Internal Stakeholder Engagement Workshop Toolkit

An engagement resource prepared by Public Agenda for Completion by Design

This Internal Stakeholder Engagement toolkit is designed to support cadres' and colleges' efforts to more effectively engage key internal stakeholders (faculty, staff, and administration) during the final quarter of the Completion by Design (CBD) planning year. While the short-term goal of this toolkit is to help the managing partner directors, senior partners, cadre team leads, co-leads, and trained facilitators engage internal stakeholders to inform the design of the cadres' model pathway plans, it is important that cadres also take a broader view of this work and plan accordingly.

Authentic engagement of key internal stakeholders is tricky and can backfire if not done carefully and well—and good intentions are not enough to guarantee success. Even in the context of great ideas and the best of intentions, lack of goal clarity, poor issue framing, unskilled facilitation, and inattention to the seemingly mundane details of *process* can undermine trust and alienate the very people who are and could be the most important change agents on behalf of student success and completion.

To be clear, we do not mean to suggest that these are mysterious matters that are beyond the capacity of the capable professionals who make up this initiative. We only wish to caution you against moving too quickly, to advise you to take the time to plan your engagement activities carefully so they will reap the greatest benefits and avoid the pitfalls that hastily designed efforts can fall into.

As you well know, community college faculty, staff, and administrators are some of the most hardworking and dedicated people in this country, and it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the work they do every day. In a climate that combines shrinking resources and greater need than ever, these vital internal stakeholders are stretched thin, weary, and wary. Yet their knowledge, expertise, and commitment are critical to meeting the challenges around student success and completion.

Given the tight time frame and heavy lift involved during the compressed planning year, it is tempting to rush ahead without paying sufficient attention to the core principles, golden rules, and red flags of engagement. But the costs of doing so can be steep: With each poorly designed engagement event or activity, you make it harder and harder to win the confidence of the people you most need as partners in change, the people you will need to carry out the work with you post–planning year.

This toolkit is designed to support high-quality, solution-oriented dialogue, deliberation, planning, and action by diverse actors so they can play a more robust and constructive role in meeting your shared challenges. It includes a number of discrete elements, presented for easy use on short time lines. The materials provided here can help you develop and implement the most promising strategies and methods for engaging the critical stakeholders who can make or break your efforts to improve and even transform how students achieve meaningful degrees and credentials.

Section 1. What Are Internal Stakeholder Engagement Workshops?

Stakeholders are leaders and constituents of important groups and organizations that have a direct interest in the success of your initiative and can directly affect its outcome. Stakeholder workshops are highly participatory discussions of an issue of mutual concern. When properly designed they are deliberative (encouraging people to weigh the pros and cons of a variety of perspectives), honest (promoting an open exchange of views), and productive (opening up new lines of thought, bringing disagreements more clearly into the open, and building common ground). They can help you:

- create better communication with key actors
- benefit from the hands-on expertise of those closest to the action of what you are trying to achieve
- gain their buy-in and participation
- avoid unnecessary backlashes by bringing people's confusion and resistance out in the open early on, so they can be addressed

The internal stakeholder engagement workshops that you will be conducting as part of your Completion by Design initiative planning will focus on student pathways to college completion. Though the goals, designs, and outcomes of your particular engagement efforts will vary, we believe there are five key internal stakeholder groups that you can engage in deliberative, honest, and productive dialogues about how to help students persist through loss points and build momentum for success:

1) Full-time faculty
2) Adjunct faculty
3) Senior administrators (department chairs, deans, assistant deans, etc.)
4) General administrators
5) Infrastructure departments (IT, facilities, scheduling, etc.)

What stakeholder dialogues are not

Not focus groups

While stakeholder dialogues overlap with focus groups in many respects, they also differ in important ways. Focus groups are research sessions in which a sample of group x or y is recruited, and typically paid an incentive, to respond to a series of research questions. Stakeholder workshops are meetings in which leaders and/or constituents of group x or y (or both) agree to donate their time to learn about and weigh in on your initiative. Whereas a focus group can tell you about the concerns and views of a group of people, it is less effective as a means to build common ground, shared understanding, and new agreements on how to work together—all goals that well-constructed dialogues can help achieve.

Focus groups keep control in the hands of the researchers. In focus groups, for example, people are typically paid to attend. It's therefore not hard to steer the conversation directly to the topics you want to discuss, and the information is yours to decide how to use. In contrast, stakeholder workshops or dialogues are by nature a less controlled process. Participants are not research subjects; they are peers who are voluntarily contributing their time and ideas. They tend to be more assertive if they have questions about the agenda.

