

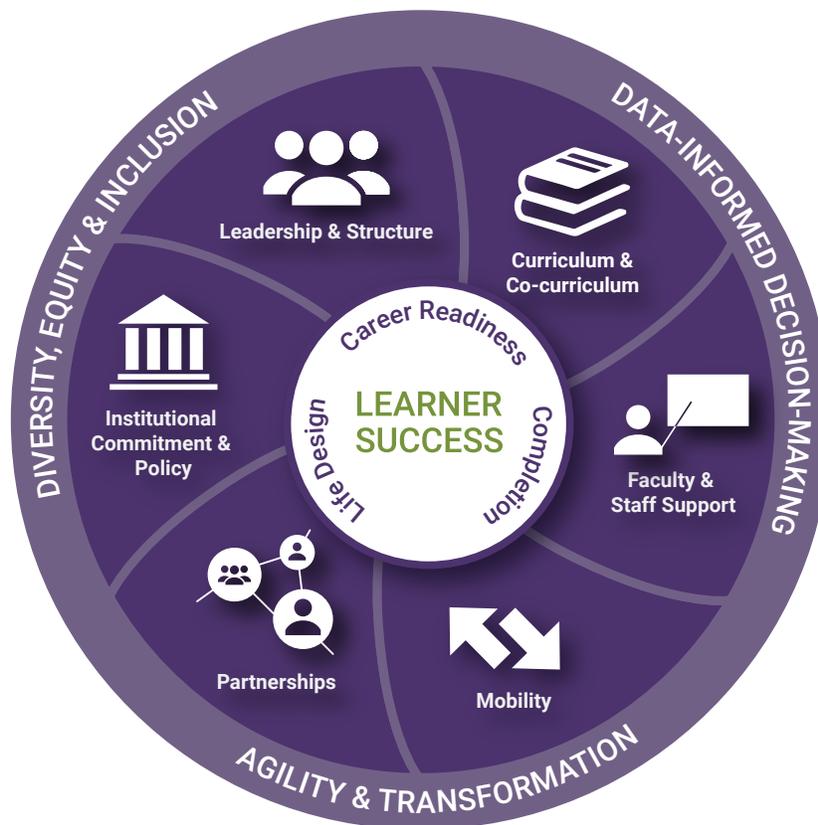
# ACE LEARNER SUCCESS LAB

## SELF-STUDY ASSESSMENT, PART 2

The Self-Study Assessment (SSA) tool, structured around the model below, is designed to **guide an on-campus review process** by institutions participating in ACE’s Learner Success Lab. *This is the second of the two-part SSA tool.* While Part 1 focused on defining learner success within your particular institutional context, Part 2 takes this exercise to the next step by examining each of the six target areas of the ACE Model for Comprehensive Learner Success in more detail and through the prism of the three strategic lenses.

In contrast to Part 1, which was intended for use by the entire learner success committee and its subcommittees, Part 2 should be divided among the subcommittees to facilitate the in-depth examination of their respective target areas.

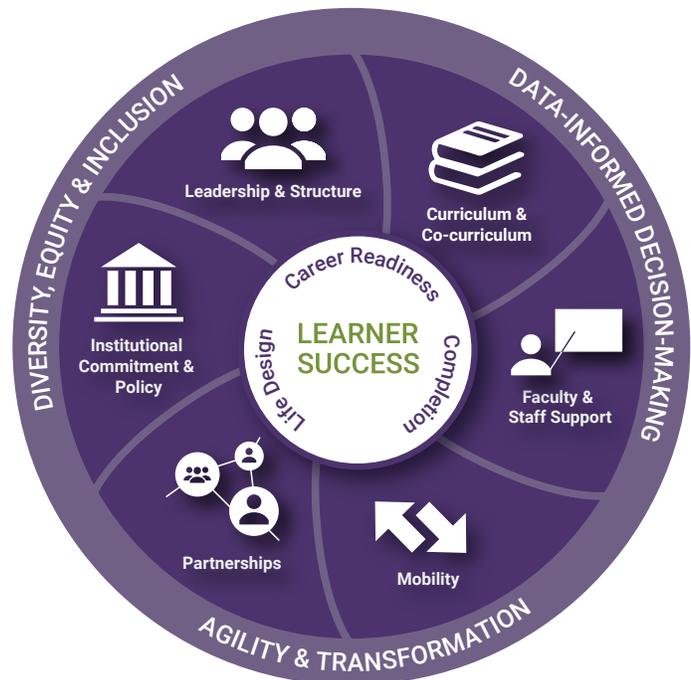
### ACE Model for Comprehensive Learner Success



# TARGET AREA: INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT & POLICY

Learner success requires priority in an institution's strategic plan. This is an explicit commitment by institutional leadership to transformative efforts related to student persistence, completion, and skills preparation for success in the workforce and lifelong learning. Furthermore, successful strategic planning must include provisions for iterative improvement, assessment, and implementation. A critical part of developing institutional commitment is organizational self-reflection. In addition to identifying assets, opportunities, challenges, and barriers through data gathering and dialogue, an institutional community discerns essential questions about their commitment to learner success, such as:

## ACE Model for Comprehensive Learner Success



- **What does learner success mean** to our institution/system's unique mission, culture, and community?
- **Why** should our institution commit to focusing on comprehensive learner success? What are our hopes for learner engagement? What would we dream for our organization if time and resources were not an issue?
- **What role** will our institution play in the local, national, and global landscapes? How does our institution connect and contribute sustainably to each of these communities?
- **Who are the stakeholders** we should involve in our discernment and decision-making? Who has been left out of past conversations? How can we engage inclusively and creatively to leverage diverse perspectives and experiences? How do we involve and meld voices from all areas and levels of the institution?

