



KICK-OFF ACTIVITY

Reflect independently on the following questions as you consider different definitions of student success.

Think about yourself when you began college. What were your goals? Why did you want to attend college? How would you have defined success in college for yourself?

Imagine that you are the president of your community college and are given the opportunity to recognize a student who embodies success at your college. What would that student have done to be successful? What do you think success should look like for students at your college? How do *you* define student success for students enrolled in community colleges today?

Consider the vision and mission statement of your college. Is there a definition of student success in your college's mission statement? If so, what is it? What does the vision statement of your college say about student success?

After watching the student videos: What themes emerged from the student videos? How do these students define their own success? Are the students in the videos primarily focused on completing college or on their post-completion outcomes? What is the relationship between the definitions of student success from students, yourself, and your college? What threads are consistent? What tensions emerge?

Using the organizer, jot down a few words, a phrase, or a short sentence that captures each of your definitions of student success.

<p>Your definition: student success for yourself</p>	<p>Your definition: student success at your college</p>
<p>Your college's definition: student success in mission and vision</p>	<p>Students' definition: student success at your college</p>

How can these different definitions of student success inform your work as a leader?



ARTICULATING A RATIONALE FOR NEW DEFINITIONS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Try to articulate a clear statement that you might make in a presentation to your campus community about why, under your leadership, the college will focus on improving each of the outcomes listed in the chart below. Choose one of the student outcome areas and spend 15 minutes writing an individual statement. Get as far as you can, and do not worry if the statement feels incomplete.

Student Outcome	Why It Matters to Student Success	Case Statement for Why Your Institution Should Focus on This Outcome
<p>Completion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community college completion/transfer rates are at about 40% nationally. • Completion of a credential leads to better employment and wage prospects. • Completion data enable colleges to set goals and benchmark themselves against other colleges. 	
<p>Transfer with baccalaureate attainment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 80% of students entering community college want a bachelor's degree; only 14% complete one within six years. • Bachelor's attainment confers, on average, higher employment and earnings rates than associate's degree attainment. • In many labor markets, the value of general education associate's degrees is relatively weak. 	

<p>Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching students so they learn and develop skills is the core business of colleges. • There is strong evidence that college rigor has diminished. • Professors cannot improve instruction without good information about what's working and what's not in their classrooms. 	
<p>Labor market outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare a skilled workforce, colleges need to understand whether their programs are aligned with labor market needs. • Students' post-graduation outcomes tell colleges whether their programs are succeeding and improving. • Students should be able to choose a college and program knowing whether they'll be rewarded for their investment. 	
<p>Equity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority college students have historically succeeded at lower rates than others, yet they can be successful with added supports. • Increasing success for minority and low-income students is necessary to meet the country's growing need for better-trained workers. • Expanding access and success helps fulfill the ideal of equal opportunity. 	

IDENTIFYING THE KEY ACTORS



What groups of individuals in your college have primary responsibility for the following outcomes?

Completion and Transfer with Baccalaureate Completion	Labor Market Outcomes
Learning	Equity

Where is accountability for these outcomes clearest? Where is it least clear? Why? What can be done to give greater ownership of student outcomes to specific individuals or groups in the college?

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP VISION



Late in this module, you will begin the process of creating a strategic leadership vision for where you think your institution should head, in regards to some definition of student success. You will seek to answer the following question: Given what you already know about the institution, after you've looked at the data, where do you see critical gaps, opportunities, or unmet needs that might inform a strategic vision for student success going forward? Take 15 minutes to review the strategic leadership vision included in the pre-reading, *NOVA Strategic Vision 2015: Gateway to the American Dream*, and consider the questions below.

<p>What gaps, opportunities, or unmet needs does this strategic vision address?</p>	<p>What resources are required to meet these needs or close gaps? How will the college access these resources? What partners are involved?</p>
<p>How would you describe this president's theory of change?</p>	<p>What language does this president use to create urgency?</p>



Strategic Vision Planning Template



Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template

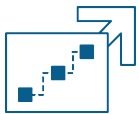
This template is designed to help organize your data analysis and planning for your strategic vision as part of the Defining Student Success curricular module. The questions and charts that follow provide a framework for moving from a systematic analysis of data on student outcomes across the four-part definition of student success to the development of a case-making presentation anchored in a compelling vision for change. The planning template covers four steps:



1. **Comprehensive Data Analysis:** How well is my institution performing across the key dimensions of student access and success? Where do I need to conduct additional inquiry to better understand students' experiences? What external data do I need to examine?



