



KICK-OFF ACTIVITY

Take some time to assess your college's existing partnerships and readiness for the work of collective impact by reviewing this inventory of the five elements for collective impact. Considering one major student success challenge, determine where your college falls in the continuum of no partnerships to collective impact.

Collective Impact Element	Your Rating									
	Weak			Moderate				Strong		
Common Agenda: A shared vision for change with a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach for solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Shared Measurement: Collecting data and measuring results consistently on an agreed upon list of indicators across organizations to hold each other accountable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mutually Reinforcing Activities: Coordinating each stakeholders' differentiated activities through an overarching plan.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Continuous Communication: Several years of regular in-person meetings among organizations' senior level leaders (presidents, CEOs, senior VPs) that build trust and understanding.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Backbone Support: A separate organization and staff to plan, manage, and support collective action with facilitation, logistical support, and data reporting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

This inventory is modified from Building Capacity for Collective Impact Toolkit Series (2011), Cassandra O'Neill and Sarah Griffiths, Wholonomy Consulting LLC, www.wholonomyconsulting.com and built upon the Stanford Social Innovation Review (Winter 2011) article, "Collective Impact," by John Kania & Mark Kramer.

SCENARIOS FOR THIS MODULE



The central premise of this module is that community colleges can positively impact student success by building structures with other entities to jointly address common goals more effectively and efficiently than partnering organizations could achieve on their own. Throughout the module, we will be using the scenarios described below to help explore how each of the five collective impact elements relates to common community college challenges.

Scenario 1: Your region has been plagued by a shortage of skilled health care workers. A recent survey of local health care employers predicts that over 10,000 health care jobs will become available in the next five years. Given the high cost of developing and operating nursing and allied health programs, your college has been unable to allocate the necessary resources or deploy the needed staff to expand existing programs or start new ones.

Scenario 2: Your region has a high number of immigrant families. Your college has a large ESL program, but just 6 percent of your students enrolled in credit-bearing courses are recent immigrants to the United States. The area has several high-performing community-based nonprofit organizations that serve immigrant families. One of those organizations recently released a study finding that a large percentage of immigrants in your area are mired in low-wage work.

Scenario 3: You meet with some of your region's technology employers and learn that they are very concerned about the shortage of STEM students that are completing college and university programs. After analyzing your institution's data, you learn that 13 percent of your students who intend to transfer and complete a bachelor's degree actually do so within six years; the number for STEM majors is only 9 percent.

Scenario 4: Your region has seen growing tensions following a series of racially charged incidents involving the police. In addition, the region's largest employer, a hospital, has been accused of discriminating against African Americans in hiring, pay, and promotions. These incidents have caused some long-simmering issues to resurface as community members have expressed frustration and anger over the poor school performance, high dropout rates, and low college-going and completion rates of African American and Latino students in low-income communities. As part of the larger outcry, business and elected leaders have increased their demands that the education community "do something" to reduce achievement gaps between various racial and ethnic groups.

ASSET MAPPING



Consider your assigned scenario. With your small group, use the questions below to consider how collective impact could address this issue by identifying the problem and assessing the strengths and limitations of the college in the prospective partnership; and identifying potential partners whose interests, actions, and resources could be utilized to complement the community college's work and fortify collective strategies to reach results.

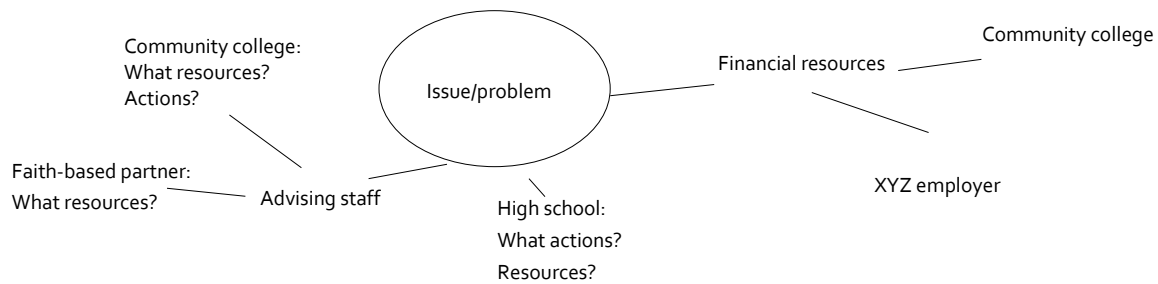
What is the problem?

