A Guidebook for Data-Driven Planning and Decision Making During Times of Change

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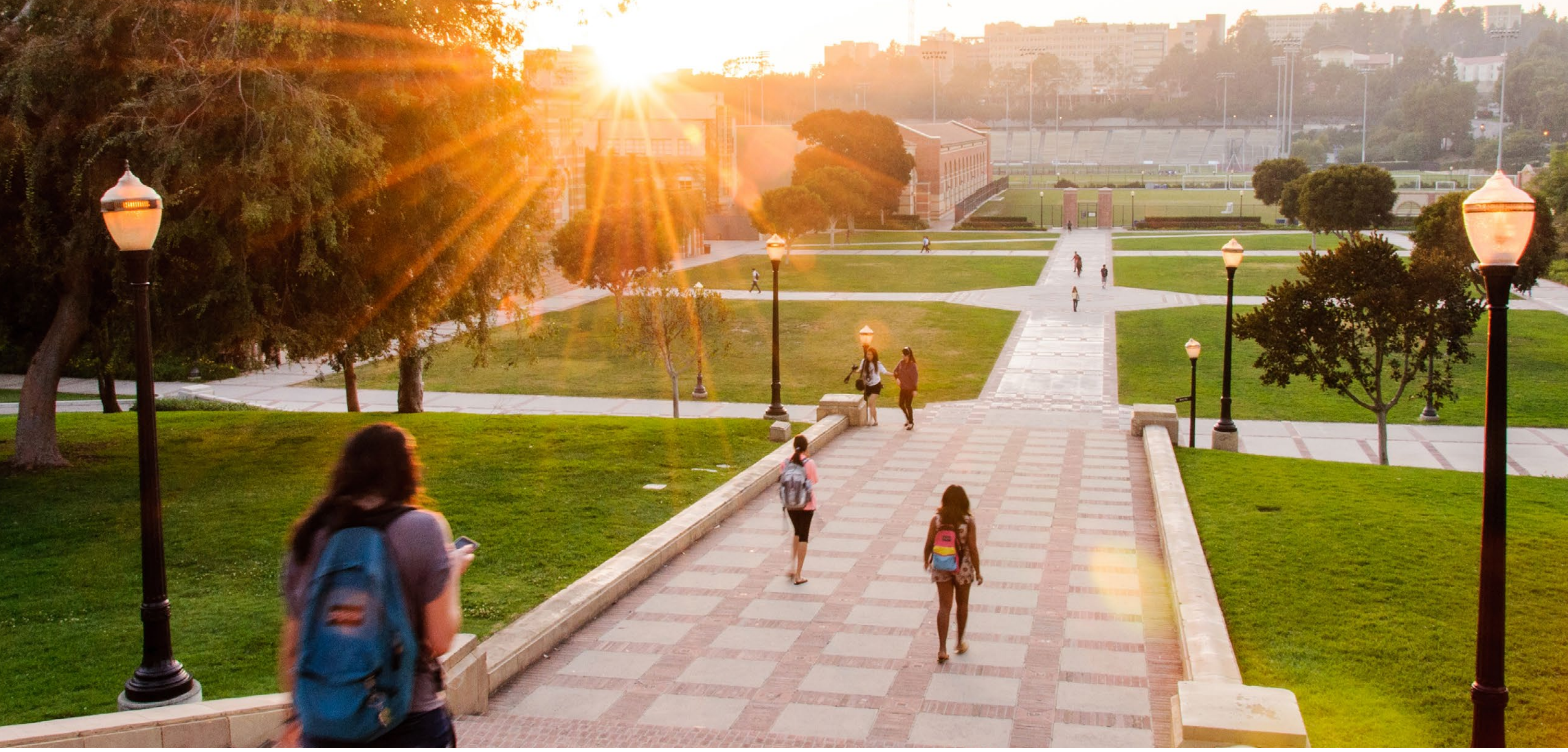

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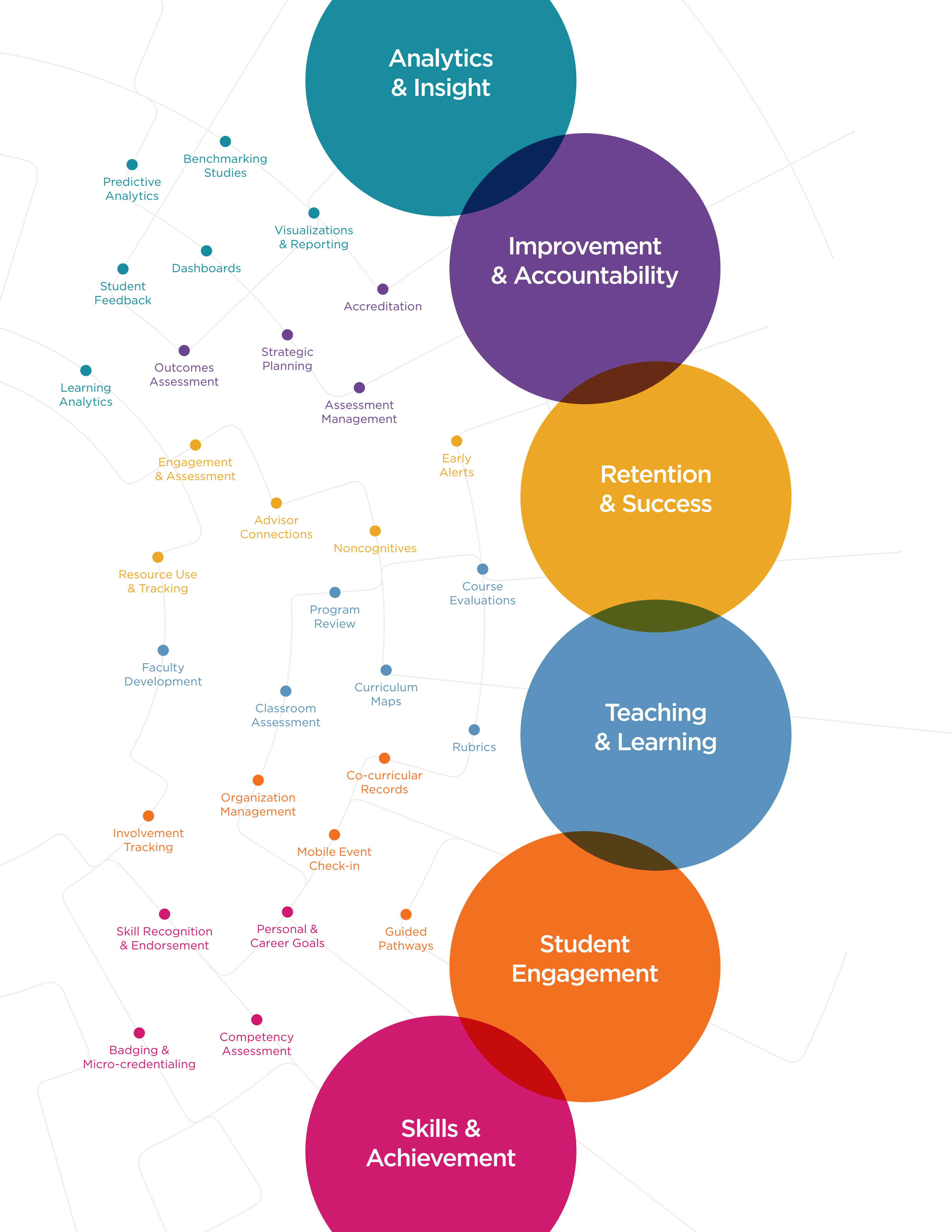

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This ebook is designed to help higher education leaders strategically guide their organization through change with a data-driven lens. Consider using this book as a full study to focus your efforts or excerpting selected articles as a pre-read for committees tasked with strategic planning or assessment work.

Part One: Change Management

> Most universities are like elephants…they're slow, they're bureaucratic, and they don't want to change. We're going to have to be [quick and agile] like ballerinas, or we're going to end up like the dinosaurs.
>
> **Dr. Gordon E. Gee**
> President of West Virginia University

Managing Change in Times of Uncertainty

Higher education now faces a new era—confronted with an array of challenges and forces of change. Over the past couple of decades, environmental factors such as enrollment management, workforce development, technology and financial strength were top strategic issues for colleges and universities. Today, institutions are obliged to consider the coronavirus pandemic's implications, which are causing significant shifts in operations and directly impacting strategic goals, processes and culture.

In a space that has been slow to adapt historically, higher education must respond swiftly to the need and pressure for rapid transformation during this time of uncertainty. However, some leaders question whether institutions have the ability and stamina to deal with this magnitude of change. To keep pace with this continually evolving and worldwide situation, institutions will need to strengthen their capabilities by implementing organizational change management.

What is Change Management?

Change management refers to a systematic approach and the application of knowledge, tools, and resources to respond to change. It involves defining and adopting strategies, structures, procedures and technologies to retool an organization to remain relevant, responsive and effective. Furthermore, it can cultivate awareness, understanding and support as it helps people adapt to change.

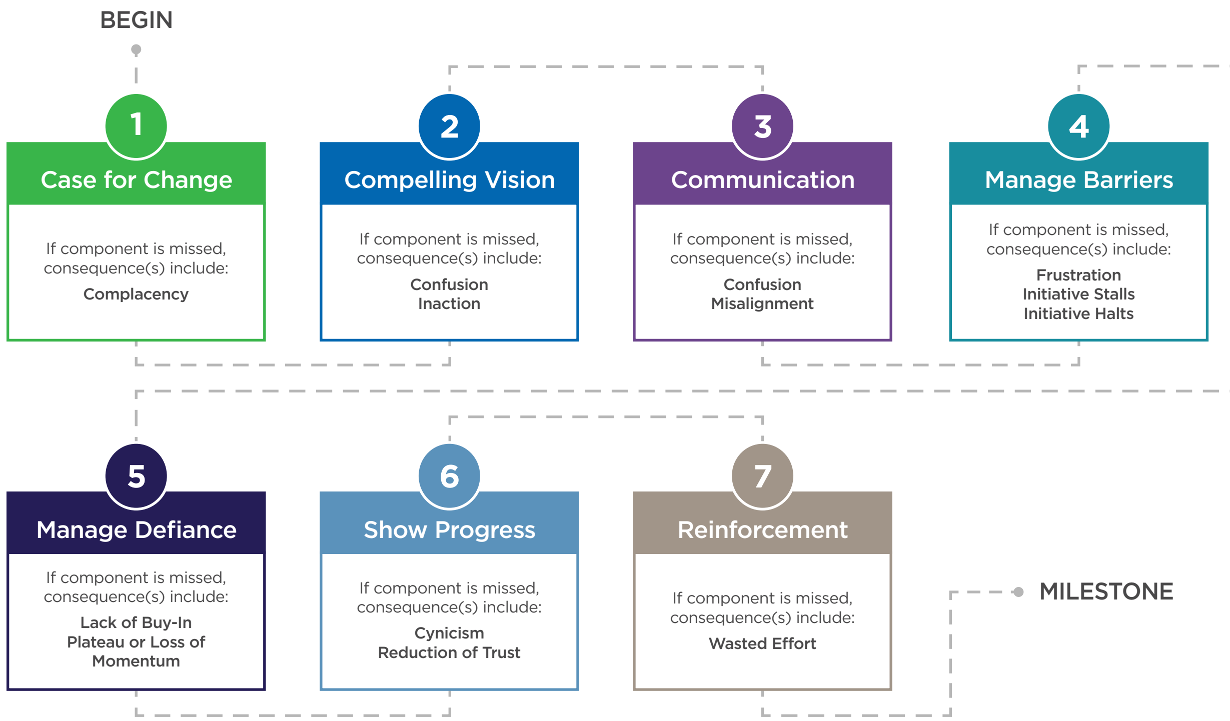
Effective change management goes beyond project management and organizational development, whereas it focuses on the business practices and procedures that address the human and cultural aspects of organizational change. The main driver of change management is establishing a set of transformational processes and practices while minimizing negative results.

