

DEFINING QUALITIES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP



LEADING FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXCELLENCE: CURRICULAR RESOURCES

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

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advice my mentor gave me, but it is very clear to me these past fifteen years or so that achieving extraordinary results with ordinary students is what I want my work to mean.

Shugart's perspective is echoed in current policy conversations. No longer is it enough for community colleges to enroll students in traditional pathways that are well operated and funded. Today, policymakers expect that community colleges will deliver "extraordinary results."

Against this changing set of expectations, this module invites learners to reflect on what their leadership will mean and what role student success and learning will play in that narrative. As a structure for that exploration, the module presents key characteristics of leaders whose institutions have generated significant improvements in student learning and success. Specifically, in 2013, the Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream researched the qualities of presidents who were, at the time, leading community colleges that had achieved high and improving levels of student success. Reflected in the 2013 report *Crisis and Opportunity: Aligning the Community College Presidency with Student Success*, the following five attributes were identified as particularly important among transformational leaders:

1. **Deep commitment to student access and success**
2. **Willingness to undertake significant risks to advance student success**
3. **Ability to create lasting change within the college**
4. **Capacity to build strong external partnerships aligned to student success goals**
5. **Ability to raise and allocate resources in ways aligned to student success goals**

In the introduction to "Transformational Leadership in Organizational Culture," Bernard Bass describes the difference between transactional and transformational leadership in the following way: "Transactional leaders work within their organizational cultures following existing rules, procedures and norms; transformational leaders change their culture by first understanding it and then realigning the organization's cultures with a new vision and a revision of its shared assumptions, values, and norms." While transactional leadership is a valuable part of college leadership, this module focuses on the role of transformational leadership, exploring its attributes and providing learners with the opportunity to reflect on how these attributes could be applied to improve student outcomes in their current or future community college campus.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

After completing this module, participants will be able to:

- Describe the five qualities of exceptional community college leaders as defined by the Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream.
- Understand the relevance of each leadership quality to leadership in practice.
- Draw connections between the five leadership qualities and other relevant ways of thinking about leadership.
- Reflect on participants' personal leadership capacities in relation to each defined leadership quality, and define action steps to encourage growth in areas identified for development.
- Put processes into place for ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement
- Plan for a student success research agenda that includes data inquiry and consideration of the student experience

PRE-READING

- American Association of Community Colleges. (2005). Competencies for community college leaders. Retrieved from http://www.aacc.nche.edu/newsevents/Events/leadershipsuite/Documents/AACC_Core_Competencies_web.pdf
- Aspen Institute & Achieving the Dream. (2013). Crisis and opportunity: Aligning the community college presidency with student success. Retrieved from <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/crisis-opportunity-aligning-community-college-presidency-student-success>
- Kotter, J. P. (2007, January). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, 92-107.

KICK-OFF ACTIVITIES



KICK-OFF ACTIVITY: LEADERSHIP QUALITIES 25 MINUTES

1. **Using the Poll Everywhere software—or some other form of electronic polling—pose a series of questions to the group and allow them to vote using their phones:**
 - **Which of these qualities do you see most often among leaders today?**
 - Deep commitment to student access and success
 - Willingness to take strategic risks to advance student success
 - Ability to create lasting change within the college
 - Capacity to build strong external partnerships aligned to student success goals
 - Ability to raise and allocate resources in ways aligned to student success goals
 - **Which of these qualities is least common among leaders today?**
 - Deep commitment to student access and success
 - Willingness to take strategic risks to advance student success
 - Ability to create lasting change within the college
 - Capacity to build strong external partnerships aligned to student success goals
 - Ability to raise and allocate resources in ways aligned to student success goals
 - **Which of these qualities do you feel most confident that you hold as a leader?**
 - Deep commitment to student access and success
 - Willingness to take strategic risks to advance student success
 - Ability to create lasting change within the college
 - Capacity to build strong external partnerships aligned to student success goals
 - Ability to raise and allocate resources in ways aligned to student success goals
 - **Which of these qualities do you feel least confident that you hold as a leader?**
 - Deep commitment to student access and success
 - Willingness to take strategic risks to advance student success
 - Ability to create lasting change within the college
 - Capacity to build strong external partnerships aligned to student success goals
 - Ability to raise and allocate resources in ways aligned to student success goals
2. **After each question, discuss the results. Some suggested discussion questions:**
 - Why do you think this is the most/least common attribute?
 - In your own experience, how do you think that professional development and leadership programs contribute to the development of this quality?

