
Success & Equity Through Quality Instruction


Measures of Structural Change

It's important to measure the extent to which an institution is fostering an environment conducive to the highest levels of faculty development. The measures outlined here are related to the pace and quality of intentional adoption of improved practice on the part of faculty and within a broader context of student-focused innovation.

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Every student deserves a strong start in their first year of college. This toolkit is part of a SSTF three-part series, providing resources to assist postsecondary leaders design and implement reform strategies that support equitable outcomes for students who are marginalized and racially minoritized.



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Measures of Structural Change

Measures of Institutional Culture Change

Measures of institutional culture change are evidence-based metrics that can be used to assess the extent to which an institution is fostering an environment conducive to the highest levels of faculty development, as outlined in the above rubrics. Grounded in implementation climate research, and informed by Sova's Implementation Climate Scan, the measures outlined below are related to the pace and quality of intentional adoption of improved practice on the part of faculty and within a broader context of student-focused innovation.

The Power of Perception

When studying measures of culture change, keep in mind that the numerator is faculty perceptions and the climate measures are the denominators. Climate research is anchored in the notion that perceptions can be studied, measured and influenced. As a result, the focus on perceptions provides a practical foothold for efforts aimed at strengthening a healthy culture for student success innovation.

These measures are especially important in higher education settings because leaders in this sector lack the formal command and control levers available to leaders in other workplaces. Higher education's core commitments to shared governance and academic freedom define faculty culture and fundamentally shape the landscape of possibility for leaders seeking to innovate at scale on behalf of better and more equitable outcomes for today's students.

Visibly Establishing Senior Leadership

- To what extent have senior leaders communicated a compelling vision of student success?
- Does this vision meaningfully connect with the core values of faculty?
- Does leadership consistently and visibly connect discrete efforts to the overarching vision?

Developing a Culture of Evidence and Data

- Does your institution have a culture of data use in which data are used to inspire curiosity (rather than to shame or punish)?
- Does the institution's use of data include specific attention to both the technical aspects (data collection structures) and the human dimensions of change (the demonstration of social and emotional intelligence in the translation of data for faculty and staff)?

Strengthening Mid-Level Leadership Capacity

- Are academic leaders, including deans and department chairs, equipped to translate the vision from senior leaders (president and provost) to speak to the specific interests and passions of faculty?
- Are they competent in both project management and change leadership?

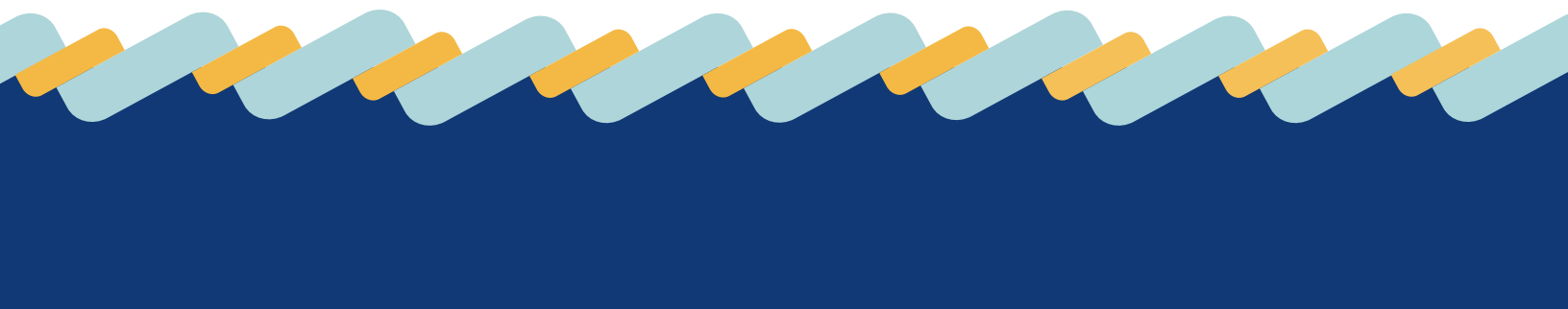
Building Trust and Morale

- To what extent do faculty feel valued and supported?
- Do they feel optimistic when working to improve their practice in the classroom?
- Do they show resilience in the process?
- Do they believe that leaders care about them personally?

Deepening Equity Consciousness

- To what extent do leaders display an understanding of the historical and persistent barriers to student success, as sustained in policies, practices and cultural conditions, along the lines of race, socioeconomic status and gender?
- To what extent do faculty understand how their role and mindset can contribute to exacerbating inequities or, alternatively, leveling the playing field?

“Does your institution have a culture of data use in which data are used to inspire curiosity (rather than to shame or punish)?”



About This Toolkit

This toolkit provides institutions, higher education systems and state agencies with a framework to fully engage faculty in the student success movement. It was prepared by ACUE and Sova based on decades of research and insights gained by these organizations through direct work supporting hundreds of institutions committed to scaling ambitious, equity-grounded student success reforms.

Toolkit Authors

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President and Co-founder, ACUE

Dr. Gyrko is president and co-founder of ACUE and has spent more than two decades leading innovative efforts to create and expand educational opportunities for students at all levels, in the United States and around the world. Gyrko spearheaded ACUE's earliest work with faculty, provosts, presidents and experts to define the evidence-based teaching approaches that every college educator should possess — ACUE's Effective Practice Framework. Together with ACUE's chief academic officer and founding team, Gyrko devised ACUE's online courses in effective teaching and developed ACUE's comprehensive approach to institutional partnerships which encompasses academic, research, planning and communications services. Gyrko formed and maintains ACUE's collaborations with leading higher education associations and national philanthropies, including the American Council on Education, with whom ACUE's credentials are co-issued. He co-authored ACUE's approach to program accountability, which underlies numerous studies demonstrating the positive impact of effective instruction on student outcomes.

