Collaborating
for change

Changing Higher Education,
Transforming Lives

Revolutionizing
the Role of the University

COLLABORATION TO ADVANCE INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Coalition of
Urban Serving Universities

ASSOCIATION OF
PUBLIC &
LAND-GRANT
UNIVERSITIES

COLLABORATING FOR CHANGE

Collaborating for Change is a six-year initiative implemented by USU and APLU, and supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation,to work with urban serving universities to plan and implement transformational—although often disruptive—approaches to advancing student success efforts. These efforts are particularly focused on helping high-need and traditionally at-risk students while keeping costs down, re-examining business models, and reaching deeper into the community.

COALITION OF URBAN SERVING UNIVERSITIES

The Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU) is a president-led organization committed to enhancing urban university engagement to increase prosperity and opportunity in the nation's cities and to tackling key urban challenges. The Coalition includes 43 public urban research universities representing all U.S. geographic regions. The USU agenda focuses on creating a competitive workforce, building strong communities, and improving the health of a diverse population. The Coalition of Urban Universities (USU) has partnered with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) to establish an Office of Urban Initiatives, housed at APLU, to jointly lead an urban agenda for the nation's public universities.

ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AND LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is a research, policy and advocacy organization representing 235 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations. Founded in 1887, APLU is North America's oldest higher education association with member institutions in all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, four U.S. territories, Canada, and Mexico. Annually, member campuses enroll 4.7 million undergraduates and 1.3 million graduate students, award 1.2 million degrees, employ 1.2 million faculty and staff, and conduct $40.2 billion in university-based research.

Introduction

Higher education is in transition and has been so for decades. As pilots, projects, and processes balloon at institutions across the country, there is increasing public pressure to identify the "silver bullet" that will consistently deliver success for all students.

Yet there is no silver bullet. The approach that will graduate more students at a lower cost and ideally with higher academic quality does not come in one form, but in many.

While many institutional change attempts can point to some success, it is unclear which, if any, efforts are markedly improving student success at scale, or making a significant impact on narrowing the student achievement gap.

Change is not a single disruption—that, one good idea, achievable in a semester or a year. Rather, institutional change and transformation require continuous generation and execution of new ideas.

An emerging approach, however, which we refer to as relentless commitment, is showing results. Relentless commitment is a process of embracing failures and successes, piloting and then scaling practices that work, and then overcome barrier after barrier.

The purpose of this brief is to present this relentless approach and specific strategies that support student success. We draw core lessons from the first phase of *Collaborating for Change*, a six-year effort to improve student outcomes at public urban research universities. The initiative was launched by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), in partnership with the Coalition for Urban Serving Universities (USU), with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The initiative supports a set of institutions that planned and are now implementing transformational—often disruptive—approaches to advancing student success efforts, especially for low-income, first-generation students, who make up a significant percentage of their demographics.

In what follows, we highlight observations and strategies employed by seven public, urban-serving universities in the first phase of the *Collaborating for Change* initiative. Their strategies strengthen their capacity not only to improve student success, but also to empower the communities in which they are based—an aspect of transformation that continues to go largely unnoticed. We believe these lessons must be part of the national conversation on institutional change occurring in higher education.

What do we know about institutional change?

Institutional change is difficult to define, as no single definition exists. From our project and review of the field, we identified six major observations about institutional change in higher education which provide context for our work.

1) Those both within and outside higher education are largely unaware of specific and potentially promising transformational institutional change efforts.

Generally, the public believes that higher education is slow to reform and highly resistant to change (King, Marshall, & Zaharchuk 2015; Lapovsky 2013). Nearly 80 percent of adults believe that colleges and universities need to change in order to better satisfy student needs; and less than half believe higher education is actually changing. Equally concerning is the fact that, as of 2014, only 13 percent of U.S. adults believed college graduates to be prepared for the workforce (Gallup & Lumina 2014). Half of industry and academic leaders do not believe higher education satisfies student needs (King, Marshall, & Zaharchuk 2015).

