



Universal Data Skills: Shaping Financially Savvy, Data Informed Leaders

Megan Garrett & Kristen Buttigieg
Lansing Community College

Overview

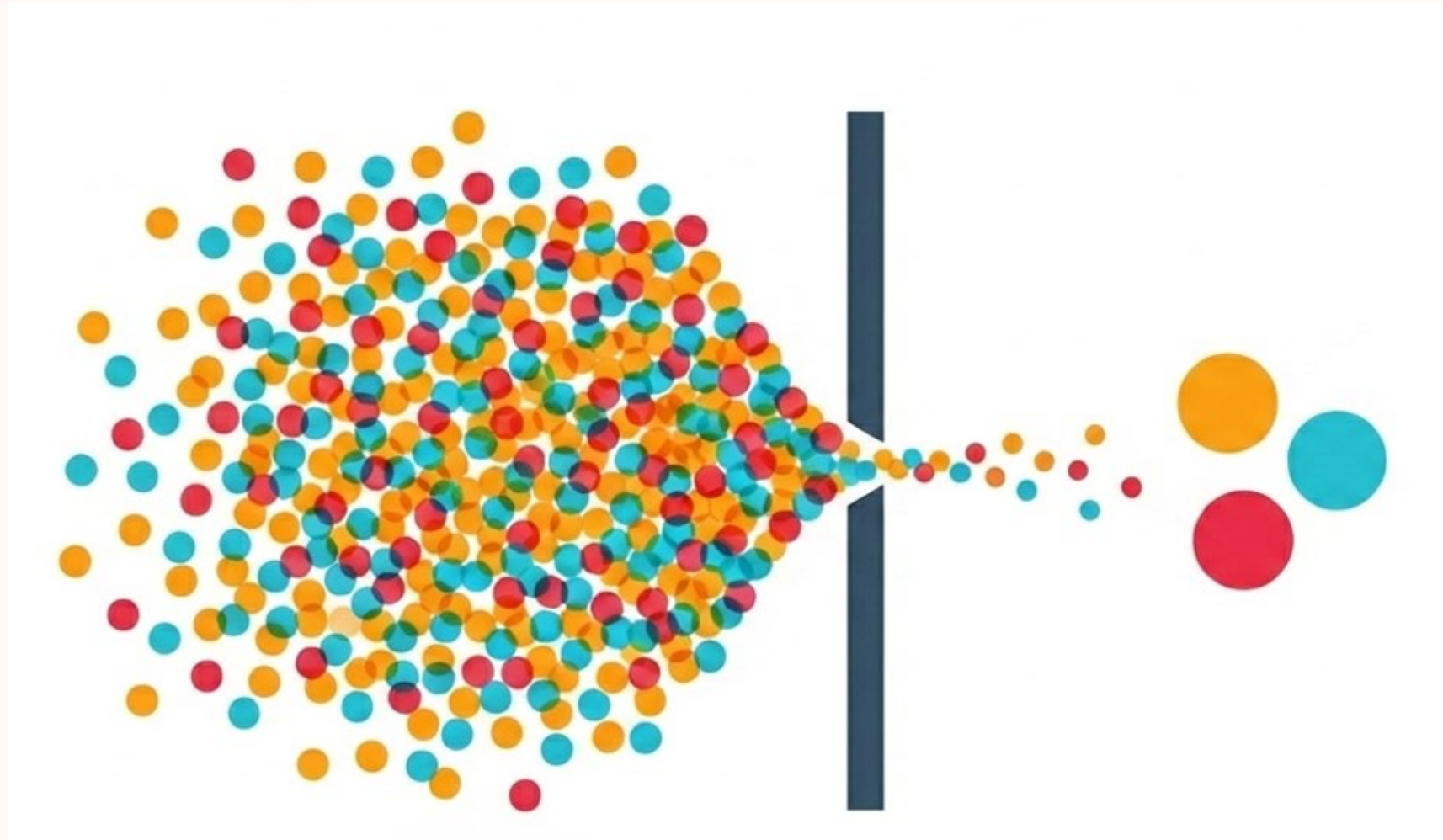
- Today's session connects two essential leadership capabilities: data literacy and financial literacy
- Together, these skills help leaders to move from information → insight → action



