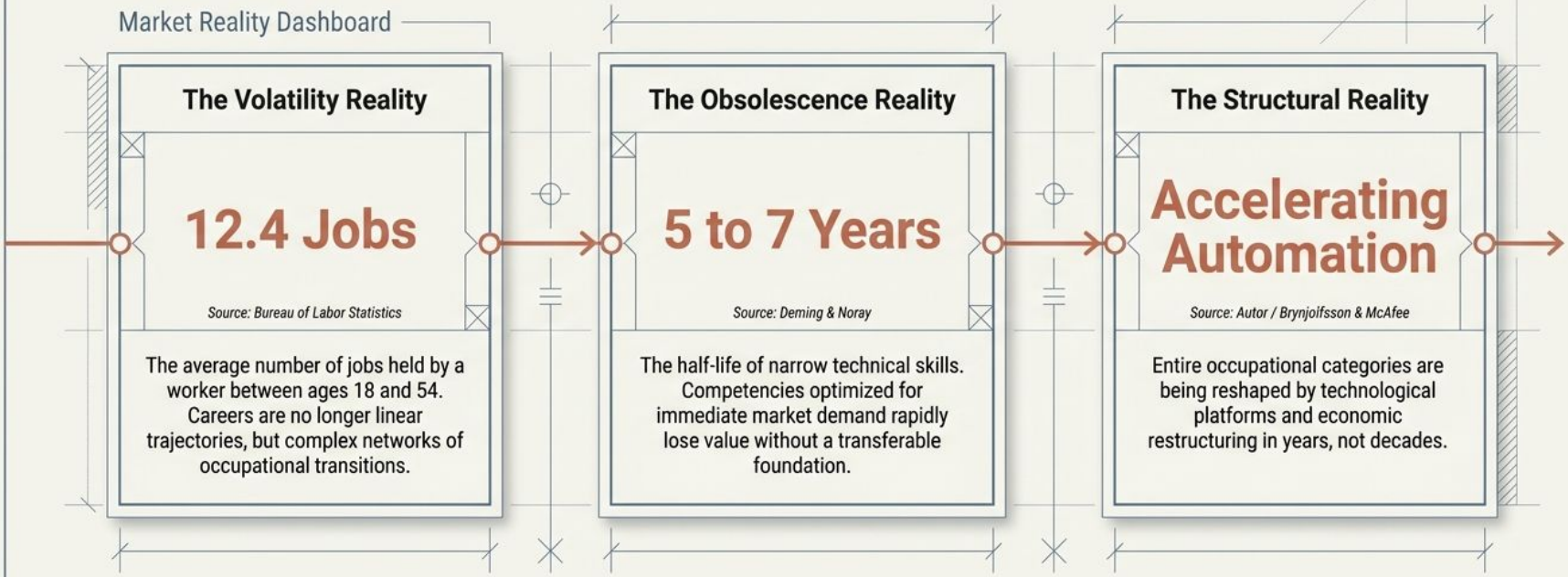


Beyond Single Careers

Building Adaptive Capacity for the Multi-Future University

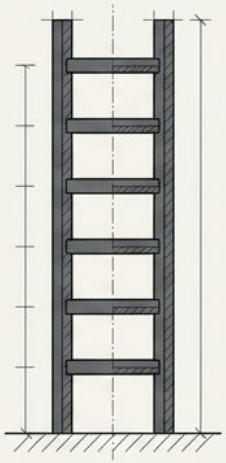
An evidence-based blueprint for transforming higher education curricula, advising, and employer engagement to survive accelerating labor market volatility.

The 50-Year Working Life Defies Single-Track Preparation



The Brittleness of Narrow Technical Optimization

The Single-Future Assumption



Institutions incur severe strategic risk by funding programs based solely on current, narrow labor market signals. When market conditions shift, initial investments become stranded assets, and graduates face rapid skill obsolescence.