2) Disruption is frequently used to describe changes in higher education, but may distract from how the sector is actually evolving.

Disruptive practices challenge traditional standards, operations, and procedures within higher education and are often framed as "threats" to an industry that many view as expensive, inaccessible, and slow at innovation (Christensen, Horn, Caldera, & Soares 2011; Forbes 2014).

Disruption, as in a break and a rebuilding, is only one aspect of the change process. Change usually advances incrementally, with one successful innovation driving the next one, then the next one, and then the next one. Change is revolution plus evolution; not one or the other. Technology, new models of competition, competency measures, and many other innovative approaches, are now being incorporated into universities.

Disruption is not just about threatening a traditional system, but rather about progressively inspiring new opportunities and approaches to transforming institutional receptivity, accessibility, and overall operations. Progressive disruption includes the promotion of specific innovations, and transformations that yield considerable promise and opportunity for other institutions to potentially model and replicate. Examples of progressive disruption are discussed in the following sections. They are varied in nature, but share a commonality: pushing institutions to operate on a "not business as usual" model.

3) Institutional change is easy to prescribe, complex to diagnose, and requires time to implement.

Why institutional change needs to occur may be more obvious than where and how it should happen, or how long it will take to implement. Change in general is multifaceted, unpredictable, and dynamic. Institutional change and transformation do not follow a linear path, but require consideration of a range of variables at both the institutional—and the student level.

Efforts to transform institutional policies and practices must consider an institution's overall

culture (Tierney 1988; Eckel & Kezar 2002, 2003; Setser, & Morris 2015); examine the range of barriers at both institutional and student levels (Chaplot, Rassen, Jenkins, Johnstone 2013; Armstrong 2014); follow an incremental but evidence-based path (Yeado, Haycock, Johnstone, Chaplot 2014); and effectively channel external disruptions and resources to achieve student success (King, Marshall, & Zaharchuk 2015; Selingo, Carey, Pennington, Fishman, & Palmer 2013; Christensen, Horn, Caldera, & Soares 2011; Armstrong 2014; Eyring & Christensen 2011).

Determining where and how change should occur requires not only institutional capacity, but also a strong understanding of a student's reality. Universities that are successful in integrating institutional change and transformation are strategic in identifying barriers and challenges to student success, and employing select interventions to improve student performance. This does not always happen easily or naturally; but rather, it requires a relentless execution of testing, piloting, and tweaking to ensure that changes support student success. Institutional change is complex to implement, as it requires shifting cultural mindsets and redesigning capacity to ensure student success.

4) Change usually first appears in market niches.

The cohort of institutions participating in *Collaborating for Change* are public urban-serving universities (USUs).[1] USUs are on the frontline of change. Students attending these public institutions are predominantly from the area where USUs are located, and typically remain in the region to work following graduation. Institutional change and transformation at USUs are often designed to also meet the needs of the communities in which they are located, to improve capacity, and to embolden those communities.

In essence, the success of USUs is also the success of graduates' families and of local communities. Partnerships with K–12 districts, community colleges, and businesses are instrumental in driving change within the institution. By documenting and understanding niche-market changes and coalition building through partnerships within USUs, we can offer lessons for the rest of the higher education sector.

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1. Participating schools are both members of APLU and USU.

Efforts to Scale Institutional Change and Innovation

An inherent challenge to institutional change efforts is how to scale practices across the higher education sector. Every university is different: in size, type, students served, and location, to name a few. Of late, a number of efforts have emerged focused on scaling institutional change across colleges and universities. These attempts vary in reach and scope, but share the same goal: advocating for large-scale transformation and sharing successful practices to strengthen student performance. A number of organizations are supporting similar change initiatives. The work underway is of extreme value to us and our institutions as we learn of and explore opportunities to scale successful practices and programming to advance institutional reform and student success.