How does Change Management work?

Research says that approximately 70% of change initiatives fail because organizations do not engage in effective change management. The desired objectives of the effort must be fully realized to be successful. But how do you initiate a change management process? Where do you begin, and how do you ensure that the campus is implementing a successful process?

Scholars have established several models for successfully navigating through change. From relatively informal to a highly structured framework, some of the best strategies and approaches include Lewin's Change Model, Kotter's Change Management Theory, and the ADKAR Model. Regardless of the model selected, planned change might be implemented in a variety of ways, depending on the institution's needs, goals, and organizational context.

One way to begin this conversation on campus is by employing seven critical components of change management. Each component is essential for addressing strategy, operations, culture, and talent. If any component is neglected, the specified consequences will occur and jeopardize the optimal achievement of planned change.



Adapted from Linkage, Inc. "Leading Change and Managing Transitions." Leading Change and Managing Transitions, 2015, pp. 8–11

Why is Change Management Important Right Now?

Today's environment is driving change at an unprecedented level. The pace of change is accelerating, requiring institutions to consider transitions to new processes regularly. As EDUCAUSE states, "The college or university that employs some means of managing strategic change, whether administrative or pedagogic, is more likely to succeed, protecting its investments in money and human capital and positioning itself strategically in an educational ecosystem where changes are becoming more frequent and more pervasive."

We are facing a new normal where the old rules do not apply. For our colleges and universities to survive and progress forward, they must employ change management strategies. These strategies will be critically important to (1) help the institutional members manage the shift; (2) align the various components of the institution—people, processes, and technology—with each other, so they direct employees' behaviors in a strategic direction; and (3) help senior leadership diagnose the existing culture and make necessary changes.

In the coming weeks, we will explore additional topics to further your understanding and application of change management in higher education. The next topic will focus on Real-Time Strategic Change—a different approach to designing the best path forward for organizational success.

Each organization has unique characteristics that can impact change management process. These organizational attributes are essential to understand so you can educate your members and address potential obstacles before implementation. Complete the Change Management Self-Assessment to assess how well your organization manages change.

Change Management Self-Assessment

Use the key steps of successful organizational change to assess how well your organization manages change. First consider how your institution has approached change in the past and how it is approaching any current or anticipated change initiatives. Then score your institution on each of the steps below using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 **means you strongly disagree** and **5 means you strongly agree**.

A score of three or less on any step could indicate a change management area in need of improvement in which your institution may want to analyze and correct.

Our institution...

- ____ Examines external trends, issues and problems confronting it
- ____ Identifies and discusses actual or potential crises or major opportunities
- ____ Establishes an increased sense of urgency around needed change
- ____ Puts together a group with enough power to lead the change
- ____ Gets the group to work together effectively as a team
- ____ Creates a vision and strategy to help guide the change effort
- ____ Ensures that it is a shared vision and strategy
- ____ Continuously uses every available vehicle to communicate the new vision and strategy
- ____ Has the leadership team role-model the behavior expected of employees
- ____ Modifies systems or structures that undermine the change vision
- ____ Encourages reasonable risk-taking and non-traditional ideas and actions

____ Focuses on results rather than activities

____ Plans for visible short-term improvements in performance (quick “wins”)

____ Visibly recognizes and rewards people who make the wins possible

____ Monitors and adjusts strategies in response to problems in the change process

____ Aligns all policies, systems, structures and practices to fit each other and the change vision

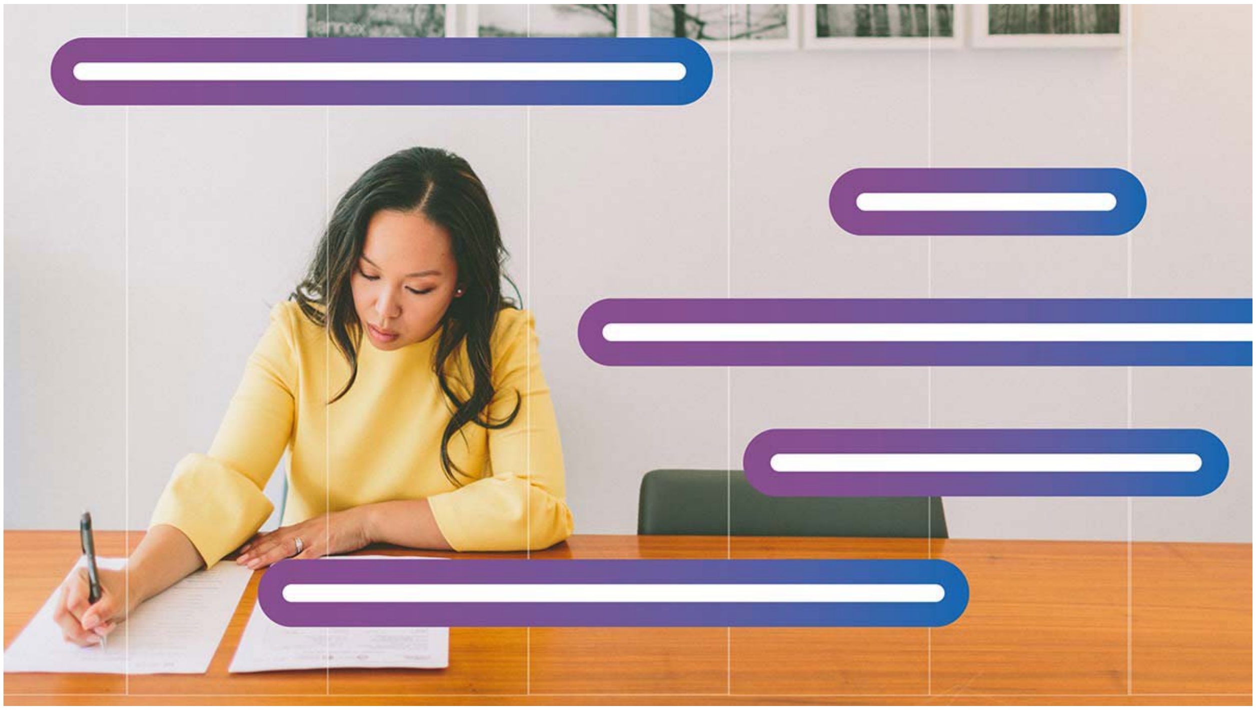
____ Hires, promotes and develops people who can implement the change vision

____ Reinvigorates the change process through new projects, themes and change agents

____ Articulates the connection between new behaviors and organizational success

____ Creates processes to ensure leadership development and succession

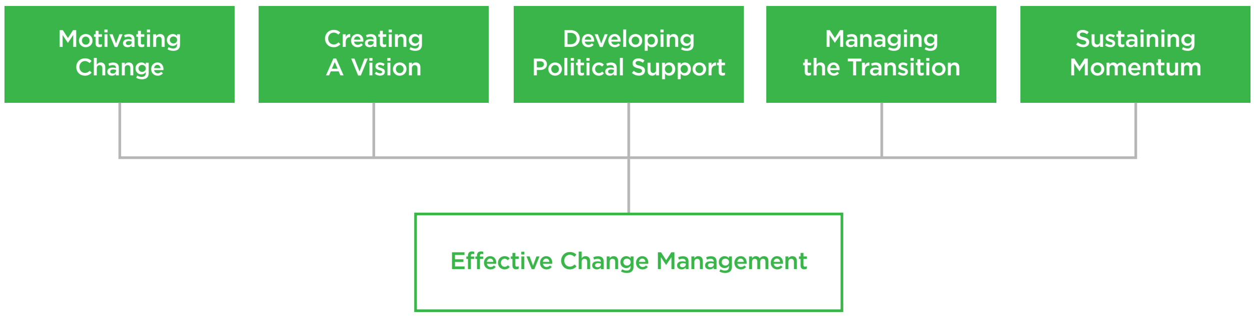
Adapted from Sterling & Selesnick, Inc. “Organizational Change Management Self-Assessment Questionnaire”



Five Activities to Effectively Lead and Manage Change

Changes can vary in complexity—from simple processes to intricate transformations. As higher education seeks to address the forces of change triggering significant shifts in operations, institutions are considering new and possibly radical ways to strengthen their efficiencies. To ensure that actions taken are effective, institutional leaders should implement several key activities associated with successfully leading and managing organizational changes.

According to Cummings and Worley (2009), the diversity of practical advice for leading and managing change can be organized into five major activities: 1) motivating change; 2) creating vision; 3) developing political support; 4) managing the transition; and 5) sustaining momentum. Each activity provides general guidelines for effective change management well as represents a key element in change leadership. An institution should identify a model that includes the priorities and areas of emphasis described in these five activities of change to improve their organizational effectiveness and performance.



Adapted from "Organization Development & Change," by T. G. Cummings and C. G. Worley, 2009, p. 164. Copyright 2009 by South-Western, a part of Cengage Learning.

Motivating Change

The first activity includes creating a readiness for change and developing approaches to overcome resistance. Organization members generally do not support change unless compelling reasons convince them otherwise. Therefore, leadership must educate the campus community about the need for change, disclose the institution's current status and where it needs to be in the future, and convey realistic expectations about how change might be accomplished.

Institutional leaders should also recognize that people are likely to resist change for a variety of reasons, including fear of the unknown or whether their current skills will be valued in the future. Leaders should listen and learn how people are experiencing change by extending empathy and support to address resistance. People need to feel that their concerns are being heard. Finally, leaders must involve individuals directly in planning and implementing change because people need to feel that the approach to change includes their input and involvement.