Strategic plans provide a roadmap for implementing goals and policies that align with an institution's response to these questions. Formal assessment mechanisms reinforce that commitment and hold leaders accountable. Policies that align with and systematize the institutional commitment ensure that meaningful, equitable student outcomes extend beyond a public statement, are sustainable, and provide agility for growth and improvement.

## MISSION AND STRATEGY

- Is the institutional mission learner-centric? Are learner success goals (of any sort) mentioned (directly or indirectly) in the institution's **mission statement**? How?
- Does the institution have **goals for learner success** (for example, increasing retention or completion, preparing students to meet the needs of the twenty-first-century workforce, personal and professional identity development, or connecting learner success and diversity, equity, and inclusion agendas)? What are these goals, and where are they articulated?

- What does the institutional **strategic planning process** look like? At what levels of the institution does strategic planning occur? How formal is the process? How does it vary between different areas of the institution?
- Does the strategic planning process include learner success (directly or indirectly)? If so, what goals and strategies does it set?
- Does the institution establish priorities, plans, and assessment metrics for both the **immediate and long term**?
- How does learner success relate to the institution's **mission, history, and student body**?
- Does the institution engage the campus in dialogue to develop a **shared vision**? Are these efforts diverse and inclusive?

**DIDM** How does the institution determine whether it is succeeding in its mission?

**DEI** Is the institution succeeding equally in its mission for all students?

**A&T** To what extent does the institutional mission inform department-level strategies and decisions?

## FUNDING AND SUPPORT

- What **financial resources** does the institution now provide for each of the following areas of learner success: curriculum development, faculty development, support infrastructure, staffing, co-curricular programs, partnerships, services for new majority learners, and any other learner success activities or initiatives? How are these budgets created (process)?
- How well do institutional **resources align with institutional goals** for learner success?
- Does the institution have a **fundraising strategy** for learner success? How is it aligned with the overall institutional fundraising strategy?
- What is the balance between **internal and external funding sources** for learner success? Has this funding increased, decreased, or remained the same during the last five years? Ten years?
- What learner success activities, if any, have been specified as the highest **priorities for additional funding** in the future? How well do these priorities reflect the institution's mission?

**DIDM** How does the institution evaluate the **financial sustainability** of programs, initiatives, strategic activities, etc.? Is there a specific model or strategy in place?

**DEI** Is the institution investing in programs **equitably**?

**A&T** When starting new initiatives, does your institution begin by thinking about what it will look like **at scale**? Does the institution emphasize **financial sustainability** from conceptualization through implementation of programs, initiatives, and activities? How uniformly does this occur at various levels and areas?

## VISIBILITY AND MESSAGING

- How does the institution discuss issues of being learner-ready versus learners being “college-ready”? Does the institution discuss being “friendly” (reactive) or “ready” (proactive) for new majority learners (veterans, student parents, first-generation, post-traditional, etc.)?
- What **terms** do institutional policies and other documents use to refer to new majority groups?
- Is **deficit-based language** used when referring to nontraditional, at-risk, or marginalized populations? How might this be replaced with more growth-minded and inclusive language?
- To what extent is the institution’s activity related to learner success visibly present on its **website**? Is there a learner success “portal” on the home page? How easy is it for visitors to the website to find information on learner success activities?
- To what extent is the institution’s learner success programming/positioning part of its **branding**, both internally and externally?
- What methods are used to **publicize** what is happening with learner success at the institution?
- How does the institution communicate with the **extra-campus public** about the value of learner success? What existing community engagement mechanisms might be leveraged to facilitate outreach and discussion?

**DIDM** Does the institution use focus groups, surveys, and open discussions to convey priorities, address concerns and **gain buy-in** by students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders?

**DEI** How does the institution determine **who participates** in conversations around learner success? Which voices are heard? Which voices are *not* heard?

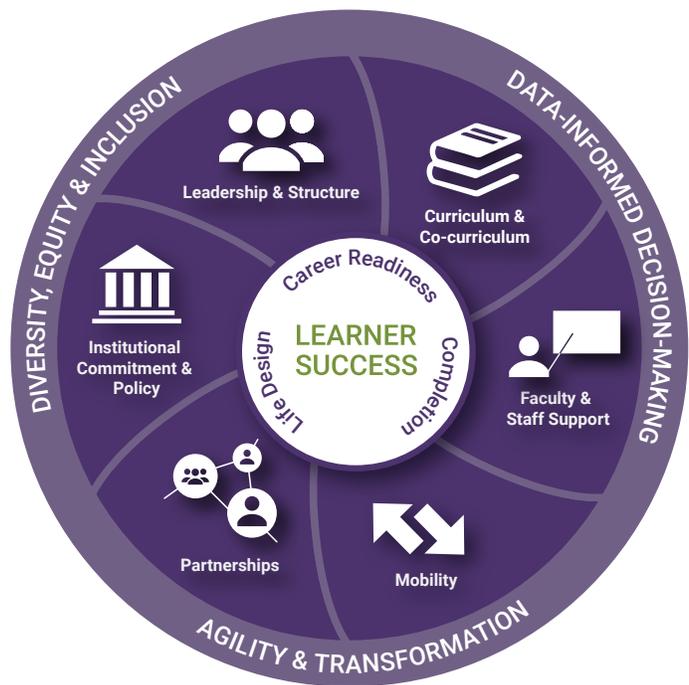
**A&T** What internal systems and practices are in place to support the **communication** necessary to facilitate organizational change management?

# TARGET AREA: LEADERSHIP & STRUCTURE

The involvement of senior leaders and appropriate administrative and reporting structures form an essential framework for learner success and institutional transformation. These include the president and chief academic leaders; offices that are designated to coordinate student support services (e.g., academic advising, counseling, career exploration, tutoring, financial aid) and off-campus learning experiences, as well as units that are responsible for research, institutional research, faculty development, enrollment management, finance, community and alumni relations, and advancement. Critical staffing and structural support include:

- **A committee or task force** that leads the work of the Learner Success Lab and carries the implicit directive of the president so that members prioritize their responsibilities and their work is taken seriously across the administration and campus units.
- **Modern, efficient student support systems** that streamline admissions, facilitate progress, and effectively manage data and relationships throughout the learner life cycle.
- **Adequate human and financial resources** that account for ongoing assessment, communication, and coordination across campus units and agility to respond to shifts in the higher education and global landscapes.