COMPLETION BY DESIGN (CBD) is an initiative that seeks to significantly increase completion and graduation rates for low-income students across large consortiums of community colleges. CBD employs a distinct model for institutions to follow, which works in tandem with its hallmark "Loss and Momentum" framework, in which interested institutions may frame select interventions against a student experience guide.

THE UNIVERSITY INNOVATION ALLIANCE (UIA) is a coalition of 11 high-enrollment, public research universities. Through its mentorship model, the UIA aims to bring innovations to scale across the 11 institutions and has publicly pledged to graduate 68,000 additional students by 2025. The 11 institutions are uniquely suited to increase significant margins of student success given the volume of students served and their overall demographic, geographic, and economic diversity.

PATHWAYS PROJECT is an initiative of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) which aims to build capacity and opportunity for scale at community colleges regarding the design and implementation of academic and career pathways for all students. The multi-year initiative is currently working with 30 institutions in 17 different states. These institutions serve as sites to implement the project's *guided pathways* model approach, in which campuses will examine and consider opportunities to help students choose more coherent programs that are more aligned with workforce and employment standards, as well as with the next stage of their educational development.

REIMAGINING THE FIRST YEAR (RFY) is an initiative of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) in which 44 institutions will collaboratively work to transform and redesign the first year of college in support of student success. This three-year effort seeks to improve the quality of learning and student experiences in the first year, increase student retention, and improve overall student success. Participating institutions will form a learning community in which evidence-based practices are shared and scaled.

These initiatives all share a common purpose—to help students at every level succeed. These are just a few of the examples of organizations currently committed to understanding the institutional change process, and strategically disseminating how change occurs, to strengthen student success nationally.

5) The impetus for institutional change is as complex as the change process itself.

Institutional change stems from a variety of both external forces—federal and state policies, the philanthropic community, globalization—and internal forces—changes in campus leadership, student demographics, and financing. Additionally, growing enrollments of traditionally underserved or marginalized populations, along with state disinvestment of public universities, creates an uncertain future. Taken together, these forces create an urgent sense that higher education needs to change, but with conflicting expectations in an increasingly resource-constrained environment. Unfortunately, this sense of urgency often conflicts with the pacing of large-scale institutional change, which is incremental, evolutionary, and often invisible.

For many urban universities, change has been the norm. Public urban research universities have adapted, and continue to adapt, to not only remain competitive, but also to support an increasingly diverse set of students. Change efforts also reach deep within the community, adding to the complexity of how and when institutional change occurs. We believe the observations and lessons gleaned from urban universities serve as examples to help other universities adapt specific practices as they develop similar change agendas in support of student success.

Collaborating for Change
PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVANCE INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE INITIATIVES AT URBAN UNIVERSITIES

The APLU/USU *Collaborating for Change* initiative is a network of public urban universities undergoing large-scale, transformational institutional change to accelerate student success and completion, especially for low-income, first-generation students, while keeping costs down, re-examining business models, and reaching deeper into the community.

Over the past two years, seven public urban universities have planned bold new approaches to advance student success. Unlike other, related efforts to scale institutional change, *Collaborating for Change* seeks to understand a) how urban universities are taking the reins to transform their campuses and also their communities for the better, and b) how the collective innovation efforts of these institutions can transform the higher education sector more broadly. The individual and collective aspirations of these institutions are ambitious in reach, but not impossible to achieve.

Transformation Values and Practice

Transformation is different for every university. Differences exist in the types of innovations happening, as well as where and how disruptions are occurring.

Collaborating for Change: Institutions

- California State University, Fresno
- Florida International University
- Georgia State University
- Portland State University

- Temple University
- University of Akron
- University of Illinois at Chicago

The following institutional transformations are meant to provide context on how institutional change takes shape at various urban universities. The seven institutions featured represent diverse approaches to institutional change.

Their stories also underscore the importance of collaboration, not only internally, but among one another. From their institutional change stories, we are able to extract common values and approaches to initiating and supporting institutional change.