Creating a Vision

The second activity involves creating a vision of what the campus community wants the institution to look like or become. Leaders must express a clear vision that provides a purpose and reason, describes the desired future state, and energizes commitment from the organization's people. Moreover, it is critically important that organization members believe that the vision is relevant and realistic. Research indicates that compelling visions must do two key things:

1. Describe the core ideology of an institution (i.e., the motivation that brings people to work each day and gives work meaning)

2. Construct an envisioned future that vividly reflects the specific change being considered

Developing Political Support

Matters of power and politics are critically important to recognize and manage during organizational change activities. Attempts to change an organization often threaten the balance of power among individuals and groups, resulting in political conflicts. For success, the change effort must leverage all key power players who are recognized as having strong expertise, influence and integrity.

In managing the political dynamics of change, the first task is to evaluate the change agent's sources of power to determine how to influence others in support of changes as well as to detect areas that need to be strengthened. Second, change agents should identify key stakeholders such as faculty, staff and administrators with interest in the changes. And the third task involves using power to influence stakeholders and motivate a critical mass for change.

Managing Transition

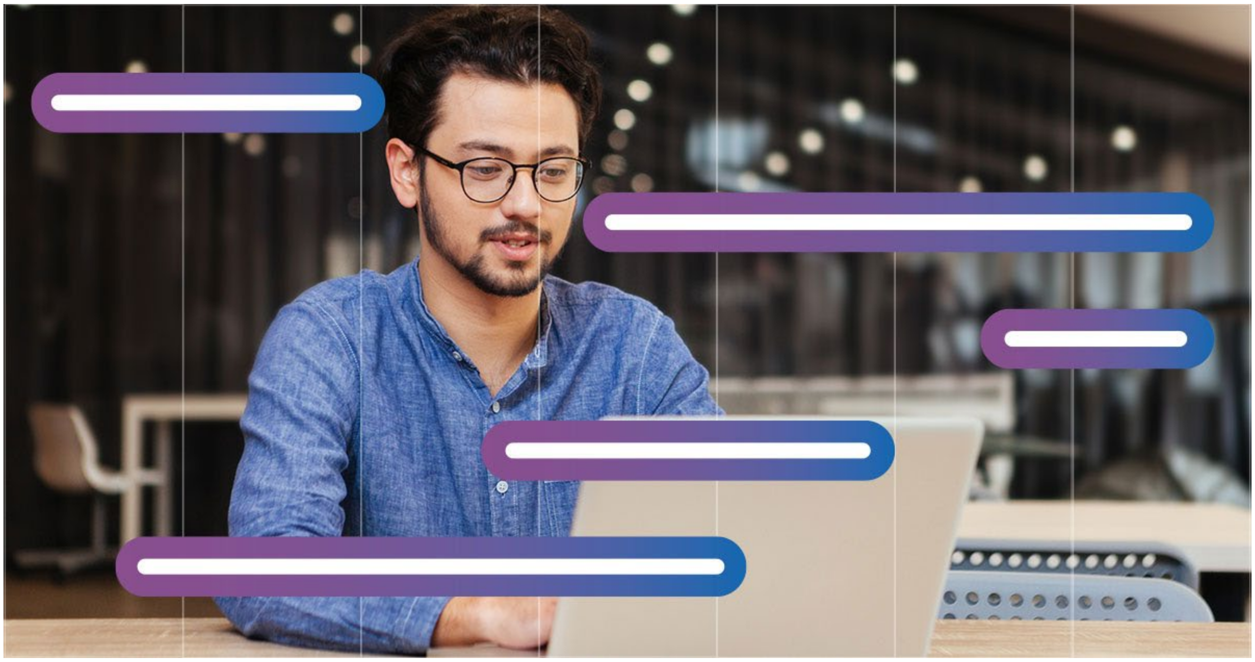
This activity involves moving from an existing state to a desired future state—such movement requires a transition period of actions to help implement the conditions needed to reach the desired future. Three major tasks aid in the facilitation of the transition: activity planning, commitment planning and change management structures. Activity planning provides a roadmap of the specific activities and events that must occur during the transition period for the change to be successful. It should include discrete tasks and remain flexible for regular feedback.

For commitment planning, specific plans for identifying key stakeholders and obtaining their commitment to change throughout the transition process is needed. Finally, special structures for managing the change process during the transition need to be created to help maintain clear and explicit direction.

Sustaining Momentum

The final activity is often the most difficult in leading and managing change. Over time, the excitement of change dissipates, and campus members return to old behaviors and processes. Explicit attention must be paid by institutional leaders to sustain the momentum of the implementation and adjustment of plans. This includes providing financial and human resources for the changes, creating a support system for change agents, developing opportunities for organizational members to build new knowledge and skills, reinforcing the new behaviors required to implement changes, and staying the course through full implementation.

Each of these activities is important for leading and managing change. Without motivation and commitment, getting movement from individuals on the desired change will be difficult. Without a vision, change will be disorganized and diffuse. Without the support of power players, change may be blocked or even sabotaged. Without a transition process, the institution will have difficulty operating while moving to its future state. And without sustaining momentum, the institution will not be able to manage the changes to completion. Therefore, institutional leaders must give care, attention and effort to each activity when planning and implementing change.



Navigating Risk and Opportunity: A Strategic Enterprise Approach

Over the past several years, numerous institutions have dealt with high profile risks and the resulting disastrous after-effects: hurricanes, mass shootings, suicides, sexual abuse, hate crimes and more. In these cases, individual campuses were thrust into the spotlight. Institutions were often criticized, second-guessed and held accountable for their lack of foresight and preparation and the resulting adverse consequences, even when the crisis was arguably unforeseeable. Today, the spotlight is not on just one campus, but all of higher education, as institutions struggle to manage risks—and seize opportunities.

So how is it that storied, well-established institutions of higher education so often miss the mark when it comes to identifying, assessing and mitigating risks? Most campuses still utilize a traditional risk management approach that is reactive, responding to crises and incidents on an ad hoc basis, with departments operating in fragmented silos and no focus on risk interrelatedness.

These unprecedented times demand a reevaluation of how institutions assess and respond to uncertainty. Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) systematically identifies, assesses and mitigates risk across an institution. ERM is integrated (spanning all organizational units), comprehensive (including all types of risk) and strategic (aligned with an overall business strategy). ERM has proactive board and senior administrative leadership and links institutional governance to the identification, evaluation, mitigation and monitoring of risks. ERM also incorporates the upside of risk—the opportunities.

Required by the SEC in the corporate sector, ERM can be difficult to adopt in higher education due to the complex interwoven missions of teaching and learning, research and service, decentralized administrative and faculty governance structure, and the "collegial" culture shaped by the competing demands of a diverse set of internal and external stakeholders. College and university assets go far beyond the physical and financial to include the institution's reputation.

Many campuses have effectively translated the tenants of ERM to campus culture using the ISO 31000 risk management framework. The purpose of University of Vermont's ERM program is to enhance the University's ability to achieve its mission, vision, and strategic objectives and strengthen its competitive position by fostering an institution-wide culture of risk and opportunity awareness and providing a structured, consistent, and continuous process for the early and proactive identification and reporting of risks and opportunities to senior management and trustees. UVM's risk form the basis for decision-making about which risks or opportunities are priorities, what the appropriate response should be, and how resources should be allocated to manage the risk or opportunity in a way that best support's their mission and strategy. form the basis for decision-making about which risks or opportunities are priorities, what the appropriate response should be, and how resources should be allocated to manage the risk or opportunity in a way that best support's their mission and strategy.

An ERM approach helps an institution see both the positive opportunities and negative consequences associated with risk, and allows for more informed, and thus more effective, decision making. What's more, it can be an active component in improving an organization's governance and, ultimately, its performance. Key aspects of ERM to consider as institutions navigate their current and future decisions related to the pandemic include:

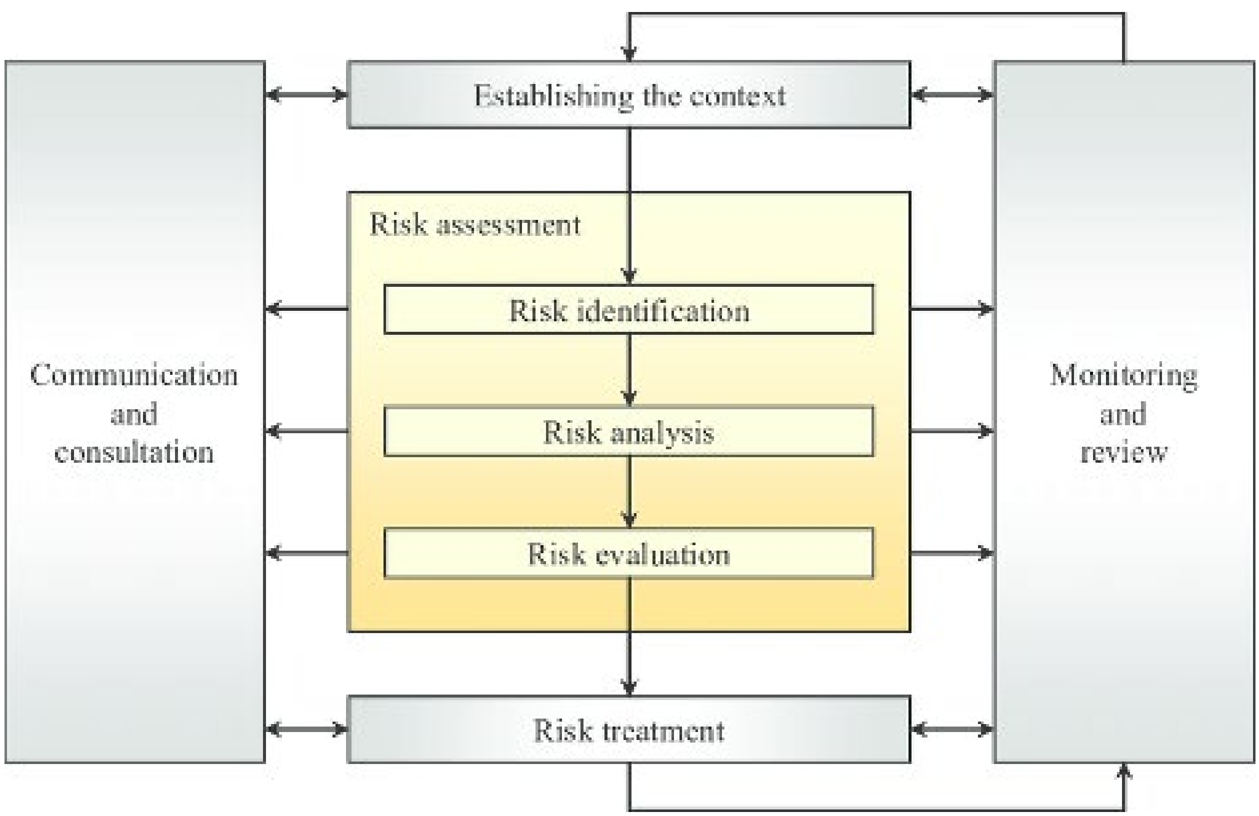
- Continue to evaluate and update previously developed preparedness and crisis management plans
- Reassess goals, objectives and performance measures—and adjust as needed
- Determine tolerable risk levels based on internal and external environmental scans
- Don't forget the upside—identify emerging opportunities
- Leverage data analytics and metrics to support ongoing risk monitoring

To consider how ERM applies at your institution, use the following worksheet to ponder how your institution currently views risk and determine how you can embed enterprise risk management as a part of your institution's overall strategy to achieve its mission.

