

## **STRATEGY 2 - KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE (BE RELEVANT AND INTERESTING!)**

Remember the classic question, “If a tree falls in the woods and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?”

A similar question pertains to our content. If it doesn’t connect with an audience, it doesn’t matter. And our content needs to matter to the audience we’re writing for. We want to produce stuff that is relevant to a particular audience and grabs their attention. After all, we’re a college whose **brand essence is boldness**.

### **KEEP IT REAL, MY FRIENDS**

To go beyond blandness and reach boldness, our content must appeal to our audiences by being relevant and interesting. The only way to do this is to know our audiences, to understand and empathize with them. Remember that an audience is made of real people. Each piece of content gives us a chance to meet them where they are, address real concerns, answer real questions, spark real ideas, and meet real needs.

At every stage of the content process — from choosing what to create and how to craft it, to deciding how to package and publish it — always consider the following questions:

- Who are the people you’re hoping to reach?
- What do they know about NOVA?
- What questions do they have about your topic?
- With what challenges are they grappling?
- What excites them?
- What motivates them?
- What scares them?
- What cultural, political or other external factors are influencing them?
- What do they need from us?
- What decision are you hoping they will make? Where are they in that decision-making process?

Then, in your content work, make sure you’re delivering information and offering an ultimate message that such people would find interesting, useful, helpful or enticing.

### **PICK YOUR PERSONA**

“I have found that sometimes it helps to pick out one person — a real person you know, or an imagined person — and write to that one.” - John Steinbeck

At NOVA, we have developed a set of personas, fictional characters that represent a subset of our real target audiences. Writing to a particular persona can help prevent navel-gazing, or worse, veering off target. It ensures that even when we’re writing about us, we are ultimately writing to and for our target audience.

Here are some of the personas we often use at the College level for central marketing purposes. Feel free to use these in your own content work. If you’re in a role where you create content often for your area, we’d also recommend sketching your own set of 4-5 personas that, taken together, represent the majority of your audience group. Writing to a specific person (even a fictional one) helps to ensure you stay relevant, interesting and useful. We recommend sketching them as “real” people with layers of depth and detail, including:

- Demographic information like age, race, nationality, socioeconomic status, cultural background, etc.
- Personality.
- Background / backstory.
- Goals and motivators.
- Fears and concerns.
- Tech savviness.

*Pro Tip: Before you start even outlining a particular piece of content, alongside the pillar(s) you noted that apply to your topic at hand, also note which persona(s) you are primarily targeting. Then answer three questions: What might s/he find interesting about your topic? What questions does s/he likely have about this topic? Why should s/he care about the pillar(s) you are hoping to emphasize with this topic? Note these answers at the top of your document and refer back to them as you craft.*

### **IMAN - International student | college transfer path**

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- Female, Muslim
- Age 18, student
- Highest Education: H.S. Equivalent
- Intended Status: Full-time student
- Interest: Undecided / potentially four-year business degree
  
- Goals/Concerns:
  - Transfer to four-year institution for an American bachelor's degree
  - English language development
- Location: Ethiopia

At 18 years old, Iman is ready for a brand new adventure. Born and raised in Ethiopia, Iman is about to enter a whole new world; going to college in the United States. Ever since her parents agreed to support her higher education international journey, Iman has thought of little else. Ultimately, she wants to earn a four-year degree at a university but she knows her English skills have a long way to go before she can walk across the stage with her bachelor's degree. Not one to be easily discouraged, Iman researched ways she can improve her English mastery and be better prepared for a 4-year degree and discovered NOVA.

NOVA immediately strikes her as a place where she can prepare for the challenges of earning a four-year degree, as well as belong to a multicultural community to more easily adapt to life in a foreign country. NOVA's international student population, proximity to multicultural events in Washington D.C., and diverse array of clubs and campus groups give Iman confidence that she'll find the resources and network of support to thrive. Iman's dream of an American higher education is closer to becoming a reality thanks to NOVA's cost savings, diversity, and academic training.