Compared with focus group participants, workshop participants will feel less constrained about commenting to others—including, perhaps, the media—about what it is they've discussed. These sessions can be with highly homogenous groups—a session with faculty only, for example. Or, depending on your purpose, they can be more diverse, with several different stakeholders, e.g., sessions with faculty and students combined. (Public Agenda has found combined faculty-student dialogues to be a particularly useful process for productive problem solving.) The idea is to engage people in productive dialogue about your initiative, to elicit their interest and ideas about how to make it work.

Not Community Conversations

Stakeholder workshops are distinct from broad-based community forums aimed at engaging the public more generally by bringing large numbers of people from diverse backgrounds together. Instead, the workshops described in this toolkit target specific critical groups of actors within your institution.

Neither lectures nor gripe sessions

Communication in stakeholder workshops is not one-way: They are neither lectures meant to educate an audience nor gripe sessions meant only to blow off steam. They are open (yet structured) discussions, with give-and-take, aimed at promoting better communication, understanding, and problem solving.

***Not action planning meetings** (although they are a step toward action)*

Finally, while dialogue is ultimately about action (at the least in the form of your Completion by Design work), dialogue sessions are best thought of as groundwork for and a prelude to action, rather than as hard-core action planning sessions themselves. There should not be pressure to have concrete action outcomes at the end of the meeting.
There are some dialogue theorists, in fact, who think that there should be no

action goals in a dialogue, as this can amplify power dynamics and thereby raise the immediate stakes of the conversation, making the honest and insightful exchange of values and ideas more difficult. Other, more action-oriented and pragmatic types believe words without concrete actions immediately flowing from them are meaningless.

The middle ground that is espoused here is that dialogue is best used to promote mutual understanding and communication about a shared problem, and to help identify general potential ideas and directions for solutions, which can then lead to concrete action as a next step. It is a platform for action planning, but it is not the same thing. Through dialogue common ground is identified, concerns and confusion are clarified, and the ideas for action and collaboration that generate the greatest support are separated out from those that are nonstarters. Such insights form a strong foundation for concrete action, planning for which can often fruitfully follow from dialogue. But if a dialogue begins with the admonition, "We are not leaving this room without a concrete action plan that maps out every one of our responsibilities," it can stifle the thoughtful and honest exchange of perspectives and ideas. Therefore, such an action-planning session may be appropriate as a follow-up to dialogue, but should not define the parameters under which it takes place.

Strengths of stakeholder workshops:	Drawbacks, limitations, and challenges of stakeholder workshops:
• They allow you, as focus groups do, to target specific groups that are most important to your work. • They do not tend to cost much. • They do not require much in the way of special expertise. While some designs will work much more effectively than others, stakeholder workshops are closer than other engagement strategies to things that educators and administrators have done many times before (i.e., lead meetings), and they can usually implement the strategy with little or no outside help.	• They require time and care to do well. • They do not raise general awareness and engagement across the broader campus or surrounding community as effectively as larger Community Conversations will. • They can raise some issues of diplomacy because, as a practical matter, you will have to concentrate on some stakeholders more than others.

When embarking on the design and execution of stakeholder engagement workshops, it is essential to be clear about your goals from the outset. By taking time to set goals, articulate success factors, and clearly detail the actions before, during, and after the workshops that will be needed to achieve them, you will be in a much stronger position both to design high-quality engagement opportunities and to make the most of the information that results from these sessions.

Core Principles and Engagement Planning Guidelines

The following principles are key to designing effective stakeholder engagement.

Begin by listening

Understanding the best ways to communicate with and engage people on tough issues requires careful and systematic listening. Be alert to the issues various stakeholders care about, the language they use to discuss them, and their concerns, aspirations, knowledge base, misperceptions, and sense of direction with respect to solutions. Doing so will allow you to engage people in ways that are meaningful in light of their interests, concerns, and natural language. It will help you avoid making faulty assumptions about people's positions.

Meet people where they are, not where you want them to be

Different internal stakeholders experience challenges differently, and effective engagement requires meeting people where they are. While it is important to be clear about the goals of deliberation, it is also important to create space for people to talk about their own leading concerns and agendas. Doing so will create an atmosphere of respect and inclusion required for genuinely productive deliberation.