## ACE Model for Comprehensive Learner Success



## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- Does the institution promote and empower a **shared leadership** model? How? (Note: this question should be posed to various stakeholders.)
- What efforts has the institution made to engender deep organizational and cultural change over time? What obstacles is the institution facing in this work of **organizational change management**?
- Does the institution engage in **succession planning**? What **leadership development** programs are in place?
- How well does the **organizational structure reflect the institution's strategic priorities**?
- What level of support does learner success receive from **senior leadership**?
- To what extent do institutional leaders engage in **scenario planning** to prepare for potential future disruptions?
- What have institutional leaders learned from the response to **COVID-19**? How did the institution respond to support its most vulnerable (physically, socially, economically) students? Faculty? Staff?

- DIDM** Does the institution track **who participates** in governance and leadership development opportunities?
- DEI** Are these data analyzed to understand potential **equity gaps**?
- A&T** How is **leadership and innovation encouraged in non-management positions**? Does the institution solicit input for institutional effectiveness from all areas and levels of the organization?

## UNITS AND ROLES

- What roles do the **president/chancellor and provost/chief academic officer** currently play in learner success? Trustees and advisory boards?
- Where does **primary responsibility** for guiding and maintaining institutional learner success lie? Is there an overall **learner success office** for the institution? What is its charge? What are the **staffing arrangements and reporting lines**? How well are they working?
- What additional **offices, departments, units, committees, and/or task forces** have some responsibility for learner success? How well are these responsibilities recognized both by the unit itself and other campus units?
- Are learner success related duties and goals written into **position descriptions**?
- Does the institution have a **Teaching & Learning Office** (an office or offices designated to coordinate campus-wide efforts to blend professional and liberal arts education to meet learners' diverse career, life and educational needs)? How is learner success emphasized in the activities of the office(s)?
- What is the **organizational structure** that supports career services, internships, and experiential learning opportunities? Is it centralized or decentralized? How are information and opportunities **communicated and coordinated** across campus units?

- DIDM** Do **non-instructional units** engage in assessment efforts? Are these assessments aligned to the institutional mission? How is the information generated from these assessments aggregated? Is it used to inform decision-making?
- DEI** Is this capacity equitable for **all institutional stakeholders**?
- A&T** What capacity does the institution have to **adapt to emerging circumstances**?

## STUDENT SUPPORT AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

- Does the institution have a nontraditional **student recruitment and enrollment management plan** for the institution as a whole, and/or for any of its schools/colleges? How successful has this plan been in achieving its goals?
- What are the **enrollment, retention, and completion trends** of new majority learners? How are new majority learners distributed among schools and colleges? Between undergraduate and graduate programs?
- How are **student support services** (e.g., academic advising, counseling, career exploration, tutoring, financial aid, etc.) organized and coordinated? How well is the current structure working to support learner success (as defined by ACE and your own institution)?

- What **programs or support services** exist specifically to help nontraditional, at-risk, or marginalized students (including but not limited to learners who are racial and ethnic minorities, first-generation, veterans, student parents, post-traditional, etc.) succeed at the institution? What services are lacking?
- **Which learners access** these services? Are these programs proactively made available to learners and embedded into academic experiences?
- How well do admissions and advising processes support the specific needs of new majority learners? Does the institution use an **early alert system** to monitor those that may be at-risk? What factors trigger an alert? What interventions occur as a result?
- Are all **student services equally available to remote learners and non-traditional learners** who may not be able to access campus locations during regular business hours?
- How closely do **student service educators and faculty** work? What facilitates and incentivizes communication between these two groups?

**DIDM** How is the **effectiveness of learner support programs** evaluated?

**DEI** What is the process for determining **what support programs to offer**? Is there **variation between groups** in how well programs support learners?

**A&T** What targeted programs has the institution **successfully scaled**? What did you learn from that work?

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- What **communication channels** exist among the various units involved in learner success, and how well are they working?
- What mechanisms exist to facilitate communication between the unit(s) responsible for learner success and **other campus units**? How well are they working?
- How are **campus leaders** informed of learner success progress? **Other key constituents** (e.g., the faculty senate, committees and task forces, etc.)? How is their input gathered?

**DIDM** Are learner success data **shared** with department chairs, program directors, and other decision makers?

**DEI** Are learner success data **disaggregated** so that decision makers can understand equity gaps?

**A&T** How does the institution approach the work of **developing a shared understanding and vocabulary** related to learner success issues?

## INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE, STRATEGY, AND USAGE

- To what extent are **institutional research or decision support staff** involved in helping academic leaders identify barriers to persistence and completion across the institution?
- Are the institutional research and Information Technology offices **adequately staffed** to support a culture of data guided decision-making? How are the needs of these services integrated into the strategic planning and decision-making processes?
- **Who decides which research questions are asked** and what data are reported to various stakeholders? How does the institution **track and monitor** its current learner success activities? What does this information reveal about the state of learner success at the institution? Where do equity gaps exist?

- Does the institution *use* its learner success **data to inform decision-making**? Has the institution created a culture of data-guided decision making? Are assessment data disseminated to faculty and staff? How?
- If the institution has articulated learner success goals, how does it **assess its progress** in achieving them? What do existing assessment data say about the extent to which those goals are being met?
- How does **Information Technology strategy** inform the institution's work on learner success?