Get Started with an Enterprise Approach to Risk Management

ISO 31000 Enterprise Risk Management Framework

ISO 31000 is intended for use by anyone who manages risks, not just professional risk managers. Its overarching goal is to develop a risk management culture where employees and stakeholders are aware of the importance of monitoring and managing risk. It helps organizations see both the positive opportunities and negative consequences associated with risk, and allows for more informed, and thus more effective, decision making, namely in the allocation of resources. What's more, it can be an active component in improving an organization's governance and, ultimately, its performance.



Use the following rubric to identify your institution's risk readiness. Use the findings for discussion and take action.

Enterprise Risk Principle or Practice	**Nonexistent**	**Emerging**	**Satisfactory**	**Responsible Person/Unit**
Definition of and approach to risk includes upsides (opportunities)				
A senior leader is designed to coordinate strategic risk management for the institution				
We have a risk identification process, schedule and tools				
Regularly evaluates existing and emerging risks at various levels of the institution, including senior leadership				
We have a risk evaluation and prioritization process that leads to action				
Risk management is integrated with strategic planning				
Risk management is embedded with other organizational practices, processes, and plans				
Institutional decision-making involved explicit consideration of risk				
Risk management is seen as providing the basis for effective governance				
Comprehensive and frequent internal and external reporting on significant risks				
The board regularly receives updates on the institution's key risks				
Faculty regard effective risk management as essential for achieving the institution's mission				

Part Two: Strategic Planning

> The strategic plans of our institutions are driven by our missions. Our missions have not changed. Our priorities have not changed. Our methods will have to.
>
> **Dr. Roslyn Clark Artis**
> President of Benedict College

Leveraging a Real-Time Strategic Change Model to Make Big Things Happen Fast

> Even in the best of times, leading an institution of higher education demands an ability to weigh many competing individual interests against moral responsibility for the whole. The current health emergency makes striking the right balance all the more difficult—and multiplies the damage any missteps could cause.
>
> **Michael Sorrell**
> President of Paul Quinn College, The Atlantic

For an industry known for moving slowly and incremental change, higher education has undergone unprecedented change in just a few months' time. Campuses have shifted quickly to balance immediate financial needs with public health and safety, while trying to remain true to their mission. This upheaval of the status quo has required institutions to shift from incremental change to active experimentation—at times with limited data.

But campuses can't remain frozen in experimental crisis mode interminably. Some campuses are recognizing that old planning models won't lead to the transformation required to move past this crisis. What is required of colleges and universities at this juncture is radical, dramatic, future-oriented change.

However, even with planned change, people are often fearful and need time to understand what changes mean so they can adapt—or resist. But campus decision-makers don't have the luxury of time. Nothing short of transformative decisions and actions will allow campuses to weather the immediate and long-term changes that have emerged. And that requires a systemic change management approach.

Real-Time Strategic Change (RTSC) is one large group intervention strategy that may be helpful as campuses navigate an evolving future, as it involves simultaneous planning and implementation of individual, group and organization-wide changes. RTSC takes place in three phases:

- *Scoping possibilities:* crafting a clear, considered plan for the future, where people are energized about the multiple possibilities that fit the institution's culture, needs and constraints.
- *Developing and aligning leadership:* building the competencies and commitment to succeed through large- or small-scale events, action learning initiatives, individual reflection and training, with efforts focused on developing a preferred and consistent leadership style and strategy alignment.
- *Creating organizational congruence:* engaging the entire organization in developing a fit between strategies, actions, processes, systems, practices and culture.

RTSC is a participative, structured and organized process for involving a whole system in planning the strategy of an organization. The goal of RTSC is to formulate a new vision and/or strategic direction and to obtain major improvements in key financial, quality, mission or other performance measures. The RTSC method enables all participants to interact with their leaders, outside experts and each other to exchange ideas and create a forum for analysis and dialogue.

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With an RTSC approach, change is given the opportunity to occur when three elements are in place simultaneously—dissatisfaction with the present situation, a compelling vision of how the change will create a better future and first steps for reaching the vision.

The process of designing a shared future enhances participant's motivation and recognizes their individual role in the future of the organization. While it may not be possible to design an in-person RTSC workshop in higher education right now, it is possible to engage stakeholders virtually through hosted meetings, webinar discussion groups, virtual town halls, and digital brainstorming.

Even before current industry challenges, rising rates of change drove higher education to respond to increasingly complex problems and situations where stakeholders in and outside of campuses were at odds about the purpose, goals and best way forward for institutions. For better or worse, campuses don't have to imagine the RTSC polarity of planning for the future and being in the future now.

What institutions can do is respond by making informed, smart decisions that invite participation and provide direction, envisioning compelling, transformational future possibilities. Download this step-by-step PDF guide from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research on how to host an RTSC event and use this accompanying question guide to guide you as you implement your change management approach.

Time to Assess or (Re)start the Strategic Planning Process?

Higher education faces greater challenges today than at any point in recent history—and in these times of uncertainty, proceeding with an established five- or 10-year strategic plan is likely to hamper, or possibly stall, an institution's progress in different areas. Holding tight to the strategies reflected in a document that does not account for the lasting and vastly different circumstances that have arisen from the COVID-19 pandemic could have a damaging impact.

As Hugh Courtney, Jane Kirkland and Patrick Viguerie stated in their "Strategy Under Uncertainty" article in Harvard Business Review: "Underestimating uncertainty can lead to strategies that neither defend against the threats nor take advantage of the opportunities that higher levels of uncertainty may provide."

It is important for institutions with active strategic plans to revisit and revise their plans to account for various operational and financial changes within the context of newly anticipated risks and changes in resources. And it is equally important that campuses undergoing the process pause to examine how to shift course.

Decide how to move forward

Institutions currently at the beginning or in the middle of their strategic planning process have the opportunity to react differently from their institutional peers who have completed the process. For campuses in the early to middle stages, there are many potential directions to take, including:

- **Stop:** Focus on the here and now, and narrow efforts to the immediate problem of responding to the difficulties of COVID-19, with no strategic planning discussions
- **Ignore:** Unwisely proceed forward with original process frameworks, with little to no consideration of current implications, and ignore both the impact and uncertainty of COVID-19
- **Consider and continue:** Aware that something needs to change, but unsure how to move forward; proceed with limited changes to the original strategic planning framework
- **Question and adjust:** Question what should be considered or changed about the process in light of current circumstances, identify what discussions should be going on now and which stakeholders should be involved, and shift to a more dynamic process

Form a strategic team

Regardless of whether you are in the early stages of the strategic planning process or are having to reassess a plan currently implemented, all campuses should form a strategic team to think about the current disruptions for the short and long term. For some, this may be naturally woven into the mandate under which your strategic planning team already operates. This team will need to be empowered to identify risks, consider multiple futures, and use data and evidence to support strategic thinking and decisions.

Focus on actionable data

The underpinning of any strategic planning process is data. However, institutions don't need a constant stream of data. Instead, in times of change, focus on the most important data. Actionable data that allows institutional leaders to adjust the two main levers, enrollment and retention, should be at the center. Access to specific insights, combined with supporting analysis and some intuition, will help shift resources as needed.

Start scenario planning

Scenario planning is valuable as it focuses on the creation of multiple futures based on a unique combination of uncertainties. The impact, threats and opportunities of each future can be identified and acted upon. This can help institutions gain clarity into decisions that have to be made when developing or adjusting a strategic plan.

Going through such a process can remove some confusion around what needs to be done in anticipation of a host of scenarios based on current realities. It provides a mechanism for identifying strategic priorities. Above all, it creates a clear direction forward for the entire campus community and identifies actionable steps to course-correct your strategic plan as needed.

For instance, through scenario planning, campuses can explore different futures that may include (as a starting point):

- Meeting local workforce needs while having to balance financial realities and possible hiring freezes/furloughs
- Focusing on remote learning, student services and new approaches to institutional technology
- Fulfilling the traditional higher education mission in nontraditional ways

- Expanding focus and diversifying revenues by helping local school districts or managing local health systems

‘Changing course is not an admission of defeat’

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced institutions to quickly determine new ways to navigate an already choppy sea of revenue changes and uncertain public funding—all of which have impacted the ability to act on strategic plans. Surrounding these fiscal realities are the known challenges of shifts in enrollment, increased public scrutiny and political unpredictably. It is essential in this environment to set forth an intentional, vision-based path through strategic planning. Institutions should focus on providing clarity and inspiring confidence—for faculty, staff and students.

Now is the time to address how our new reality affects the current stage of your institution’s strategic planning process, or to assess needed revisions to the current strategic plan you have in place. Changing course is not an admission of defeat; instead, it is a necessary step to recognize a higher education landscape vastly different from the one we were in just two months ago.

Building Strategic Partnerships

What types of partnerships exist on your campus today? Do offices across divisions collaborate to create programs, processes and services? Do departments partner outside their college? Are campus partnerships using and producing data to advance the mission and vision of the institution?

Whether creating internal partnerships between colleagues within the same division, to more significant partnerships between colleges, harnessing the strengths and abilities of others from different areas of your institution is one of the most strategic ways to tackle complex challenges, build powerful coalitions, and unlock thoughts of innovation.

In today's higher education arena, breakthroughs and progress can't happen in silos. Campuses should implement ways to drive collaboration that provide the insights and actions needed now and in the future. By developing strategic partnerships, colleges and universities are demonstrating a commitment to enhancing overall institutional quality and effectiveness.

Three major tactics for structuring strategic partnerships on campus include (1) utilizing a cross-functional team approach; (2) adopting a planned change process; and (3) developing a communication strategy.

Utilizing a Cross-Functional Team Approach

Simply stated, a cross-functional team is a group of individuals from different functions or units within an organization. Those individuals are typically brought together to collaborate on specific projects and collectively produce results. These teams can take many forms, but when appropriately designed, all aim to leverage the skills, expertise, and experience of a diverse group of individuals. Although the concept of cross-functional teams is not new, the approach has gain popularity in recent years because of its power to improve problem-solving efforts, strengthen coordination and integration across the organization, and identify inventive yet thorough decisions.

