(MUSIC)

MALE: In a community college, everybody has a true opportunity. But at the end of the day our graduation rates aren’t as high as we want them to be.

MALE: Students graduating with 30, 40 hours more than they needed because they took the wrong class.

MALE: We’re trying to guide students very deliberatively toward their goals.

FEMALE: Guided pathways is an overarching way of looking at the student experience. It’s a big picture, transformational work, and it’s all about student success.

(MUSIC)

RODNEY McLAIN: Milwaukee is hurting, man. It’s hurting. People come to me with problems, I don’t care who you are, I'm going to do my damnedest to help you out.

(MUSIC)

CHRISTINE MANION: Our systems weren’t built for student success. So as much as you can work with a student here and I could get you through the English 151 or 201 and wave and there you go, two years later I didn’t see you crossing the stage. And why was that? Where did we lose you along the way?

AMANDA BROOKS: Students are here to transform their life. We can do better. We will do better. Setting students up on a pathway that’s actually visible to our students is only going to echo throughout our community.

(MUSIC)

NIKEYIA: Basketball is like a love for me. Back then everybody was focusing on puppy love. Which boy I'm going to talk to, which boy it is. Spalding was my boyfriend. Anytime somebody ask me who you go with? Spalding. Who is that? We never seen him around the school. If you go to the gym you’ll see him all the time.

My road for college is a little bumpy. I went to a school in Minnesota. I got a scholarship, and I was playing ball there. My toe got broken during a game and they took my scholarship. So I just had to leave the school because I didn’t have enough funds to keep on attending the school. So from there I was a little discouraged. I was just like I don’t want to do this anymore.

Thank you. Appreciate it. Hey, how you doing.

RODNEY McLAIN: Good to see you.

NIKEYIA: Good to see you too.

RODNEY McLAIN: How’s everything going?

NIKEYIA: Good, good, good.

RODNEY McLAIN: Where you heading right now?

NIKEYIA: Class.

NIKEYIA: I came here to MATC. I ran into Mr. Rodney McLain and first off what he asked me, “What do you want to do?” You know what, I like to help people, I want to give back to my community because where I'm from it’s broken. It’s tore down, and people don’t care. But if they had someone to care I think it would be such a better place. So he like, you know what, maybe you should do human services. And I'm like, yeah, I’ll look into it.

RODNEY McLAIN: I came through the cafeteria model to where a student will come in that’s signed into counseling were sitting with someone, building their schedule, having that connection, and then you disappear. I may never see you again. With this new plan, guided pathways, I can leave my desk, I can go to your classroom. I can call you up. Not just turn you over to another colleague, but really dialogue, build relationship with you.

(MUSIC)

VICKI MARTIN: I appreciate you coming together today to really think through what is it we need to do to create that student experience. When they come here what would be the best way for them to get through the system and then what is it that we can do to help support that process?

CHRISTINE MANION: We’ve made some mistakes or we’ve had to kind of go backwards once in a while, but overall we really collectively have a vision and we’re all moving forward, and it’s all about student success. And so I'm just really proud of everyone who stepped up to be part of the change.

FEMALE: Guided pathways is an overarching way of looking at the student experience. Instead of saying, “Well the students aren’t college ready, what should we do about them?” it’s saying, “Wait a second, are we student ready?” And today’s students especially in technical and community colleges in a city like Milwaukee, they have a lot of challenges. We have to keep that in mind. And we have to treat them like the VIPs that they are.

(MUSIC)

EFASHIA: I enrolled in MATC 2016, then I took a break after, you know, there’s family issues, so I started working. I had two jobs, an apartment, a car. And beginning of last year, I pretty much lost everything. And so I lost one of my jobs, so it impacted me, you know, financially, and so I couldn’t keep up with the bills or anything and so I lost, you know, my car, I lost my home.

I went to Student Life, and they had an opportunity for student housing, emergency housing, and so I went to Amanda.

EFASHIA: How you doing?

AMANDA: How are you?

EFASHIA: Good. Good.

AMANDA: Efashia’s story I think is a story of a lot of our students, you know, live and have to live check to check and one event could be life changing. She was courageous enough to come and share. And we were able to get her in our emergency housing. But then we start looking at big picture. What does your resume look like? What jobs are you, you know, looking for right now?

This is a crucial time. What I’ve been doing is setting students up to meet with Ms. Stephanie, with US Bank. She’ll sit down, go over everything with you, and let you know this is how you’re going to be able to still pay that $625.

EFASHIA: Amanda, I can go to her to talk about anything, you know, she connects me with other people as far as like networking and she’ll go above and beyond to help me find anything. And she’s like that with pretty much all of the students.

AMANDA: Is this your first time at MATC or no?

FEMALE: It was yesterday.

AMANDA: First time touring.

FEMALE: For the tour, yes.

AMANDA: Okay. And what programs did you see?

FEMALE: We did the barber, we did the nail tech, we did the welding.

AMANDA: So which program are we signing up for?

FEMALE: We want to do cosmetology and nail tech.

AMANDA: Okay.

FEMALE: And then business management.

AMANDA: So kind of working in a shop then funding that next program?

FEMALE: Yeah.

AMANDA: I see what you’re doing there.

CHRISTINE MANION: We really need to think about today’s student. What do they need? So that they can be successful. And it’s their definition of successful. And so it’s not just enough to get through one course, but that course has to be tied into a bigger certificate or credential that leads them either to that transfer or to that job, to that career. So it’s a big picture. It’s not going away. And it’s really, really hard work.

RODNEY McLAIN: I think that social justice is part of our fabric. It has to be. If we don’t make it part of our institution, we’re going to lose our students. They can get the As and Bs, but still go out in their environment and get beat down. I got childcare issues, you know. I was called the N-word. You got to be one student at a time, one situation at a time and just be a voice. Just listen. You don’t listen, we can’t make a change.

RODNEY McLAIN: Here’s the thing, the world we create begins with your education. But who’s behind you?

STUDENT: I watched my mom, you know, work day in and day out to make ends meet, something that I'm doing now.

RODNEY McLAIN: Yeah.

STUDENT: Of course I'm here to strive.

RODNEY McLAIN: Thank you.

STUDENT: I changed, you know, for my son. And I'm tired going back and forth to jail.

RODNEY McLAIN: Yeah.

STUDENT: The mantra for this school is in spite of joblessness, in spite of homelessness there will always be somebody to address you as a person.

NIKEYIA: You always put a smile on my face, Rodney. Whenever I need help you’re always there for me and I respect you for that.

RODNEY McLAIN: I love you.

NIKEYIA: As a man, because I ain’t got no father. Never had one. My momma is a single mother. I look up to you.

NIKEYIA: Rodney showed me like you have people behind you. And coming from somebody that don’t even know me, it meant a lot to me. Some counselors just throw a schedule there just because you need the schedule, just give me my classes I need so I can graduate. The classes that I need to graduate. With this degree. And he did just that. And I won’t stop until I get that degree.

(MUSIC)

EFASHIA: I don’t want to be limited. I don’t want my future children to be limited. So I want to give them as many opportunities as possible. So that’s another reason why I want to break that cycle.

(MUSIC)

AMANDA: Getting students comfortable with knowing that we are truly here for them. I mean, I can’t say it enough. With guided pathways and us asking are we ready for our students, I see the change happening and know that more is coming.

(MUSIC)

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