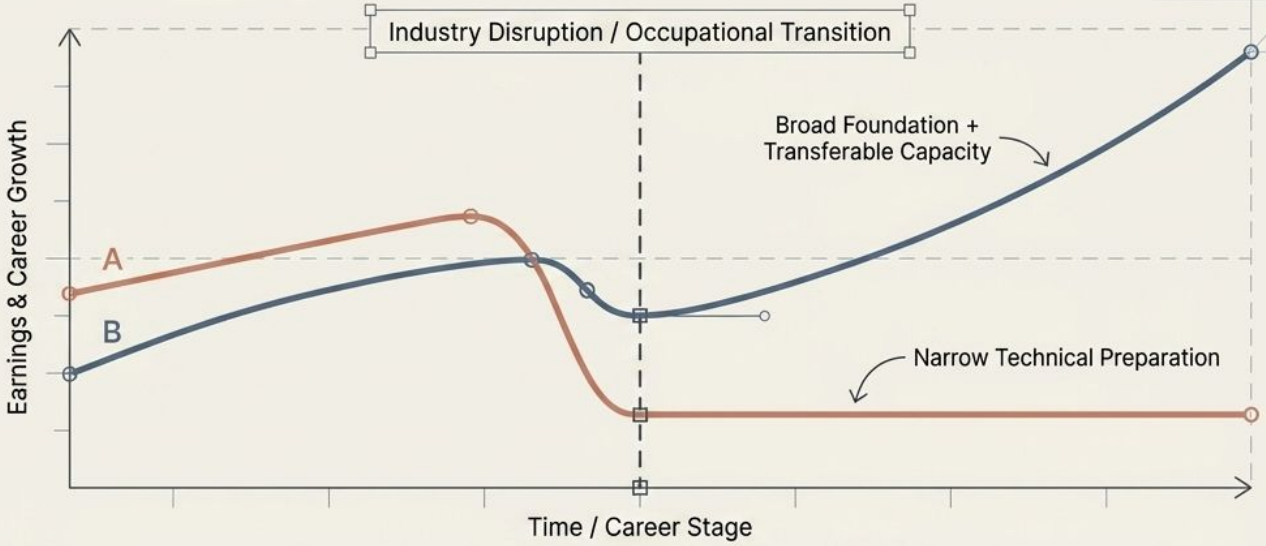
The Multi-Future Reality

While 80% of employers prioritize judgment, communication, and complex problem-solving, institutional resources frequently remain trapped in narrow technical certifications.

(Note: source Hart Research Associates data)

Alumni who struggle with career progression post-transition attribute that failure to their institution. Adaptability is the new metric of institutional reputation.

The Adaptability Premium: Longitudinal Earnings Trajectories

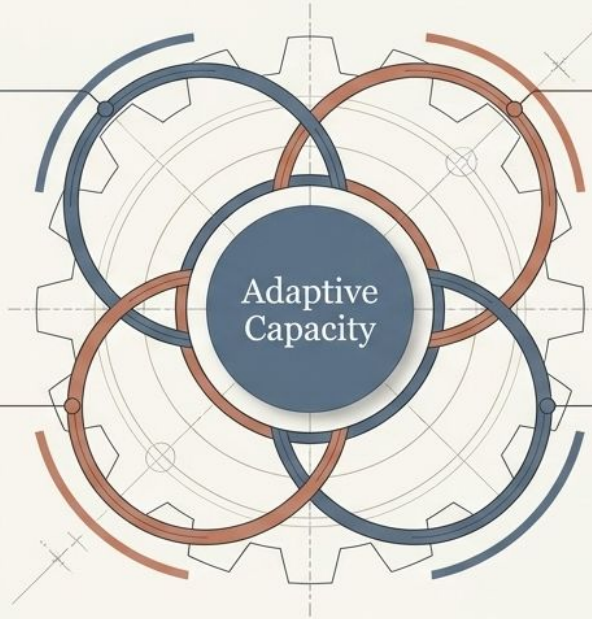


Based on Hemelt's longitudinal studies: Graduates with stronger foundational knowledge experience superior earnings growth over time, particularly when geographical or industrial disruptions occur.

