

QUALITY 1: OPERATIONALIZE



In small groups, consider what it looks like and sounds like in practice for a leader to exhibit Quality 1: Deep Commitment to Student Access and Success. Discuss the following questions.

If a community college president exemplified this quality, what *actions* might you see him or her taking? (Example: Taking time during every speaking engagement to rally the college community around measurable student success goals.)

If a community college president exemplified this quality, what phrases might you hear him or her *saying*?

Consider leaders you have worked with who truly exemplified this quality. How did they communicate this quality? What evidence do you have?

Whole group discussion: What characteristics would demonstrate that a leader is exemplifying this quality?

QUALITY 1: CONNECT



Consider the passage below from the essay “The Challenge to Deep Change: A Brief Cultural History of Higher Education”¹ by Dr. Sandy Shugart, president of Valencia College.

These beliefs are subject to change, but only through that most human of activities, deep and meaningful conversations. The beginning of real cultural change is found in what a friend of mine calls “courageous conversations,” those that touch the heart, not just the business. And the job of leadership is to summon those who can and will to these conversations. To be sure, there are deep conversations occurring all the time in our organizations, but most serve to affirm people in their already held views and the advocacy for these views that marks the politicized organization. We have to change that conversation.

We begin by celebrating all that is good in our shared work while admitting the dysfunctional elements that undermine our results. In a college deeply marked by the industrial model, like a community college, for example, acknowledging that enrollment has dominated our decision making at the expense of learning can be a first step toward opening the conversation to the possibility of change. This type of conversation requires a kind of cocktail of evidence and premise that is three parts hope and one part despair. Despair gathers the conversation around our most disappointing evidence, the data that point to low completion rates, poor learning, low persistence rates, and student churning at the front door. Hope finds evidence of genuine success in learning and progression among students and asks, “What would it take to get these kinds of results with most of our students?”

In small groups, take 15 minutes to discuss the following questions.

Identify a specific student success goal you have for students at your community college. What are some ways that you, as a leader, could demonstrate your commitment to student success in a personal and authentic manner?

¹ Shugart, S (2013). The challenge to deep change: A brief cultural history of higher education. *Planning for Higher Education*, 21(2).

What questions could you pose to different college constituencies (cabinet, faculty, and staff) that would bring to the fore the basic values that underlie the student success agenda, and how might you structure these conversations?

What is the recipe of three parts hope and one part despair for your college as it relates to your student success goal?

In your professional life, have you encountered leaders who were able to inspire their colleagues through their personal commitment?

QUALITY 1:

REFLECT AND PLAN FOR ACTION



Work independently to reflect on your strengths and areas of growth within Quality 1: Deep Commitment to Student Access and Success, using the questions below.

Think of a time when you think you were able to exhibit this quality.

In what ways do you demonstrate this quality in your current role? If you are not already a president, how would the ways in which you demonstrate this quality change or shift in the role of president?

Do you feel that you are able to demonstrate and communicate this quality to the people around you? What evidence tells you that your commitment is understood or shared?

Consider the following questions in creating a personal development plan for this area.

What are some of the ways that you can demonstrate your deep commitment to student success (consider communication skills and opportunities around specific strategies)? What actions could you take to develop or sharpen communication skills to better convey your deep commitment to student access and success?

What are some ways that you could convey your commitment to student access and success in your current role? What about in the presidential interview process (cover letter or interview)?

QUALITY 2: OPERATIONALIZE



Work in small groups to read and respond to the following scenario with the following lens: How could a president who is willing to take significant risks to advance student success respond to this scenario? What might he or she do? Consider the two kinds of risks most often taken among exceptional presidents.

Thanks to City Community College's efforts to implement a comprehensive student success agenda, graduation and transfer rates over the past decade have been steadily increasing for all student groups. But, when disaggregating the data dealing with the post-transfer success of its students, it is found that baccalaureate completion rates for Latino and African American males are disproportionately low and not improving. In fact, in some cases the rates have actually declined. You suspect that the regional university which accepts most of your community college transfer students is not doing the job it should be doing. When university leaders are presented with the data, they insinuate that these students are not academically prepared to succeed.