Look for the bright spots

When engaging internal stakeholders, creating space to recognize accomplishments, honor commitments, and celebrate victories is an important early step in building a sense of shared ownership of problems and solutions. Focusing on where and why things are successful is a key approach to arriving at progress toward the goal and finding solutions to apply to other aspects that are struggling.

Frame issues for deliberation

Engaging key stakeholders involves speaking their language and acknowledging their concerns. Expert-speak must be translated into language that anyone can use and should address the stakeholders' particular concerns. Framing an issue means, in essence, helping people wrestle with different perspectives and the pros and cons of going down different paths. Framing for deliberation communicates that there are no easy answers and that many points of view are welcome and essential to the discussion. This technique also helps people with very different levels of expertise engage both the issues and one another more effectively than a wide-open discussion with no structure.

Provide the right type and amount of information at the right time

It is helpful to provide people with carefully selected, essential, nonpartisan information up front in order to help them deliberate more effectively, but it is equally important to avoid overloading them with a "data dump." Concise and thoughtfully presented information is useful, but too much all at once can result in people feeling overwhelmed by information. It plays to the data-savvy individuals in the room while disempowering those who are less comfortable with data. Instead, beyond a few salient essentials, people should themselves determine, through their deliberations, the information that will allow them to move deeper into an issue. Enabling people to better determine their informational needs is one of the important purposes and outcomes of engagement.

Expect obstacles and resistance

People are used to doing things in a particular way, and it is hard work to grapple with new possibilities. It may even threaten their identities or interests (or perceived interests). It therefore takes time, and repeated opportunities, for people to really work through problems, absorb information about the trade-offs of different approaches, and build common ground.

Create multiple, varied opportunities for deliberation and dialogue

People need to go through a variety of stages to come to terms with an issue, decide what approaches they are willing to support, and figure out how they can make their own contribution. A strong engagement initiative will be inclusive as well as iterative, giving people multiple and varied opportunities to learn about, talk about, think about, and act on the problem at hand.

Respond thoughtfully and conscientiously to stakeholder input

Those designing deliberations should be mindful that engagement can easily be perceived as "just more talk." Stakeholders, understandably, need to know that the time they spend deliberating will amount to something meaningful and that their input can make a difference. To build confidence in the importance of meaningful engagement: Give people real opportunities to contribute to solutions; communicate back what was heard and explain clearly how it will be used; spell out how and why ideas discussed during the deliberations will or will not become the basis for decision making; and give people an ongoing role in the work that is respectful of both their constraints and their offerings.

Build long-term capacity as you go

When done well, each round of engagement will set the stage for broader and deeper engagement in the future. Engagement processes are not only exercises aimed at gathering input; they are problem-solving experiments that help people learn how to better reach out to and include more perspectives, frame issues for deliberation more effectively and meaningfully, facilitate dialogue and collaboration across boundaries or silos that have not typically been broached, and build common vision and common ground that allow different stakeholders, with different interests and experiences, to work together to make headway on shared problems. The work should thus always operate on two levels simultaneously: On one level it is about addressing a concrete problem, such as helping target student groups persist through particular loss points. On another it is about building what philosopher John Dewey called “social intelligence”—the capacity for a community or group of stakeholders to collaborate effectively in order to solve its shared problems in creative and sustainable ways.

Set Goals and Determine Success Factors

Careful thinking from the beginning about why you are engaging stakeholders, what specifically you want to engage them about, and how you will determine if you met those goals is a critical first step in your engagement planning process. To help you think through your goals and the indicators of successful stakeholder engagement, we have developed the table on the next page. While the outputs and short-term outcomes will be the direct results from the engagement workshop, it is important to think further down the line to the mid- and long-term outcomes in order to put your specific engagement workshops in the context of your Completion by Design work more broadly. These mid- and long-term outcomes could also result from ongoing engagement work.

We do not intend for this to be used as your college’s planning model, but instead encourage you to view it as a conversation starter to determine and document your own goals and indicators of success. Following this step is a detailed framework for planning the internal activities that will help you meet your engagement goals.