Paradigm Shift: Designing for the Multi-Future

	The Single-Future Baseline	The Multi-Future Target
Design Assumption	Stable occupational pathways	Accelerating volatility & occupational transition
Curricular Focus	Narrow technical optimization	Scaffolded broad competencies + explicit transfer learning
Role of Advising	Transactional degree-planning	Developmental competency & portfolio building
Employer Engagement	End-of-line recruitment & job placement	Co-designers of learning & skill development
Definition of Success	First-destination job placement	Long-term career resilience & mobility
Institutional Risk	Stranded assets & rapid program obsolescence	Differentiated value & sustainable alumni success

The Engine of Resilience: 4 Dimensions of Adaptability



Concern

Awareness of future career development and the landscape of work.

Control

A sense of agency and responsibility for constructing one's own career network.

Curiosity

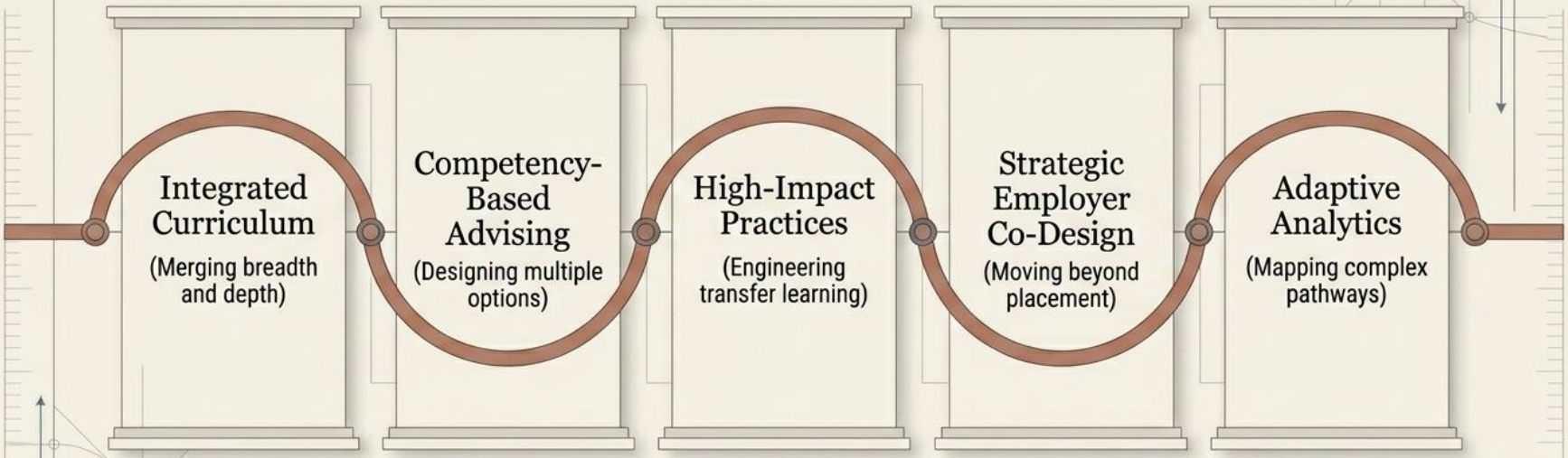
The active exploration of multiple future scenarios and possible selves.

Confidence

The belief in one's ability to successfully execute aspirations and pivot during disruption.

Career resilience is not a personality trait; it is an **engineered outcome**. Educational experiences must actively develop all four dimensions to protect students against volatility.

The Architecture of Adaptation



How pioneering institutions are systematically breaking down silos to build multi-future ecosystems.

Intervention 1: Integrated Curriculum Design

The Mechanism

Scaffolded Competencies: Progressive challenges across contexts.

↓

Explicit Transfer Learning: Teaching how disciplinary inquiry applies elsewhere.

↓

Synthesizing Capstones: Merging general education with specific expertise.

Research Anchor

Arum & Roksa: Students engaging in both broad liberal and focused study show the highest gains in complex reasoning.