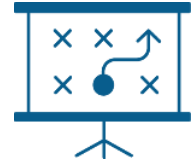
As president of City Community College, how should you proceed?

How does a willingness to take risks influence how a president would act in this scenario?

Consider your current role. How is the presidential response different from that of a vice president or other administrator?

What might you see or hear from a president who is willing to take risks to advance student success (in any situation)?

QUALITY 2: CONNECT



In “Balancing Risk and Innovation in Higher Education,”¹ Maurits van Rooijen asks, “How can we include innovation in a context where reputation needs to be protected and experimentation is seen as rather risky?” In light of this article, consider the questions below.

Identify three innovations that could have a clear impact on a student success goal but also carry significant risks. Then, referencing the article, consider your risk exposure as president in each of the three scenarios. How you would monitor progress? Over what period of time? How you would incorporate the outcomes of these innovations into the broader student success agenda?

	Innovation 1	Innovation 2	Innovation 3
Innovation			
Associated risks			
Risk exposure for the president?			
How to monitor progress? Over what period of time?			
How to incorporate outcomes into the broader student success agenda?			

How would you, as president, involve senior leadership and the broader college community in this process?

¹ Van Rooijen, M. (2016, August). Balancing risk and innovation in higher education. *The Evollution*. <http://evollution.com/managing-institution/higher-ed-business/balancing-risk-and-innovation-in-higher-education/>

QUALITY 2: REFLECT AND PLAN FOR ACTION



Work independently to reflect on your strengths and areas of growth within Quality 2: Willingness to Take Significant Risks to Advance Student Success, using the questions below.

Have there been situations where you've taken significant and strategic risks? What did you learn?

In your present role, can you identify situations that require you to take a risk? If so, how do you evaluate the costs and benefits of taking action?

How do you demonstrate this quality in your current role? If you are not already a president, how do you envision the way in which you demonstrate this quality changing or shifting in the role of president?

Do the people around you recognize the ways in which you demonstrate this quality? How do you know?

Consider the following questions in creating a personal development plan for this area.

Have you ever worked with someone who exemplifies the willingness to take risks to advance student success? If so, what did you learn from him or her? Are you able to connect with that person to gain a better understanding of how he or she approaches risk?

Do you see opportunities for you to take further risks to advance student success in your current role? If so, what are they? Where might you look for support in these decisions?

If you have identified this area as a personal strength, how could you communicate that in the presidential interview process?

QUALITY 3: OPERATIONALIZE



In small groups, discuss the following scenario. Think about how to move beyond thinking about individual interventions to consider whole college reform, using the framework for transformational change presented in this section of the module.

You were hired about one year ago into your first presidency at Central Community College (C3), a metropolitan community college of about 20,000 students with three campuses, one very urban and the other two in fast-growing suburban areas. The college was led for the last 17 years by a successful president who came up through the ranks at C3. He was known as a very good "outside" president, working well with the community and legislature, but leaving most of the institutional management and leadership to the chief academic officer and the chief financial officer. The board is proud of the college's record of 35 semesters of year over year growth and its beautiful new campuses in the suburbs, although a closer look shows that the urban, original campus is actually losing enrollment at about 2 percent per year and the growth of the younger campuses has managed, so far, to overbalance these losses. Just this year, however, enrollment has plateaued and it seems likely, given national trends, that enrollment may decline by 2 percent in the coming year. As you have looked more deeply into the college's situation, with the limited resources available from an institutional effectiveness department that is all about meeting accreditation requirements and an institutional research department completely absorbed in making accurate state reports, you have discovered the following essential facts:

- About 60 percent of the students coming to the college require developmental studies, although only those with the deepest developmental needs are required to take these courses. The two-year completion rate for the developmental sequence is just over 45 percent.
- The IPEDS graduation rate for the college is 21 percent, above average for the state's community colleges. The associate of arts students account for about 60 percent of the enrollment, and about 15 percent earn a degree before transferring. Little is known about the rate of transfer or how they perform in upper division work. Associate of science and certificate programs are robust, with a focus on allied health, business, and nursing. The allied health and nursing programs have the best graduation rates in the college, and licensure exam scores are good. However, attrition in the programs is high, especially among minorities. Job placement in health and nursing for completers is excellent, but the college offers many small, boutique career programs with very low completion rates and uneven placements. Short-term skill training is almost nonexistent.
- Fall to spring persistence rates have been stable for years and hover around 68 percent. Fall to fall persistence rates have been declining in recent years, dropping from a peak of 58 percent several years ago to about 44 percent currently.
- Though the college has had no habit of evaluating student performance data by ethnicity (arguing that the real correlate to performance isn't race, but socio-economic status, you have pulled the data and found that there are significant gaps by ethnicity. Hispanic students, accounting for 27 percent of the enrollment, perform on all measures at about two thirds the rate of Anglo students, and African American students are just above half the rate.
- When you sought data on student performance in the 20 most highly enrolled courses in the college, you created quite a stir among the faculty because you published the data widely and it showed very low success rates in gateway courses, especially in mathematics, economics, history, and English composition. What you had hoped would generate a conversation around improving student performance has, so far, created a spirit of defensiveness among some faculty and rumors of pressure to lower performance standards.
- While the college has a solid faculty and leadership team, the underlying culture is really about growth and access, not performance.

Your one-year honeymoon is over at the college, and they are looking to you for leadership.

Consider the following questions.

What strategies might you use to build urgency in this situation?

How would you understand what students actually experience as part of your inquiry in this situation?

What aspects of the framework for internal transformational change do you think come most naturally to you? Which are more difficult to think about? Why?

How did you discuss building college-wide ownership for change in this scenario? How were you informed by your past experiences in this area?

QUALITY 3: REFLECT AND PLAN FOR ACTION



Work independently to reflect on your strengths and areas of growth within Quality 3: Ability to Create Lasting Change Within the College, using the questions below.

Where have you exhibited this quality in the past?

With which of the above steps do you have the most experience? The least?

Which of the steps in the process of change are you most likely to emphasize? Why? To underemphasize? Why?

Consider the following questions in creating a personal development plan for this area.

Have you ever worked with a leader who successfully led change efforts within a college? What can you learn from that leader's style and actions?

Where in your current role do you have the opportunity to lead change? As you think about preparing yourself for the role of a college president, how can you approach those opportunities in the future?

What communication skills do you need to hone in order to better build urgency around change? What resources can you use to improve those skills?

QUALITY 4: OPERATIONALIZE



Put yourself in the shoes of a new community college president who clearly exemplifies the capacity to build strong external partnerships based around a broad vision for student success. If you have completed the Defining Student Success module and have created a strategic vision for student success, use that vision to ground your work in this activity. If not, your facilitator will provide a vision for student success to read and refer to as an example. Independently choose one of the prompts below and spend 15 minutes brainstorming potential external partnerships that the president might pursue in order to further his or her vision. Then draft a goal for each partnership.

1. Of the Latino students entering your college, 83 percent are placing into developmental education in English, math, or both. Many of them are leaving the college before completing the developmental sequence and are instead taking full-time low-wage jobs in the food service industry.
2. Your region has been plagued by a shortage of skilled health care workers, but given the cost of operating nursing and allied health programs along with the limited number of clinical rotations that are available at your health care partner sites, your college does not have the resources or capacity to expand existing programs or start new ones.
3. The economy of your region is changing, and more and more jobs in your area are requiring a bachelor's degree. Only 27 percent of your students transfer to a four-year college, and only 30 percent of those students receive a bachelor's degree within three years of transferring. Results for Pell Grant recipients are even lower.

Partnership	Proposed Goal
Example: Local public high school A	Increase the number of students who enter the college with college-ready math skills.