Cultural Values Associated with Institutional Change

Over the first two years, we observed six values common across universities that successfully innovate in higher education. These six values—being student-centered, collaborative, embedded, inclusive, accountable, and relentless—shape our strategic thinking around institutional change efforts, and, more importantly, allow us to consider specific ways in which other institutions can start to adapt and integrate similar change initiatives on their own campuses.

STUDENT-CENTERED. Universities are not always designed with the student in mind, especially non-traditional, disadvantaged students who may be working multiple jobs, have family responsibilities and complex schedules, and come with different levels of academic preparedness, among other characteristics. Innovative universities figure out how to redesign curriculum, registration, admission, degree maps, and other processes and criteria to meet the needs of all students.

COLLABORATIVE. Institutional change requires teamwork, specifically among groups and individuals who have not traditionally worked together. Collaborations should occur both internally and externally, and focus on outcomes beyond student performance. Collaboration may emerge from organizational restructuring, which requires team approaches, or new incentives. Integration of information and knowledge transfer through peer-to-peer, intra-institutional, and inter-institutional exchanges are all aspects of collaborative institutional change.

EMBEDDED. Urban universities historically align and consider a number of institutional change practices and initiatives within the community. This engaged and embedded element is reflected in student demographics, institutional research aligned with community needs, and formal and informal partnerships with local industries and non-profits in support of student success.

INCLUSIVE. Institutional change is comprehensive in its reach and goals. Change is not a matter of targeting specific groups, but rather looking at the needs of all students across demographics such as race, ethnicity, and income. Inclusive institutional change also considers strategically thinking about, and employing, strategies to overcome barriers through a student's entire pathway from recruitment to graduation.

ACCOUNTABLE. Institutional change is transparent and evidence-based. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and change requires a strong commitment from institutional leadership.

RELENTLESS. Change is not an idea, a practice, or a project. It requires relentless execution and commitment to advance continuous improvement, which includes piloting and eventual scaling of successful practices.

Transforming a Region
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FRESNO

PROBLEM: *Low college enrollment and college-preparedness within the region.*

Fresno is listed among the lowest metropolitan statistical areas for educational attainment—less than a third of the population 25 years and older have an associate's degree or higher, and nearly a quarter of the population only has a high-school diploma or equivalent. The region is also racially and ethnically diverse, with nearly 50 percent of residents being Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau 2014). California State University–Fresno is a reflection of the region's diversity. As a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), the university has a long history of enrolling and graduating disproportionately higher numbers of traditionally at-risk students who are low-income, first-generation, and minority. As of 2013, nearly half of its 23,000 students were Hispanic, and about 57 percent of undergraduates were Pell-eligible (U.S. Department of Education 2014). Given the university's historic standing in the community and its familiarity with the region's economic and social diversity, Fresno State is taking on an ambitious agenda to establish a stronger college-going culture within the Central Valley region.

SOLUTION: *Develop a coordinated initiative to align institutional commitments and practices in order to foster greater college aspirations throughout the K–16 pipeline and region.*

The Central Valley Promise program was created as a community-wide effort to engage the entire K–16 pipeline, including five unified school districts, four community colleges, and the university at the helm. Fresno State's Central Valley Promise program is ambitious in its reach and deep in its approach.

Transformation Strategies

TARGET FAMILIES AND BUILD INCENTIVES: The Promise initiative targets both students and parents, and establishes early and strong commitments to college preparation while students are in elementary and middle school, with the promise of guaranteed college participation in the future. Deep reach into the K–16 pipeline has been facilitated through the use of a shared mobile application developed to teach students and their families why and how to prepare for college. The app includes the acquisition of digital badges that can be applied to attend college athletic and cultural events, as well as to receive personalized college advising and counseling.