2. **Prioritizing a Student Success Challenge:** Where is there urgency to improve student outcomes? Where is the college falling short of its mission to advance access and success for students and impact the community? Where the greatest disparities among racial/ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, age, or other groups?



3. **Building a Plan:** What is my vision for student success at the college? What should be the institutions goals for improving student outcomes? What internal strategies can be developed to address prioritized goals? What external partnerships are required? How will we measure success?



4. **Anticipating Challenges:** What might keep the institution from being successful? What actions can I take as president to help mitigate potential risks and lower obstacles?

Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template

Guiding Principles for Strategic Vision Planning:

As you move deeper into the analysis and planning for your strategic vision, keep in mind the following:

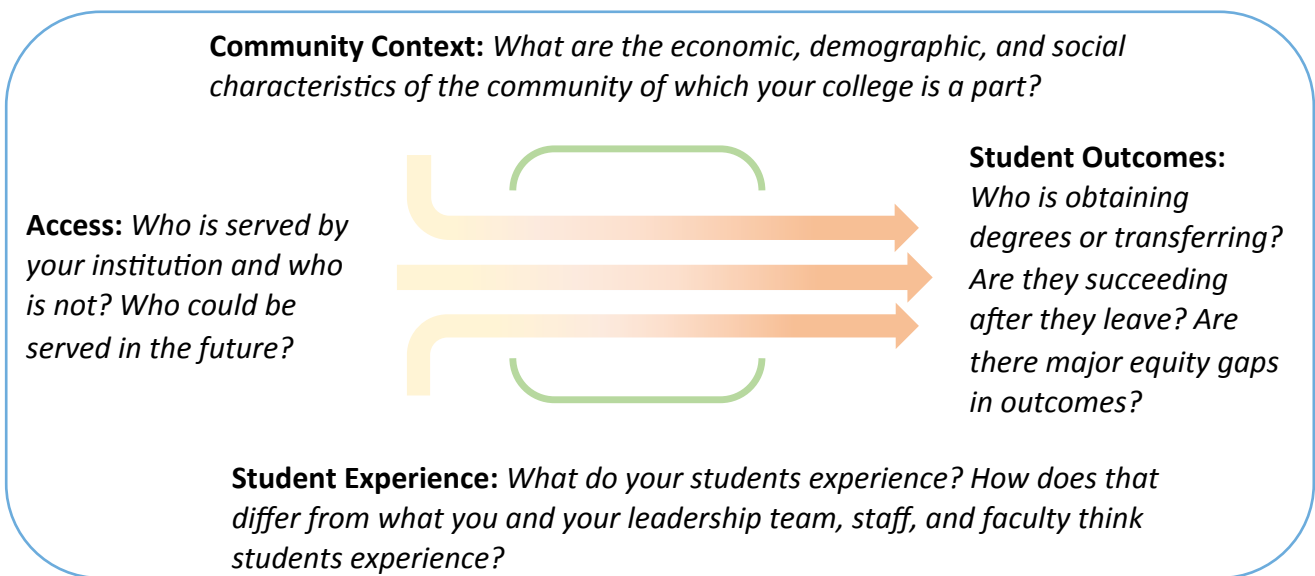
- **Anchor your work in evidence.** Collect evidence as you go and make sure you are confident in your ability to describe the evidence that substantiates your issue: where did your data/information come from, what population(s) does it reflect, what are its limitations, and how well is the student voice reflected?
- **Interpret your evidence.** The meaning of data and other forms of evidence is not self-evident. Your responsibility as a leader is to use evidence to help communicate effectively with your colleagues and broader campus and external communities. Whenever you bring data or other information to bear on a problem, make sure you can describe clearly what the evidence you provide is telling your audience: What is the key takeaway? Why is the information helpful? What are the implications of the information? What additional questions does the information raise and how will you as a leader build a disciplined approach to continuous inquiry?
- **Situate the problem.** Identify where the problems/challenges you've prioritized are situated within the college in terms of organizational structures. In very concrete terms:
 - What are the offices, departments, or divisions within an institution that have administrative control over the factors associated with the challenge?
 - Who are the administrators and related staff that are directly implicated in the problem? Who do they report to? What are their primary roles/objectives?
 - Where are their offices/divisions located within the organizational chart of the institution? What are the accountability/reporting/governance structures that impact the way those individuals work?
 - Who/what are the external actors/settings that are critical to the issue?
- **Relate the problem to the institutional mission and goals.** Don't assume your audience knows why the problem/challenge is a problem/challenge. Make sure you can convey explicitly how the problem *relates to the mission of the institution and why it is important*. In what ways does the issue you've identified reflect a short-fall of the college's mission, goals, and aspirations? How do you tell a story to exemplify the connection between the mission and the goals?
- **Avoid jumping to solutions before you've defined and diagnosed the problem.** We tend in higher education to adopt solutions ("pathways" or "advising redesign") before clearly and carefully defining and substantiating the student success goals we hope to achieve, the barriers to achieving the goals experienced by students, and the specific organizational policies and practices that contribute to those barriers. Be sure to think systematically about the problem you're trying to solve before jumping to specific interventions.

Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template

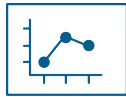


Comprehensive Data Analysis

The model below illustrates the community college as a system. Students enter the institution, experience the campus environment (through the classroom, student services, and social interactions), and eventually leave as a graduate, a transfer student, or as someone who does not obtain a credential. Think about all the data available to you that illustrate this system. Where is the picture clearest? Where is the picture out of focus or incomplete?





Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template



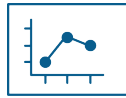
Comprehensive Data Analysis

Use the charts below to guide your analysis of the data you've collected or received as part of the Defining Student Success module, including the templates Aspen provided, interviews you conduct with students, and any transfer or labor market data you have available.

	Example Questions	Data Sources
 <p>Community Context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the demographics (race, education, income, etc.) of the populations the college serves, and how are they changing? • What are the characteristics of the surrounding economy and how are they changing? • Where are there unmet needs and opportunities to improve access to education and labor market outcomes? 	Aspen Data Template: Tab 1 Labor Market Tools
<p>Notes:</p>		


	Example Questions	Data Sources
 <p>Access</p>	How reflective of your community is your institution, with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial/ethnic minority communities • Students from low-income families • First-generation students • Non-native English speakers • Returning/adult learners 	Aspen Data Template: Tab 2
<p>Notes:</p>		


Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template



Comprehensive Data Analysis

Use the charts below to guide your analysis of the data you’ve collected or received as part of the Fellowship, including the templates Aspen provided, the CCRC transfer reports, interviews you conduct with students, EMSI labor market data, and any other information you have available.

 Student Experience	Example Questions	Data Sources
Notes: 	What are students experiencing on my campus? What do I know about the campus environment? What are the gaps between what administrators and faculty think students experience and what they actually do?	Aspen Data Template: Tab 2 Student interviews/focus groups, “secret shopper” feedback CCSSE or other campus climate data

 Student Success Outcomes	Example Questions	Data Sources
Notes: 	How well are students succeeding across the four-part definition of student success? Where are there equity gaps? What do I know about student success and equity in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistence and completion rates • Transfer and bachelor’s degree attainment • Demonstrated learning • Student labor market outcomes • Alignment of programs/degrees awarded to regional labor market trends 	Aspen Data Templates Labor Market Data NSC/CCRC Transfer Outcome Data

Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template



Prioritizing a Student Success Challenge

Based on your analysis of data (quantitative and qualitative) across areas of access, completion, and post-completion outcomes, as well as regional contexts, student experiences, and equity in access and outcomes, *what are the most significant mismatches between the current state of affairs and your institutional aspirations?* What strikes you as the most urgent and unacceptable of these gaps – those that you, as president, would prioritize in building a vision for change?

The following chart lists some examples of the types of issues you may be recognizing. The next page has space for you to begin forming your own problem statement.