A great example of a coordinated cross-functional team approach on campuses is the implementation of a data governance team. Driven by a specific group of individuals, data governance is a shared responsibility in the management and maintenance of data.

However, setting up a cross-functional team can sometimes bring difficulties. This team structure is often new and requires changes in mindset, skills and knowledge to manage lateral relationships, and a balance between job responsibilities and team tasks. You can overcome these challenges by establishing a planned change process.

Adopting a Planned Change Process

Planned change is the process of preparing the organization for new goals or a new direction. Organizations participate in planned change to increase their effectiveness. Organizations—notably higher education institutions—can use planned change to solve problems, to reframe shared perceptions, to adapt to external environmental changes, and to improve performance. We see many colleges and universities using planned change processes when initiating new organizational developments such as strategic planning, enrollment management, and IT infrastructure.

When campus partnerships are designed to modify strategies, structures, and practices to increase institutional effectiveness, adopting a planned change model can provide guidance and formation. With a general framework, depicted by four basic phases—entering, diagnosing, planning and implementing, and evaluating and institutionalizing—this model has broad applicability to many types of planned change efforts. Regardless of the model, institutions should engage in a formal process that helps them identify the gap and opportunity, work toward a common goal and capitalize on individuals' talent and strengths.

Developing a Communication Strategy

Communication is essential for a partnership to succeed. Like on any team, effective communication allows individuals to understand their roles, the roles of everyone else, and what needs to be accomplished. Throughout the partnership, individuals should strategically leverage multiple mechanisms of interaction and exchange. Open and active channels of communication will ensure there are no misconceptions and misaligned expectations.

Two main communication strategies should be considered when creating partnerships. The first is a plan of how best to share and distribute information among colleagues in the partnership. This plan is a necessary part of managing a strategic partnership and is critical in establishing mutual understanding as well as clear objectives. The second plan should address how the partnership and its progress will be conveyed to the greater campus community. These communication messages can increase support for the partnership as well as motivate people for any future changes.

All in all, strategic partnerships are a necessity for institutions to achieve success in today's challenging environment. To scale innovation and solve complex problems, institutions must foster collaborative opportunities of broader viewpoints and experiences, demand strategic thinking, and increase internal competencies. And though meaningful partnerships require thoughtful consideration and continuous effort, the rewards are great, and the added value is priceless.

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Part Three: Data-Driven Decision Making

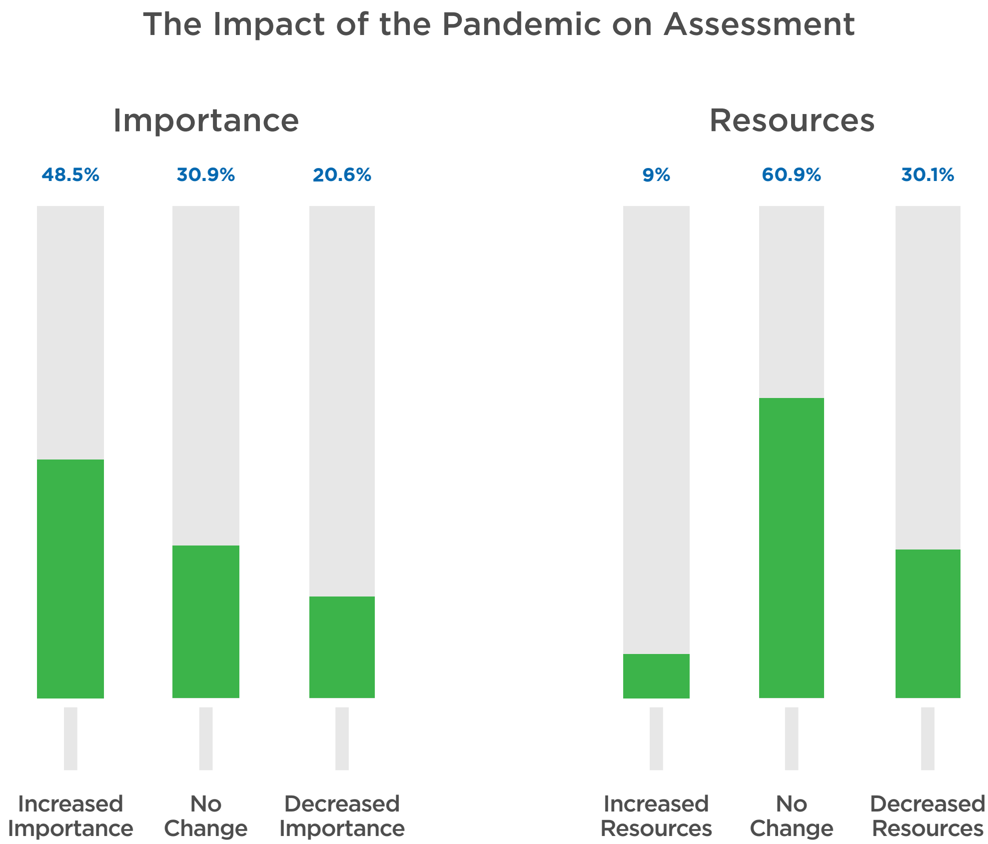
> We are going to have to depend on data in an environment that's quite foggy right now. No managing by gut, no intuition, no fear—just facts, just data. That's all we have to rely on in this uncertain time.
>
> **Dr. Roslyn Clark Artis**
> President of Benedict College

Follow the Data: How Campuses Use Assessment in Times of Change

Campuses have shared a great variety of ways the pandemic has impacted assessment. Some reported a heightened emphasis on data and an increase in activity—others said they cancelled assessments and lowered expectations. The broad spectrum of reactions led us to wonder what was really happening to the practice of assessment. We sought to learn more from series of polls to higher education professionals during the Spring 2020 phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Importance of Assessment

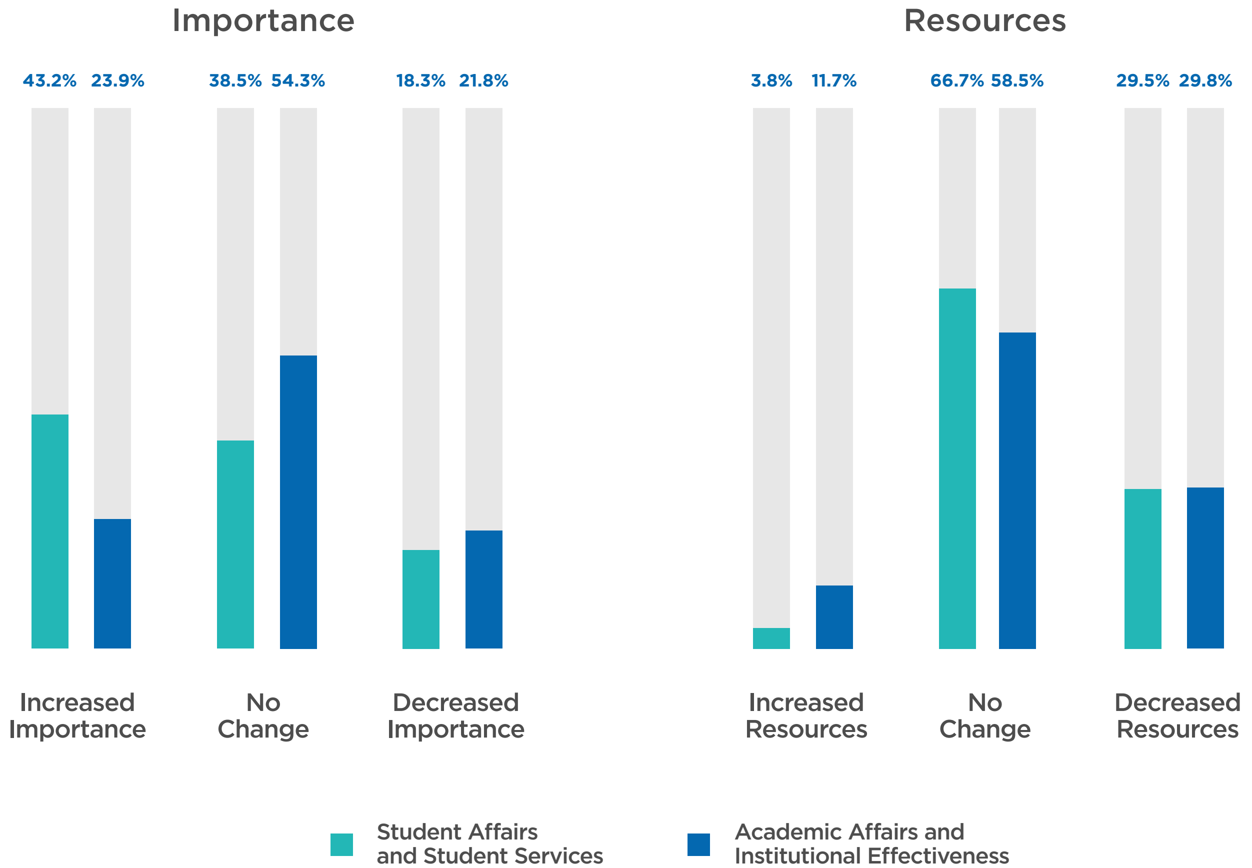
One thing is clear: assessment is just as—if not more—important as ever for a strong majority of respondents. Clearly data can be a valuable tool, whether it be for understanding a new phenomenon or planning for an uncertain future. But how will campuses respond to the increased pressures for data-driven activity without a proportionate increase in resources to support it? And what can we learn from those saying the importance of assessment has decreased?



301 respondents to the question "In your opinion, how has the pandemic impacted the importance placed on assessment at your institution?" and "How has the pandemic impacted the resources devoted to assessment at your institution?", excluding those who selected "Unable to Judge"

A closer look yielded an interesting conclusion: student affairs professionals reported a different experience—one in which assessment was more likely to increase in importance and yet was even less likely to come with more resources. This raises the question: Is student affairs effectively resourced to be data-driven? And how will that affect direct student services that impact the mental health, safety and retention of college students?

