Student Success Initiative Inventory Discussion Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Nearly every institution attempting large-scale student-success transformation is awash in discrete initiatives that, when not sufficiently coordinated, contribute to a sense of 'initiative fatigue' (the leading symptoms of which are slowed/poor implementation, low moral, declining confidence in leadership, active resistance and passive non-compliance).

The **Student Success Initiative Inventory is a user-friendly tool & exercise that helps institutional leaders and student success leadership teams take comprehensive stock of the projects and initiatives being pursued.** Capturing a complete picture of the drivers of people's time and energy around student success work fosters dialogue, deliberation and action planning aimed at bringing coherence to the institution's student success vision and strategy. When used properly, the Inventory and accompanying analysis can help:

1) mitigate against initiative fatigue
2) bolster confidence in leaders
3) improve in strategic alignment, planning, and implementation of student success priorities
4) inform communications & engagement strategies aimed at building a shared vision and culture of care and innovation on behalf of students.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

This Inventory is intended to engage and connect the individuals managing, owning, and contributing to change work across the institution, and therefore it is best approached as a collaborative exercise. A student success leadership team can complete the template collaboratively in a process of dialogue, or the the template can be circulated to key individuals to contribute asychronously. In either case, one individual should be in charge of ensuring that all the right people have a chance to contribute. The exercise of completing the nventory can itself be a useful vehicle for spurring dialogue and deliberation about the key challenges and opportunities facing the institution in its efforts to innovate on behalf of better outcomes for students.

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STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE INVENTORY DISCUSSION GUIDE

The data collected as a part of this inventory exercise should be modified to fit your institutional context. Below, key elements of the Inventory are presented with accompanying questions to guide deliberation and improvement efforts.

KEY QUESTION: Who else on campus should be brought into discussions to analyze these results or help plan next steps forward?
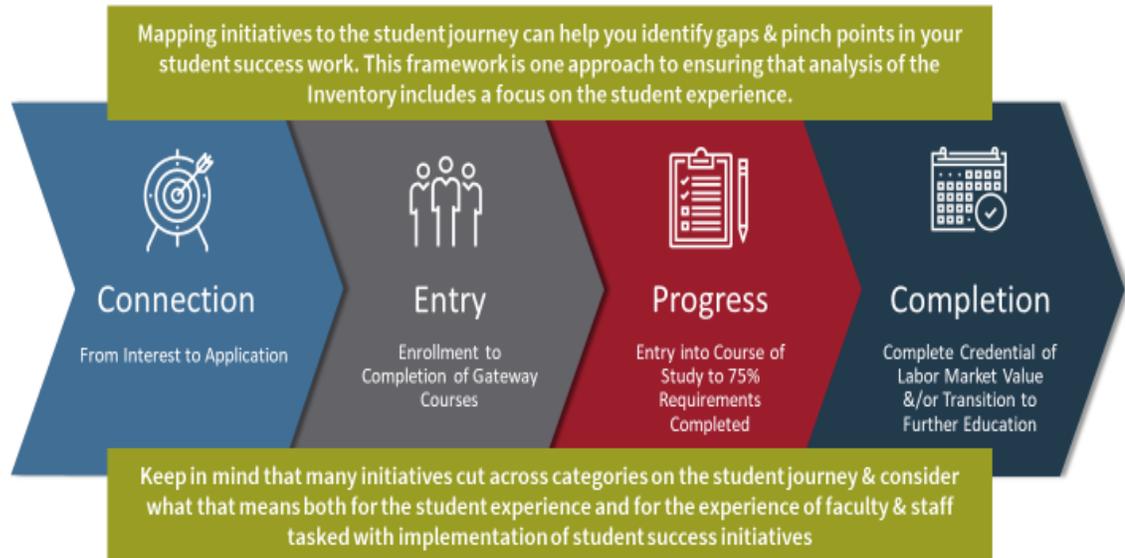
INITIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Time period.** How many large-scale initiatives is the institution currently pursuing and how do they align to broader institutional priorities?

- **Source of funding.** How are initiatives funded? What is the balance of grant-funded vs institutionally-funded initiatives and what does that breakdown tell you about resource allocation and length of commitment?

- **Initiative origin.** Is there a pattern around how and where student success initiatives originate? What does the pattern, or lack thereof, suggest about how decision-making happens at your instituiton?

- **Primary "owner" & others impacted.** Is the leadership of student success initiatives distributed across the institution or do most initiatives live in a small number of places? What groups are especially impacted by initiatives (e.g. faculty, staff)? How many initiatives/practices draw on shared resources (e.g. IR, IT)? What do the answers to these questions indicate about intended and unintended resource utilization?

- **Approximate % of initiative implementation.** How (based on what indicators) is progress of initiative/practice implementation tracked? (Note: this is not about effectiveness of initiative/practice, but rather how is implementation measured and evaluated?) How is the overall status of initiative implementation? (e.g. If an initiative is due to close in 2020, is it on track? Or, if multiple initiatives are stuck at 50% implementation, what could this signal about resource utlization or the effectiveness of implementation practices?)

- **Target student population.** Are the target student populations of initiatives/practices representative of whole campus community? What does the information in this category suggest about the student experience across the array of initiatives?

STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE INVENTORY
TIPS FOR ANALYSIS

In addition to engaging in dialogue and deliberation about the key categories of the Inventory, it can be helpful to analyze the results of the exercise to yield deeper insight. There are two types of analysis that can be particularly illuminating, one conducted according to impact on individuals within the institution, and one conducted according to the student journey. With respect to impact, it can be useful to analyze the results by focusing on which individuals and groups are either implicated in or impacted by implementation in order to identify patterns and to discern if some individuals and groups are disproportionately impacted by change processes. With respect to analyzing results according to the student learning journey, we recommend using the "Loss and Momentum Framework" to map initiatives.

Analyzing Initiatives by Mapping to the Student Journey
The "Loss & Momentum" Framework

Mapping initiatives to the student journey can help you identify gaps & pinch points in your student success work. This framework is one approach to ensuring that analysis of the Inventory includes a focus on the student experience.

Connection	Entry	Progress	Completion
From Interest to Application	Enrollment to Completion of Gateway Courses	Entry into Course of Study to 75% Requirements Completed	Complete Credential of Labor Market Value &/or Transition to Further Education

Keep in mind that many initiatives cut across categories on the student journey & consider what that means both for the student experience and for the experience of faculty & staff tasked with implementation of student success initiatives

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While the Inventory was created for institutions to use without outside support, many find value in having support in the form of neutral facilitation of the analysis and collaborative problem-solving dialogue that flow from the exercise. For help with the Inventory, please contact info@sovasolutions.org.