- Which qualities do you think are more likely to be found in leaders at all levels of the college? Which, if any, do you think are specific to the presidency? Think about examples from your own institution.
- How do you think these qualities align with what boards value most/least in hiring, and what are the implications for you as a (prospective) president?

KICK-OFF ACTIVITY: FOUR CORNERS25 MINUTES

1. **Write each of the following quotes from current and former community college presidents on chart paper and hang them in different parts of the room:**
 - “The challenge is being the change, not just declaring it. People will follow if they believe you are living out the change as opposed to using the institution to further your own goals.” —Sandy Shugart, President, Valencia College
 - “When I’m talking about taking risks, you have to have a certain amount of passion, you have to have a certain amount of security in yourself to take those risks, because you believe in the purpose of that institution, and that is to make students better.” —Don Cameron, Former President, Guilford Technical Community College
 - “It is not about the faculty, staff, or administration; it is really about the student. The president, of all people, must first and foremost be an advocate for the student and create a culture where the student is the centerpiece of the institution.” —Jerry Sue Thornton, President, Cuyahoga Community College
 - “The biggest part of my job is relationships and the big vision of the college, how we fit into the community, where we are going, and how do we plan to get there.” —Barbara Veazey, Former President, West Kentucky Community and Technical College
2. **Ask participants to move to the quote that most resonates with them, either because they firmly agree or disagree with the quote, because they are inspired by it, or because they have further questions about it. Once participants have moved into groups, have them discuss the following questions:**
 - How would you operationalize this quote?
 - What does it really look like in practice when presidents are acting on the closely held beliefs reflected in the quote?
 - What are the potential roadblocks that presidents might encounter in working toward the goals implied in the quote?
 - Have you worked with a leader who truly exemplified the belief conveyed in this quote? What did he or she do or say that makes you believe this to be true?
3. **Reconvene the group after 15 minutes of conversation to share highlights of their conversation. Explain that the group will now dig deeply into each of the five qualities of exceptional leaders, thinking about how each one could be operationalized. Remind participants to draw on this conversation as they move forward to thinking about each of the qualities individually.**

QUALITY 1:

DEEP COMMITMENT TO STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS



KEY LEARNING

A primary attribute of exceptional presidents is that they demonstrate a deep commitment to student access and success. While many who devote their careers to community colleges are concerned for the populations and missions their institutions serve, certain leaders demonstrate a persistent, almost zealous drive to ensure student success while at the same time maintaining access for the broad range of students community colleges have traditionally served. For these presidents, this commitment is more than rhetoric; it is what drives them to become community college presidents and informs a great majority of their actions. This deep commitment to student access and success leads the most effective presidents to persist, over the long haul, in doing all the things needed to create lasting change on community college campuses.

How do exceptional presidents build a culture that demonstrates a deep commitment to student access and success? They balance a seemingly paradoxical set of attributes:

Persistence: Push hard and relentlessly for scaled and sustainable advances with measurably better outcomes for students

Patience: Understand that change takes time

Boldness: Make hard choices on behalf of students

Collaboration: Remain aware that many decisions should be made collectively, with broad buy-in

GROUP APPLICATION ACTIVITY: OPERATIONALIZE30 MINUTES

1. **Invite participants to think about what this quality (deep commitment to student access and success) looks and sounds like in practice. Using Handout 1, have participants work in small groups to brainstorm responses to 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?
2. **Give participants 15 minutes to brainstorm and discuss in small groups. Bring the group back together, and have a whole group discussion. Work to generate a group list of characteristics that would demonstrate that a leader is exemplifying this quality.**

GROUP DISCUSSION: CONNECT20 MINUTES

In his essay “The Challenge to Deep Change: A Brief Cultural History of Higher Education,”¹ Shugart writes in a section on changing institutional culture:

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

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

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?"

One could argue that Shugart's effectiveness is a combination of three parts the ability to inspire through the authentic example of his commitment, and one part the effectiveness of his arguments.