Pioneers

Georgetown University

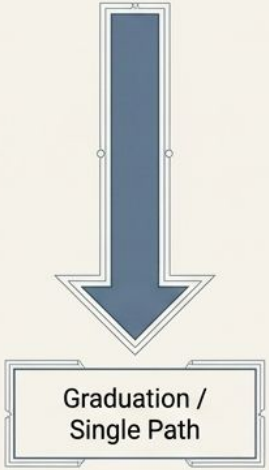
Core curriculum identifies competencies (ethical reasoning, intercultural understanding) developed repeatedly from first-year seminars to advanced major courses.

University of Michigan

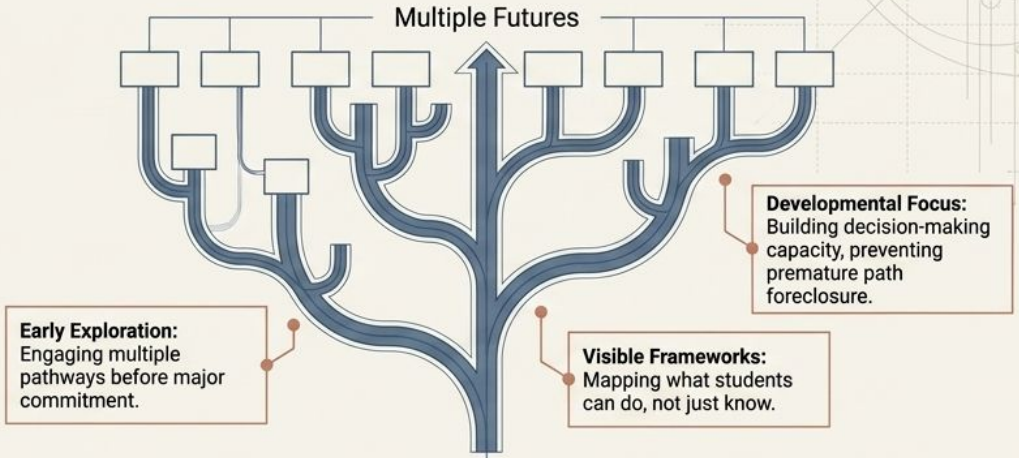
Integrative Project requires students to synthesize insights from multiple disciplines, producing verifiable transfer-learning data.

Intervention 2: Competency-Based Advising

Traditional Advising



Competency Advising



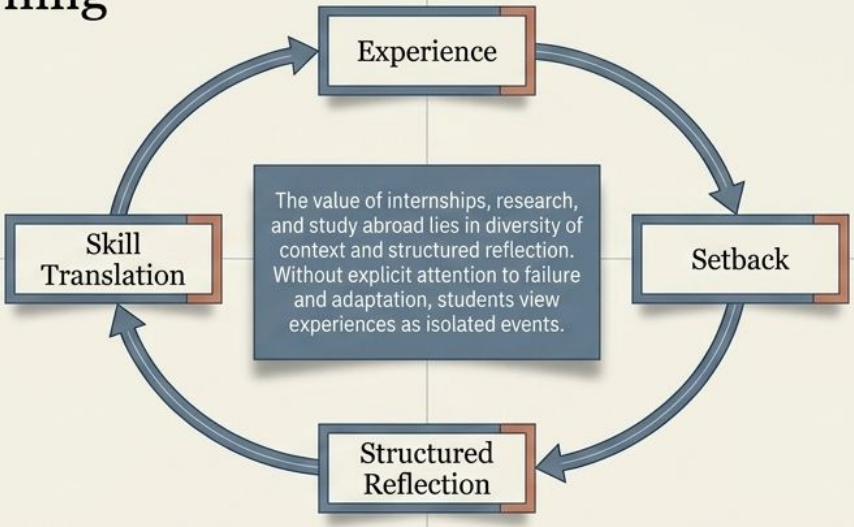
Indiana University

Career planning embedded into academic advising from the first semester. Intervenes when students show low confidence or premature path foreclosure.

Wake Forest (THRIVE)

Integrates exploration sequentially—first-year self-assessment, second-year curriculum mapping, third-year market testing.

Intervention 3: High-Impact Practices for Transfer Learning



Purdue Polytechnic

Integrates multiple applied experiences with intentional variation in context (industry internship + community project + solo research), led by faculty reflection sessions.