Table 1. Stakeholder Engagement Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes

Activity	Outputs	Outcomes		
Activity that participants will be part of	Tangibles produced as a result of activity	**Short-Term** (awareness, knowledge, etc.)	**Mid-Term** (behavior, group changes, policy, etc.)	**Long-Term** (policy, culture, conditions, etc.)
Internal Stakeholder Engagement Workshops	# of workshops # of attendees at each workshop; total; broken down by 5 types of participants Facilitator notes from each conversation New information regarding target populations with respect to the loss of momentum framework # and type of reports generated as a result	Participants better understand the connection between their own work/values and the broader institutional change effort on behalf of student success represented by CBD Participants have a stronger grasp of their actual and potential roles at different points in the loss of momentum framework, and are better able to articulate their ideas in the context of the framework Participants identify shared interests with other internal stakeholder groups and develop a better understanding of divergences in experience and opinion between various groups Participants identify and accept the necessity of tough decisions/trade-offs, and are disinclined to grasp at straws or search for scapegoats Participants gain an increased sense of efficacy in their roles as change agents on behalf of student success	Among internal stakeholders, there is increased individual action in support of chosen interventions More collaboration among stakeholders in the implementation of interventions Individuals engaged in workshops become peer influencers and increase broader buy-in for change efforts Individuals develop a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for the success of interventions Internal stakeholders develop a stronger sense of shared purpose with respect to student success Ongoing engagement of internal stakeholders becomes the norm Institutional decision makers consider their role as convener and catalyst rather than primary problem-solver Institutional leaders feel more confidence in the internal stakeholders as reliable partners Institutional decision making is viewed as legitimate by internal stakeholders	Improved capacity of the college community to make efficient use of its resources to support and sustain successful interventions on behalf of student success Students persist through critical loss points and maintain momentum X% of target student populations succeed in achieving degrees X% of target student populations transfer after completing an Associate's degree

Once you have mapped out the range of potential outputs and outcomes from your stakeholder engagement activities, focus in on those you expect in the short term, as a direct result of the workshops. Decide how you will determine if your engagement activities meet these goals. You can create a table similar to the one below to detail what success will look like for each of your expected outputs and outcomes.

Table 2. Outputs and Outcomes Indicators of Success

Outputs & Short-Term Outcomes	**Indicator** (What will success look like? How will you know the outcome was achieved?)
Example: Number and type of participants	*What number and type of participants are you hoping will participate? What number will you be happy with?*

Plan for *Before, During*, and *After* the Workshop

One of the greatest challenges for dialogue is to level the playing field and minimize power dynamics, so people can speak freely, thoughtfully, and creatively, without worrying that their ideas will be unduly criticized or, worse yet, come back to haunt them. Location, recruitment strategy, and when workshops are held—details that can fall through the cracks or not seem very important—are just a few of the pieces that can have an impact on power dynamics. Having a clearly defined purpose and plan for stakeholder engagement workshops can be the difference between successful and disappointing results for you and the participants.

Table 3, on the next page, has been designed to lead you through each of the most important considerations as you plan a stakeholder engagement workshop to meet your particular goals. You can create a worksheet similar to the table below to help you track your planning activities. Use the Critical Planning Questions to guide your planning conversations and decisions.

Table 3. Workshop Planning Activities Worksheet

Component	Critical Planning Questions
Purpose/Goals	➢ **What is the purpose/goal(s) of the stakeholder engagement workshop(s)?** *(Refer to Tables 1 and 2.)*
Stakeholders	➢ **Who is interested in the goals of the engagement workshops?** Creating a list of those vested in the issue will assist in determining the potential participants of the workshop(s) and a communications plan to share the workshop results. ➢ **Who should spearhead the workshop(s)?** Find the right person (or team) to spearhead the effort, someone who believes in open, inclusive dialogue and who has a knack for it.
Participants	➢ **Whom do we want to participate? Which groups are especially important?** ➢ **Homogenous or mixed groups?** You can hold stakeholder sessions with a specific stakeholder group (e.g., all full-time faculty) or with several key stakeholders. • Homogenous groups allow you to develop more of an in-depth understanding of, and relationship with, a specific stakeholder group. • Mixed groups may be appropriate if your aim is to get broader input and also to explore how different kinds of groups can work together more effectively. ➢ **How many groups?** How many are feasible for you? If you are a multi-campus site, should there be groups on each campus? (*See When & Where for more details.*) ➢ **Recruitment** This is the most critical and perhaps most challenging task. • **Who is helping recruit?** Having key people to connect you to the desired participants may help you get beyond the usual suspects. • **Message?** Be sure the purpose of the stakeholder engagement workshops is clearly detailed when recruiting. • **Incentives?** Think about various incentives for stakeholder participation, such as professional development credit. **Be sure to reach beyond the usual suspects**. In your recruitment, reach beyond those who inevitably attend meetings on issues such as those you are concerned with. While certain figures may immediately come to mind, do not stop with the first and easiest invitations you might make. Take seriously the concept of diversity and outreach, put in the time to bring new faces to the table along with established figures, and make sure you are getting broad representation of the stakeholder group you wish with to engage and not just one or two spokespeople who claim to speak for an entire group. To more