- 1. Give participants time to read the above passage on Handout 2, and 15 minutes to discuss the following:**
 - 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?
 - 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?
- 2. Bring the group back together for a quick debrief discussion, focusing on the last question. What qualities did these leaders share?**

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY: REFLECT AND PLAN FOR ACTION15 MINUTES

This activity can be done either as an in-class reflection or as homework. Facilitators may also wish to combine the Reflect and Plan for Action activities from multiple qualities into one longer reflection time.

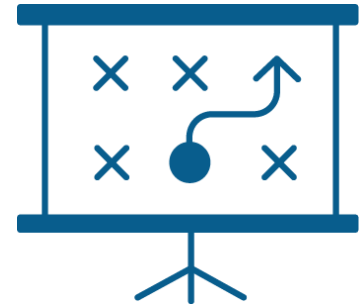
- 1. Provide participants with the organizer on Handout 3. Participants will work independently (either in the session or at home) to reflect on their strengths and areas of growth within Quality 1: Deep Commitment to Student Access and Success:**
 - Think of a time when you think you were able to exhibit 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?

2. **Ask participants to consider the following questions in creating a personal development plan for this area:**
 - What are some 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)?

Give participants about ten minutes to discuss with their groups, then come back together and add any new learning to the group's working definition of transformational change.

QUALITY 2:

WILLINGNESS TO TAKE SIGNIFICANT RISKS TO ADVANCE STUDENT SUCCESS



KEY LEARNING

The most effective community college presidents recognize that the existing cultures at their institutions often foster resistance to fundamental reform. While these leaders understand that cultures cannot be turned around overnight, they are willing to take significant risks to inspire changes in how their colleagues think and act to improve student outcomes.

Exceptional presidents judiciously aim to disrupt the status quo, choosing moments to take risks that signal their commitment to change. In the Aspen/Achieving the Dream research, two kinds of risks were identified most often among exceptional presidents:

Openly admitting low levels of student success: Rather than defending current institutional performance—including completion and transfer rates that are commonly below 50 percent—presidents openly acknowledge shortcomings, regularly using them to challenge and inspire everyone at their community college to improve student outcomes.

Realigning resources when needed to advance student outcomes: Exceptional presidents make clear their commitment to change by reallocating resources to better support programs and policies that improve student success. They minimize risk by tying controversial funding decisions to shared goals, often embedded in strategic plans. In the end, though, they understand that budget reallocations are necessary to maximize the portion of limited resources spent on what matters most to student success and to make clear that the bottom line—where dollars are spent—will be guided first and foremost by the institution’s student access and success mission.

GROUP APPLICATION ACTIVITY: OPERATIONALIZE20 MINUTES

1. **Participants will work in small groups to read and respond to the following scenario on Handout 4 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?

2. **Participants will take 20 minutes in small groups to discuss how a president who exemplifies this quality would proceed. Bring the group back together for a debrief:**
 - 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)?

GROUP DISCUSSION: CONNECT25 MINUTES

Provide participants time to read Maurits van Rooijen's article "Balancing Risk and Innovation in Higher Education"² (or assign as pre-reading) before introducing the following activity.

1. **In "Balancing Risk and Innovation in Higher Education," the author asks, "How can we include innovation in a context where reputation needs to be protected and experimentation is seen as rather risky?" Using the organizer on Handout 5, have participants work through the questions below in small groups:**
 - What are three innovations that could have a clear impact on a specific student success goal but also carry significant risks? Have participants list these risks.
 - Considering each of the three scenarios, what would your risk exposure be as president? How would you monitor progress, and for how long? How would you incorporate the outcomes of these innovations into the broader student success agenda?
 - How would you, as president, involve senior leadership and the broader college community in this process?
2. **Bring the group back together for a quick debrief focusing on the final question.**

² 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/

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY: REFLECT AND PLAN FOR ACTION15 MINUTES

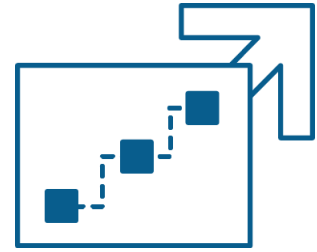
This activity can be done either as an in-class reflection or as homework. Facilitators may also wish to combine the Reflect and Plan for Action activities from multiple qualities into one longer reflection time.