K–16 CURRICULAR ALIGNMENT THROUGH PUBLIC COMMITMENTS AND FORUMS: Fresno State developed opportunities to garner community-wide commitment and stakeholder participation at all educational system levels. More than 60 faculty leaders from K–12 partnering districts and colleges participated in two technology-based professional development workshops. These workshops facilitated greater collaboration across the K–16 sector, and also provided new information and resources to improve teaching and learning approaches.

STRONG AND TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION: In an effort to better engage the community, the Fresno State transformation team developed a regionally focused marketing plan to create a stronger college-going mentality and to build momentum around the Promise project. In addition to the campaign, open communication across project constituents, strong leadership at each partner site, and shared professional development opportunities have strengthened the university's ability to develop shared values around student success.

Putting the Student First
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

PROBLEM: *High failure rates in gateway courses are significant barriers to student progression and completion.*

With a student enrollment of around 50,000, Florida International University (FIU) is one of the largest public urban universities in the country. Nearly 70 percent of its student body is Hispanic, and the university is number one in the country for awarding bachelor's and master's degrees to this demographic. Nearly 40 percent of FIU undergraduates attend part-time, and about 84 percent are from the state. Gateway courses are notorious barriers to success—math in particular. At FIU, the Gateway College Algebra course had a failure rate of 70 percent.

Recognizing that students who dropped out or failed would likely not persist, the university took action.

SOLUTION: *Identify courses where students are at-risk and transform advising and pedagogical techniques to improve student performance.*

FIU's University Transformation through Teaching (UT3) effort focuses on developing a comprehensive, multi-year plan to improve the performance of 17 high-enrollment, high-failure, and high-impact courses. Innovations supported through the program work to improve the university's advising system and to establish stronger academic pathways for students as they enroll in, and persist through, gateway courses. UT3 also works with faculty to transform the teaching culture throughout the university.

Transformation Strategies

TARGETING THE HIGHEST BARRIERS FIRST THROUGH ANALYTICS: FIU employed early predictive analytics to identify College Algebra as one of the greatest risks impeding on-time graduation. As a result, the university developed a modified mastery approach through a computer-based, emporium-style Mastery Math Lab and integrated high-touch supplemental instruction techniques by including learning assistants in the classroom. Radical improvements in DFW ("D", fail, or withdraw) rates and student performance for College Algebra have been reversed from a 30:70 pass/fail ratio to 70:30. The university is now implementing some of these techniques in other gateway courses.

PILOTING, TESTING, TWEAKING, AND SCALING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES: The university is targeting UT3 efforts to improve student performance in 17 high enrollment, high failure, and high impact courses. FIU's work has been incremental—beginning in College Algebra, the university piloted and tested techniques they are now applying to other disciplines and departments. This work is partly responsible for fostering greater collaboration and synergies across departments, colleges and divisions. More than 41,500 students taking these gateway courses have been served, underscoring the depth and pervasiveness of these efforts.

CENTRALIZING AND ARTICULATING STUDENT SUCCESS: The UT3 change framework is centered on the student journey and embedded in the university's strategic plan. The university's transformation approach prioritizes four clear strategies: (1) help students to identify the appropriate major early, preferably at admission; (2) provide a clear path to on-time graduation in that major; (3) provide immediate feedback, whether on or off that path; and, (4) remove barriers and add supports in the path. This intentional approach has paid off. UT3 goals and associated work groups are integrated into, and aligned with, FIU's Strategic Plan.

Data Driving Change
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

PROBLEM: *Inefficient course scheduling and high risk financial behaviors serve as serious barriers to student progression and completion.*

Based in Atlanta, Georgia State University (GSU) is a reflection of the city. Demographically, 41 percent of its undergraduates are black or African American, and 9 percent are Hispanic or Latino, compared to 52 percent and 5 percent of Atlanta's population respectively (U.S. Census Bureau 2014; U.S. Department of Education 2014). In its transformational change work, the university identified two barriers common to all of its students: (1) limited availability of courses necessary for academic preparation; and (2) insufficient financial aid to cover the full costs of education (including non-academic collegiate expenses).

