

Student Services Self-Assessment Toolkit

Team Survey

Community Colleges serve a wide variety of students with different strengths, support systems, and needs. However, as with any student, at times life, work, family, and school demands can become overwhelming requiring a little extra support. At times like these simple life needs or basic academic hurdles can cause students to drop out. Having a strong, proactive student support system can be the difference between a successful student and another drop-out statistic. Use the Student Services Self-Assessment Toolkit to help your college team assess current usage of student services and the level of student services provided to students, as well as make a Service Improvement Plan to build on existing strengths and improve the student experience.

The Student Services Toolkit was created through the Shifting Gears project funded by the Joyce Foundation. A committee consisting of members from the Illinois Community College Board, Women Employed, and the Office of Community College Research and Leadership at the University of Illinois designed the toolkit.

This is the first document in the toolkit- the team survey. The toolkit also includes a Service Usage Evaluation (SUE) and Service Improvement Plan (SIP). The entire team can use the survey to assess how all team members see student services and what is available to students. SUE can be completed by a few members on the team and shared with the rest of the team to help the team get a clearer understanding of how services are actually being used. Teams are also encouraged to develop a student survey to assess student perspectives. Allowing students to share their experiences and understanding of student support services in the program provides a more robust, accurate view of college performance. Focus groups of students may also be utilized to help accurately evaluate student support services. SIP can be used to help the team decide on priorities and responsibilities for making any improvements to student services that need to be made. Student services are always a work in progress especially in tight fiscal times, so even the best program is likely to find a strength they can build on or a service that is being underutilized.

Improving Student Outcomes: Teams can use aspects of the self-assessment toolkit to measure improvements. The self-assessment process can be used as part of the college's strategic planning, annual planning, program review, or bridge program application each year. The Team Survey includes numerical scores which can be used to compare team members perceptions of student service provision or track program progress from year to year. Once the team has identified strengths and areas for improvement, it is important to use SIP to prioritize which issues the group will focus on and engage team members from each area in identifying and

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working towards solutions collaboratively. The college should share results and their priorities for improvement with their Chief Student Services Officers who can then ensure they receive any additional help needed to make progress on their goals. SIP includes a section where colleges can identify their strengths, ways to build on their strengths, priorities for improvement, and action plans.

How to Begin: Colleges are encouraged to assemble a team of administrators, faculty or teachers, and staff leaders, including those working directly with all types of students and those working on support services and research or institutional effectiveness. The team should include those who are involved with the day-to-day operation of the program and those who provide strategic direction or can provide resources from other departments of the institution. Each individual should complete the Team Survey portion. One or two team members who have access to service usage and other quantitative data should be asked to fill out SUE and share results with the team.

The team should then meet to discuss their impressions of the level of student support currently provided and use SIP to develop a plan for building on strengths and addressing weaknesses.

Using the Survey: The tool is based on three themes of student success:

- Early student engagement
- Supporting student success
- Institutional commitment to student success

Each theme has categories within it and these include benchmarks. The benchmarks provide a high-mark target or goal for which the college can plan.

The team survey includes an unusual grading scale. Zero represents none- the program does not provide this service. A score of one indicates that the program is not offering the service but is planning to offer it. Two indicates that the service is offered but is not being utilized by students to the extent expected or needed. Team members may want to let the group know if the service is offered, but not used at all. Three indicates that the services is offered and is being by some students students. Four indicates that the service is offered and is used by a large number of students or all students. The team can average individual results and compare them or

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average all the teams results for each area and use them to track progress over time. The team can also use the numeric results of the survey to set priorities for improvement.

Please answer all questions honestly as they apply to students at your institution. Because there may be different levels of programs, questions are divided according to population -- Adult Education, Developmental Education and Traditional Education. If you don't know the answer to a question leave it blank.

Theme 1: Early Student Engagement

Benchmark: Well in advance of the program start date, students meet with a staff person or faculty member who identifies possible barriers to completion and connects students to additional resources, including financial assistance and income supports, such as food stamps. Staff give students individualized help to develop a realistic career and education plan and budget for lost wages and program costs.

	Adult Education					Developmental Education					Traditional Education				
	Extent of Service Provision					Extent of Service Provision					Extent of Service Provision				
	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot
Before the program start, entering students are engaged in career exploration, learn about career pathways, and receive help to determine whether the program is a good fit.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Services and supports are well-advertised and students	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4

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learn about them when they first express interest in the program.															
Materials and websites do not use insider acronyms or unfamiliar terms when explaining student services.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Staff meet with each bridge student prior to the start of class to help create a course schedule, an academic plan, as well as identify support service needs and resources to meet needs.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Transition coordinator, case manager, or assigned advisor are available after work hours or on Saturdays to accommodate worker schedules.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Bridge students receive budgeting tools and staff are available to help students with budgeting for lost income	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4

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<p>and/or any course expenses.</p> <p>Students learn about various types of financial assistance and staff help them apply for all available sources, including child care subsidies and other income supports such as food stamps.</p> <p>Outreach to developmental bridge students occurs well in advance of financial aid cut-offs.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4</p>
<p>Early Student Engagement Total Score</p>			
<p>Divide total score by the number of questions answered</p> <p>Early Student Engagement Average Score</p>			

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Theme 2: Supporting Success

Benchmark: The college or organization provides proactive supports and robust academic supports to address barriers to completion and financial aid needs, and helps bridge students transition to careers and further education. Students meet with an advisor, counselor, or transition coordinator at least once a semester. Staff are trained to recognize (not diagnose) signs of major challenges such as homelessness, mental health issues, or domestic violence. The program has strong links to community resources to ensure students receive the help they need.