Resonant Pillars:

- Outstanding Value
- Real-World Diversity
- Springboard to Opportunity
- Big School/Small School

### **MESSAGING POINTS:**

- NOVA is a place that provides community, a sense of belonging, and opportunities to make connections that last a lifetime.
- NOVA is a place with opportunities to explore and understand new cultures and contexts.
- NOVA students from similar backgrounds find success and achievement at NOVA.
- NOVA is a great place to begin a person's educational and career journeys regardless of their background.

### **CONTENT TOPICS:**

- Stories involving students finding career success
- Stories about NOVA's diversity
- Resources for English language learners
- Information on how to succeed and thrive as a student and a graduate

### **SOPHIA - Traditional high school student | college transfer path**

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- Female, Hispanic
- Age 17, student
- Highest Education: Junior in H.S.
- Intended Status: Full-time student, open to some online courses
- Interest: Undecided / Psychology

- Goals/Concerns:
  - Interested in going to George Mason to study psychology
  - Cost-conscious – eager to save on tuition en route to her bachelor’s degree
  - Interest in guaranteed admissions / transfer to GMU through the ADVANCE program
  - Mason is her top-choice school, not NOVA. Overcoming misconceptions is key.
- Location: near Annandale campus

An aspiring first generation college student, Sophia has big dreams for her future. She was inspired by her Psychology teacher, Ms. Hicks, who noticed her curiosity and excitement for the subject. This ultimately led Sophia to pursue Psychology as an undergraduate degree. Ms. Hicks introduced her to the array of career paths available to psychology majors, and even asked a Psychology professor at nearby George Mason University to meet with Sophia to talk about other opportunities in the field. Since then, Sophia’s determination to receive her degree has only grown, and she ultimately wants to study at George Mason.

However, dreams often come with a price tag. Paying for a bachelor’s degree would put a huge financial strain on Sophia’s family. Growing up in a working class home, Sophia has an appreciation for hard work and perseverance, traits she and her family show in their collective determination to give Sophia every opportunity to succeed. They’ll need to get creative in figuring out how to make college a reality.

In searching for ways to pay for college, Sophia learns about ADVANCE – NOVA’s partnership with George Mason, and the guaranteed transfer program. She is elated at the opportunity and immediately begins digging into the classes and resources at NOVA. Are there psych clubs or programs to get involved in, she wonders? What’s guaranteed transfer or guaranteed admissions? As she uncovers the wealth of information, resources, and programs NOVA offers its transfer oriented students, Sophia is confident NOVA will be a great ally in her college journey.

Resonant Pillars:

- Outstanding Value
- Springboard to Opportunity
- Relevant and In-Demand

### **MESSAGING POINTS:**

- NOVA can set students up for success when they transfer to other schools.
- NOVA offers challenging, high-quality classes comparable or superior to those at four-year institutions.
- Most NOVA students are eligible for a variety of scholarships, grants and other types of financial aid.
- NOVA offers money-saving transfer agreements with countless VA four-year institutions.
- NOVA is a great place to begin a person’s educational and career journeys regardless of their background.
- NOVA’s groundbreaking ADVANCE program with George Mason University offers students the opportunity to dual-enroll at both institutions.

### **CONTENT TOPICS:**

- Stories involving students finding career success
  - NOVA students succeeding at four-year institutions
  - NOVA’s growing partnerships with four-year institutions
  - Extracurriculars and student organizations
- LOUIS - Traditional high school student | career path**
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- Male, white
- Age 19, student
- Highest Education: Senior in H.S.
- Intended Status: Full-time student if can work while studying
- Interest: Automotive Technology
- Goals/Concerns:
  - Start career in well-paying, technical field without a four-year degree
  - Job prospects after NOVA
  - Flexibility to work while studying
- Location: near Manassas campus

Louis’ upcoming high school graduation day is a mix of excitement and anxiety. Having never really enjoyed most of his high school classes, four more years of a similar experience in college doesn’t sound appealing, but he isn’t sure what to do next.

