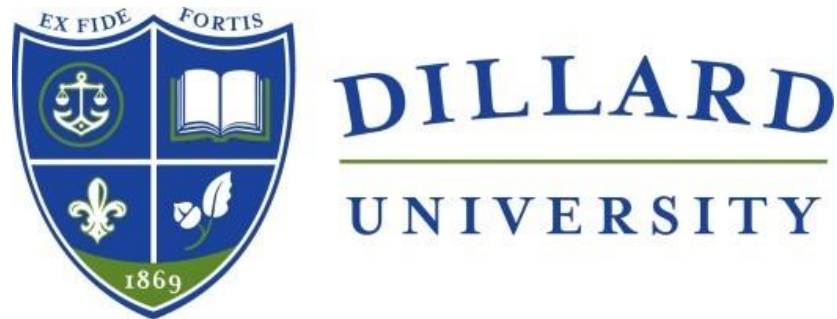# Thinking Strategically & Creatively about the Closing the Achievement Gap

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TODAY'S DISCUSSION WILL CENTER AROUND...

1) Identifying the gaps (What does the data say?)

2) Determining campus readiness (What is the campus climate?)

3) Identifying & creating allies (Who is really invested in this effort?)

4) Crafting & executing a plan (What are the next steps?)

5) Assessing progress (How will we know if we did it right?)

6) Telling our story (How do we make sure everyone knows about our work?)

National Trends Addressing Achievement Gaps

- First-Year Programs

- Second-Year Programs

- Undergraduate Research

- Learning Communities

- Curriculum Mapping & Evaluation

- Family Programs

- Re-conceptualized financial aid packaging

- Credit Recovery Initiatives

Who is doing it the best?

What makes them the best?

Data tells a story...

But there is more than one way to create a story

Sources of Information

- Know your institution's demographics

- Analyze the data to identify subpopulations with lower attainment rates

- Evaluate current processes & policies around student retention, persistence and graduation (RPG)

Ask question #1 —Do these policies support the students who are having the most difficulty?

Ask question #2– Do we really care?

Conduct an Environmental Scan

Know your campus

What is the discussion around equity on campus?

- Explore institutional goals around equity

- Examine the roles of various departments & individuals around the identified goals

- Initiate discussion on the current institutional culture around addressing equity-related issues

- Know your institution's equity champions

Identifying Stakeholders & Building a Team

Cooperation

Cooperation means "associations of persons for common benefit."

- Merriam Webster Dictionary

Collaboration

Collaboration means "to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor."

- Merriam Webster Dictionary

According to Susan Komives, Ph.D. *collaboration* means "people in a community decide on a vision for change together and then work together to devise means to achieve it."

- *Social Change Model of Leadership* (1994)

Let's Brainstorm

- Answer the following questions about your institution:
  - What departments or individuals on campus may share similar goals around student success, equity and attainment?
  - How are these areas working together to accomplish those goals?
  - What are the obstacles in place hindering these areas from collaborating?

Creating Momentum Through Strategic Partnerships

The Run Around "Everywhere I go they tell me something different. " "The rules are always changing." "Every time I come back from a break someone new is in charge."

Campus Partnerships
Dean of Students
Office of Records & Registration
Residence Life
Student Support Services

- Summer Bridge Program
- Community Partnerships
- Redesigned Seminar
- Peer Mentor Program
- Service-Learning
- Office Location
- Learning Communities
- Centralized Advising
- Placement Criteria
- Student Accountability
- Housing
- SAFE Fund
- Creation of the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)

Crafting and Executing a Plan

Do your research–
Let the data lead the way

- Research national best practices

- Call your peers & share your stories

- Go back to your data

- Review student data around academic performance, course completion, progression and retention

Let's Brainstorm

- Divide into dyads or triads
- Answer the following questions about your institution/organization:
  - How does your campus define student success?
  - What are the top 3 goals for your organization as it relates to promoting student success?
  - How do you in your current position support these goals?

Closing the Gaps: Assessment

MEASURING PROGRESS & SUCCESS

- Review persistence patterns
    - Identified specific populations to monitor
    - Identified specific courses to support
- Talk with students, faculty and staff
- Monitor the campus climate & culture

INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Work within the _existing_ University organizational structures to continue to engage students, faculty and staff around your strategies
  - Faculty & staff committees
  - Student Organizations
- Communicate importance and success of your strategies with external stakeholders (parents, alumni, community leaders)

Telling Your Story

Who has the first question?

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