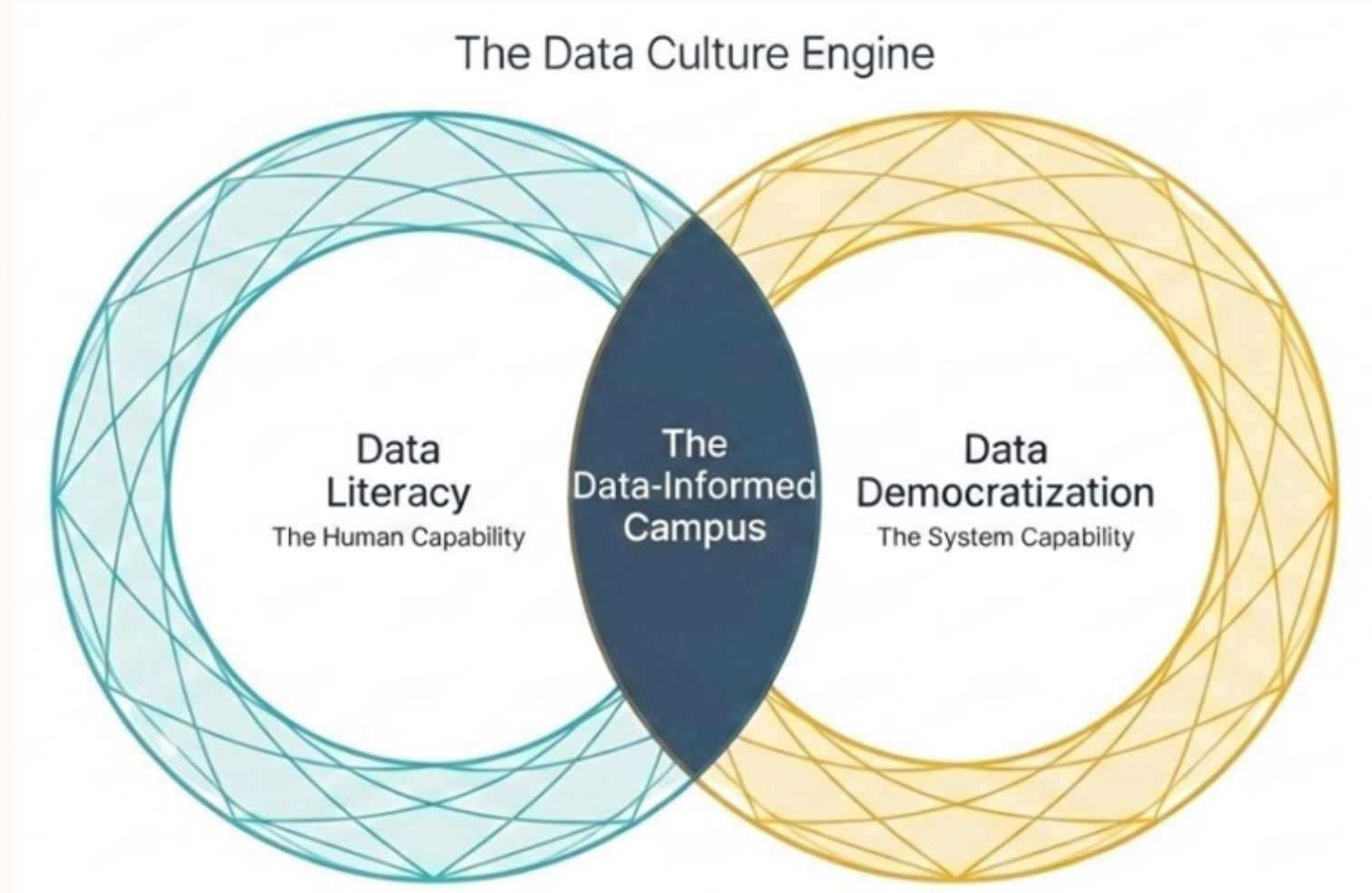
Shaping Data Informed Leaders

Kristen Buttigieg
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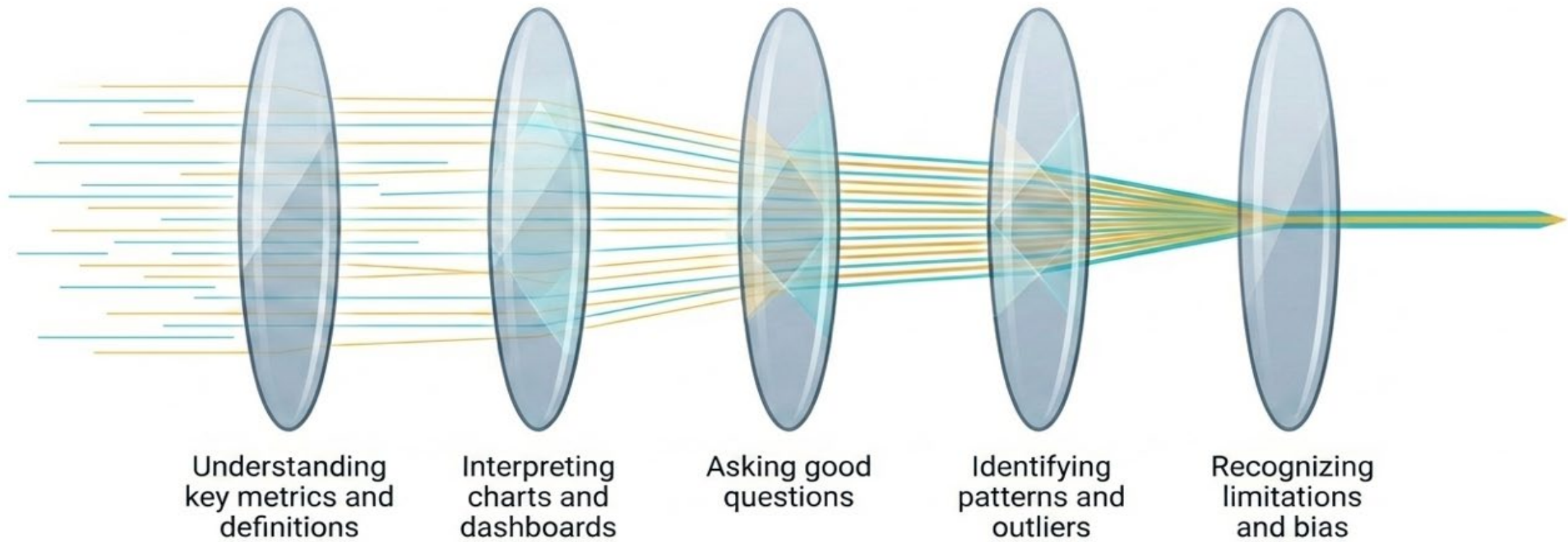
Data is everywhere but access and understanding is a work in progress