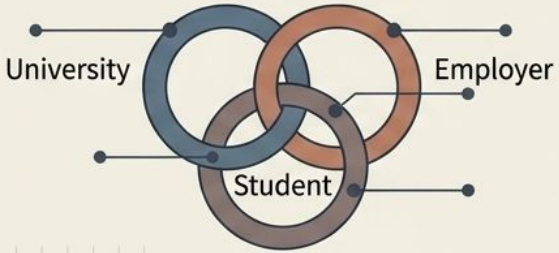
Elon University

4-year scaffolding (Freshman service -> Sophomore study away -> Junior internship -> Senior capstone). Graduates show quantifiably higher adaptability scores.

Intervention 4: Strategic Employer Co-Design

Recruitment Model (Linear Handoff)

Co-Design Model (Ecosystem)



Co-Design Priorities

- Targeting transferable skills (judgment, agility) over temporary technical needs.
- Employers co-designing simulations and case studies.
- Engaging multiple industry perspectives to prevent premature specialization.

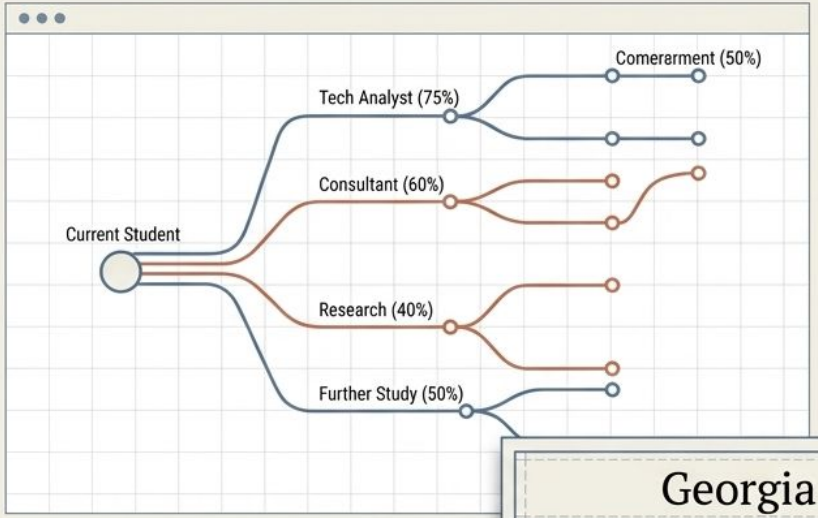
Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

Co-op objectives are actively negotiated among student, faculty, and employer—focusing heavily on **organizational adaptation**, not just production.

University of Cincinnati

Rotational co-ops explicitly encourage exploration across different employers and functions to build adaptive professional identity.

Intervention 5: Predictive & Adaptive Pathway Analytics



Key Capabilities

- **Competency Measurement:** Tracking transferable capabilities, not just credit hours.
- **Pattern Recognition:** Recommending course/experience combinations proven to build adaptability.
- **Equity Analytics:** Ensuring underrepresented students get equal access to high-impact interventions.

Georgia State

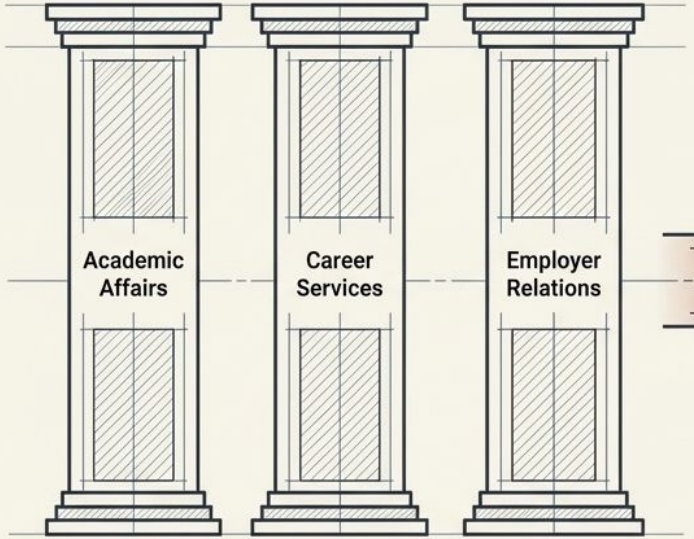
Proactive alert system identifies not just academic risk, but students missing opportunities to develop transferable competencies or foreclosing options too early.

