We would like to first thank the reviewers for their feedback. Although responding to the reviewers’ feedback proved to be a very involved process, we believe that the substantial changes the manuscript resulting from this process has significantly improved our manuscript.

The following table provides an overview of the changes made to our manuscript based on the previous reviews. Since the decision for the previous submission was a rejection, and because of the extent of the revisions, we are not able to provide a document with all of the changes shown using track changes; rather, we have provided an overview of the changes made to each section of the paper and, in parentheses, the reviewer to whom the changes correspond.

| **Manuscript sections** | **Overview of revisions** |
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| 1. Introduction/literature review | This section was restructured using a reverse outlining process to remove the noted repetition (Reviewer B). Additional literature was added to provide more information regarding the present context in Ontario (Reviewer A), and greater depth to ensure that the literature review was no longer lacking, providing more than what exists in other work (Reviewer B). This overhaul was also done to provide a greater focus on how barriers have been operationalized and theorized in the past, along with Cross’ typology for barriers, and included moving some of the literature cited in the discussion section into the lit review (Reviewer A). Furthermore, the overview of the current study was clarified to make the study objectives clearer – to identify what mature students perceive to be the most significant barriers to their success and then to make recommendations for how to respond (Reviewer A). Finally, we worked to ensure that the contributions of the work were clearer (Reviewer B). |
| 1. Methodology | Further information regarding the survey questions was provided in this section (Reviewer B); however, given that the data for this work was from a three year survey with six phases of data collection, it was not feasible to provide all of the questions. The question that was used for the current study is provided and information on how the broader survey was conducted is included. We hope that these additional details are sufficient to address this comment. |
| 1. Findings | The findings section was expanded to include more of the students’ own words, to provide greater clarification of the themes/sub-themes (including the addition of a table with an overview, table 2), and to summarize the themes at the end of each section rather than ending abruptly with a quotation (Reviewer A). Recommendations in this section were further clarified to connect with the policies and practices in the literature review (Reviewer A). |
| 1. Discussion/conclusion | The discussion section is somewhat reduced due to moving some of the literature to the lit review (as noted in the lit review overview). |