After school, Louis would spend most afternoons working on the old Jeep Mr. Briggs, his auto shop teacher, had in the shop to teach

and tinker with. Mr. Briggs had become a sort of mentor to Louis from their many afternoons together, and wanted to help Louis in his next stage of life. He assigned Louis to shadow three different auto industry professionals, to give him a sense of career possibilities in everything from small repair shops to large-scale auto production facilities. Louis loved every minute of working at these shops and in each case, the professional encouraged Louis to earn at least a certificate in automotive technology to distinguish himself from applicants with just a high school diploma. Motivated by these experiences, Louis began researching certificates and programs and came across NOVA's Associates of Applied Science in Automotive Technology degree.

Louis is inspired to begin his college education journey by the opportunity to not only be the first to earn a degree, but to do it in something he actually enjoys, all while studying and gaining skills directly related to the job. But is it possible to work part time and still take classes, he wonders? Is NOVA's program successful at helping graduating students find jobs in their field? Louis still has questions about his future, but he's done studying for studying's sake and he's excited for a practical, hands-on, and relevant education.

Resonant Pillars:

- Outstanding Value
- Springboard to Opportunity
- Relevant and In-Demand
- Experts in the Classroom and the Field

### MESSAGING POINTS:

- NOVA has great career-specific options for students who want to get to work.
- NOVA offers high-quality, real-world training and skills education at a great price.
- NOVA workforce programs and professional degree options offer the latest equipment and technology.
- Through its partnerships with regional businesses and industries, NOVA offers graduates solid job opportunities post-graduation.

### CONTENT TOPICS:

- Stories involving workforce students finding career success
- NOVA's partnerships with local businesses and industries.
- Extracurriculars and student organizations
- Students doing interesting projects and achievements in hands-on fields

#### **JAMES - Non-traditional student | career starter**

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- Male, African-American
- Age 27, student
- Highest Education: H.S. Diploma
- Intended Status: Part-time student (open to full-time)
- Interest: Cybersecurity, other IT industry programs
- Goals/Concerns:
  - Earn more money in an established career with potential to grow
  - Academic support services
- Location: near Alexandria campus

Having just celebrated the birth of his first child six weeks ago, James is an excited, albeit overwhelmed new father. Learning how to adjust to a baby in the home, he and his wife are working to make everything perfect. James wants to give his daughter a wonderful life, but without a college degree, he has been working in a customer service job since high school and hasn't managed to achieve the financial stability he craves. Now, with support from his wife, James knows the time is right to return to school and pursue not just a better job, but a true career.

Living around the Washington D.C. area, cybersecurity and technology issues are constantly in the news. James has always had a knack for computers, so he imagines this might be the perfect industry for him. One of his former coworkers recently quit work to attend the cybersecurity program at nearby NOVA and seems to be enjoying it, so James is interested in possibly doing the same. However, quitting work to attend full-time may not be an option for James, as he doesn't have savings to pay for tuition and he still needs to provide income for his family. The flexibility of NOVA's program is a top concern. It's also been awhile since he's been in a classroom, so his study and test taking skills are a little rusty. James is nervous about succeeding in the classroom and wonders if there are academic support options such as tutoring available. Thinking ahead, he also wonders if there are job placement programs available once he's earned the degree. Why go through all this effort if there isn't a job waiting on the other side? NOVA's academic and career resources are important to James as he wants all his hard work to pay off in the end with a great career.

Resonant Pillars:

- Outstanding Value
- Springboard to Opportunity
- Relevant and In-Demand
- Experts in the Classroom and the Field
- Big School Experience, Small School Feel

#### **MESSAGING POINTS:**

- NOVA faculty are nationally-recognized in cyber-security and related fields.
- NOVA offers high-quality, real-world training and skills education in high-demand fields like cyber security at a great price.
- NOVA workforce programs and professional degree options offer the latest equipment and technology.
- Students with busy lives and responsibilities can choose from flexible classes offered at night, on weekends and online.
- Through its partnerships with regional businesses and industries, NOVA offers graduates solid job opportunities post-graduation.