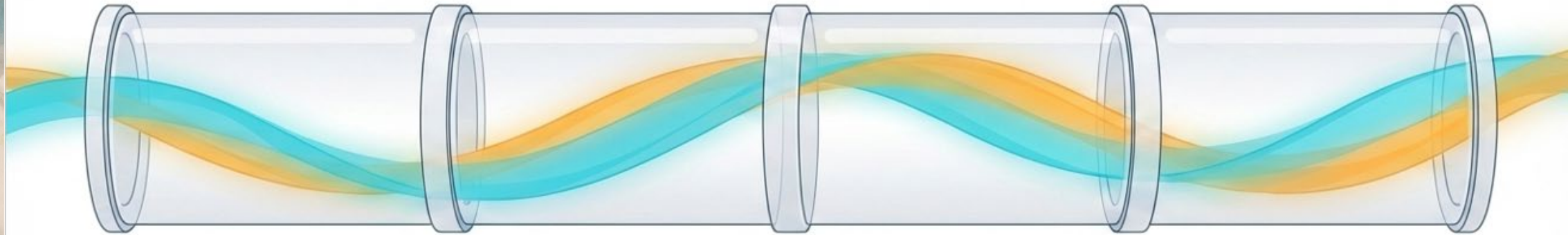
Transforming institutional data culture requires two interconnected shifts



Data Literacy: The Human Capability



Data Democratization: The System Capability



Access

The right people can find relevant data.

Clarity

Data is easy to interpret.