SOLUTION: *Employ the use of predictive analytics to target appropriate interventions and reduce barriers in order to support student progression and completion.*

Nationally recognized for its analytics-driven-model, GSU employed predictive analytics to reduce barriers and establish equitable supports through advising, course scheduling, and financial aid. Through the use of analytics, combined with support from external vendors (e.g., EAB, Ad Astra) and cross-campus working groups, the university has developed a more systematic and proactive approach to supporting student success.

Transformation Strategies

FORECASTING STUDENT NEEDS: In partnership with Ad Astra, GSU developed data analytics to redesign course scheduling by balancing faculty preferences, room availability, student demand, and academic program requirements. This disrupted the traditional approach to scheduling. The use of analytics also resulted in a more proactive and engaged culture around student progression.

REDEFINING ATTENDANCE COSTS: GSU used 10 years of student financial data—more than 140,000 student records—and a cross-institutional working group to develop predictive analytics to determine when students make financial decisions that put them at risk of attrition. Risk factors include the costs of choices in housing and meal plans, late application-filing for financial aid, failure to make satisfactory academic progress, and having unmet financial needs. The data-driven effort transformed the university's outlook on the overall cost of its undergraduate education, and also helped determine appropriate interventions—such as financial counseling—to keep students on track.

ReTHINKing the University Model
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

PROBLEM: *Universities are historically siloed, which impedes the development of greater support and alignment around student-success initiatives.*

More than 40 percent of Portland State University's undergraduate population is over the age of 25 (U.S. Department of Education 2014). These students typically transfer in from local community colleges or return to college to continue their education. Given these student demographics, the university is hyper-aware of the need to establish appropriate services and supports to ensure the success of adult students. As part of its transformation efforts, Portland State is undertaking an ambitious plan to break down internal silos and establish greater coherency and collaboration across divisions in order to strengthen student success.

SOLUTION: *Establish platforms and opportunities for greater transparency and role expectations specific to student success initiatives.*

Priority Areas for reTHINK PSU

- **PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS:** Establishing more coordinated routes for community college students to pursue a PSU degree;

- **DEGREE COMPLETION:** Aligning student success projects and efforts with the state of Oregon's landmark educational attainment goal of 40-40-20;

- **FLEXIBLE DEGREES:** Developing articulated pathways for returning undergraduates (largely adult learners who attended college but did not receive credit);

- **PROVOST'S CHALLENGE:** Allocating $3 million of institutional funds to support 24 innovative faculty–staff activities that accelerate learning, integrate innovative technology in educational delivery, and improve overall student success; and,

- **FOUR-YEAR DEGREE GUARANTEE:** Committing to an agreement with full-time freshmen in which PSU promises to provide the support and courses necessary to graduate in four years, or PSU will not charge tuition for any remaining required courses.

Note: See https://www.pdx.edu/oai/rethink-psu for more information.

Portland State University's campus-wide, presidential-led reTHINK PSU initiative aims to improve educational delivery to serve more students with better outcomes while containing costs through curricular innovation, community engagement, and the use of technology. The effort is distinct for its level of transparency and collaboration across the Portland State campus community.

Transformation Strategies

CROWDSOURCING AND DESIGN THINKING FOCUSED ON STUDENT SUCCESS:
Portland State's use of crowdsourcing, design thinking, and execution of projects through innovative platforms creates a collaborative change process within the campus. Faculty and staff engage in identifying problems and solutions, which are widely shared across the campus community. This design-based approach defines problems and crafts solutions that intentionally embed the student voice, feedback, and co-creation throughout all project phases, enabling Portland State to improve the way in which all students are served.

LEVERAGING REGIONAL CONNECTIONS TO DEVELOP FLEXIBLE DEGREE OFFERINGS AND CLEAR ARTICULATION STANDARDS:
Portland State aligns its change process with regional efforts and community partnerships. Working with local high schools and four community colleges, Portland State created Transfer Degree Maps, which provide supplemental materials related to admissions requirements, specific transferrable courses as aligned with Portland State University offerings, and answers to frequently-asked questions.