#### **CONTENT TOPICS:**

- Stories involving workforce students finding career success
- NOVA's partnerships with local businesses and industries.
- Reminders about deadlines for practical areas like financial aid and registration.
- Students who are parents finding support and success

#### **MARIAH - Non-traditional student | career changer**

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- Female, hispanic
- Age: 25, student
- Highest Education: Bachelor's degree
- Intended Status: Full-time student
- Interest: Nursing (open to other possibilities)
- Goals/Concerns:
  - Cost conscious - interested in avoiding more student loan debt
  - Job prospects following graduation / employability with NOVA degree
  - Brand concerns - is NOVA a "step backward"?
  - Guaranteed transfer / acceptance options to GMU and others
- Location: near MEC

The daughter and granddaughter of elementary school teachers, Mariah always assumed she'd follow the family example and become a teacher. After earning a bachelor's in education and landing the perfect job at her hometown elementary school, though, she quickly realized teaching was a miserable fit for her. After struggling with it for a couple of years, Mariah finally confided in her mom, who surprised her by being incredibly supportive of Mariah's desire to leave teaching.

Mariah's mother challenged her to consider her own interests and talents, reminding her that going back to school wasn't going "backwards," it could be the perfect step forward. Mariah remembers loving biology, and she believes nursing might be a great way to combine that interest with her desire to help people. She's also heard that nurses are in demand and knows it's a more profitable career than teaching. Riding the Metro one day, Mariah saw an ad for the nursing program at NOVA and immediately pulled out her phone to learn more information.

The specialized MEC campus and health care program resources quickly jump out to Mariah as great advantages of a NOVA education. But what about tuition costs? She already has plenty of student debt and is hesitant to accrue more. Also, is nursing a competitive program? Undaunted, Mariah wants to continue researching and find more information about costs and program requirements and is starting to believe NOVA can help make her new healthcare career a reality.

Resonant Pillars:

- Springboard to Opportunity
- Experts in the Classroom and the Field
- Relevant and In-Demand

#### **MESSAGING POINTS:**

- NOVA faculty are nationally-recognized in healthcare.
- The NOVA region runs on NOVA grads—our graduates find success in the areas biggest employers and important industries.
- NOVA workforce programs offer the latest equipment and technology.
- Thousands of college graduates have come back to NOVA to gain new skills and start new careers

- NOVA is a great place to restart your college goals. Your previous college credits and work experience can count toward your NOVA program.

**CONTENT TOPICS:**

- Stories about NOVA’s footprint in the region’s healthcare workforce.
- NOVA’s partnerships with local hospitals and providers.
- Students who went to NOVA to change their careers.
- Stories about nationally recognized faculty or programs

**DAIMON - Military / veteran student | college transfer path**

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- Male, African-American
- Age: 23, student
- Highest Education: H.S. Diploma
- Intended Status: Open to part-time or full-time
- Interest: Undecided; looking to earn bachelor’s degree on GI Bill but open to a workforce focused program first/instead
- Goals/Concerns:
  - Transition out of active duty and into meaningful career
  - More education to increase his pay while still on active duty
  - Capitalizing on GI Bill to earn college education

Daimon loves to plan. As a member of the junior ROTC in high school, Daimon had planned to enlist in the army after finishing high school. Four years of active duty later, Daimon is realizing he needs a new plan for the rest of his career journey. Not wanting to re-enlist, he is interested in taking advantage of the GI bill to receive a college education, but he is unsure where to start. In the military, the path for advancement up the ranks was clear. In the civilian world, though, he is unsure how to begin his new career journey.

Hailing from the Northern Virginia area and recognizing NOVA as his local community college, Daimon decides to enroll in general education classes at NOVA while he decides what career path to choose. He is excited about the range of class options as well as the strong transfer programs so that he can complete a bachelor’s degree in the typical four years without falling behind. However, coming from the military’s tight-knit community with camaraderie and clear direction, Daimon is interested in learning more about NOVA’s resources for former military students. Are there clubs or sports teams he could join? What about advising and campus leaders he can turn to with questions about his future? Daimon is excited about the new challenge and opportunity laid before him and wants to know NOVA will be there for him with resources and community along the way.