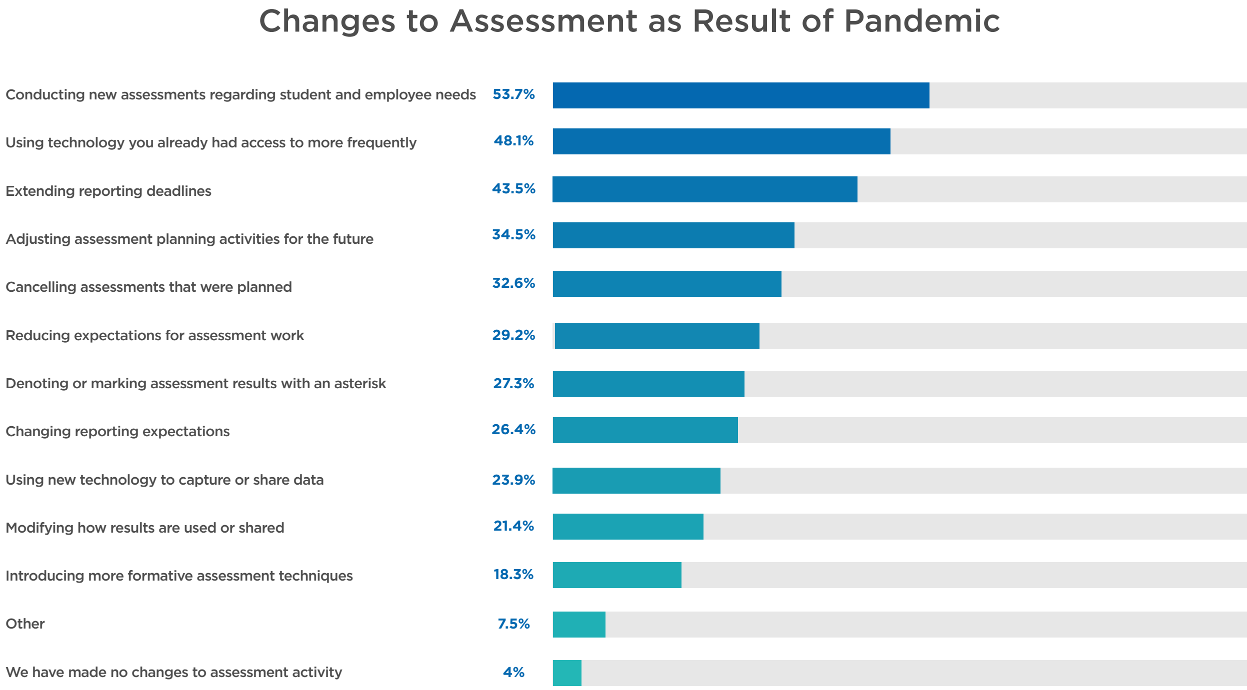
The Impact of the Pandemic on Assessment—by Population



Changes to Assessment Activities

Almost all respondents (96%) reported making some type of adjustments to their assessment activities in response to the pandemic—most commonly, they reported some combination of 4 different adjustments from the list below, which addressed every phase of the assessment cycle.

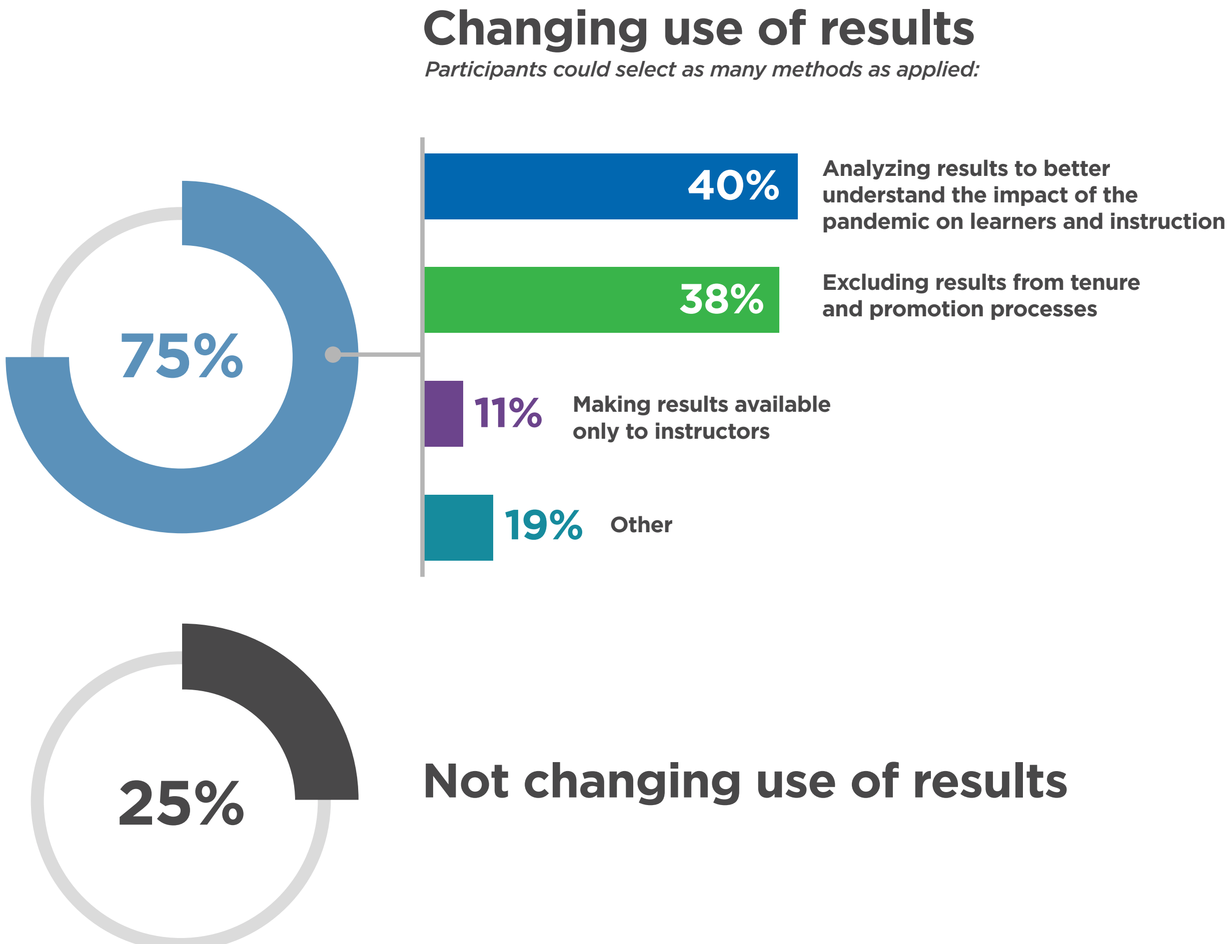
The most common action was to conduct new assessments to better understand student and employee needs (like these). The second most common action was to increase the use of existing assessment technology, which makes sense given the insights above regarding a relatively small amount of increasing resources for assessment.



322 Respondents to the question, "What changes, if any, are you or your institution making to assessment activities as a result of the pandemic? (Check all that apply)"

Changes to Course Evaluation Practice

Most (87%) institutions have decided to continue with some form of course evaluations. By far the most common practice for those who still conducted evaluations was to adjust the intended use of the results in some way. The other common adjustment was to use the results to understand the impact of the pandemic on learners and instruction.



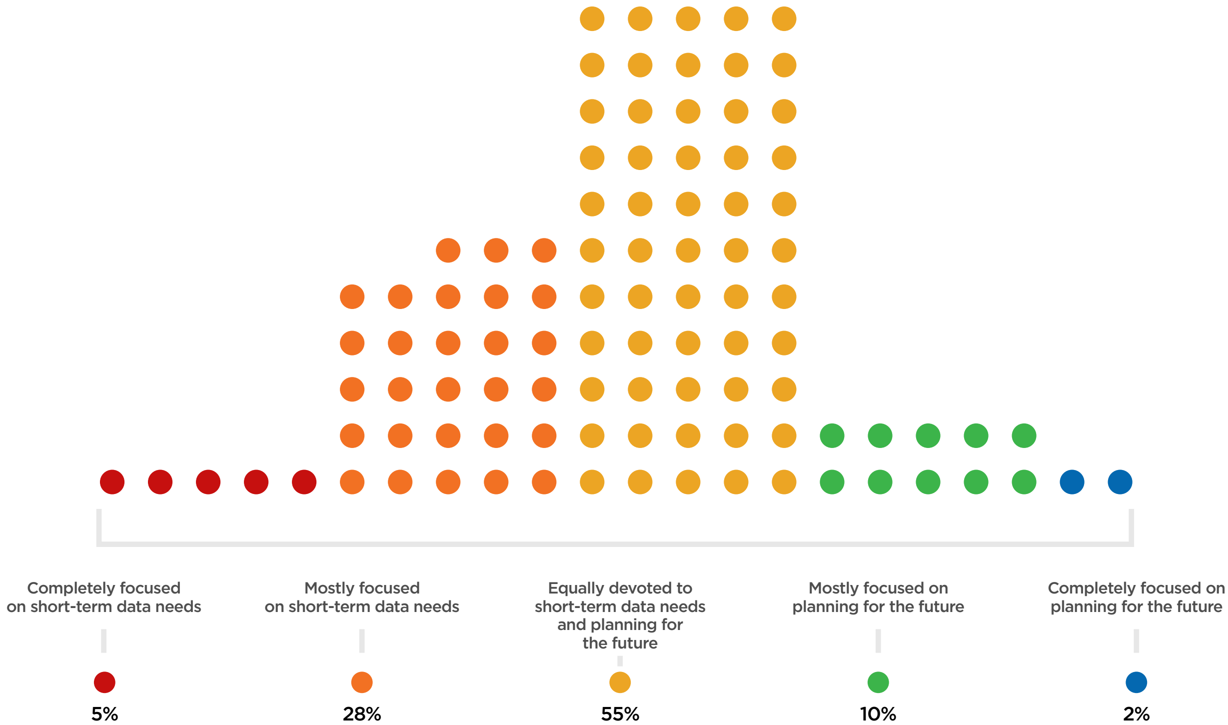
N = 134 | Number of respondents to the question, "In which ways, if any, are you modifying the intended use of results? (Check all that apply)", excluding those who responded as unsure.

As always, it is imperative to consider end-of-term course evaluations as just one component of a comprehensive feedback loop. We suggest ensuring your own feedback loop includes an ongoing emphasis on formative assessment that checks in with learners and provides valuable feedback to instructors as they, too, are adapting.

Looking to the Future

At the time the survey was conducted, only 36% of respondents' institutions had determined their plans for the fall semester. While many are still living in a time of uncertainty, some (12%) have fully shifted their assessment to focus on planning for the future.

Current Focus of Assessment Efforts



322 Respondents to the question, "What is the focus of your assessment efforts at this time?", excluding those who selected Not Applicable

As we look ahead to the future, there may be an even greater opportunity for data to play a leading role. Institutions best prepared for change in the next few months will be the ones that set themselves up well now, by collecting the right kind of data and investing in their assessment capacity.

Time to Take Action

So what could this all mean? Here are some resources to consider as you use data to drive your institution forward:

1. Include assessment data in scenario planning for the future.
2. Check in with student affairs professionals about the resources they need to be data-driven.

3. Make the most of the technology that you have, because you need to maximize your resources and data utilization.
4. Don’t wait to invest in data capacity resources—your employees need them now and your institution’s future likely depends on it.