**DIDM** Are **data systems and infrastructure** sufficient to provide actionable data? What limits this ability?

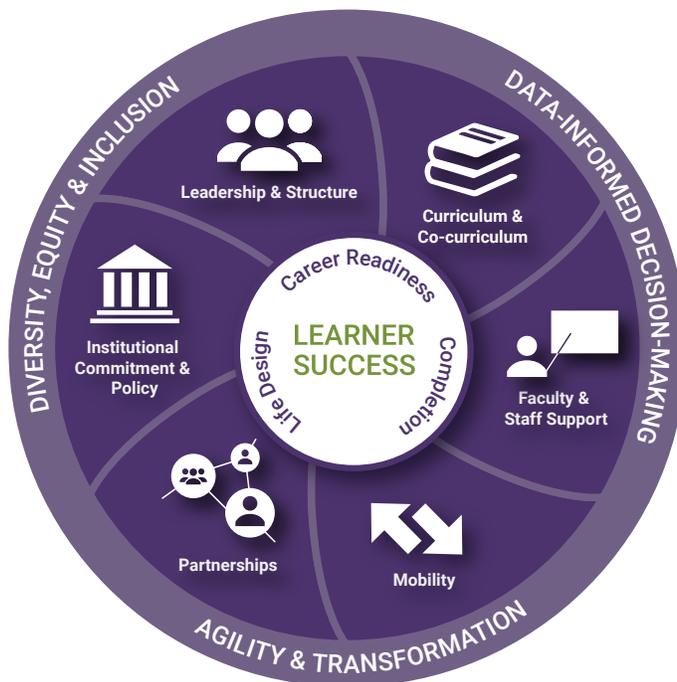
**DEI** How are institutional **assessment data disaggregated**? What groups do you have trouble identifying in your data?

**A&T** Has the institution committed to **continuous improvement and ongoing assessment**? How is this manifested throughout different areas of the institution?

# TARGET AREA: CURRICULUM & CO-CURRICULUM

Student learning and preparation for life and career are core purposes of higher education. The curriculum is the central pathway to learning for all students regardless of their background, goals, abilities, or the type of institution they attend. To help learners develop the skills needed to be successful, institutions will need to consider ways to blend professional training and liberal arts education through curricular and co-curricular activities. Workforce-ready global competencies must be included in institution or system-wide learning outcomes and assessments. Co-curricular programs and activities should deliver high-quality learning experiences that compliment course-based instruction and align with competencies and skills for working in a diverse postgraduate environment. The following elements contribute to making this possible:

## ACE Model for Comprehensive Learner Success



- **Undergraduate general education** focuses on core competencies such as communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and intentional opportunities for self-reflection, diverse interaction, civic engagement, and identity exploration. All learners should have inclusive, interdisciplinary opportunities to engage critically with global and national issues of historical and contemporary systemic injustice, while also developing an understanding of how these issues apply to their everyday personal and professional interactions.
- **Courses in each major, program of study, discipline, or research area**, in addition to teaching specific skills and knowledge, should provide opportunities for all learners to be successful by incorporating diverse perspectives and practical applications of core competencies. They provide a global and historical context as well as resources and scholarship.
- **Co-curriculum** programs and activities address contemporary issues, reinforce inclusive elements of the curriculum, facilitate discussion and interaction among learners of different backgrounds, and support the integration and success of diverse learners, faculty, and staff. Learners have opportunities to engage with culturally diverse individuals and organizations in the local community through projects and partnerships that build academic, personal, and professional networks.
- **Technology** is used in innovative ways to enhance learning, communication and social skills, research, and global collaboration through interactions with learners, faculty, and staff. This might be facilitated through strategic workforce development or research partnerships, collaborative international online learning (COIL)/virtual exchange, guest speakers, or administrative collaboration.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- What **liberal arts learning outcomes** (critical thinking, communication, quantitative reasoning, etc.) are included in the institution's overall learning outcomes? When and how were these outcomes written? Was the process inclusive?
- Do the institution's overall learning goals include **professional learning outcomes** (either directly or indirectly)? Are twenty-first-century competencies included in campus-wide learning outcome goals and assessments?
- Are **liberal arts and professional learning outcomes** separated or integrated? What are they? Where are they articulated? Who knows about them? How consistent are goals for different programs or colleges?
- Overall, to what extent do the institution's faculty and staff perceive career readiness as an **important element of the educational process**? What is the evidence? How does this vary among programs or departments?
- Overall, to what extent do the institution's faculty and staff perceive liberal education as an **important element of the educational process**? What is the evidence? How does this vary among programs or departments?
- Has the institution engaged in formal attempts to **blend professional and liberal arts learning outcomes**? Are there programs that do this particularly well?

**DIDM** How does the institution **assess learner achievement** of those goals? Who has access to assessment results? How are they used?

**DEI** Do **institutional outcomes include language** about cultural competency, diversity, equity, inclusion, civic engagement or social justice? Do course and program outcomes include such language?

**A&T** How is the academic programming mix evaluated? Does the institution engage in **labor market analysis** to inform academic programming? How do changing technology and economic forces influence curriculum development?

## COURSE CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY

- What does the **course development process** look like? What **high impact practices** are incorporated? How uniformly are these applied between schools and departments?
- Do programs of study identify and **integrate** components of liberal arts education and professional training in order to equip learners with the knowledge base and skills needed to be successful in life and in their career? How?
- To what extent does pedagogy take advantage of the **differing perspectives** that new majority learners bring to the campus?
- What opportunities exist for new majority learners to engage in **research**?
- To what extent do courses foster **experiential learning** that enables learners to apply and use what they are learning? Does the curriculum provide opportunities to engage in experiential learning both inside and outside of the classroom? Is this uniform among instructional formats (face-to-face, online, hybrid)? Are there disparities between programs or groups of learners?
- Are formal **opportunities for learners to reflect upon experiential learning** and how learning is demonstrated built into the curriculum?