Resonant Pillars:

- Springboard to Opportunity
- Relevant and In-Demand
- Big School Experience, Small School Feel
- Real-world diversity

**MESSAGING POINTS:**

- NOVA has a proven track helping veterans find success.
- By choosing NOVA, veterans can get the help they need to get the most out of their GI Bill benefits.
- NOVA offers hundreds of clubs and organizations that offer community and camaraderie.
- Thousands of college graduates have come to NOVA to gain new skills and start new careers.

**CONTENT TOPICS:**

- Stories about military (active duty and vets) transitioning to civilian careers
- Extracurriculars and student organizations
- Stories involving students finding career success
- NOVA students succeeding at four-year institutions
- Stories about nationally recognized faculty or programs

**NICOLE - Transient & college-enrolled summer student**

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- Female, Asian-American
- Age 19, student
- Highest Education: Some college
- Intended Status: Summer courses, open to online

- Interest: General ed requirements
- Goals/Concerns:
  - Retaking Gen Ed courses for better grades
  - Getting ahead on a few Gen Ed courses
  - Transferability of courses to UVA
- Residence: near Woodbridge, attends UVA during normal academic year

As a pre-med student at the University of Virginia, Nicole has big plans for her future and is determined to accomplish her goal of becoming a Pediatric Specialist one day. However, adjusting to college and taking on a full pre-med workload of anatomy, microbiology, physiology, and more was a tall order. Prioritizing her pre-med courses, she fell behind in many of her general education classes that didn't interest her as much, resulting in a lower GPA than she'd like.

Nicole wants to retake a course or two and maybe get ahead on some other general education classes heading into her sophomore year. Going home to Woodbridge for the summer, Nicole knows taking summer courses in Charlottesville isn't an option and UVA's online offerings aren't as affordable as she'd like. She looks into alternative options and comes across transferable courses offered during the summer term at NOVA.

Diving head first into her research, Nicole has many questions about the flexibility and transferability of summer courses at NOVA. Can she work a summer job and still take classes at NOVA, and do the classes she needs transfer back to UVA? Nicole is excited at the prospect of taking classes close to home over the summer, and is eager to get her GPA – and her path to a top medical school – back on track.

### RESONANT PILLARS:

- Outstanding value
- Springboard to Opportunity
- Relevant and In-Demand
- Experts in the classroom and the field

### MESSAGING POINTS:

- NOVA delivers high quality classes at a fraction of the price that four-year colleges charge.
- Summer classes allow four-year students to take a specific class.
- NOVA has credit transfer agreements with Virginia's four-year public institutions.
- NOVA faculty are nationally-recognized in healthcare.

### CONTENT TOPICS:

- Stories about NOVA students achieving success at other institutions
- Stories involving students finding career success
- NOVA students succeeding at four-year institutions
- Stories about nationally recognized faculty or programs

#### **DONNA - Parent | college transfer path**

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- Female, African-American
- Age 43
- Highest Education: Master's degree
- Intended Status: Full-time student
- Interest: Transfer program
- Goals/Concerns:
  - Aspires for H.S. daughter to earn four-year degree from prestigious institution
  - Academic support services
  - Cost conscious (but secondary concern)
  - Concerned about community college stigma holding daughter back if NOVA is on resume.
  - Proud of daughter but feeling social pressure

Donna is a stay at home mom whose only child, Catherine, is nearing high school graduation. Recently, Catherine has expressed interest in going to nearby NOVA to start out and learn more about what she wants to pursue as a career. Donna and her husband, both UVA grads, had grand plans for their daughter's journey through high school and beyond, but Catherine's high school experience just didn't conform to those expectations. An A-B student with the occasional C, and without a full slate of extracurriculars and leadership roles on her resume, Catherine isn't well-positioned for admissions to a top university like UVA. And while Donna and her husband were initially a little disappointed in what they misunderstood as Catherine's lack of ambition,



they've come to realize she has gifts, talents, and interests that aren't as conventional or easy to recognize as some of her classmates. Always supportive of their daughter and interested in what's best for her, they opened their minds to consider NOVA as a stepping stone to help Catherine find the academic direction she needs while still hoping for a four-year degree.