1. **Provide participants with Handout 6. Participants will work independently (either in the session or at home) to reflect on their strengths and areas of growth within Quality 2: Willingness to Take Significant Risks to Advance Student Success:**
 - 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?

2. **Creating a plan for development in 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:

ABILITY TO CREATE LASTING CHANGE WITHIN THE COLLEGE



KEY LEARNING

The many external responsibilities of community college presidents can easily consume all of their time. Exceptional community college presidents understand, though, that fulfilling those responsibilities is not enough to improve student success, and spend roughly equal amounts of time focusing inside and outside their institutions. They recognize that their leadership within the college is central to scalable and sustainable change. The following framework for leading internal transformational change is explored in greater detail, with aligned activities, in its own module: **Leading Internal Transformational Change**.

Define the student success challenge, develop a vision, and create urgency:

- Define a vision for transformational change leading to student success.
- Use data to build urgency and understanding.
- Effectively communicate a vision for change.

Build college-wide ownership for change:

- Build a guiding coalition.
- Develop shared language.
- Acknowledge and work through resistance.
- Clarify and reinforce key values.

Align structures and resources:

- Align resources to student success goals.
- Align incentives to student success goals.
- Communicate consistently and effectively.

Build a structure to support disciplined execution:

- Understand why reforms fail.
- Plan for implementation.
- Manage implementation.

Establish routines of inquiry and evidence use:

- Build a student success research agenda.
- Create routines for regular analysis of data.

Understand the student experience:

- Use focus groups to capture student voices.
- Utilize secret shoppers to better understand what students experience.

GROUP APPLICATION ACTIVITY:

OPERATIONALIZE.....45 MINUTES

1. **Give participants 35 minutes, in small groups, to discuss the scenario on Handout 7. Encourage participants to move beyond thinking about individual interventions to consider whole college reform, using the framework for transformational change presented above.**

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 white 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.

2. Have participants 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?

GROUP DISCUSSION: CONNECT30 MINUTES

1. **For pre-work, ask participants to read John Kotter’s “Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail.” Provide participants some time in class to review the article if necessary.**
2. **Show the following video from BIGEYE’s “BIG Thinkers” series of Shugart speaking about how he has approached change at Valencia College through his “Big Ideas”:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCi5ouKT7Lk>.
3. **Considering the article, the video, and the framework for transformational change presented in this section, provide participants with 25 minutes to discuss the following questions in small groups:**
 - Do “big ideas” like the ones Shugart shares from Valencia play a role in driving change at your college? If so, how? If not, what are the barriers to a clear vision for change?
 - Kotter’s framework for change speaks specifically about businesses—rather than specifically about community colleges—although the same framework can be applied to many different types of organizations. Where do you see connections between the Aspen framework for transformational change and the framework or errors set forth by Kotter in his article? Where do you see divergence between the two frameworks? What lessons from the business sector ring especially true for you in the community college setting?
 - What advice might Kotter or Shugart provide to the president in the scenario you worked on in the previous activity?
4. **Bring the group back together for a quick debrief, focusing on the final question.**

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY: REFLECT AND PLAN FOR ACTION15 MINUTES

This activity can be done either as an in-class reflection or as homework. Facilitators may also wish to combine the Reflect and Plan for Action activities from multiple qualities into one longer reflection time.

1. **Provide participants with Handout 8. Participants will work independently (either in the session or at home) to reflect on their strengths and areas of growth within Quality 3: Ability to Create Lasting Change Within the College.**
 - 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?

2. **Creating a plan for development in 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:

CAPACITY TO BUILD STRONG EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS ALIGNED TO STUDENT SUCCESS GOALS



KEY LEARNING

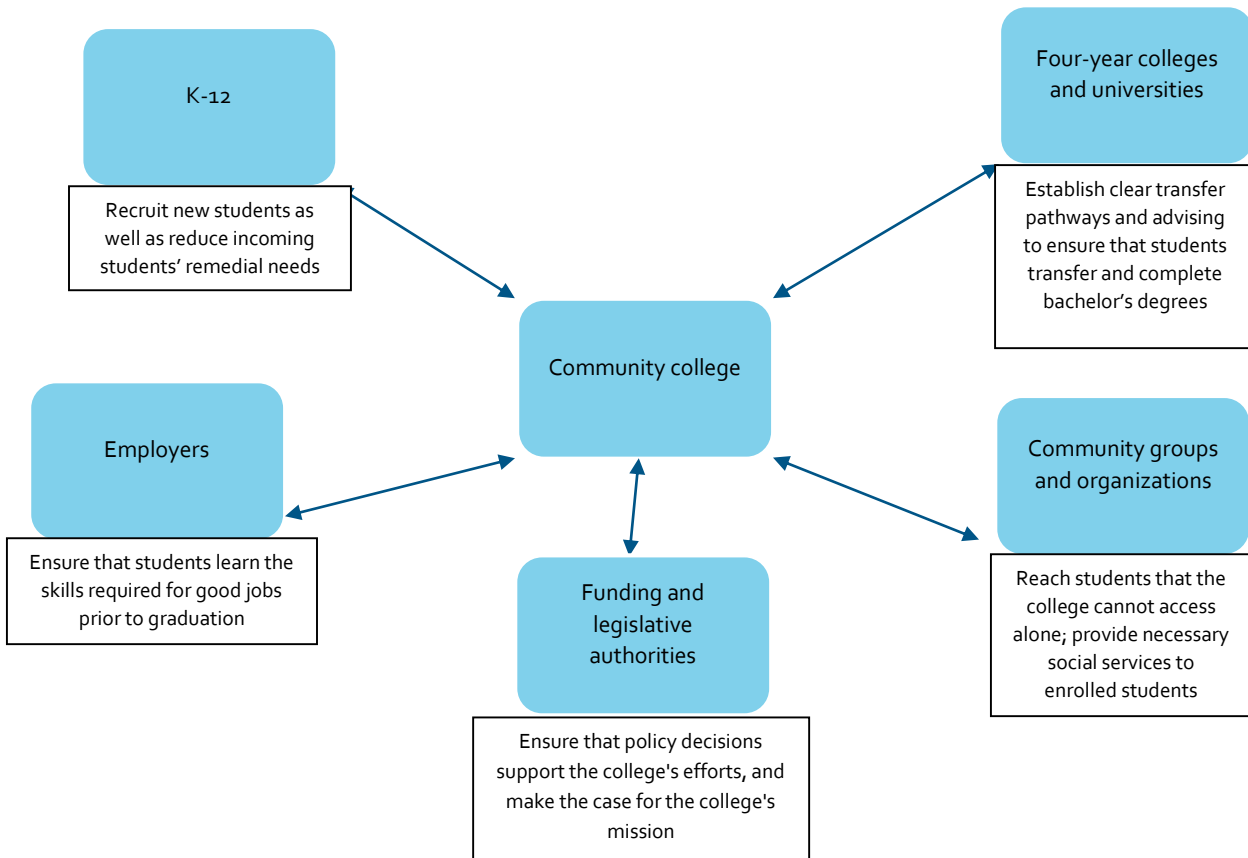
The most effective presidents have a vision that goes beyond ensuring students' success while at their college to broader aims for student success that the college cannot alone fulfill, such as improving college readiness or expanding the regional economy so that more good jobs are available for graduates. This broad vision enables exceptional presidents to see a world beyond the borders of their campuses and develop partnerships with other institutions so they can access assets, reach underserved populations, and educate students in new, highly effective ways.³ For more information on setting and executing a broad student success vision, please reference the modules **Defining Student Success** and **Leading Internal Transformational Change**.

³ This theme is consistent with findings from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) assessment of the competencies for community college leaders, which found that "an effective community college leader develops and maintains responsive, cooperative, mutually beneficial, and ethical internal and external relationships." AACC's competencies also conclude that effective leaders "work effectively and diplomatically with unique constituent groups such as legislators, board members, business leaders, accrediting organizations, and others." American Association of Community Colleges. (2005). *Competencies for community college leaders* (p. 4). Retrieved from http://www.aacc.nche.edu/newsevents/Events/leadershipsuite/Documents/AACC_Core_Competencies_web.pdf

These leaders think beyond their own campus and work to serve the community’s students before, during, and after their time at the college. They might ask some of the following questions:

- Who in the community gets access to a college education?
- Are entering students poised to succeed when they arrive?
- What non-educational services do students receive while on campus?
- What do the data tell us about student success post-graduation in labor markets or transfer?