Penny MacCormack, Ed.D.

Chief Academic Officer, ACUE

Dr. MacCormack is the chief academic officer at ACUE. In this role, she led the creation of ACUE's Effective Practice Framework — a research-based and independently validated statement of the teaching skills and knowledge that every college educator should possess. She also leads the development and implementation of all ACUE course offerings, through which faculty are awarded the only nationally recognized teaching credential endorsed by the American Council on Education. Under MacCormack's direction, ACUE has published numerous studies finding statistically significant improvements in outcomes among students taught by ACUE-credentialed faculty. These peer-reviewed studies have been commended for their range, depth and rigor of analysis.

Meghan Snow

Chief Data Officer, ACUE

Ms. Snow is the chief data officer at ACUE. In this role, she is responsible for setting and executing a strategic research agenda and supporting a culture of data-driven decision-making across the organization, with the goal of delivering on the mission to ensure student success and equity through quality instruction.

At ACUE, Snow led the development of the organization's approach to evaluating the impact of ACUE's courses on faculty and students at partner institutions. To date, ACUE has published over twelve evaluations demonstrating, in part, improved student performance and improved faculty self-efficacy. Snow has presented papers and sessions about this work at conferences including the Association for the Study of Higher Education, the American Educational Research Association, the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

Christine Ferrell

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Ms. Ferrell served as executive director of strategic communications at ACUE. A strategic marketing and media leader with extensive experience ranging from brand management and strategy to integrated marketing communications and digital media optimization, Ferrell has dedicated more than a decade of her career to enabling growth for institutions of higher education. Prior to her tenure at ACUE, Ferrell served as director of marketing and media relations at North Carolina State University's Poole College of Management, and served as director of marketing and business development for the Executive MBA and online MBA@UNC programs at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Kenan-Flagler Business School.

Alison Kadlec, Ph.D.

Founding Partner, Sova

Dr. Kadlec is a founding partner at Sova, where she leads a body of work focused on accelerating the pace and improving the quality of large-scale, equity-grounded reform of higher education. She has worked with scores of colleges and universities across the country to support the capacity of senior and mid-level leaders to effectively engage members of their communities as constructive partners in the hard work of change on behalf of equitable student success. Alison and her team also work with state policymakers and system leaders in more than half the states in the U.S. to help improve the quality of policy development and implementation around higher education and workforce issues. She has been active in the Guided Pathways movement since its origins, led the 2020 update of the Core Principles for Transforming Remediation, and is working in several states on issues related to scaled redesign of developmental education.

Paul Markham, Ph.D.

Founding Partner, Sova

Dr. Markham's work focuses on building and sustaining cultures for innovation and change. Prior to launching Sova, Paul served as vice president for organizational strategy at Public Agenda and vice president for strategic partnerships & development at Achieving the Dream, Inc. Paul also served as senior program officer at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, where he led the Foundation's work focused on developmental education redesign and the creation of Pathways for student success. As

a faculty member, he served as associate professor of education at the University of Washington Bothell (UWB) and assistant professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Western Kentucky University (WKU), both broad access universities committed to the success of all students who seek a postsecondary education. Paul has extensive experience in building capacity for social change organizations and initiatives through his roles as director of strategic partnerships & community engagement at UWB and director of the ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships and director of the Institute for Citizenship and Social Responsibility at WKU. In all these roles, Paul focused on developing organizational capacity to contribute to healthy communities, strong economies and an engaged democracy. In the private business sector, Paul has led a number of implementation and improvement efforts as both a process engineer and quality assurance manager.

Ashmi Patel

Program Manager, Sova

Ms. Patel's work focuses on equity, inclusion and diversity within higher education. Prior to joining Sova, Ashmi served as the director of the Center for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity at Eastfield College, where she developed programs to enhance students' social and intellectual development, eliminate barriers to student access and success, and develop a culture of equity-mindedness and inclusivity. Previously, as a program associate at the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, Ashmi worked on executive leadership development for aspiring community college presidents. As a first-generation child of immigrant parents from India, Ashmi has experienced the importance of student success support structures and identity development within colleges.

About The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE)

ACUE promotes student success and equity through quality instruction. In partnership with colleges, universities, higher education systems and associations, ACUE prepares and credentials faculty in the evidence-based teaching practices that improve student achievement and close equity gaps. Numerous and independently validated efficacy studies confirm that students are more engaged, learn more and complete courses in greater numbers — more equitably with their peers — when taught by ACUE-credentialed faculty. ACUE's online, cohort-based credentialing programs are delivered through institutional partnerships and open enrollment courses endorsed by the American Council on Education.

About Sova

Sova is a mission-driven organization focused on promoting equitable upward mobility for more students through reform of higher education and workforce development. Sova's work is based on the conviction that sustainable, scalable, high-quality innovation in higher education and workforce development must be designed and implemented with rigorous attention to the human dimensions of change. Sova's core services are focused on adaptive change leadership, strategic communications and will-building, program strategy and implementation support.



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