Donna still grapples with the stigma and the social pressure she feels from other families in their circle looking down on a NOVA education. She has always felt NOVA would be a great option for someone else's kid, but now that she is the "someone else," Donna is working to reframe NOVA in her mind as a great option for her daughter. Are there transfer programs to nearby four-year schools? What about academic clubs, interest groups, or faculty mentors? Donna wonders about the opportunities available for her daughter and wants to make sure she has the best chance to succeed at NOVA and beyond.

Resonant Pillars:

- Springboard to Opportunity
- Relevant and In-Demand
- Experts in the classroom and the field
- Big School Experience, Small School Feel

### MESSAGING POINTS:

- NOVA has credit transfer agreements with Virginia's four-year public institutions.
- NOVA delivers high quality classes at a fraction of the price that four-year colleges charge.
- NOVA faculty are nationally-recognized in a variety of fields.

### CONTENT TOPICS:

- Stories about students who find their path and purpose while at NOVA
- Extracurriculars and student organizations
- Stories involving students finding career success
- NOVA students succeeding at four-year institutions
- Stories about nationally recognized faculty or programs

### **AIDA - Personal enrichment student**

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- Female, white
- Age 71, retired
- Highest Education: BA in English
- Income Level: Medium
- Intended Status: Spring courses
- Interest: Art history, creative writing, foreign language,
- Goals/Concerns:
  - Keep learning during retirement
  - Worried about being in class again
- Residence: Suburban Annandale, VA.

For thirty-seven years, Aida worked as a librarian in Fairfax County. Retired for two years now, she's feeling a little lost. Her three children are grown up and scattered up and down the East Coast (she's been divorced for many years). They all have busy lives; hers is a little lonely. She seeks community and interaction with others. She also wants to re-ignite her youthful passion for art and culture, as well as explore classes in history and music. Bookish, Aida excelled in her college English classes and, if truth be told, took a job as a librarian to stay close to books and culture. She always loved school and during her early 40's tried to earn her master's in library sciences, but dropped out. It was simply too taxing for a recently divorced, single mother.

Aida will travel to Italy in the summer and wants to learn some traveler's Italian for her trip. She would also like to take some art history classes in the Italian Renaissance so that her visits to the museums in Florence, Siena and Venice will have deeper context and meaning. Aida hasn't sat in a college class, however, for 30 years. She has her doubts about someone her age trying to pick up a foreign language. Will she make a fool of herself pronouncing those Italian words among the twenty-somethings? Is she even too old for NOVA? Will she feel jarringly out of place?

What attracts her to NOVA is the proximity and affordability. Living off her pension and social security, she has some play money (but life has taught her to be thrifty). As these pursuits are just a hobby, she will not let herself spend too much. She's could take online courses, but why do that? She has the time, it's close to home, and really just wants to feel young again sitting in a class taking notes and raising her hand. Instead, she finds the face-to-face aspects of learning - community, instruction, meeting other students - most appealing. Who knows, she might even meet someone special in one of her classes.

### RESONANT PILLARS:

- Outstanding Value
- Real-World Diversity
- Springboard to Opportunity
- Big School/Small School

### MESSAGING POINTS:

- Ability to stay in a diverse, familiar learning environment within their community.
- High-quality educational experiences at a fraction of the cost, flexible options.
- An affordable option to pursue education for education's sake and to grow personally and socially.
- A more accessible step back into the higher ed world for people who've been out of the classroom for a bit.