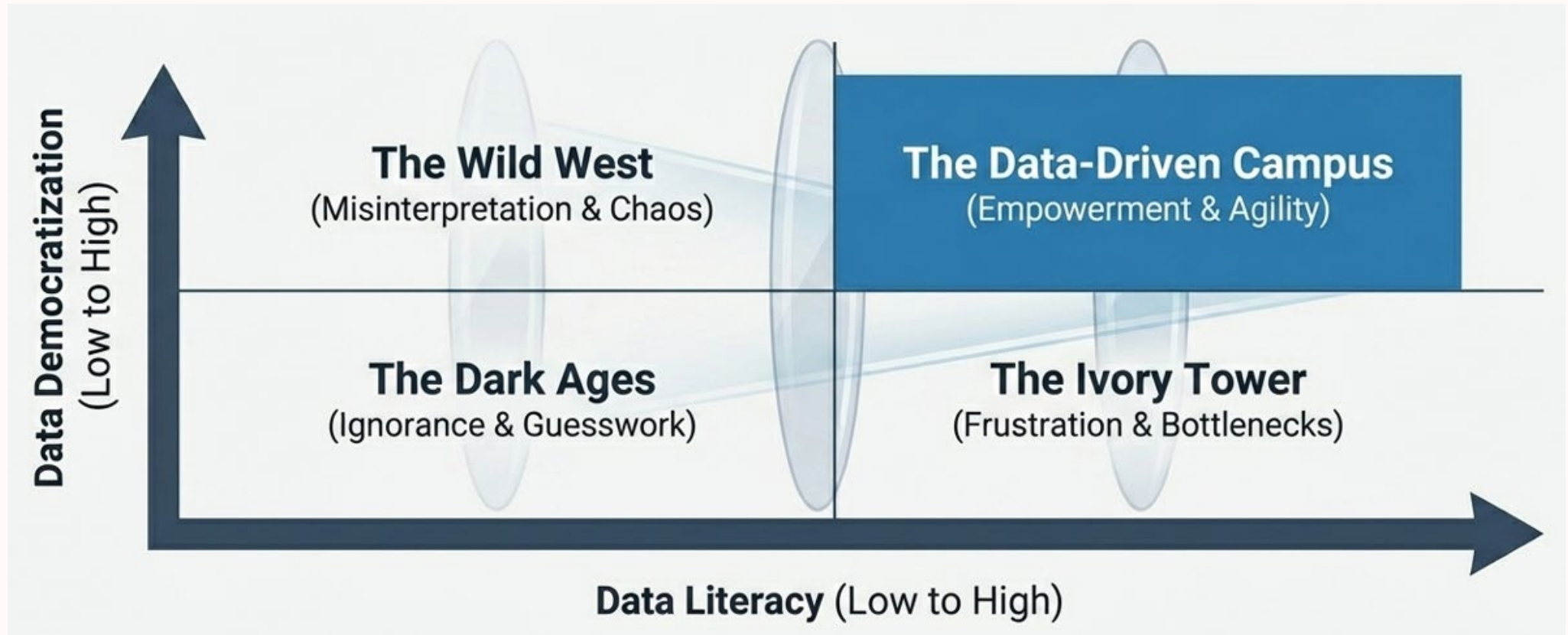
Trust

Users believe the data is accurate.

Support

Users know how to use it responsibly.

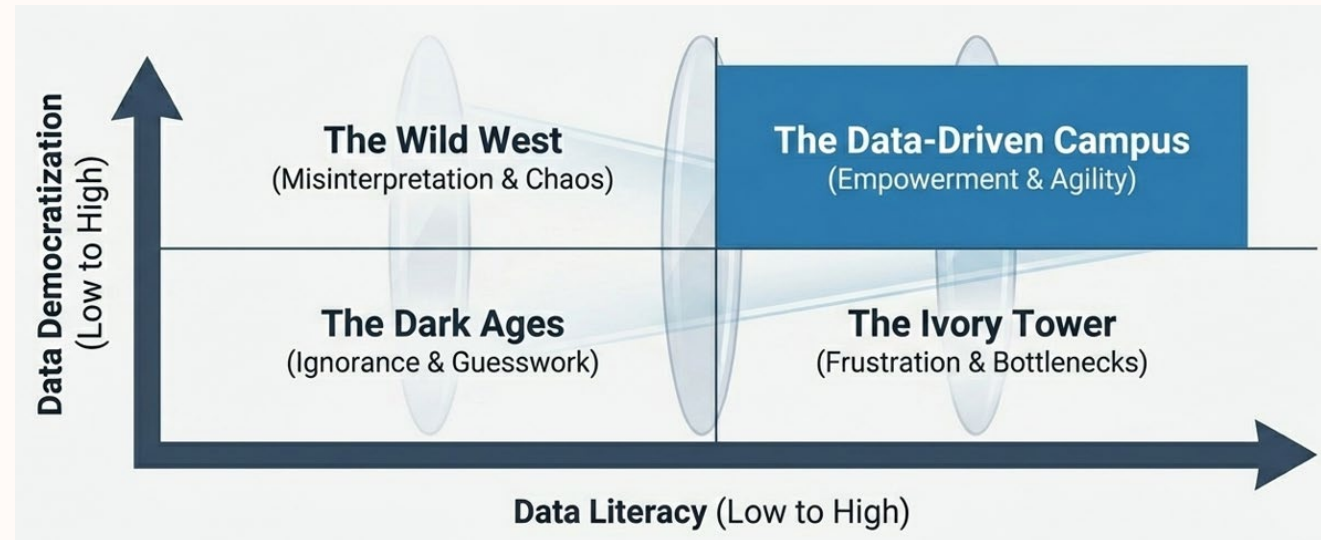
Balancing Human Capability with System Accessibility