- Does the institution offer a **freshman seminar or first-year experience**? Is it required? How is it structured? What is the curriculum?
- Are learners required to complete an onboarding course/experience prior to taking **online classes**?
- What efforts is the institution making toward improving **developmental education outcomes**?
- Has the institution analyzed outcomes for **gatekeeper courses**? Has the institution made efforts to redesign these courses?
- To what extent do faculty and administrators subscribe to the **Instructional vs. Learning paradigms**?
- Is the institution using **open educational resources (OERs)**? To what extent?

**DIDM** How does the institution **analyze pedagogical approaches, instructional modalities, and learning formats**? How are insights from such studies used?

**DEI** How are **faculty equipped and incentivized** to review their course content and delivery for aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion?

**A&T** How are promising **pedagogical techniques recognized, rewarded, and shared** across the institution?

## ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

- How do **departmental requirements** address persistence, life design, and workforce skills development?
- To what extent do academic programs require **experiential learning** and/or **internships**?
- To what extent are **life design and workforce skills development integrated** into academic majors, minors, and general education requirements?
- To what extent does the institution's **general education curriculum** include life design and workforce skills development? What is the evidence? When was the last general education review?
- Has the institution examined its **course scheduling practices**? Are course scheduling practices learner-centric? Are course scheduling practices efficient?
- Are complete programs available **entirely online** (including testing)?
- What does the **course approval process** look like? Is transfer and articulation considered? Is the course content examined from a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens?

**DIDM** What does the **academic program review** process look like? Does it address labor market skills demand? Are program review data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, Pell grant status, age, veteran status, etc.?

**DEI** Does the **general education program** include diversity requirements?

**A&T** How are **program review data** aggregated, shared, and used?

## CO-CURRICULUM

- What **theories** undergird the institution's co-curricular programs? How is the institutional **mission** reflected in co-curricular programming?
- Does the institution offer programs and activities that deliver high-quality learning experiences that complement course-based instruction and align with **competencies and skills for today's workforce**?
- Does the institution offer **every learner an opportunity to engage in life design** at the beginning and throughout the learning experience? Are these programs required? Are they proactively integrated into existing programming?
- How does co-curricular programming provide opportunities for learners to **develop agility and resiliency**?
- How are **issues relevant to new majority learners manifested in the co-curriculum** (e.g., learner success events, festivals, lectures, films)? To what extent does the institution host diverse scholars, performers, and lecturers to contribute to co-curricular programming? How is this programming made accessible to new majority learners?
- Does the institution have **articulated learning goals** for its co-curricular activities? Does it offer co-curricular **transcripts or certificate programs**? If the institution uses **e-portfolios**, is co-curricular programming reflected there?
- What do **NSSE and other surveys reveal** about the level of interest that the institution's co-curricular programming among nontraditional learners?
- Does the institution offer a **new student orientation**? How is it structured (one session, ongoing, online, face-to-face, etc.)? Is it mandatory? What content does it include?
- How are new majority learners **integrated** into campus life?

**DIDM** What is emphasized in **co-curricular outcomes**? How are co-curricular activities **assessed**?

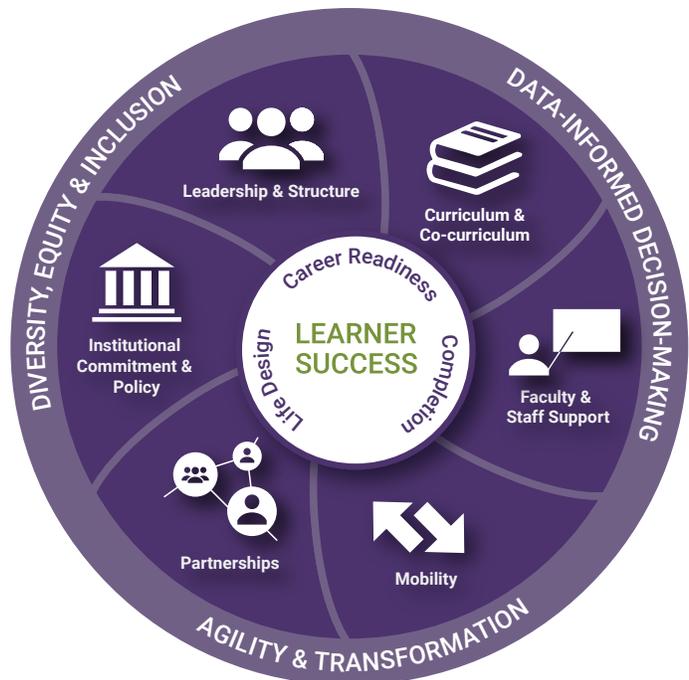
**DEI** Are there differences in the rates at which different groups **access co-curricular activities**?

**A&T** Does the institution's **infrastructure facilitate or limit** the ability to document, demonstrate, and assess student learning?

## TARGET AREA: FACULTY & STAFF SUPPORT

As the primary drivers of teaching and knowledge production, faculty play a pivotal role in persistence and completion, life design, and career readiness. Their commitment to comprehensive learner success is paramount. Institutional policies and support mechanisms ensure that faculty have opportunities to develop relevant competencies themselves, and help them maximize the impact of these experiences on student learning, research, and service. Professional development including workshops, seminars, and other programs are provided to help faculty and staff share expertise, explore classroom innovations, mentor and advise learners and junior colleagues, and address challenges in teaching, learning across disciplines. Tenure (for faculty) and promotion (for faculty and staff) guidelines reward those who contribute to the work of brainstorming, implementing, and assessing learner success, institution and community partnerships, global research connections, and mobility opportunities. This might be achieved in the following ways:

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- **Tenure and promotion policies** should state explicitly that efforts that significantly advance pedagogy, institutional equity and inclusion, career exploration, and other work relevant to learner success should be considered in tenure and promotion decisions. **Incentives and rewards** should be provided to encourage faculty and staff to engage with the local and global communities. Consider various approaches, such as financial incentives; opportunities to teach and research globally; recognition through publicity, awards, or special titles; fundraising or grant-making assistance; and support for employee participation in outside programs.
- **Hiring guidelines and practices** must include diverse backgrounds, experience, and interests among the criteria upon which faculty and staff candidates are evaluated. Explicit efforts should be made to diversify the candidate pool and to build inclusive and equitable talent pipelines. Consideration should be given to composition of the institution's learner population and local community when making hiring decisions.
- **Faculty and staff mobility** is recognized as an asset. Faculty and staff have opportunities to teach, conduct research, facilitate experiential and collaborative learning experiences, and engage in external professional development opportunities. Administrative and funding mechanisms, as well as promotion and tenure policies, support employee participation in such opportunities.
- **On-campus professional development** is expected, encouraged, and rewarded. Workshops, seminars, and other programs help faculty and staff build intercultural competence and incorporate diverse and global perspectives into their teaching, research, service, administrative responsibilities, and community connections.

## HIRING, TENURE, AND PROMOTION

- How does the institution decide what **faculty positions** to hire? **Staff positions**?
- To what extent does the institution **reward or penalize** faculty for contributing to the work of brainstorming, implementing, and assessing learner success interventions, especially in the hiring, promotion, and tenure processes?
- How does the institution **promote faculty engagement in learner success**? Does the institution provide specific funding for professional development activities for faculty, related to learner success?
- What are the **barriers to faculty engagement** in learner success? To what extent is the institution succeeding in removing them? What is the evidence?

**DIDM** What systems are in place to inform **strategic decision-making** around hiring, tenure, and promotion policies and processes?

**DEI** How are **diversity, equity, and inclusion** efforts integrated into faculty hiring, tenure, and promotion processes? Do faculty demographics mirror learner demographics?

**A&T** Is there a **pipeline** to attract and hire diverse talent? What is the institution's strategy for **developing and retaining top talent**?

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- What **internal workshops, seminars, and other programs** are offered by the institution to help faculty share expertise, explore classroom innovations, and address challenges in teaching and learning across disciplines?
- What learner success-related professional development opportunities exist for **faculty**? Does the institution offer professional development on **culturally responsive teaching practices, growth mindset, career guidance, workforce skills development, and life design**?
- What learner success-related professional development opportunities exist for **administrative staff and support staff**? Does the institution offer professional development on **cultural competence, career guidance, workforce skills development, and life design**?
- Does the institution offer professional development or tools for faculty and staff on **blending liberal arts and professional outcomes**?
- Does the institution require **new faculty** to complete instructional training? What does the training cover? How is it structured (number of sessions, timing, facilitator, etc.)?
- Are faculty required to complete training before **teaching online**?
- What are your faculty demographics? Do they mirror the student body?
- Looking at the research and teaching expertise of the faculty as a whole, on what **scholarship of teaching and learning** does the institution have the greatest strength? The least strength? How is this expertise disseminated? Is it made available?

**DIDM** Does the institution gather information on the **attitudes of faculty and staff** toward learner success issues? If so, how is this information used? How is professional development **assessed and evaluated**?

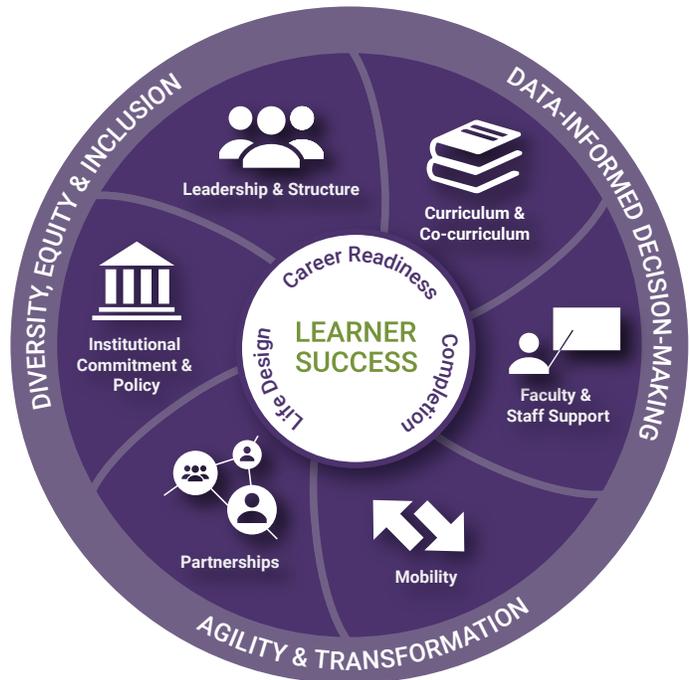
**DEI** Are professional development opportunities **offered and accessed equitably** by different groups of faculty and staff?

**A&T** Does the institution's **professional development strategy** proactively prepare staff to meet the organization's future needs?