What are the strengths of the college in the prospective partnership?

What are the limitations of the college?

Who are potential partners whose interests, actions, and resources could be utilized to complement the community college's work and fortify collective strategies to reach results?

Then, create an asset map to identify what the community college and potential partnering organizations could bring to the joint pursuit of student success goals in different contexts. An asset map is a visual representation that puts the problem or issue in the center and shows the interconnecting and reinforcing resources and actions of potential partner organizations. Consider K-12 districts, local organizations, four-year colleges, and employers.





CASE STUDY

Focusing on the Pathway to the Baccalaureate case study from the pre-reading, discuss the following questions in small groups.

What was the unique role of the community college president? How did the president go about building a common agenda with two very different partners?

What risks were involved when the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) president acted to transcend his college's self-interests to catalyze this initiative?

What was most the important element—meeting, event, concern, activity—that allowed the partners to act on the common goals?

What enabled the partnership to move to a large-scale program rather than remaining a pilot?

What might threaten the partnership in the future? What structures are in place to support sustainability?

What new financial resources might NOVA be able to obtain as a result of these new partnerships?

Consider a time when you tried (successfully or unsuccessfully) to build a common agenda with one or more partner organizations. Would you do something differently next time?

DATA BRAINSTORM



Consider your group’s assigned scenario. What types of data should each partner organization be collecting?

Partner Organization	Data Point	What Would Be Learned?	Feasible to Measure and Track?	Feasible to Monitor on a Regular Basis?	Map to Common Agenda?	Will These Data Show Progress Toward Your Goal?

ROLE PLAY



Assign each person in your group one of the partner organizations from the scenario you’ve been working on throughout the module. Then, each person should list all of the possible activities that his or her organization would be implementing related to the issue presented in the scenario. Then, as a group, role-play a conversation, convened by the community college president, about identifying and designing mutually reinforcing activities. How could you align activities to be mutually reinforcing and leverage shared resources?

What organization are you representing?
Activities Your Organization Is Implementing

How could you align activities to be mutually reinforcing and leverage shared resources?

CONSIDERING PARTNERSHIPS



Consider a partnership initiative on your campus. List each partner organization’s activities below. How could the activities be enhanced or streamlined so that they better align with and will move all organizations more quickly toward the common goal?

Partner Organization	Activity	How Could It Be Enhanced or Streamlined?

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



Working in small groups, take 20 minutes to create a communications plan for the first year of the collective impact partnership for your assigned scenario, using the template below. Be sure to include communications that inspire, inform, inquire, and celebrate.

Audience (Internal? External?)	Communications Activity	Purpose

PLANNING FOR PARTNERSHIP



Take 30 minutes to consider the following questions and begin to plan a collective impact partnership, following the guidance below.

Which of the four domains of excellence is where your community college is achieving the greatest success (learning, completion, labor market, equity)? Who, internally and externally, is focused on this student success domain? What further progress could be made through a collective impact partnership?

Which of the four domains of excellence is your community college least focused on? What effect does this reduced attention have on student success outcomes? Who, internally and externally, could be brought together through a collective impact partnership to improve outcomes in this student success domain?

Given your reflections on the four-part definition of community college excellence, determine a compelling problem/need that can be addressed through a collective impact partnership.

Outline an initial design framework for a collective impact partnership to achieve measurable progress in meeting this challenge.

Framework for Collective Impact Partnership

Problem statement

Partners

Common agenda

Shared measurement

Mutually reinforcing activities

Continuous communication
Backbone support
Next steps

ON-CAMPUS ACTIVITY: INTERVIEW AND PRESENT



Build on the collective impact framework that you designed earlier, or identify a new problem/need for students at your college, and develop a comprehensive plan that weaves the collective impact elements into sound program design. Use the questions below as a guide for your planning. Interview three to six internal and external stakeholders (potential partners) that you envision could contribute to this collective impact partnership. As a final product, create a PowerPoint presentation, video, or written memo describing a clear and compelling collective impact partnership whose goal is to achieve significant student outcomes that your institution could not achieve alone. Include references to each of the five elements and five steps involved in a collective impact initiative.