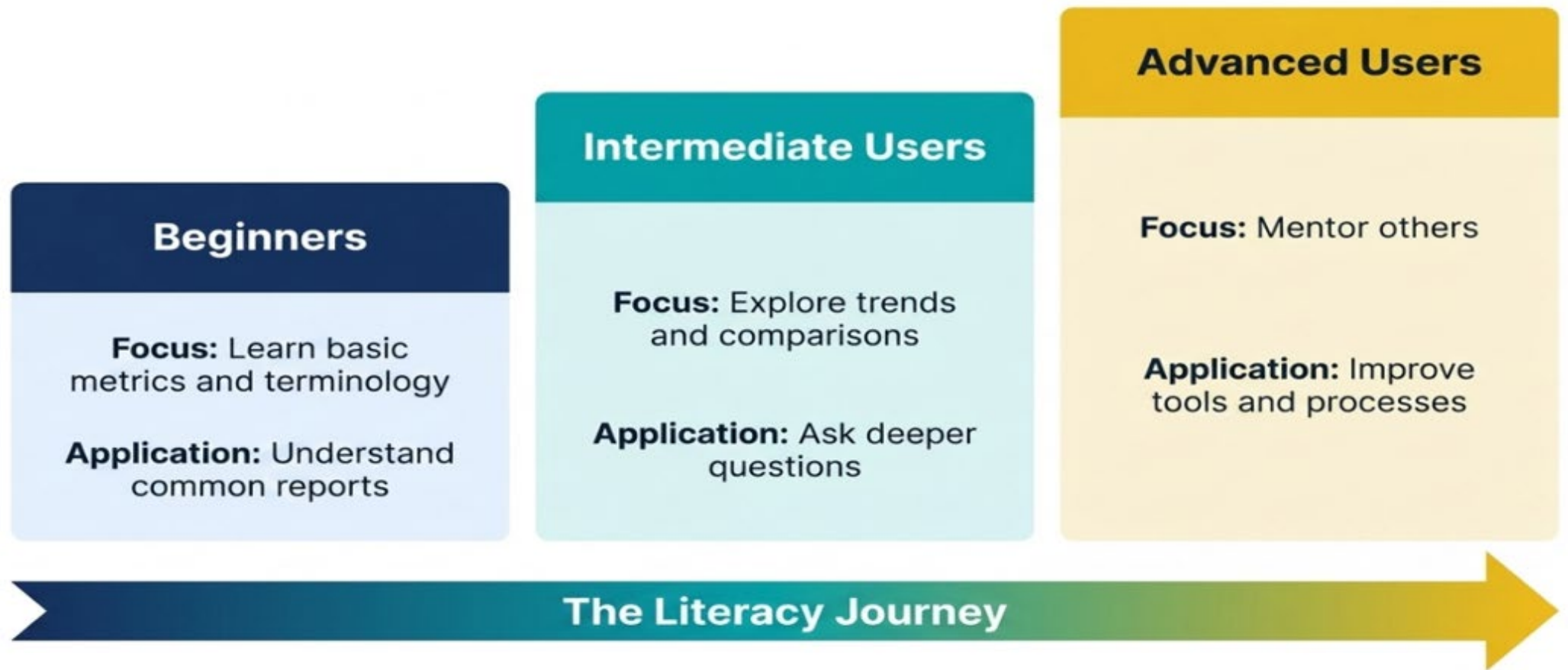
Reflection

Which category best describes the current state at your college and why?

Do you feel like your college could fall into multiple categories?