Type of Problem	Example
Completion rates	26% of FT and 14% of PT students graduate within three/six years of entry.
Transfer and bachelor's attainment	22% of AA/AS students who come to the college for at least a semester transfer to a four-year college/university within four years.
	34% of students who transfer to four-year schools attain a bachelor's degree within four years of entering that college/university.
Student labor market outcomes	52% of graduates fail to obtain FT jobs within the first year after exiting the college.
	Students who obtain jobs after exiting (or graduating) earn an average of \$24,000 in their first year of work, which is the same as the earnings of a high school graduate with no college.
Equity	There are over 500 cybersecurity jobs vacant in the region; the college graduates fewer than 50 cyber techs annually and they are not hired by major employers.
	22% of students identify as African-American or Hispanic/Latino, 12% below the adult populations (ages 18-45) of those groups who reside in the college's service area.
Demonstrated learning	Pell students graduate at a rate 16 percentage points lower than other students.
	33% of students are proficient in "reading for meaning," 8% below the norm for community colleges.
Regional economic needs	Students score 20% lower than your college's peer group on CCSSE survey results dealing with active learning, student effort, and academic challenge.
	There are many unfilled healthcare jobs that require an associate's degree and not enough qualified candidates.
	There are not enough available good jobs in the region so your community's "best and brightest" are migrating and fueling a brain drain, slowing the economy further.

Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template



Prioritizing a Student Success Challenge

Use this space to begin drafting a succinct problem statement that addresses the need(s) you see at your institution. Remember to link your problem back to the evidence from your data analysis. Keep in mind also that a lack of or gap in the data may be its own problem.

Defining the Challenge

What are the most significant challenges/gaps you observed?

What evidence do you have that these are significant problems?

Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template



Prioritizing a Student Success Challenge

After you have narrowed your focus, consider the disproportionate impact it may have on different populations of students? What are the barriers to student success that may be unique to certain groups?

- African-American/ Black
- Hispanic/ Latino
- First-generation
- Returning adults (age 25+)
- Students of a particular gender
- Pell recipients
- Non-native English speaker

Unpacking Who is at Risk	
Population	What evidence do you have that there is a significant barrier to success?
All students	
Sub-population A _____	
Sub-population B _____	
Sub-population C _____	

Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template

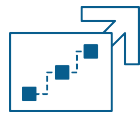


Prioritizing a Student Success Challenge

From among the challenges you've identified, select one (or a related set) and write out a problem statement that captures the problem in terms of (1) the evidence and (2) how it relates to the college's mission and goals. Start to identify specific goals, measures, and timeframes that you might put in place as president to engage your key stakeholders (internal or external) in addressing the challenge. How many students should be or can be directly helped? What specific measurements can be used to monitor success? What is a reasonable timeline in which to address this issue?

Problem Statement	
Goals for Improvement	
Timeframe for Improvement	
Measures of Success	

Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template



Building a Plan

With a crisp statement of the problem and a vision of the goals and timelines for improvement, begin to map out an agenda for internal change and external partnerships that you would lead as president.

The sample below maps out specific sub-objectives of the larger goal (improving AAS completion rates), identifies measures of success for those objectives, and identifies critical internal change and external partnership strategies that could be leveraged or developed to address the challenge.

Example Goal		<i>Improve AAS completion rates at the college from 44% to 60% within 5 years.</i>	
Interim Objectives	Interim Measure(s) of Success	Internal Strategies	Partnership Practices
Improve satisfactory course completion among AAS students	<p>AAS students completing courses with a grade of “C” or better increase from 65% to 70% after Year 1.</p> <p>AAS students completing courses with “C” or better increase to 80% by Year 5.</p>	<p>Engage faculty to understand course completion outcomes for AAS students in their courses and within their AAS programs.</p> <p>Design and implement a Center for Teaching Excellence to help faculty in reflective practice and improving student learning .</p>	<p>Consider teaming with the region’s other community colleges to create the Center for Teaching Excellence.</p>
Improve retention of AAS students	<p>Improve fall-to-fall retention rates from 70 to 74% after Year 1.</p>	<p>Create guided pathways based upon 8 meta-majors.</p> <p>Implement a case management advising system</p>	<p>Implement paid internships with employers.</p>

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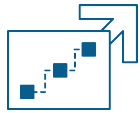


Building a Plan

Use the templates below to brainstorm sub-objectives required to meet the goals you identified above and identify the measures and strategies that you would enact as president to build an agenda to meet those goals.

Goal One			
Interim Objectives	Interim Measure(s) of Success	Internal Strategies	Partnership Practices
Objective 1			
Objective 2			
Objective 3			

Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template



Building a Plan

Use the templates below to brainstorm sub-objectives required to meet the goals you identified above and identify the measures and strategies that you would enact as president to build an agenda to meet those goals.