Viewing the community college as one step in an educational journey, highly effective presidents work closely with other educational institutions, employers, and community organizations to ensure student success. Examples of the aims of these partnerships are summarized in the chart below.



GROUP APPLICATION ACTIVITY: OPERATIONALIZE40 MINUTES

1. Provide participants with the following list of prompts on Handout 9:

- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
2. Invite participants to put themselves 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 participants have completed the Defining Student Success module and have created a strategic vision for student success, invite them to use that vision to ground their work in this activity. If not, provide participants with [this sample vision](#) for student success from Northern Virginia Community College to read and refer to as an example.
 3. Each participant should independently choose a prompt and spend 15 minutes brainstorming potential external partnerships, using the provided organizer on Handout 9, that the president might pursue in order to further his or her vision. Participants should also draft a goal for each partnership. For example:

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

4. Challenge participants to be as specific as possible with partnerships, to think of as many potential partnerships and goals as they can, and to tie the goals back to their student success vision whenever possible. If they have extra time, encourage participants to begin thinking through a different prompt.
5. Then, invite participants to pair up. 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. To close, bring the group back together and collect thoughts on the process. Ask participants how they decided which partnerships would help to advance their vision for student success. Make the connection that this quality is further operationalized in the module focused on external partnerships.

GROUP DISCUSSION: CONNECT30 MINUTES

1. Show [this video](#) of Dr. Bob Templin, former president of Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), describing the Pathway to the Baccalaureate program—a partnership between local high schools, NOVA, and a four-year university.
2. In small groups, participants should discuss the following questions:
 - How did partnerships with high schools and George Mason University advance Templin’s vision for the college? What made it necessary to move beyond the boundaries of the campus and create those partnerships?
 - In the video, Templin lays out the motivations of each partner organization. Thinking about your current partnerships (educational, economic development, community services), where do you see the overlapping missions that could pave the way for a continuum of services?
 - What were the key elements of the NOVA partnership that contributed to its success?

- The NOVA partnership represents an educational continuum that culminates in baccalaureate completion. Are there additional types of situations where these elements could become the foundation of more comprehensive partnerships?
3. **Bring the group back together and chart some elements of successful external partnerships.**

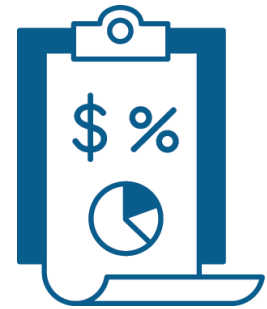
INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY: REFLECT AND PLAN FOR ACTION15 MINUTES

This activity can be done either as an in-class reflection or as homework. Facilitators may also wish to combine the Reflect and Plan for Action activities from multiple qualities into one longer reflection time.

1. **Provide participants with Handout 10. Participants will work independently (either in the session or at home) to reflect on their strengths and areas of growth within Quality 4: Capacity to Build Strong External Partnerships Aligned with Student Success Goals.**
 - 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?
2. **Creating a plan for development in 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:

ABILITY TO RAISE AND ALLOCATE RESOURCES IN WAYS ALIGNED TO STUDENT SUCCESS GOALS



KEY LEARNING

An oft-repeated lament about the college presidency is that it has evolved into a fundraising job and little else. No doubt, community college presidents play a central role in securing funds from state legislatures and higher education systems, raising grant money, and soliciting contributions from corporate and individual donors. But in an era of shrinking government contributions, exceptional community college presidents do even more: They find entrepreneurial ways to raise revenue to support their strategies for improving student success.⁴ For example, they develop relationships with corporations so that their employees receive needed training and students receive internships that lead to jobs. Other presidents formalize relationships with community groups to provide training to unemployed workers, accessing both workforce development funds and student financial aid dollars.