Building Data Literacy Across Experience Levels



What Data Democratization Requires



Best Practices for Leaders



CRITICAL RULE: Avoid using data punitively

Final Thoughts

**Better
Access** + **Better
Understanding** = **Better
Action**



Shaping Financially Savvy Higher Education Leaders

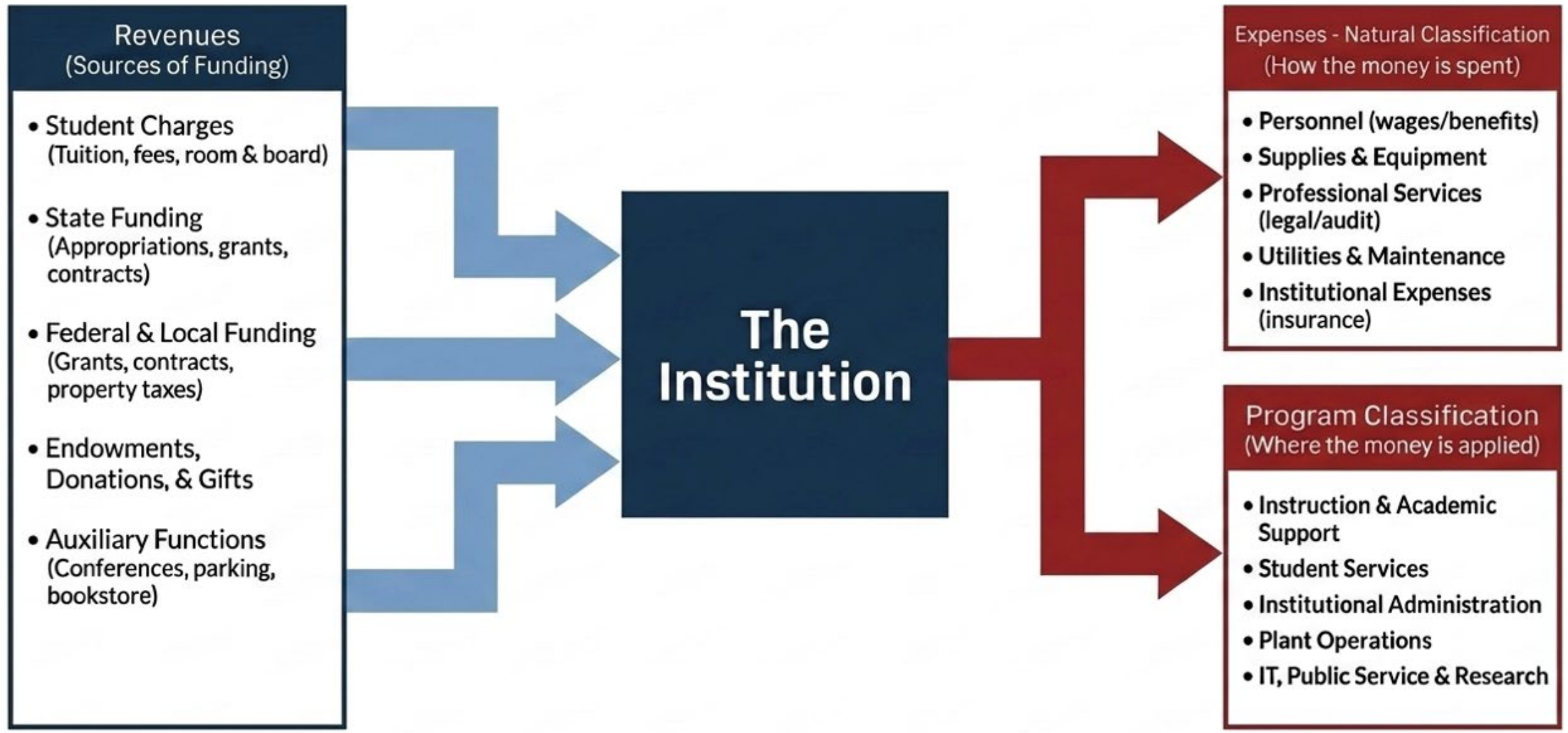
Empowering leaders with essential financial knowledge

Megan Garrett, Controller
Lansing Community College

Cycle of Empowered Leadership



Flow of Funds in Higher Education



Challenges Facing Higher Education Institutions



Enrollment Volatility



Budget Constraints & Operating Costs

Institutional Budget & Resources



Technology & Infrastructure Risks



Accountability & Transparency

Core Competencies of Financially Savvy Leaders

Statement Interpretation

Analyzing revenue, expenses, and risks through core financial reports to establish a baseline of institutional health.

