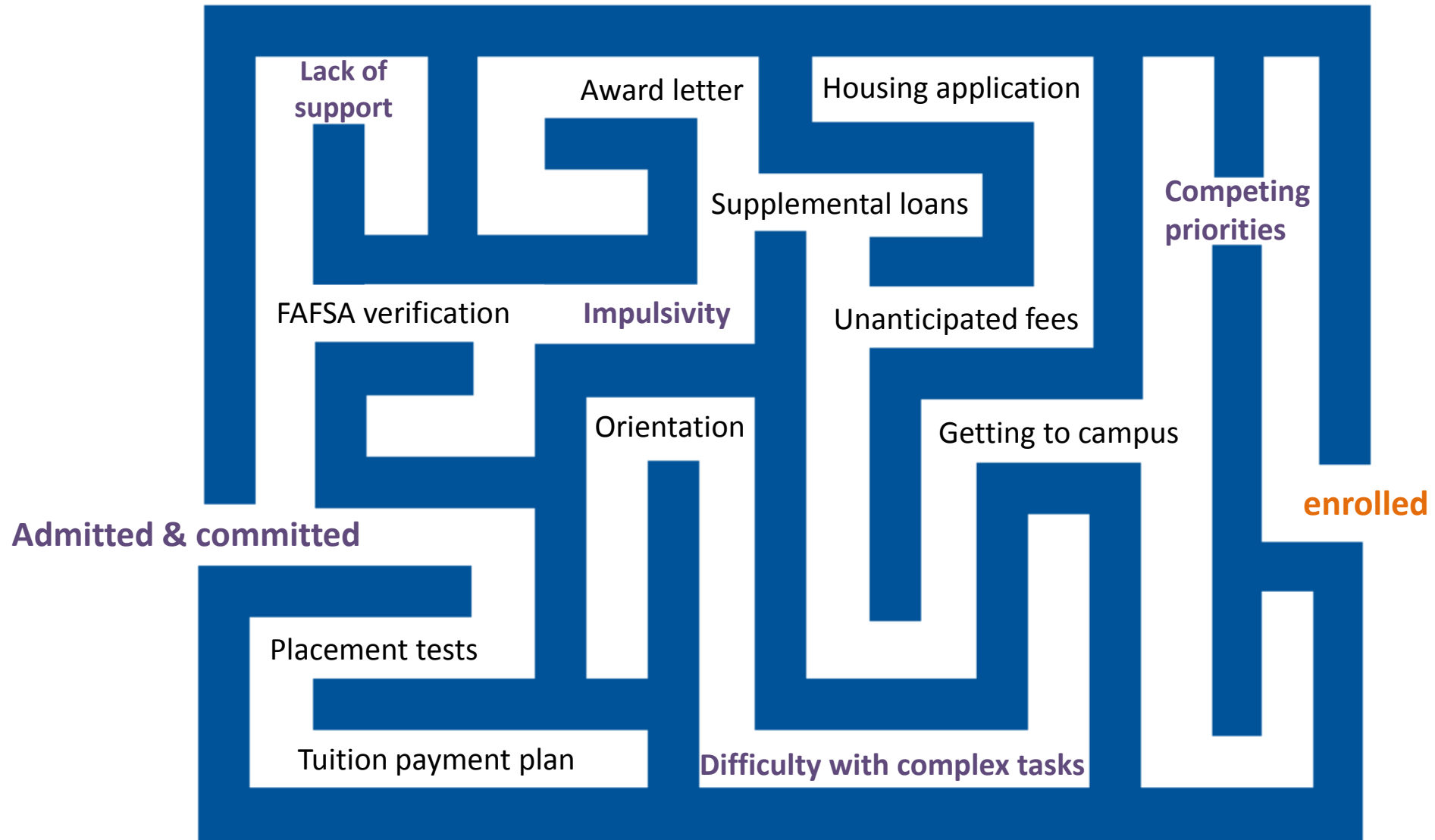


How an artificially intelligent virtual assistant helps students navigate the road to college

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Hunter Gehlbach
April 2018



Georgia State University Partnership

University-specific effort to reduce summer melt

-
- **GSU context**
 - High rates of summer melt among recent cohorts
 - Majority of incoming students are from low-income households (Pell grant eligible)
 - 1/3 admitted students are first-generation college goers
 - **Research collaboration with AdmitHub**