Tennessee Tech

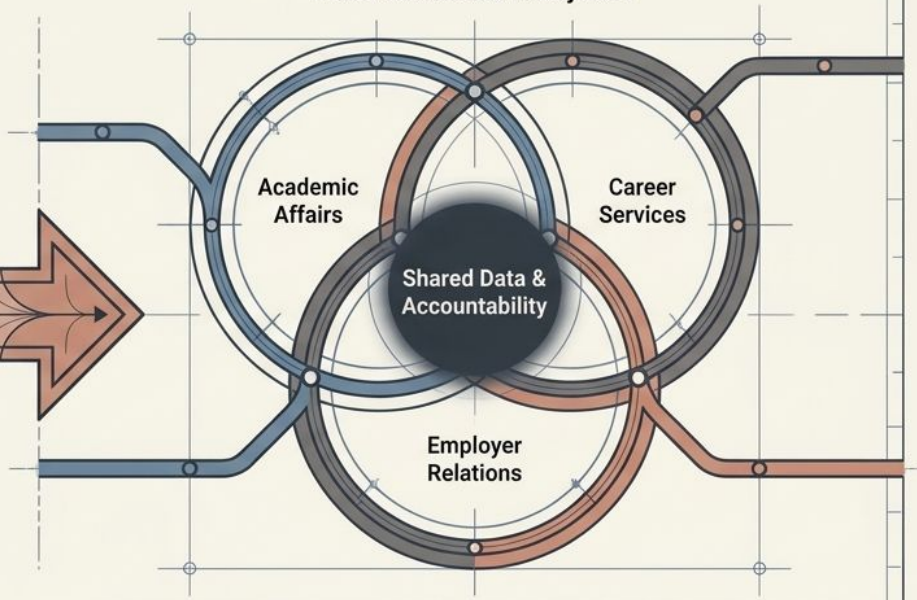
Data-informed guidance shows students multiple successful pathways based on historical data, maximizing flexibility.

The Structural Imperative: From Silos to Ecosystem

Before: Siloed Structure



After: Networked Ecosystem



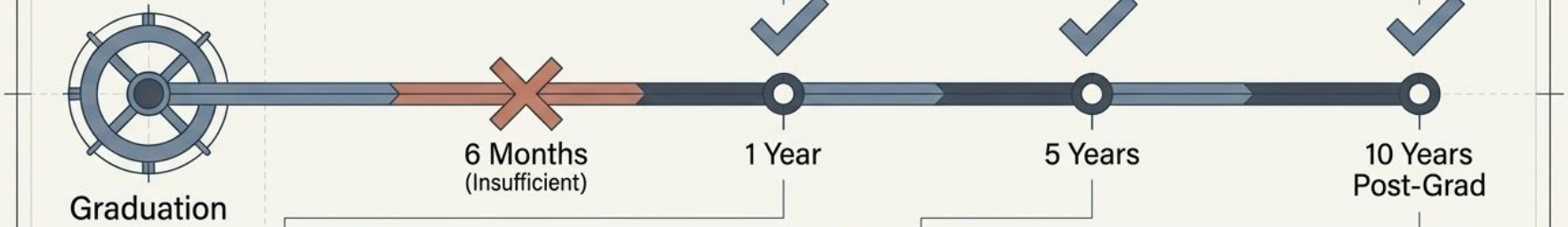
Dartmouth College: Restructured career services to embed directly within academic departments, merging academic and career guidance.

Brown University (CareerLAB): Operates on a 'population health' model, integrating career education throughout the student lifecycle and providing academic departments with outcome data.

Measuring the Multi-Future Premium

Core Insight Box

Continuous institutional learning requires tracking long-term career trajectories, transition success, and learning agility—not just initial employment.