Why Surveys are Essential

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a new educational dynamic that we are all still trying to comprehend—and, it has severed some of our existing feedback loops, compromising our ability to identify needs and see the impact of our actions. As we work, teach and learn remotely, we are all seeking connection and engagement. Which is why surveys are so important right now.

Surveys can be a form of dialogue—asking questions and listening to answers. They allow us to place value on the voices of our students and colleagues, including them in our decision-making processes. Surveys also help us understand novel concepts and new situations, to ask questions to which we don't have the answers. Of course, that's the whole point of assessment:

> Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.
>
> **Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning**
> American Association for Higher Education, 1992

But how should you decide which surveys to conduct? Consider this decision-making model to work through your current survey calendar or adapt it to a shareable process for use across campus.

Keep

Keep the survey on your schedule if the topic is still relevant and important, and feedback will help you understand our current situation or plan for the future. In particular, look for opportunities to collect foundational data about the student (or employee) experience that you can compare to past years. Rather than thinking of this data as skewed, think of the comparisons as helpful baselines for understanding the impact of this pandemic on your educational environment and impact. You can also look for opportunities to add a few COVID-19-related questions to surveys already planned, if audience and purpose align.

Examples

- Annual surveys or benchmarking surveys such as NSSE, CCSSE, or Project CEO
- Regular service evaluations (e.g. those sent after advising appointments or IT help desk tickets)
- Program or course evaluations that were already offered virtually and have remained unchanged

Tweak

Adjust the survey if the topic is still relevant and important, but questions may need to be adjusted to recognize our current situation. Also consider any changes that need to be made to how results are used and shared. For instance, any data that was included in an individual's evaluation (such as tenure and promotion processes, personnel evaluations or individual performance metrics) should have adjusted benchmarks or be excluded entirely.

Examples

- Course evaluations: Consider adjusting to questions more appropriate for the virtual instruction environment, and do not use results in any formal instructor evaluation process.
- Surveys that are specific to personnel, such as RAs or academic advisors: These could be adjusted to understand the needs and experiences of those served, not to evaluate or criticize those serving.

- Health services usage survey: Adjust to recognize the telehealth environment.
- Programing needs assessments: These can be adjusted to plan for emerging topics and the possibility of a virtual environment.

Delay

Postpone the survey if the topic is still important, but no longer relevant in this time. Or, if the survey can be conducted later without significant negative impact on your operations, providing you with an open slot for a survey on a new, more pressing topic.

Examples

- Surveys based on events or services that took place before the shift to virtual instruction
- Unique needs assessments that just aren't as important now, such as a facility plan for your new student union or an evaluation of your academic integrity policy

Cancel

If the topic is just plain irrelevant now, this is where you cut. Look for assessments about in-person programs or canceled events. Also look for assessments for which you no longer have the capacity to use or analyze the data. However, be wary of canceling a survey because you are afraid of the results.

Examples

- Event evaluations like those for residence hall move-out, commencement ceremonies, staff retreats, or spring concerts
- Assessments of physical resources or services like the dining halls, the on-campus cable package, or technology in your classrooms

Add

This is where the surveys specific to COVID-19 come in play. For the most part, these will be needs assessments that help you plan and respond to the new normal, or formative assessments you use to adjust new services or offerings in real-time. Include student leaders, such as your SGA president, in your decision making—remember they too are trying to serve their constituents from afar and can be your partners in reaching the student body.

Examples

- Student climate surveys to capture the student needs and experiences during this time of transition
- Technology inventory and needs assessments
- Housing needs for campuses that still have students in-residence
- Assessments of student financial strain, including food or housing insecurities
- Surveys to faculty and staff about working remotely
- Post-graduate career planning
- Classroom assessment techniques, such as polling students in online courses to check on their progress and self-efficacy

Final considerations

With our rapidly evolving situation, any inflexible plans might quickly be rendered irrelevant, so use an iterative approach to planning. Break down your plans by thinking in two-week chunks and expecting adjustments. Also, consider shorter but more frequent surveys—it's not necessary to take months to perfect a 100-item instrument. What's important is that you get data while it can make a difference.

Now more than ever we need to ensure our assessment has a lens of equity. Our marginalized students are even more vulnerable in the current environment, so remember to include the appropriate demographic questions that allow you to look at your data with that lens.

Guiding Principles for a Data-informed Approach to Teaching and Learning

COVID-19's disruption to college and university classes is unprecedented. Faculty and students are understandably overwhelmed and uncertain about what comes next. Instructors have justifiable concerns about how this move ultimately impacts the quality of both teaching and student learning. In this context, data can serve as a valuable aid to those seeking to maximize student success:

Here are four guiding principles for a data-informed approach to teaching and learning:

1. Explore student perceptions of the learning process

Why should faculty wait until the end of an academic term to gauge teaching effectiveness? Formative feedback from students throughout the course can yield invaluable insights. By receiving direct feedback while the course is still in progress, faculty can adjust their classroom teaching methods. And if they're told they have the potential to influence the class, students will have a greater incentive to offer detailed and constructive input.

With the right tool, student feedback about quality of instruction can be compared with outcomes assessment data to uncover significant gaps. Any revelations will help bridge the divide between student perceptions of their learning and their actual ability (or inability) to meet the expected outcomes. Another critical view into the learning process is a comparison between indirect and direct learning measures. Suppose a student has a high opinion of her academic ability but does poorly on assignments and tests. Or another student might reflect the opposite contrast: he doubts his intellectual potential but in fact scores consistently high on the expected outcomes.

2. Build a foundation of trust

Transparency is the lynchpin of trust. For any change to be effective, it has to start with an open dialogue before a data-collection instrument can ever be introduced. Intentional conversations between administrators and faculty as well as between faculty and students become the foundation for a successful implementation. If you're an administrative leader, you'll want to explain the reasoning behind any decision to introduce a data-collection initiative. Make it clear that data tools are a resource for supporting a better process, not for usurping the instructor's role. Instead of being used to penalize faculty or weed out underperforming students, the data will help uncover underlying factors that might inhibit effective teaching and meaningful learning. And if you're a teacher, tell students why and how their data will be used. Explain that their constructive feedback can have a direct impact on how you design lessons and assignments.

3. Encourage students to reflect on their own learning success

"The questions are poorly worded, and the students don't take it seriously." Does this statement echo a common refrain when it's time to do end-of-term course evaluations? Rather than offer helpful input about the learning process, a traditional course evaluation can devolve into a litany of complaints (or compliments) that have little to do with the learning process. A "weak" student might grouse about the boring subject matter, while a "strong" student might comment on how nice the professor is. A well-designed online instrument, by contrast, will focus on questions that invite students to reflect on their own learning, such as: Did the instructor find ways to help you answer your own questions? Could you easily understand how each classroom topic fit within the overall theme for the course?

4. See beyond the demographics

If you have the data, it can be relatively easy to disaggregate student success metrics like GPA and learning outcomes data by demographic factors, but the numbers don't tell you what to do about the results. It is plausible Pell eligible students may have lower GPAs than other students. But Pell eligibility doesn't make students less capable, it makes them more vulnerable. Students with financial need typically have jobs. Having one or more jobs can affect attendance. Attendance often affects grades, but not necessarily learning. Comparing actual learning data to GPA may reveal students are learning just as much as the other groups, rendering an academic intervention useless.

Non-cognitive data can also be helpful in determining how to act on success metrics. Students who are academically strong on paper may still struggle from time to time and your campus likely already has tutoring or peer mentor programs in place to help them. But if these students have low social comfort or lack the social capital of knowing what resources are available to them, they may be reluctant or unable to seek assistance. In these cases, an effective intervention may be as simple as providing the right information on your syllabi.

Some faculty may not be comfortable using these data, some may not know it exists, and other may not have access. It is worth the effort overcome whichever barriers exists on your campus, so valuable teaching and learning data can be used to support more open and effective classrooms.

Equitable Assessment

> Addressing issues of equity may involve some uncomfortable, challenging and courageous conversations and discussions. Equity data-informed discussions have the power to foster progress
>
> **Dr. Jillian Kinzie**
> Associate Director of the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Institute

At its core, equitable assessment calls for those who lead and participate in assessment activities to pay attention and be conscious of how assessment can either feed into cycles that perpetuate inequities or can serve to bring more equity into higher education.

The continuum for equity-minded assessment (Henning & Lundquist) provides a pathway for progress:

Causing Harm → **Anti-Bias** → **Culturally Responsive** → **Socially Just** → **Deconstructed** → **Assessment for Social Justice/ Decolonization**

As campuses and individual professionals plot their own journey along this continuum, consider:

1. Does the institution have a shared definition of equity-minded assessment to inform stakeholder involvement?
2. Is the language used regarding learning outcomes and assessment understandable to various stakeholder groups, including students?
3. What processes are in place for critical data disaggregation?
4. What processes exist for different communities to express their needs, voice concerns, and adapt policies and processes accordingly?

5. What assumptions about how students learn, where they learn, and how that learning can be demonstrated need to be examined from an equity lens?

Equitable Assessment Resources

In higher education, it's important for there to be a cross-campus focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and intercultural competence in our approach to developing impactful programs and services. However, it's equally important to be intentional in ensuring cultural responsiveness and avoiding bias in assessment work—with a commitment to implementing socially just assessment practices. Campus Labs, in partnership with NILOA, CAS, and other like-minded higher education organizations, has gathered resources focused on socially just assessment, including a series of webinars and podcasts on the topic.

Podcast Series

This podcast series provides in-depth conversation on just a selection of the many nuanced topics that fall under the umbrella of socially just assessment. Each of these conversations focuses on a singular topic and is meant to deepen the listener's understanding of critical issues assessment professionals deal with in their day-to-day work.

- **Episode 1:** Culturally Responsive Assessment
- **Episode 2:** Critical Theory as a Framework to Advance Equity Through Student Affairs Assessment
- **Episode 3:** Socially Just Assessment
- **Episode 4:** Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Assessment: Graduate School Preparation for Future Student Affairs Practitioners
- **Episode 5:** The Connections between Decolonization, Social Justice and Assessment

Case Studies

The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) and Campus Labs have released the first three case studies—linked as PDFs below—in a series focused on exploring equitable approaches to assessment in higher education. These case studies aim to shine a spotlight on institutions that have instituted practices to address issues of equity in assessment.

- Portland State University: General Education and Equitable Assessment. For Portland State University, equitable assessment practice includes space for all students and faculty to participate in ways that are meaningful to them. This means that students have the opportunity to show their learning in multiple ways, not just through high stakes standardized tests.
- Capella University: Equity and Transparency. At Capella University, assessments are designed to ensure that learners have opportunities to learn and practice career-relevant competencies. Capella ensures transparency for all learners in every course for each assessment, beginning with how the assessment criteria are aligned to the course competencies.
- Cornell University: Ripple Effect Mapping. Cornell University believes that equity-minded assessment practices should invoke participatory practices aimed at validating diverse stakeholder experiences and be aligned with program goals and student learning outcomes, proving useful to all stakeholders.