# TARGET AREA: MOBILITY

Mobility refers to learners transitioning between institutions of higher education, the workforce, and other experiential learning opportunities, as well as higher education as a means of upward social mobility. Updated policies and practices are needed for learners who bring diverse experiences to—and increasingly enroll in—multiple institutions throughout their postsecondary careers. Almost 40 percent of learners transfer at least once within six years of first enrolling, and almost half of all learners who complete a bachelor’s degree first enroll in a community college. Institutional policies should make these transition opportunities as clear and “frictionless” as possible (i.e., prior learning experience is recognized and credits are not lost). Thought must be given to staffing and infrastructure needs to develop clear, accessible academic plans aligned to careers and to facilitate credit transfer and credit for prior learning. Technology now allows for mobility to include global academic engagement opportunities for all learners. This might be accomplished through collaborative online international learning (COIL) or virtual exchange; research cooperation; faculty and staff exchanges or expertise shared virtually; internship and service experiences; and virtual partnerships. Equitable, intentional mobility includes:

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- **Inclusive accessibility.** All learners have access to the tools, academic programming, and opportunities achieve their academic and professional goals. Policies and procedures serve to propel learners forward not create barriers to success. Funding and financial aid support all types of learners and from across the disciplinary spectrum. Technical infrastructure and training are available for all learners, faculty, and staff to success in virtual and off-campus spaces. **Assessments** continually explore whether in-person, off-campus, and virtual mobility opportunities are equitable and inclusive for learners, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds.
- **Funding and financial aid.** Scholarships and other funding are available for part-time and other nontraditional learner populations. Proactive practices are in place to encourage and assist first-generation and other traditionally underrepresented learners who may be less likely to complete the necessary steps to receive aid. Resources are available to help learners locate additional funding.
- **Ongoing support.** Academic and social support structures and programs facilitate traditionally underrepresented learners’ full integration into campus life, from the time of enrollment through their alumni experience. This includes development opportunities for faculty, staff, and learners, and emphasizes their role in creating an inclusive environment for learners from all backgrounds.

## ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL PLANNING SUPPORT (LIFE DESIGN)

- How are learners supported in exploring and selecting programs of study? Building a personalized educational plan? Does the institution have **clear, accessible academic plans** that provide roadmaps of the courses required to complete a credential and how those credentials align with further education and career advancement?
- How does the institution facilitate learners in **exploring different career fields**? When in the academic program does career exploration occur (early or late)?
- How are learners supported in **gaining critical skills, connections, and experiences** throughout their program of study—in addition to the knowledge and learning outcomes from their aligned coursework?
- Does the institution offer “**stackable credentials**” that provide milestones along academic pathways? Do these include credit and noncredit options? Industry certifications?
- How are learners supported to pass gateway requirements, enter into, and gain momentum/excitement for a field of study? Does the institution use strategies such as “**meta majors**” that allow for exploration of different career fields without losing credits?
- How are learners supported to **continue making progress on their plan** and toward completion of their program of study? How are they supported in switching programs with minimal loss of progress when necessary? Are there any tools available to help them understand the effect of **changing majors**?
- How does the institution support learners, faculty, and staff in translating classroom knowledge and competencies into **marketable career skills**?
- What are the ways in which learners can **access academic and personal planning services**? How does IT strategy inform these delivery methods?
- How does the institution develop **learner agency** to understand their interests, strengths, and skills in relation to their career goals?
- How does the institution understand the “learner life cycle”? Does this understanding embrace the philosophy of **lifelong learning**?

- DIDM** Does the institution track **which learners access** academic and personal planning support services?
- DEI** Do **all learners** have the opportunity to engage in life design opportunities? Are there **disparities** in which groups access academic and personal planning support services?
- A&T** How does the institution determine **what academic and personal planning support services to offer**? What **theories** undergird these service offerings?

## PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND TRANSFER

- Does the institution view prior learning and transfer as a **source of strategic partnerships**?
- Can learners easily apply **prior learning experiences and credit** earned from other accredited higher education institutions to their current program of study? What is the institution’s process and policy for assessing and awarding credit for prior learning experiences? How much is the program used? How are learners made aware of credit for prior learning opportunities?
- Does prior learning assessment inform the institution’s **recruitment strategy**?
- What **articulation agreements** does the institution have? Who initiates these partnerships? Who has access to this information? Is there an **overarching strategy** to managing these partnerships?

- To what extent do **academic departments collaborate with their counterparts at transfer partners** to create talent supply chains with aligned transfer credit pathways to ensure learners are prepared to be successful at the baccalaureate level in a specific major (thus incurring minimal loss of credit)?
- What consideration is given to **transferability** in course and program proposal process (in terms of how credits apply to the bachelor's degree program)?
- How are **learners made aware** of the transferability of their courses and programs? Does **life design** programming support prior learner and transfer work?

**DIDM** Does the institution track which institutions learners **transfer in from and out to**? Which institutions (academic, as well as employer) are your primary transfer destinations/feeders? What information do you have about the **biggest leakages in the transfer pipeline** overall and for major transfer partners specifically?

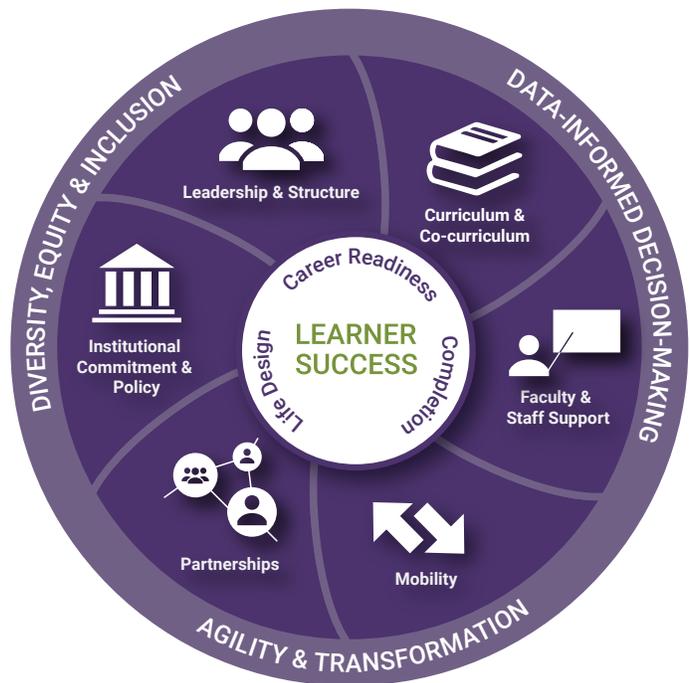
**DEI** Are transfer outcomes disaggregated, and if so, for which learners is the transfer pipeline not working particularly well?