In addition to transfer students, Portland State's Flexible Degree programs were created to support largely adult learners, who combine their studies with work and/or family obligations. At the undergraduate level, for example, flexible degrees offer students the option to enter a program at any level (acknowledging credit for prior learning), to earn credentials along a different timeline (e.g., stackable credits), to complete their degrees online, and to receive career and post-degree resources.

ESTABLISHING AN ORGANIZED, TRANSPARENT APPROACH TO STUDENT-SUCCESS EFFORTS:
The university has championed the use of a project-management style in which reTHINK PSU priorities are explicit, associated projects are outlined in scope and duration, and roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated. The project-management approach is executed from Portland State's centralized Office of Academic Innovation (OAI), which provides leadership and support for activities in support of the reTHINK mission. OAI's staff carefully document and promote all innovation efforts related to reTHINK PSU. Monthly reports and a detailed website provide faculty, staff, students, families, and the greater community real-time status updates.

Access as a Driver of Success
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

PROBLEM: *Standard measures to assess student success may act as access barriers for qualified underserved students and their subsequent success.*

With more than 37,000 students, Temple University is Philadelphia's largest university. The university's transformation efforts were aligned with the principal goal, which was to deepen student access, and build its access pathway in a way that ensures success and offers lessons for the higher education community as a whole. What resulted is aptly named IN and THROUGH.

SOLUTION: *Redefining access through the integration of a holistic understanding of, and approach to, student access and success.*

In an effort to broaden access for qualified students, Temple University sought to address academic pathways into the university.

Transformation Strategies

INSTITUTIONALIZING AN ALTERNATIVE ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE:
The Temple Option is an alternative admissions procedure emphasizing motivational and developmental characteristics to measure students' potential for success. Applicants choose to have their admission application evaluated based on responses to four short-answer (a maximum of 150 words) questions. These questions are then subject to a holistic evaluation along with transcripts and other

standard admissions materials. This alternative admissions route targets high-performing highschool students whose academic performance is not reflected in standardized testing results. The Temple Option serves as a potential model for improving access and predicting student success. The Option was the product of a cross-campus team of representatives from enrollment management, institutional research, and faculty within the College.

INVESTING RESOURCES AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE LOCAL K–12 COMMUNITY: Faculty from Temple's College of Education created College Pathways, a program and partnership with a neighborhood school, Frankford High School. The program engages faculty in the design of a college preparatory curriculum in reading, writing and quantitative reasoning, provides professional development for teachers and student teachers, and fosters collaborative teaching and reflection. The program establishes greater alignment with the K–12 community, as well as enhancing college readiness for local, high need students.

INTEGRATING A MORE HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF STUDENT SUCCESS: The university formed a campus-wide committee to review the existing student support service infrastructure, policies, and procedures. The committee considered: (1) how non-cognitive factors add value to intervention and retention strategies for all Temple students, whether they are defined as marginal or exceptional upon admission; and (2) developed plans for implementing or enhancing student support services, including supplemental instruction, academic coaching and discipline-based tutoring programs.

Unbundling the Academy
UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

PROBLEM: *Standard educational delivery can limit student learning and pathways to completion.*

Like many other Midwestern cities, Akron, Ohio has been in a state of economic recovery. Previously dominant industries—such as manufacturing and automotive—do not carry as much economic

promise for residents. Adding to the city's economic challenges, college attainment rates are low, with only a quarter of adults currently holding a bachelor's degree or higher (U.S. Census Bureau 2014). As such, the University of Akron serves as an important workforce development option for local residents and their economic and social mobility. Acknowledging this, the university is embarking on an ambitious change plan to become Ohio's leading polytechnic university, providing an accessible opportunity for residents in which its degree offerings are more vertically aligned to area industry opportunities, and more attuned to student needs.