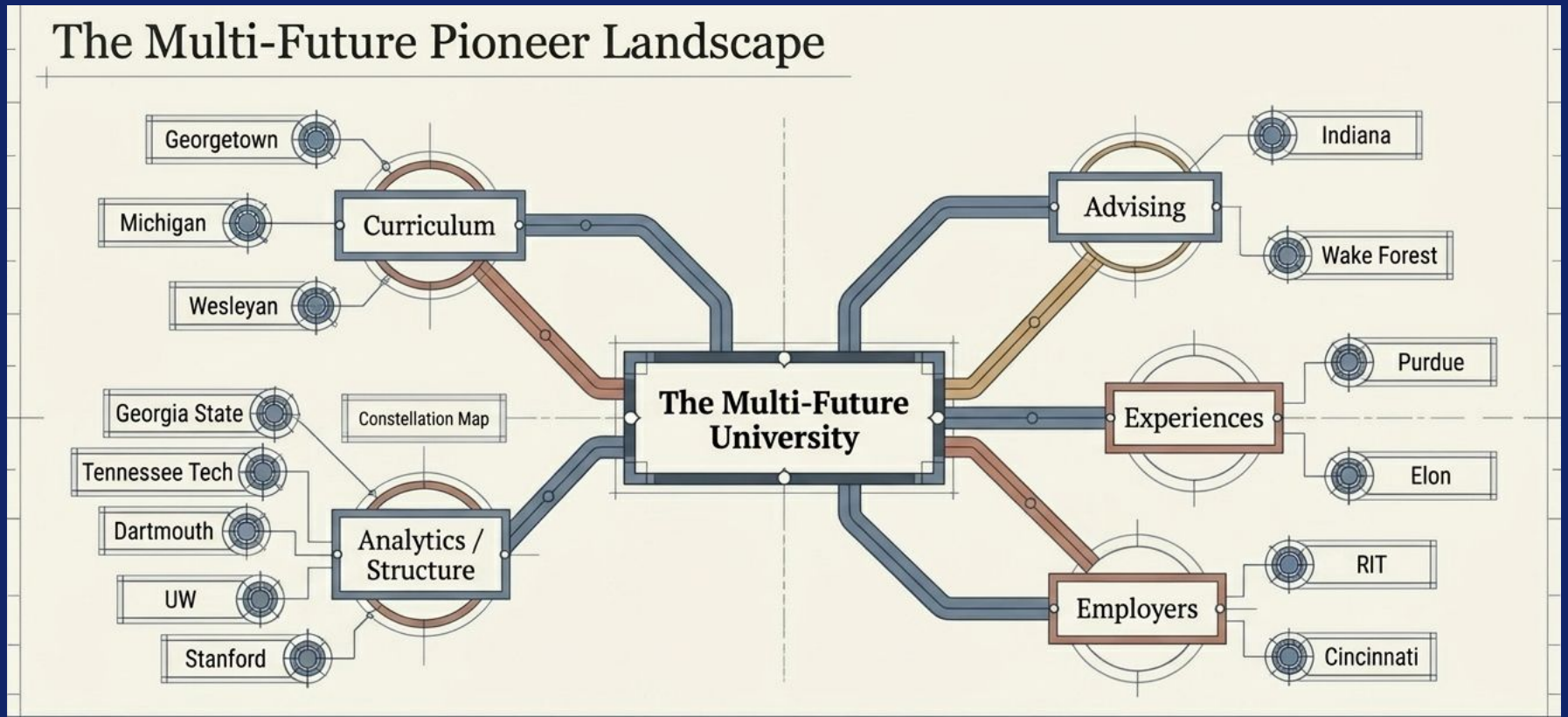
University of Washington

The "Beyond Graduation" survey tracks alumni at 1, 5, and 10 years, revealing how specific educational preparations map to successful career transitions and earnings growth.

Stanford University

Longitudinal assessment connects specific undergrad experiences (e.g., substantive research) to an alumni's later willingness to take career risks and execute transitions.

The Multi-Future Pioneer Landscape



We don't know what the future holds. Our students will work for 50 years across economic and technological transformations we cannot fully anticipate. The mandate of higher education is no longer placement into a single trajectory, but the architectural design of continuous adaptation.