Data-Driven Allocation

Aligning funds spent to academic initiatives, student services, capital planning, and institutional goals.

Initiative Evaluation

Assessing new initiatives by analyzing financial data, along with economic and institutional data, and multi-year budget projections.

Collaborative Decision-Making

Fostering a shared understanding across campus leaders for evaluating initiatives and costs.

Transparent Communication

Promoting accountability to internal and external stakeholders through data-supported budget decisions.

Financially Savvy Leaders

Core Competency	The Savvy Leader	The Common Pitfall
Financial Oversight	Reviews actual expenses against the annual budget continuously.	Waits for year-end reporting to discover budget overages or shortfalls.
Departmental Management	Uses tracking tools to code expenses appropriately and comply with funding source policies.	Relies on intuition or informal tracking, risking compliance errors.
Strategic Collaboration	Leans on the Finance Division personnel as expert mentors for questions and literacy education.	Operates the department in a silo, viewing Finance as a hurdle rather than a strategic partner.
Executive Reporting	Prepares transparent, monthly financial reports for governing boards or entities.	Obscures financial realities or avoids communicating risk until crises emerge.

Blueprint for Campus Financial Literacy

Professional Development

Deploying structured trainings, workshops, and accessible online dashboards to equip leaders with baseline statement interpretation skills.

Embedded Mentorship

Pairing finance professionals with academic leaders to provide personalized guidance in translating financial data into departmental decisions.