Meet Pounce



Reminders



Guided Tutorials



Surveys

Building Pounce

Separate workflows pertaining to all steps in the GSU college transition process



Intent to enroll form submission



FAFSA submission/verification, accepting loans, paying tuition bill



Orientation registration & attendance



Transcript and test scores submission



Housing deposits



Immunization records submission



Placement test sign-up

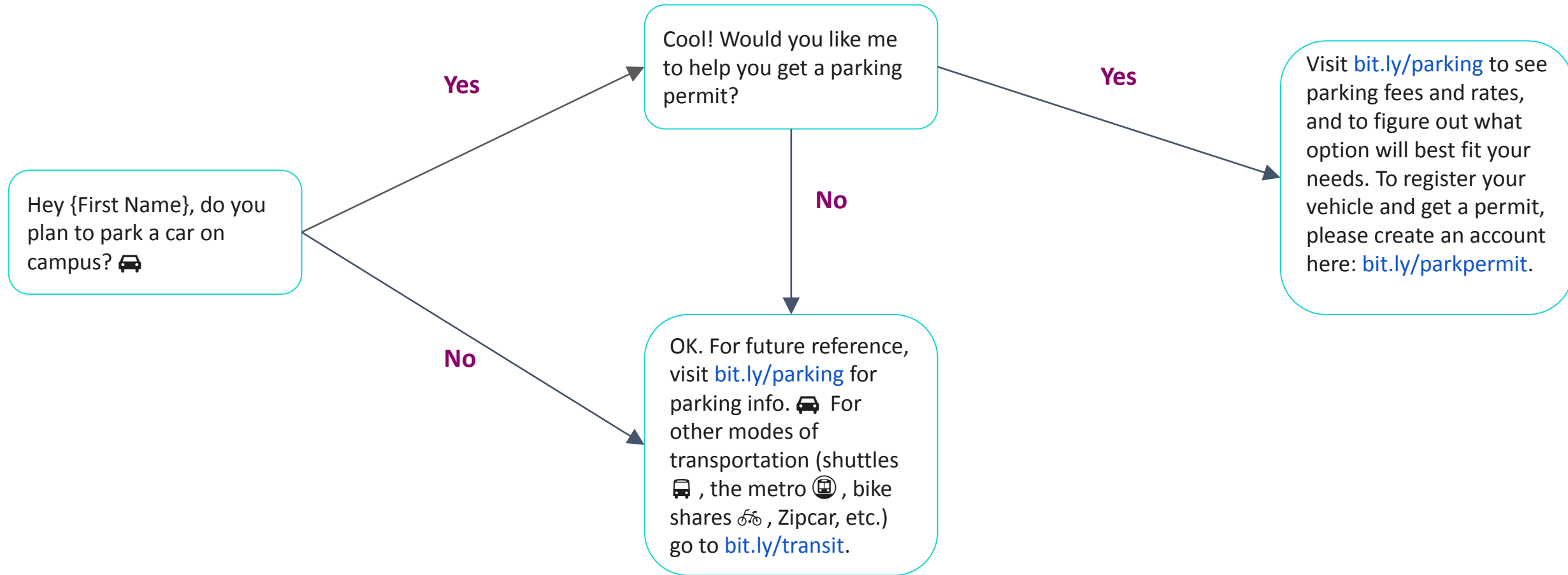


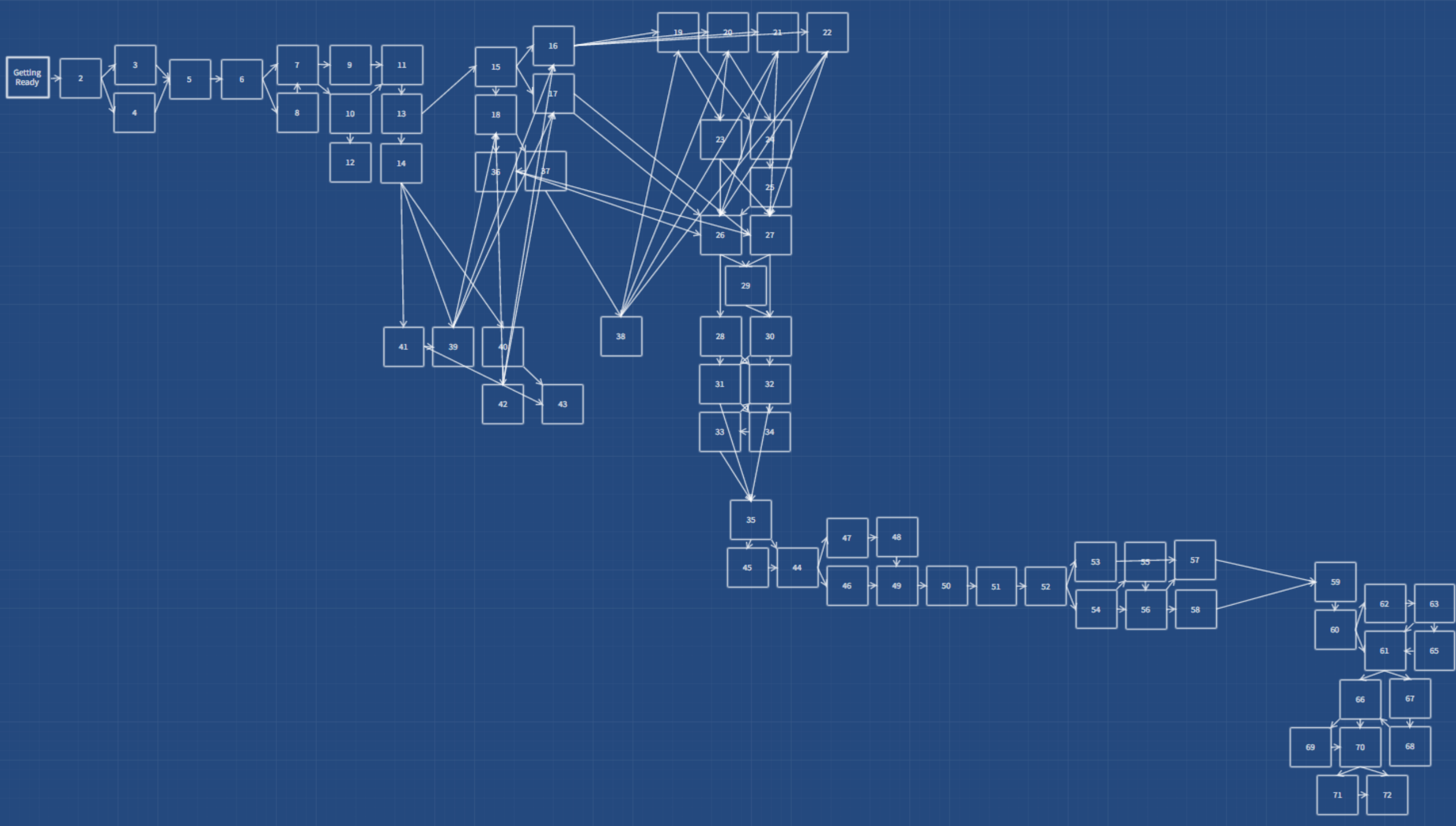
Planning for transportation



Meal plan sign-up

Building Pounce







SPEED
LIMIT
30

UBERATC.COM/CAR

UBER

ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGIES
CENTER

UBER

Chatbots

Computer programs that mimic conversation with people using artificial intelligence



Hi Mike! Congrats on being admitted to Georgia State! 🎉 I'm Pounce -- your official guide. I'm here to answer your questions and keep you on track for college. (Standard text messaging rates may apply.) Would you like my help?

Can I bring my dog to the dorm?