Be as specific as possible with partnerships, think of as many potential partnerships and goals as you can, and tie the goals back to your student success vision whenever possible.

Then, pair up with a partner. Each partner has 10 minutes to share the partnerships and goals that he or she came up with and to get feedback from the other partner.

QUALITY 4: REFLECT AND PLAN FOR ACTION



Work independently to reflect on your strengths and areas of growth within Quality 4: Capacity to Build Strong External Partnerships Aligned to Student Success Goals, using the questions below.

Where have you exhibited this quality in the past?

How do you form or take part in external partnerships in your current role? If not currently a president, how do you see your role in the formation of partnerships changing as you move into the role of president?

Which types of organizations do you feel most comfortable partnering with? Which do you feel least comfortable with? Why?

(For sitting presidents) How well do you think your current external partnerships reflect your vision for the college?

Consider the following questions in creating a personal development plan for this area.

What steps can you take to evaluate the partnerships in which your organization is currently involved?

What leadership communication skills do you need to develop in order to be more successful in the forging of external partnerships?

QUALITY 5: OPERATIONALIZE



Take 30 minutes in small groups to read and discuss the scenario and the following discussion questions.

Suburban State Community College (SSCC) has seen its state funding shrink dramatically over the last decade. Ten years ago, 70 percent of the college's funding came from state revenues, while only 30 percent came from tuition and fees. Today, those percentages have been reversed, and the board of trustees and legislators are wary of the college attempting to raise tuition further. This year the college expects to have another midyear reduction in state funds—and possible staff layoffs. Even though the college is located in an affluent community, it can't launch or expand career and technical programs that are needed in the community (in fields such health care and cybersecurity) because of the college's constrained capacity and the enormous expense of running such programs. There are thousands of good jobs available, but due to the college's meager resources, employers are having to recruit qualified workers from outside the region even though there are plenty of low-wage workers in the community who could and want to be trained. SSCC's new president is trying to think of a finance strategy that would reverse the college's downward financial spiral and build capacity, so more students can achieve valued educational credentials and economic mobility and the region's economic competitiveness can be increased.

What are some ways of thinking about this challenge that might realistically lead to a breakthrough strategy for SSCC's president?

In what ways can new revenues and other resources be generated?

What kinds of efficiencies can be implemented to help free up resources or expand institutional capacity?

Are there partnerships or collective actions with other organizations that can extend the capacity and impact of the college?

How can the college be more intentional about the way it allocates and redeploys its existing resources?

QUALITY 5: REFLECT AND PLAN FOR ACTION



Work independently to reflect on your strengths and areas of growth within Quality 5: Ability to Raise and Allocate Resources in Ways Aligned to Student Success Goals, using the questions below.

Consider the list of six actions in the “key learning” session. Which actions do you feel most confident about? The least confident about? Why?

In your current position, how do you align the allocation of resources to student success? If not currently a president, how do you see this changing as you move into the role of president?

(For sitting presidents) How clear are the underlying purposes of your annual budget to all members of the organization? How could you more clearly communicate the connections between your budget and the college’s student success goals?

Consider the following questions in creating a personal development plan for this area.

Consider the actions from the “key learning” section about which you feel the least confident. What steps can you take (e.g., seeking out resources, talking with colleagues) to improve in this area?

How would the development of communication skills help you to be more successful in the allocation of resources (and messaging around reallocation) in the future? How would you approach strengthening specific communications skills?

STRATEGIES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



After considering your leadership development in the group activity, start planning for action using the questions below. After completing each person's action plan, swap contact information (email address, etc.) and make a plan for contacting one another in a given period of time to check up on progress toward goals and hold each other accountable.

Leadership goal(s):

Pair up with a partner and work together to backwards plan from each partner's goals (taking into account the reflections and action planning throughout this module) to create an action plan for professional development. Work together, but address each person's goals separately. Think about the following questions:

Whom will you look to as a resource or mentor?

Where will you seek out new learning?

How will you practice this skill?

How will you know when you've improved?

How can people within your college help you to develop?

What resources exist outside your college?