**A&T** How does the institution view itself within the course of the supplying **lifelong learning experiences**? What is the institution doing to create a **transfer-affirming culture**?

# TARGET AREA: PARTNERSHIPS

Colleges and universities serve many stakeholders, including their local communities and employers. In order to serve these stakeholders well and ensure learners have the skills necessary for success, institutions must work closely with their community and employer stakeholders to better understand and meet their needs. Partnerships and networks, both internal and external, primarily transactional or more collaborative. These relationships—essential to comprehensive learner success—bring different viewpoints, resources, activities, and agendas together to illuminate and act on emerging issues. They provide diverse and meaningful experiences for faculty, staff, and learners; expand research capacity; enhance the curriculum; generate revenue; diversify knowledge production; and raise the visibility of institutions. Critical to the success and sustainability of these relationships are ethical standards of practice; commitment to mutual benefit or shared objectives; awareness of historical and systemic injustices; and articulated institutional methods for selecting partners, keeping records, and reviewing the entire institutional partnership portfolio. Partnerships can originate either “top down” or “bottom up,” but effective relationships derive their strength from bridging these two poles over time. Two categories of institutional collaboration include:

## ACE Model for Comprehensive Learner Success



- **Local community collaborations and partnerships with institutions, organizations, governments, and communities abroad.** Organizations, governments, and individuals in the local community often have wide-ranging connections, backgrounds, and knowledge. They can provide research partners for faculty and experiential learning opportunities for learners. Individuals from such groups and organizations are invited to institution-hosted initiatives and to be partners in knowledge production, learner development, and civic engagement programs. Global opportunities include physical or virtual exchanges, education abroad arrangements, and other forms of curricular collaboration (e.g., 2+2 programs; COIL). They also include research collaborations and centers and joint development and capacity-building projects. These relationships require strong long-distance communication plans; legal compliance; deepening knowledge of the partner institution and nation; and navigating different cultural, national, and academic structures.
- **Internal institution networks.** Many units across an academic institution or system have knowledge of and ownership for learner success. Therefore, it is imperative that offices work collaboratively with an array of administrative and academic units to design research, teaching, and service initiatives that support diverse faculty, staff, and learners, and communicate learner success work internally and externally. Collaboration between student support and academics is particularly important, as is the relationship with those who carry out diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, civic engagement, career development, enrollment management, finance, community and alumni relations, and advancement.

## LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

- Does the institution have an **inventory of partnerships** throughout the institution? In what form? To whom is it available? How is it used?
- Does the institution have an **overall strategy for learner success partnerships**? If so, what does it address? How well is it working? Does it inform partnership activities at **all levels and areas** of the institution uniformly?
- Does the institution have **criteria for deciding** whether to pursue potential partnerships? How well do they work?
- Does the institution regularly **evaluate** its partnerships? If so, what criteria are used? What have recent evaluations revealed? Does the process encourage **actionable intelligence**? What actions have been taken as a result?
- Does the institution's partnership model include creating **feedback loops** wherein partners share their desired outcomes and definitions of success so the decision makers are consistently receiving feedback on how their graduates perform? Have employer partners communicated their needs effectively?
- How does the institution's partnerships effect the budget? What kinds of administrative and logistical support are available? How **sustainable** are the existing partnerships?
- What **effect** do the institution's partnerships have on teaching and learning, research, and other on-campus activities?
- What opportunities exist in the **local and state environment** to enhance the institution's learner success efforts? To what extent has the institution taken advantage of them?
- Does the **immediate environment** from which the institution draws its learner population suggest a special approach to learner success? For example, large industries, sizeable ethnic populations, regional economic or geographic characteristics, etc.
- Does the institution **collaborate with local organizations, governmental agencies, and businesses** that have strong learner success interests and ties?
- Does the institution have programs that provide relevant **internships and service-learning** experiences for learners in the local community?
- Does the institution provide **learner success expertise** useful to the local and state community? To what extent are learner success-focused co-curricular activities open to and attended by members of the local community?
- Are relationships built and maintained between **employers** and faculty, departments, and/or the institution to align learning and credentialing opportunities with the demands of the labor market?
- Are relationships built and maintained between **community leaders and organizations** and faculty, departments, and/or the institution to align learning and credentialing opportunities with the needs of the local community?
- How did the institution respond to **support the broader community during the COVID-19** pandemic? What relationships can be built upon from these activities?

- DIDM** Does the institution engage in **labor market analysis** to inform strategic partnerships? Has the institution considered how partnerships may be developed and enhanced in **resource-intensive programs** to provide additional experiential learning opportunities and decrease costs?
- DEI** Does the institution's partnership strategy emphasize developing **partnerships that will benefit its new majority learners**? Are learner engagement opportunities available equitably?
- A&T** How are existing partnerships, and processes for seeking out and formalizing new partnerships, **evaluated for added value**?

## ON-CAMPUS NETWORKS

- Are administrators, faculty, staff, and learners **connected across campus** to promote activities and services, provide support, and communicate improved learner outcomes?
- What **platforms, systems, or mechanisms** exist to facilitate on- and off-campus networking opportunities?
- Does the institution foster connections between its **alumni** in the workforce and its **current learners**?
- What **top-down communication** mechanisms exist? How well do these work? What **bottom-up communication** mechanisms exist? How well do these work? What voices may be left out?
- What mechanisms exist to ensure **collaboration between campus units**?

- DIDM** Does the institution **track networking activity**? Are these data used to inform decision-making regarding policies and programs designed to facilitate on- and off-campus networking?
- DEI** How does the institution ensure that new majority learners have the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to **develop professional networks**, including mentors?
- A&T** Does the institution actively **teach learners how to engage in networking** activities and build their professional networks? Faculty and staff?