⁴This finding is consistent with AACC's competencies for community college leaders, which say that "an effective community college leader equitably and ethically sustains ... financial assets to fulfill the mission, vision, and goals of the community college." These competencies also suggest effective leaders "take an entrepreneurial stance in seeking ethical alternative funding sources." American Association of Community Colleges. (2005). *Competencies for community college leaders* (p. 2). Retrieved from http://www.aacc.nche.edu/newsevents/Events/leadershipsuite/Documents/AACC_Core_Competencies_web.pdf

Obviously, effective presidents must have a good grasp of their institution’s budgets to ensure fiscal strength. But exceptional presidents also:

- Maintain ultimate responsibility for fiscal resource allocation.
- Use that authority to align expenditures with strategies for ensuring student success.
- Make sure they have access to data to understand which programs are effective and affordable—delivering measurably higher-quality education or advancing more students to complete credentials at sustainable costs—and then find the money to expand those programs.
- Reduce funding for or eliminate programs or services that don’t achieve results.
- Allocate resources transparently, making clear to everyone where dollars are spent and justifying major revisions by emphasizing alignment to strategies for ensuring student access and success.
- Avoid keeping pockets of money set aside for pet projects that cannot be justified as promoting student success goals.

GROUP APPLICATION ACTIVITY: OPERATIONALIZE50 MINUTES

1. **Allow participants 30 minutes in table groups to read and discuss the scenario and the following discussion questions on Handout 11.**

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?
2. **Then, bring the group back together for a recap of themes, focusing on next steps.**

GROUP DISCUSSION: CONNECT30 MINUTES

1. Have participants read the section “Fiscal Status and Budget Development” in the article “Basic Elements of the College CEO Position—Advice for the New CEO” by Bill Scroggins, President and CEO of Mt. San Antonio College.⁵

In “Advice for the New CEO,” Scroggins cautions new presidents to “go slowly” when approaching budget development, saying, “Making changes in the budget process takes time, experience, and finesse.” He points to the importance of building budget transparency as an initial and critical step in bringing the college-wide community into the conversation. While the re-allocation of resources can cause anxiety and resentment, it also sends a strong message about the future direction of the college.

2. Provide participants with the following questions for discussion in small groups.
 - One of Scroggins’ four elements of budget transparency is “dialog with the campus at open town hall type meetings.” How could you use the budget process to communicate your vision of student success?
 - Think about your college. Identify a budget reallocation priority that reflects an increased focus on student success. Do a risk assessment of the potential costs and benefits.
 - In considering the potential for resistance, what steps could you take to neutralize that resistance?

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY: REFLECT AND PLAN FOR ACTION30 MINUTES

This activity can be done either as an in-class reflection or as homework. Facilitators may also wish to combine the Reflect and Plan for Action activities from multiple qualities into one longer reflection time.

1. Provide participants with Handout 12. Participants will work independently (either in the session or at home) to reflect on their strengths and areas of growth within Quality 5: Ability to Raise and Allocate Resources in Ways Aligned to Student Success Goals.
 - 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?
2. Creating a plan for development in 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?

⁵ Scroggins, B. (2015). *Basic elements of the college CEO position—advice for the new CEO*. Retrieved from www.mtsac.edu/president/board-reports/Basic%20Elements%20of%20the%20College%20CEO%20Position%204.pdf

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER



GROUP APPLICATION ACTIVITY: STRATEGIES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT 45 MINUTES

1. Have each leadership quality listed on a piece of chart paper around the room. Instruct participants to go stand by the quality that they feel the most confident about (from the Poll Everywhere activity at the beginning of the module). Discuss with the other people at the chart: What do you do at your college that demonstrates this leadership quality? (For example, Quality 4—formed relationships with local high schools and built pre-college partnerships.) Write each action on a yellow sticky note and place it on the chart paper.
2. Now, instruct participants to move to the quality that corresponds to the area in which they've developed most as a leader—not necessarily a quality that comes naturally to them, but something they've worked hard to develop. Discuss with the other people at the chart: What steps have you taken to develop yourself in this area? (For example: Quality 4—went to a workshop to learn more about collective impact in order to rethink how my college was forming partnerships.) Write each action on a pink sticky note and place it on the chart paper.
3. Now, participants should move to the quality that corresponds to the leadership quality that they struggle with the most—the area they feel the least confident about. Read the practices and ideas for development on the chart. Discuss with the group: What ideas or strategies do you plan on incorporating into your own leadership development? Whom can you seek out as a resource (either in this group or at your college)? Discuss any ideas for developing in this area that may have emerged from discussion at other posters, from the videos, or from table discussions.
4. Have participants return to their seats and set one or two leadership goals for themselves based on the conversations in the activity, recording these goals on Handout 13. Then, each participant should 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. Participants will work together but address each person's goals separately. They should 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?
5. **After completing each person's action plan, participants will 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.**