### CONTENT TOPICS:

- Current community offerings and events
- Related enrichment opportunities and profiles
- Profiles of other enrichment students
- Profiles of enrichment instructors and their offerings
- Stories that reflect NOVA's student experience

#### **JENNIFER- HS guidance counselor**

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- Female, mixed Asian-White
- Age 33, Guidance Counselor, Broad Run High School
- Highest Education: BA in Child Development, MA in Counseling
- Income Level: Medium
- Interest: Yoga, running
- Goals/Concerns: Challenging the way her students (and their parents) approach career and higher education opportunities
- Residence: Ashburn, VA.

Jennifer has a dilemma she faces every day with her mix of exurban and rural juniors and seniors. A recent transplant to the DMV, Jennifer landed her dream job at Broad Run High School in Loudoun County. Jennifer truly wants to do what's best for her "kids", and that means showing them their best college options. As a guidance counselor, she's a believer that high-tuition, 4-year institutions aren't in the economic interest of many of her students. However, the Loudoun County School system actually incentivizes her to focus on just that traditional pathway.

Like many educators, she's frustrated by the current policy enforced by school administrators. But Jennifer faces even greater pressure from the parents of her students. From outsized expectations to unrealistic scholarship opportunities, the most vocal parents often thrust their kids toward colleges and universities totally unsuited to their talents and interests. Many of her students (from the strongest to the struggling) lack true direction or calling. Many simply cannot afford the sticker price of area 4-year institutions. And many would be wise to complete two years at a community college like NOVA, then take advantage of its strong transfer agreements.

Selling NOVA to Loudoun County parents with lofty expectations has proven tough. She can't count the times that a parent has said, "NOVA's a great school, but I'm not sending my child there." Part of her frustration comes from NOVA itself. They don't provide her with good information about the cost savings, transfer agreements, or even programs. And NOVA admissions officers haven't always left the best impression at her school. Lastly, on a daily basis, Jennifer is overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of students seeking her help. In her heart, she knows NOVA is the right choice for many of her students, but the reality of her job often works against this smart, economic option.

### RESONANT PILLARS:

- Outstanding Value
- Springboard to Opportunity
- Big School/Small School
- Relevant
- Experts
- Real-World Diversity

## MESSAGING POINTS:

- NOVA offers challenging, high-quality classes comparable or superior to those at four-year institutions.
- Most NOVA students are eligible for a variety of scholarships, grants and other types of financial aid.
- NOVA is a great place to begin a person's educational and career journeys regardless of their background.
- NOVA's groundbreaking ADVANCE program with George Mason University offers students the opportunity to dual-enroll at both institutions.

## CONTENT TOPICS:

- News of initiatives around transfers, dual enrollments, high school outreach and financial aid.
- Content about new programs and academic offerings from NOVA.
- Stories centered on NOVA's inherent diversity
- Stories about student success.
- Stories that reflect the relevancy of NOVA's offerings, such as partnerships with employers and industries.
- Stories that reflect NOVA's student experience.

### **DOUG - Donor**

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*(Note - This audience is not for enrollment goals, but to build relationships with NOVA donors)*

- Male, White
- Age 74, semi-retired
- Highest Education: MBA
- Income Level: High
- Interest: Health Care and Entrepreneurship
- Goals/Concerns:
  - Continue and strengthen NOVA's commitment to educating the next generation of healthcare workers in the Mid-Atlantic
- Residence: Great Falls, Va.

Doug's legacy can be found in the doctor's offices, surgical centers and hospitals across the Mid-Atlantic region. Forty years ago, he started a small health care placement agency. Launched during the height of the late 80's recession, everyone said Doug and his wife were crazy. Turns out, they were crazy successful. Over the years, Doug built up his healthcare talent business into one of Northern Virginia's leading suppliers of nurses, lab technicians and therapists. The secret to his success was always investing in the professional development of his talent. His biggest challenge was always finding a new pipeline of healthcare workers ready to take on the job.