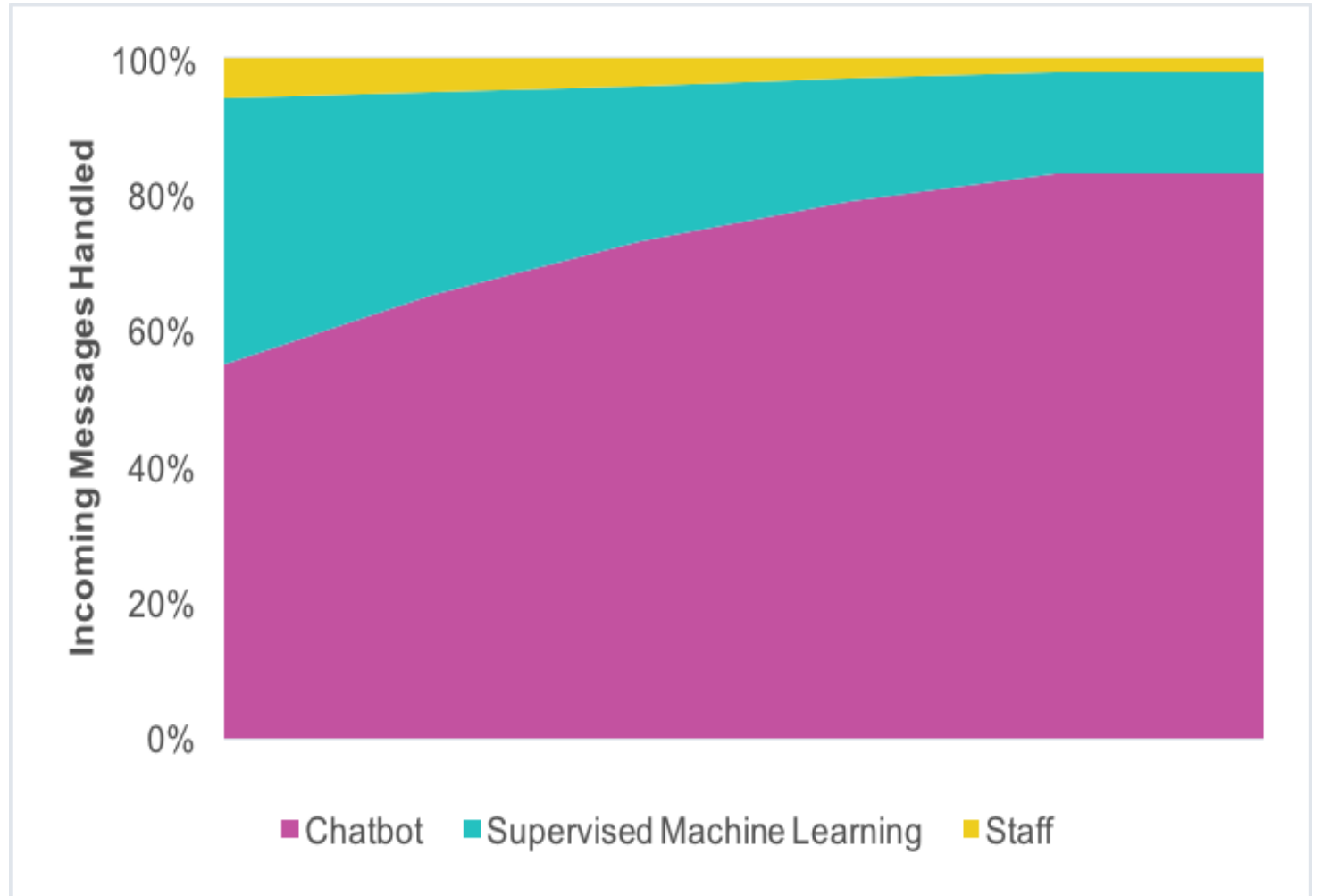
Fish are allowed in tanks no larger than 10 gallons, but all other pets are prohibited. Visit bit.ly/1SiBe6R to see what you should and shouldn't bring.

Implementing Pounce

-
- Target sample (Summer 2016)
 - Admitted students with a US cell phone
 - 1,948 committed to GSU
 - 5,541 admitted but not committed
 - Randomized controlled trial, stratified by GSU commitment status at time of randomization
 - Pounce integrated with GSU student data systems
 - Specific workflows targeted only to students who needed them

Implementing Pounce

Reduced need for human input
over time



Pounce impacts on pre-enrollment steps & GSU matriculation

Impacts for GSU-committed students

	Treatment effect	Control mean
Verification hold on financial aid	-0.030~	0.178
Submit final transcript	0.043*	0.688
Attend orientation	0.028~	0.857
Immunization hold on registration	-0.048*	0.513
Complete loan counseling	0.063**	0.422
Accept loan	0.055*	0.449
Accept Stafford loan	0.069**	0.375
Enroll in GSU	0.033*	0.846
Enroll in two-year institution	-0.013**	0.017

~ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Conclusions

- Data-informed outreach helps to support students through key steps in the college-transition process
- Replace school counselors & college admissions staff with chatbots?
 - No!
 - Systems like Pounce can help improve staff efficiency
 - Efficient use of data to target those who need outreach
 - Pounce: AI can handle common student questions & improve over time in doing so
- Just as self-driving cars don't do well in bad weather, staff time saved for complex circumstances that only they can help students navigate.

Thank you.

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Paper:

Page, L. C. & Gehlbach, H. (2017). How an artificially intelligent virtual assistant helps students navigate the road to college. *AERA Open*, 3(4), 1 – 12.