National Survey

This survey of assessment professionals in both student and academic affairs examined what current perspectives, knowledge and practices exist regarding the intersection of equity, inclusion and assessment.

Recorded Webinar Series

Beyond Bias: Culturally Responsive and Critical Assessment for Social Justice
In this introductory webinar, we review action-oriented strategies for ensuring cultural responsiveness and avoiding bias in your assessment work.

Beyond Culturally Responsive Assessment: Socially Just Assessment
This webinar explains the term “socially just assessment” and reviews its theoretical underpinnings. Examples of campus practice are highlighted.

Deconstructed Assessment: Using Assessment to Foster Social Justice
This webinar explores how assessment can be used not only to measure social justice on campus but also to foster it.

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Institutional Effectiveness in Action: 5 Tips for Success with Learning Datasets

In a recent poll about the pandemic's impact on assessment practice, we found one of the most common changes was an increase in the use of assessment technology. With these five tips, you'll discover ways to use your technology to jumpstart the continuous improvement journey at your campus in an inclusive and reflective way.

Tip 1: Prioritize Data Collection Efforts to Align with Key Initiatives on Campus

With a sea of data on campus and no shortage of problems to solve, the key is to focus on your most important initiatives and set up your tools to capture that data. Michael Metzger, special assistant to the vice chancellor of student affairs at UMass Boston, shares how their partnership with Campus Labs allowed them to begin with the end in mind. "Campus Labs offered "structure for how an assessment plan could work," Metzger said. "It was about providing efficiency for our staff. We have a lot of one person shops…time is limited and skill is uneven across the board. Having the technology power has been incredibly valuable." By aligning their assessment technology goals with their student learning goals, UMass were able to clearly share the impact their student engagement initiatives in the division of student affairs had on retention initiatives across campus.

Tip 2: Create Responsive Training Plans that Simplify Technology Use

When you launch new technology on campus, responsive communication and training plans are key. Judith Silva, Ph.D., a faculty assessment coordinator at California State San Bernardino, shares that a phased rollout was critical to gaining administrative support and faculty buy-in:

“[Because of our phased approach] I already knew it was going to be a successful and positive experience for the users. We really refined our ability to use it in cool and efficient ways, so I felt confident the faculty entering their assessment data… were going to have a great experience.”

Silva cultivated champions by including stakeholders in each stage of onboarding and deployment. This ensured high-quality data collection and—most importantly—built transparency and buy-in.

Tip 3: Launch Accessible Institutional Effectiveness and Learning Technology

Collaborative uses of technology create proactive and reflective environments. Creating these Communities of Practice take time, expertise and transparency to cultivate. It’s important to remember that student learning data is relevant to most—if not all—offices on campus. There needs to be a “collegial give and take,” according to Wayne Tikkanen, Ph.D., director of assessment for the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development at Rhode Island College. “It’s important for the stakeholders to be in the same room and participate in the use of student learning data to improve campus wide outcomes beyond compliance reporting.” Student learning is central to student success intervention planning, programmatic improvements and advancing equity initiatives on campus.

Tip 4: Teach Stakeholders to Use Data in Scenario Planning and Decision Making

Transitioning from a culture of compliance reporting to student learning analytics is new for many. Honor this change by providing your faculty, staff and students professional development around using data to inform decision-making. By helping build these skills you are creating a community of data consumers, fluent in not only interpreting but—perhaps more importantly—acting on data to make improvements.

Start your transition by using data visualizations to tell a story of shared assessment experience. These stories need clear visualizations using datasets that community members understand and trust. Create opportunities for those stories to be used as conversation starters to create action plans.

Illinois Eastern Community College's assessment office facilitates annual assessment workshops where faculty and staff work together to reflect on the data stories and craft annual programmatic improvement plans with clear stakeholder responsibilities, resource questions, intervention steps, success metrics and timelines.

Tip 5: Democratize Data with Shared Definitions and Equitable Practices

Like your students, campus leadership teams are diverse in their expertise and views. That range in vision helps cross-functional teams build innovative solutions to some of higher ed's most complex initiatives. Great leaders like Charity Schneeberger, assessment coordinator for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at the University of Valley Forge, act as data stewards, creating charters and policies to ethically grow data consumers on campus. Charity shares that by being more inclusive in data governance policies, "faculty realized they weren't alone and instead were seeing trends happen across the campus… nobody felt that fingers were being pointed or that the data was going to be used punitively." Charity goes on to share that once they unlocked the data, "anecdotal storytelling brought about faculty-led surveys for students and focus groups and student success interventions [were formed] that helped students feel confident in engaging in classwork." By giving faculty a seat at the assessment table, they were able to lead these changes. This is proof that democratizing data is a key to student success on campus.

Summary

Using assessment data to close the loop is about crafting environments to better prepare students to use what they have learned in practical settings. It's about autonomy and empowering students to learn in a way that works for them.

As we all shifted to virtual learning in spring 2020, Jillian Kinzie, the associate director of Indiana University's Center for Postsecondary Research, shared that "it could really help shift and reorient assessment practice to be much more about what the student is owning in the experience, rather than responding to the standard ways of expressing their learning."

With the tips highlighted in this blog, you can begin to reduce stress for stakeholders, improve processes and embody the possibilities that come from using data to tell your campus story.

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Margin Management: Balancing Your Institution’s Finances

Establishing the balance between educating effectively and operating efficiently is both more essential and more difficult than ever. Especially in today’s climate, margin management is crucial to helping your institution function. While other industries like manufacturing can communicate their revenues and expenses for things like ingredients, processing and shipping—for higher education it’s not as straightforward.

For proper margin management, you must first understand your margin structure at every level of your campus. Are you adding to or subtracting from your overall margins with a specific program? How do specific athletic teams contribute to the overall margin pictures? How can you see the financial numbers of a specific student body cohort and what does that mean?

Proper margin management on campus requires us to ask and answer each of these question, painting a full financial picture. Through some careful preparation and analysis, you can begin to see accurate and consumable data that helps you and the key stakeholders on campus focus on the several key areas listed below.

Strategic Enrollment Management

Situation

It's critical to understand where to invest in order to have the most positive impact for your students and the institution. A sound enrollment management strategy—considering things like a discount rate distribution across programs or majors, current course capacities and the margins of programs, majors or certain student body cohorts—helps provide the insights necessary to have a data-informed dialogue on where to invest, why and what the impact will be.

Approach

Base your strategic enrollment management decisions around marginal revenue opportunities. With the knowledge of course margins, you can uncover space in the current course structure that could be filled with additional students or use opportunities to consolidate where and when appropriate. Your goal with this approach is to increase marginal revenue from the addition of these students while keeping the cost of the course flat, positively impacting the margin contribution of a specific course.

In-person vs. Online Education

Situation

As institutions shift more courses and instructional activities online, there are a lot of variables that might impact learning experiences and associated margins. Are courses more or less expensive? And what does this mean for comparable performance metrics like class size, faculty coverage ratio, revenues, expenses and net per credit-hours?

Approach

You could start addressing these types of questions with the information you already have regarding online courses. Provided you have a sense of the margin structure, class sizes and student outcomes data, you can use this as a model to extrapolate the potential impact (positive or negative) of this online shift. Additionally, there are certain scenarios you can outline to account for resource allocation questions, like the range of class sizes and the associated learning impact or the percentage of student populations currently enrolled online. All of this can only be done if you have a fundamental understanding of the current financials in place.

Student Residency

Situation

Students classified as in-state, out of state, international, out of county, commuters, living in dorms or off-campus housing all affect your margins differently. As these populations shift or are projected to shift over time, you should be prepared to understand the financial impact of these shifts. One institution had a large group of international students that would pay 4 years of full tuition up front. When these students suddenly stopped attending, there was a significant financial impact and the institution realized the need to add additional domestic students at a much lower rate of net tuition revenue per student.

Approach

It's beneficial to understand your margins from various student populations in order to plan for potential enrollment risks or opportunities to refocus efforts. Using a program like Academic Economics can provide the data necessary to identify risk factors that may exist and equip key stakeholders on your campus with the information to anticipate and mitigate these risks where and when possible.

Athletics

Situation

Chances are your institution has an athletic division, whether it's a club sport or NCAA team. Administrators need to know the budget, revenues and expenses for their sports teams to pay for the coaches, team travel and everything else between. Often missing are the total margins generated from the various students on the teams, providing a better overall understanding of the team's financial contribution.

Approach

Identify the revenues and expenses for the various students on the sports teams to uncover whether you are losing or gaining money on the sport when all the revenues and expenses are allocated. You are hoping to discover one of two things: What would the margins be if the sport did not exist and the student came to your institution regardless or, what would be the implication of not having the sport and those particular students never attended?

Campuses or Sites

Situation

Some institutions offer courses and academic programs at multiple campuses and sites to help engage a variety of student demographics and needs. If you are in this situation, what are the margins at these various sites and how do they contribute to your overall departmental and institutional margins and plans? Are they feeder sites to your main campus, allowing margins on these other sites to be lower as a form of loss-leader?

Approach

Determine the revenues and expenses by campus and site to help discover whether these additional sites make sense to continue to operate. What would happen if these sites were closed and the students moved online? Is there another opportunity to downsize the physical presence but maintain enrollment? What if you lost the students due to the closure of the additional sites? These calculations would allow you to determine the marginal revenue or expense for these additional sites.

Partnership Agreements

Situation

Schools have historically explored options to expand their footprints in online education as well as other physical locations. Due to the current worldwide circumstances, this may become a more attractive option. As part of this desire to expand, many institutions enter into various partnership agreements in the form of a revenue share. The question is: what are the margins for the activities under these agreements? Do these relationships make sense long term? Should they be expanded, restructured or kept as is? You should be able to understand the margins around these arrangements to inform your decision making.

Approach

Consider if your marginal revenue might be higher if instead of using these partnerships, you brought this in-house and hired some dedicated marketing and development staff to build and market these online programs or additional locations. Try to compare the purported ROI on these agreements compared to the hiring of internal staff for growth.

As the world changes and your institution evolves its method of instruction, physical location, course type and expectation, student cohort and more, it’s important to refine and enhance your metrics and analysis to inform your decision making. A fundamental understanding of your institution's finances is critical to empower the right stakeholders to make decisions that set the campus and students up for success both on and off campus.

Edited by Annemieke Rice

Contributing Authors
Shannon LaCount, Ed.D.
Michael Leardi, Ed.D.
Anne Lundquist, Ph.D.
Kelli Rainey, Ed.D.
Annemieke Rice, M.S.
Jennifer Schiller, Ph.D.

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