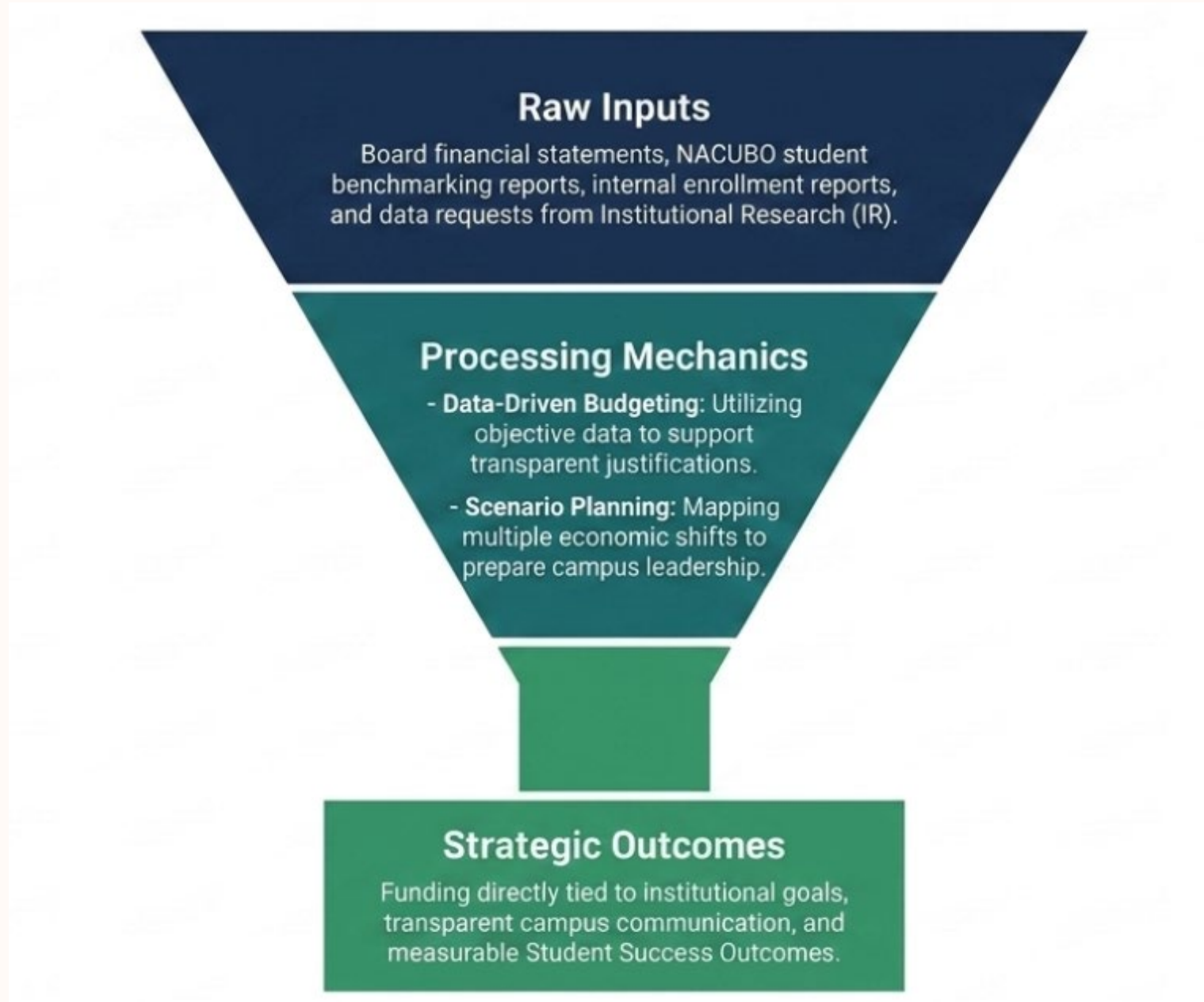
Real-Time Analytics

Providing leaders with continuous, accessible data reports to independently monitor their division's revenues, expenses, and program performance.

Transparent Communication

Normalizing regular briefings and clear, accessible reporting to replace financial anxiety with a culture of shared stewardship.

Data to Decision-Making



Lansing Community College Financial Reporting



Government Finance Officers Association

Certificate of
Achievement
for Excellence
in Financial
Reporting

Presented to

**Lansing Community College
Michigan**

For its Annual Comprehensive
Financial Report
For the Fiscal Year Ended

June 30, 2025

Christopher P. Morill

Executive Director/CEO

Lansing Community College Financial Reporting

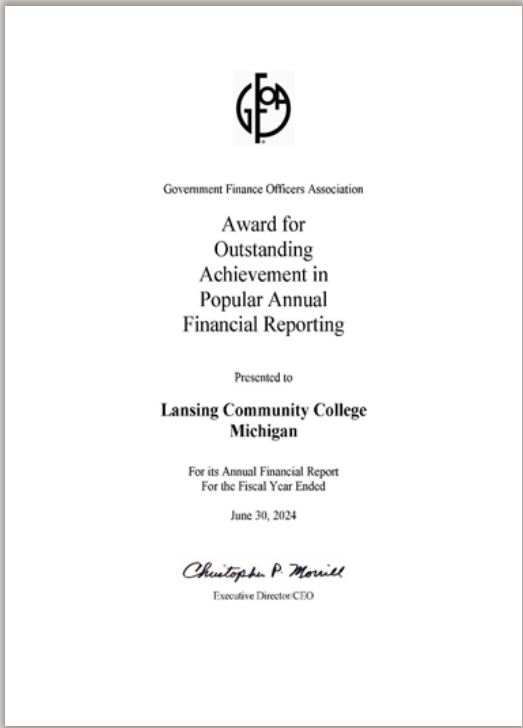
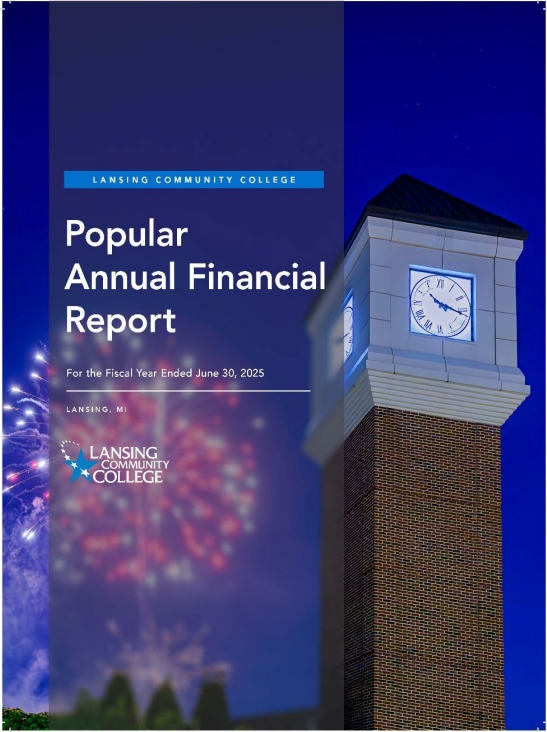
Transparency

Current reporting located on website – State reporting icon



Historical Reports and Popular Financial Reports

<https://www.lcc.edu/divisions-departments/financial-services/>



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