SOLUTION: *Unbundling institutional services and processes to reimagine the student experience and learning outcomes.*

University of Akron's transformation process explores content delivery and assessing student learning outside traditional higher education boundaries. The university leveraged data and technology through faculty, students, and support staff to unbundle content, reimagine delivery, assessment, and credentialing. Through this collaborative approach, Akron sought to determine more efficient ways to create additional pathways to skills attainment and degree completion for a diverse student body.

Transformation Strategies

REDESIGNING COURSE CONSTRUCTION FOCUSED ON STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND WORKFORCE DEMANDS: The question driving Akron's transformation framework is how to unbundle services and processes from the traditional credit hour model to better serve all students? To do that, the university is reimagining the student experience by leveraging data to better understand student learning and employer demand. Faculty and staff are also shifting how courses are traditionally created (e.g., by individual faculty) by redirecting course construction to employ a more collaborative and interactive process that is faculty-led and focused on student learning and competencies. Though in its early stages, this institutional change in course development and learning is transforming Akron's learning environment, to becoming more personalized and adaptive to student needs.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCY-BASED CERTIFICATES:
The university has prototyped a new program, the Certificate of Advanced Spanish for the Health Professions and First Responders. The certificate provides Spanish language training to enhance fluency among first responders in the region, servicing the growing number of Spanish speaking residents.

Courses offered in the hybrid program are taught entirely in Spanish to two groups of students: working adults from Akron's Children's Hospital and other students enrolled in Akron's health professions and emergency management programs. Instructors from both programs collaborated to map their courses, and have identified new ways of delivering content aligned with student competencies and desired learning outcomes.

Community Partnerships for Student Services
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

PROBLEM: *Weak relationships within the community can limit dissemination of college readiness resources and information to underserved students.*

For many universities, organizational structure and coordination can be difficult, especially when various units are decentralized. Time spent organizing units for meetings and the difficulty of reaching consensus and sharing information can result in significant costs and inefficiencies in decision-making. Compounding this is the way in which an institution engages and interacts with external partners (e.g. local school systems, NGOs, etc.). In large, decentralized universities like the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), interaction and coordination with external organizations and internal units was prohibitive to student access and college readiness. Accordingly, UIC decided to take action and to develop clearer processes and opportunities to provide information and resources from the university to external partners in the hope of reducing transaction costs and improving student access and success.

SOLUTION: *Formalize partnerships within the community.*

The University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC) Transition Coaching Integration program formalizes partnerships with Chicago-based transition-coaching organizations. Despite having no formal affiliation with the campus, transition coaches have been on the frontline of supporting UIC students. However their knowledge of, and access to, campus resources are often limited.

Transformation Strategies

CENTRALIZE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: To better support students, the university decided to formalize relationships with community groups and establish a staff position to manage the community relationships. This partnership provides better information to the student, taps into non-university resources, at a time of significant resource constraints.

Though a number of universities form partnerships with external organizations and community groups, UIC's centralized model is designed to reduce inefficiencies and potential organizational frictions between campus and community partners, and across existing student success offices. Additionally, UIC's formal partnerships also enhance the academic pathway and access to the university for local high school students.

ESTABLISH A PROJECT-MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:
Working with Portland State University, UIC chose to implement Portland State's design thinking, transparency and project-management approach to implement its student-success strategy. With this framework, the university openly supports teams and campus-wide collaborations to produce and develop high-quality student success-centered projects. Three elements—documentation, accountability, and the creation of an Office of Project Management—are core to UIC's project-management framework and overall approach.

Next Steps: Institutional Blueprints for Change

Over the next few years, Collaborating for Change will continue to drive relentless commitment as a workable approach to advancing student success in higher education. The next steps include supporting three institutions—Florida International University, Georgia State University, and Portland State University—in continuing their transformation process. After that, we will identify aggressive approaches to replicate and scale what works across the sector. We hope you will join us on our journey.

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