Providing Student Supports	Adult Education					Developmental Education					Traditional Education				
	Extent of Service Provision					Extent of Service Provision					Extent of Service Provision				
	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot
An advisor/counselor or transition coordinator meets with each student before the semester and at least once during the semester for academic planning and to address student needs.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Tutors provide dyadic or one-on-one tutoring in multiple subject areas at times and places convenient to them.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
An early alert program is in place with clear staff roles and procedures to proactively identify and assist students at	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4

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<p>risk of failure.</p> <p>The college or organization has childcare available for infants through school age during day, evening, and weekend classes for all students, or has a partnership with an outside organization to expand available, affordable childcare.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>
<p>Staff is familiar with the childcare referral network resources and website, and proactively assists students.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>
<p>Staff and faculty are trained to recognize potential signs of personal issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence, refer students to providers and follow up to make sure they have gotten the help they needed.</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>
<p>Program has referral relationships with other</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>0 1 2 3 4</p>

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organizations, such as housing providers and food banks, to meet student needs. Staff proactively refers students to needed resources.			
Providing Student Supports Total Score			
Divide total score by the number of questions answered Providing Student Supports Average Score			

Financial Aid and Income Supports	Adult Education Extent of Service Provision					Developmental Education Extent of Service Provision					Traditional Education Extent of Service Provision				
	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	Alot
Staff proactively provide bridge students with uniforms, books, exams, or transportation vouchers.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Developmental and Career Technical Education bridge students receive multiple types of financial aid.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Staff proactively provide	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4

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bridge students with emergency help, such as emergency grants or transportation vouchers.			
Staff meets with bridge students who are struggling financially to help them budget and identify additional resources, including public benefits.	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
Financial Aid and Income Supports Total Score			
Divide total score by the number of questions answered Financial Aid and Income Supports Average Score			

Transitioning to Further Education and Employment	Adult Education Extent of Service Provision					Developmental Education Extent of Service Provision					Traditional Education Extent of Service Provision				
	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot
Staff orient bridge students to CTE or college study, including an introduction to staff members and services,	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4

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and program standards and expectations.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Bridge students receive help applying for further study, selecting courses, and applying for financial aid before they complete their current program.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
All bridge students learn about starter jobs and receive resources to help them find starter jobs.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Internships and starter job postings are shared with bridge students through a variety of methods.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Local employers participate in networking or job search events or assist with mock interviewing and provide detailed feedback.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Staff meets with all bridge students to provide career testing, counseling, and career	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4

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planning assistance.			
Transitioning to Further Education and Employment Total Score			
Divide total score by the number of questions answered Transitioning to Further Education and Employment Average Score			

Theme 3: Team Commitment to Success

Benchmark: Changes to program offerings, academic or other support services are made based on data. Dedicated teams or committees guide and monitor student success efforts. Staff receive high quality training.

	Adult Education					Developmental Education					Traditional Education				
	Extent of Implementation					Extent of Implementation					Extent of Implementation				
	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot	None	Planning	Underutilized	Some	A lot
Disaggregated data is collected, measured, and evaluated to assess program and student service effectiveness.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Students are engaged in surveys, focus groups, or interviews and the results inform program and resource	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4

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decisions.															
There is a clear, well-organized process for evaluating data and implementing solutions, engaging multiple stakeholders.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
All staff and instructors view academic success of bridge students as their job, and are responsible for helping meet improvement goals.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Leaders are willing to make changes to resources, policies, or procedures to improve student success.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Staff know when and where bridge students drop out or begin having problems and actively work to find solutions.	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4
Staff work together to address student needs and help	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	2	3	4

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bridge students complete. New instructors, tutors, and staff receive training based on best practices for working with adult learners.	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
Instructors, tutors, and staff receive on-going staff development opportunities based on best practices for working with adult learners.	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2 3 4
Team Commitment to Success Total Score			
Divide total score by the number of questions answered Team Commitment to Success Average Score			

Insert your totals and averages from each section.

	Adult Education		Developmental Education		Traditional Education	
	Total Score	Average	Total	Average	Total	Average
Early Student Engagement						
Supporting Success						
Providing Student Supports						
Financial Aid and Income Supports						

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Transitioning to Further Education and Employment						
Team Commitment to Success						