Review the following five major strategy areas for developing a collective impact partnership. Under each strategy are listed action steps that you might take to implement your program. Add in your own significant actions.

STRATEGY: CREATE URGENCY AROUND THE COMPELLING PROBLEM OR NEED

- ☐ Define the problem you set out to address, using data to demonstrate the challenge. Consider the implications and consequences of not addressing the problem, and how that might be communicated to create urgency without laying blame.
- ☐ Show the size, scope, and projected duration of the problem and the expected benefits of solving the problem or improving the outcomes.
- ☐ Other: _____

STRATEGY: IDENTIFY AND SELECT THE RIGHT PARTNERS

- ☐ Select a college team of high performers that will work with you to guide the process through the remaining steps.
- ☐ Identify and recruit a leader (champion) within the community as an important political partner with the stature to focus attention upon the challenge or issue.
- ☐ Reach out to organizational leaders whose resources and influence are critical to addressing the problem you've outlined. Consider how to tap their interests as you engage them on the issue.
 - ☐ Include high-performing partners whose capability or expertise will complement and reinforce each other. What can these partner organizations do that is different from what your college can do? What unique resources can each organization bring to the partnership?
 - ☐ Don't assume that the reasons these partners might care about these issues is identical to the reasons you care. Do their organizations' leaders face pressures and have goals that relate to the compelling need you have identified?
- ☐ Plan how partner organizations will signal their immediate commitment to the work.
 - ☐ Identify the specific benefit that will accrue to the potential partner organizations.
 - ☐ Decide on next steps in public communications and recruiting additional partners.
- ☐ Other: _____

STRATEGY: JOINTLY DESIGN THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT STRATEGY

- ☐ Jointly develop a theory of change that states your common goal or shared problem (common agenda), defines the inputs and expected outcomes, and details how specific data elements will be used to measure progress.
- ☐ Determine each partner organization's strengths and align your responsibilities and activities to be mutually reinforcing.
- ☐ Identify the different phases of the work to be done, in which time frame, and with what milestones.
- ☐ Define the commitments needed from each organization in specific time frames.
- ☐ Negotiate or mutually agree upon what each leader/organization commits to during each stage of the collective impact partnership.
- ☐ Determine what resources will be needed to address the issue or problem and identify potential funding sources.
- ☐ Other: _____

STRATEGY: BUILD NEW STRUCTURES AND PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALE

Internal work:

- ☐ Build commitment across the campus by engaging internal champions early in the effort, sharing updates on their activities, and publicly celebrating “early wins.”
- ☐ Address internal opponents by voicing understanding for their concerns, sharing compelling data, using stories to convey the common agenda, and offering recognition and resources for activities making progress in solving the problem.
- ☐ Allocate sufficient institutional resources, move the program closer to core budget allocations, and ensure that personnel leading the initiative are protected from budget cuts and reallocations.
- ☐ Consider: What is the institution willing to give up in order to have the chance of achieving the mission/goals at a larger scale in the future?

Work with partners:

- ☐ Create the backbone organization or incorporate backbone support within one of the partner organizations.
 - What specific resources are needed for a backbone (staff, office space, supplies)?
 - What are the costs associated with those resources, and who will provide them?
 - Is this funding model sustainable?
- ☐ Confirm that your strategy is scalable and sustainable by considering costs per student, sources for long-term funding, and the proportion of students served versus those in need.
- ☐ Develop a continuous communications plan to strategically share updates between collective impact partners, maintain ongoing leadership discussions on efforts to work toward a common agenda, and broadcast updates with key stakeholder audiences, both internally and externally.
- ☐ Other: _____

STRATEGY: MONITOR, ASSESS, AND REVISE

- ☐ Work with collective impact partners to determine how often partners will receive progress reports on milestones and outcome data about the initiative and its goals.
- ☐ Determine how you will present outcome data to internal staff and provide the time and space for staff to discuss implications.
- ☐ Based on your team’s data analysis, develop plans to revise activities, implement changes, and reallocate resources as necessary.
- ☐ Meet with collective impact partners to discuss the outcomes data for all mutually reinforcing activities organizations are implementing in pursuit of the common agenda. Ensure frequent and regular meetings among all collective impact partnership leaders.
- ☐ Other: _____