Doug's company took off the year his business partnered with NOVA. Today's healthcare industry just keeps expanding — and the demand for trained workers grows more acute. For almost 20 years, Doug's company has run on NOVA grads. And over the years, he's been an active member of the NOVA advisory board, playing an important role in the creation of the Medical Education Center (MEC) as well as advising some business programs.

Though he still goes to work most days, he's living a rich retirement fishing and boating the Chesapeake Bay. After his heart attack at age 74, Doug is now considering a re-write of his will, possibly leaving two-thirds of his estate to NOVA, earmarked to programs that teach the health sciences and entrepreneurship. Today, he's one of NOVA's greatest ambassadors, value-signaling his own estate planning to leaders in the greater D.C. health and business communities. His message always preaches the upward mobility NOVA gives to the diverse and hard-working student body, often men and women who came not from privilege, but through their own smarts and grit, trained at NOVA to help nurse, test, and heal the citizens of Northern Virginia.

## RESONANT PILLARS:

- Outstanding Value
- Real-World Diversity
- Springboard to Opportunity
- Experts
- Relevant
- Big School/Small School

## MESSAGING POINTS:

- NOVA is truly a springboard to opportunity for the students it serves.
- NOVA depends on the vision and generosity of its donors to achieve excellence in its offerings for students.
- NOVA offers donors an opportunity to help ensure our region's continued growth and prosperity into the future.

- Like many institutions of higher education, NOVA needs resources to stay flexible and future-focused, resources that donors provide.

**CONTENT TOPICS:**

- Stories involving students finding career success
- Stories about NOVA’s healthcare offerings
- Profiles of other donors and their giving
- Information about NOVA’s major development and philanthropic initiatives

**DAVID - Business leader**

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*(Note: This audience should be targeted to build relationships with the business community, not for enrollment growth)*

- Male, African-American
- Age 51, CTO of a growing IT services company
- Highest Education: MBA
- Income Level: High
- Interest: IT and the NOVA business community
- Goals/Concerns:
  - The area’s continued growth overwhelming the pipeline of available skilled talent, especially in the booming technology sectors
- Residence: Loudoun County

For seven years, David has played a leading role in the Northern Virginia Technology Roundtable. As a past Executive Director and a current board member, David has witnessed the Northern Virginia area transform during his long career in IT. As someone whose company has witnessed first-hand the struggle for skilled workers, David spearheaded outreach to the big-name universities in the area. Each time, however, his interactions left him frustrated. Either the university moved far too slow for today’s tech world, or the university gave but mere lip service to the Roundtable’s recommendations. It’s safe to say that he felt his perspective was not heard.

Not so with NOVA.

From his first introduction, NOVA representatives showed an eager enthusiasm to partner, and moreover, to listen to what the Roundtable had to say. In fact, honing, growing, and evolving the curriculum — based on industry recommendations — seemed baked into the NOVA DNA. Unfamiliar with — and even skeptical of — working with a community college, these concerns were quickly swept aside as David helped shape NOVA’s growing IT and Cybersecurity curriculum. Today, NOVA has become an area leader for workforce and talent development. And David has become one of NOVA’s biggest cheerleaders. He hires NOVA talent. He advocates for NOVA in NVA political circles. And lastly, he sent his own son to NOVA to earn his AA degree in Cybersecurity (His son also took full advantage of a transfer agreement to Virginia Tech).

**RESONANT PILLARS:**

- Outstanding Value
- Springboard to Opportunity
- Experts
- Relevant

**MESSAGING POINTS:**

- Want to be included in the conversation, to feel that their perspectives are heard.
- Works on a different, faster time-scale than public institutions.
- Needs places like NOVA for workforce and talent development.
- Solutions-oriented, with less interest in making sure political considerations are brought to bear.

**CONTENT TOPICS:**

- News of new initiatives, partnerships and developments in workforce programs, especially in his area of interest.
- Content and communications produced by the president and other senior college leadership
- Speeches from industry leaders that work with NOVA.
- Stories of student success in the workplace.
- Content that reflects NOVA’s inherent diversity