Goal Two			
Interim Objectives	Interim Measure(s) of Success	Internal Strategies	Partnership Practices
Objective 1			
Objective 2			
Objective 3			

Defining Student Success Strategic Vision Template



Anticipating Challenges

Assume that, five years from now, you have failed to achieve your goals. Identify on the chart below the likely major causes of that failure. Consider what specifically might happen that could derail the effort and conduct a “pre-mortem.” Who are the key actors and why did they resist or fail to become engaged in advancing the change? For each cause, delineate specific leadership strategies you will employ to anticipate and avert or address the challenges.

The sample below illustrates some of the potential causes of failure for not reaching the goal of improving AAS completion rates.

Cause of “Mortality”	Leadership Strategies	Actions to Mitigate Risks
Faculty may resist the idea that they should be responsible for improving student completions or that they need to improve.	Create a faculty-driven initiative using some of the college’s best teachers to drive this effort.	Engage faculty early and often in examinations of course success data, without assigning penalties or blame.
After 2-3 years, no improvements are appearing in the data and the board, leadership team, and faculty are becoming disheartened.	Implementing guided pathways will take time. A five-year plan will help with scaling and funding these initiatives, while communicating to the campus the long-term goals and timeframes for success.	Identify interim indicators of success and visibly and publicly celebrate small wins, giving credit to everyone involved in the changes.

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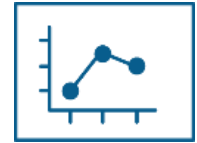


Anticipating Challenges

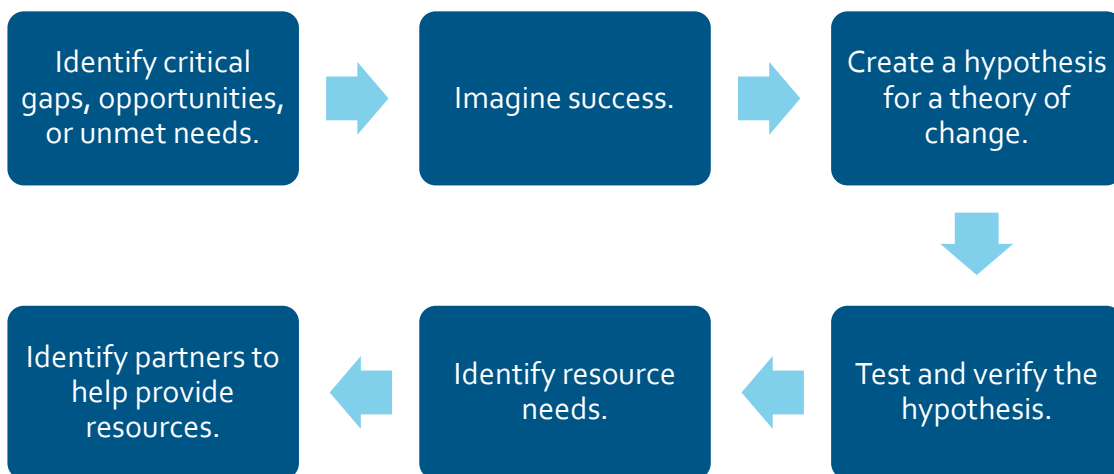
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Cause of “Mortality”	Leadership Strategies	Actions to Mitigate Risks

HYPOTHESES FOR A STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP VISION



Each person will have 15 minutes to share his or her identified gaps or needs, as well as the hypothesis for closing those gaps. The role of the group is to ask questions that will help create next steps for testing these hypotheses. Use the questions below, but also think about how you can push beyond the provided questions to help your peers refine their hypotheses.



What else do you need to know in order to verify this hypothesis? What lingering questions do you have?

Who else do you need to engage within your college in validating this hypothesis? Who else do you need to engage outside your college?

Defining Student Success: Handout 6

For labor market questions: What do your labor market data suggest? How can you validate this? What industry leaders do you need to talk to? How will you determine what the details of labor market needs actually are?

For transfer and baccalaureate completion questions: What do your transfer and completion data seem to be suggesting? How can you validate this? Whom do you need to talk to at your college? At four-year colleges? What questions will you ask students?

Have you looked at your data with equity between student populations in mind? What did you discover? What further questions will you need to answer?

What are the implications for student learning?

Think about what you heard from the students we watched on video at the beginning of this module. How relevant is this opportunity or gap to what students need, or to how students define their own success? How important is this issue to students?