Component	Critical Planning Questions
	effectively include a good mix of stakeholders, give yourself enough time for person-to-person outreach to ensure diverse participation and enlist the right people to help you with the outreach. They should be those with knowledge of, and credibility within, the groups you are seeking to include.
Data Needs	➢ **What data/information do we need as part of this workshop?** Provide needed background without overwhelming people. Some background on Completion by Design is likely to be useful, along with information on your chosen student populations. But remember, too many bare facts, statistics, and tables can put non-data-savvy folks in the room at a disadvantage. Some information can be provided in advance, though you can't assume everyone has studied it; you will need to review it. ➢ **What materials or data should we make available even if we don't present them?** ➢ **How will we answer people's data-related questions?** Help people identify their data needs during the course of the workshop. An important task for the workshop facilitator and recorder will be to amass the open questions from workshop participants. As workshop organizers you should make a plan for how you will respond to these questions when reporting on and following up after the workshop.
When & Where	➢ **When?** • When will you hold the groups? For example, is there a planning process coming up that would benefit from the information you will gain? Remember, you'll need time to organize, recruit participants, train moderators, and analyze the results. • What is the most appropriate time of day or day of the week? ➢ **Where?** • Consider holding the dialogue in an environment that minimizes power dynamics, some kind of neutral setting that doesn't feel like one person's home turf. • Avoid auditorium setups, in which authority figures are up on a stage looking down at row upon row of passive participants.
Moderators	➢ **Who will oversee moderator recruitment and training?** The task of recruiting the moderators and supervising their training should be attended to with care. As with participant recruitment, be mindful that there may need to be multiple people recruiting moderators to help get beyond the usual suspects. • This includes the creation of a facilitators guide. ➢ **Whom will we ask to moderate and record the groups?** Good moderators must be able to listen without sharing their own

<table>
<tr><th>Component</th><th>Critical Planning Questions</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>opinions, help others express themselves openly, and set a problem-solving tone for the discussion. It is important that they will be viewed as neutral by the participants. As with participant recruitment, you may consider reaching beyond the usual suspects.

Clearly explain the goals, roles, and tasks when recruiting moderators. Moderators will have tasks before, during, and after the workshops, and they should have clear expectations before committing. Tasks include:
• Training
• Taking notes (flip charts, paper, laptops; it is recommended to have a separate note taker to assist with this task)
• Synthesizing ideas
• Reflecting on their experience as a facilitator of the group

(More details in Sections 3 & 4 of this toolkit.)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Workshop Format</td><td>➢ Will we serve food or other refreshments?

➢ Who will introduce the workshop?
Is there an individual who is familiar and credible among this group of stakeholders? Is this an individual who is familiar with our college’s involvement in CBD?

➢ Will we need breakout groups?
• If you have 20 or more participants, do much of the dialogue work in small groups. Dialogue takes place best in small-group settings of 10 to 12 participants. Much smaller than that and you lose energy and diversity in each group. Much larger and it’s hard to have enough time for people to really explore the issues and contribute to the discussion. If you are working with larger groups, create a program in which you move back and forth between larger plenary sessions to introduce ideas or share results, and smaller breakout sessions in which most of the real dialogue takes place.
• Do we have the space capacity for breakout groups?

➢ Do we have moderator guides for our meeting facilitators?

➢ Do we have recording materials for our recorders?

➢ Do we have participant guides/materials?

Remember to be clear up front. Make sure the purpose and plan for your stakeholder engagement workshop are clearly stated at the beginning of your workshop(s).</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><th>Component</th><th>Critical Planning Questions</th></tr>
<tr><td>Analysis</td><td>➢ Who will:
Collect the information (flip charts, moderator notes, etc.) from the groups?
Compile all of the information into one document?
Interpret/analyze the information?
➢ How will we analyze the information from the groups?
Themes. Review the notes for common themes that arose.
Identify and answer any open questions.
Prioritize action steps. Look first for those that can be considered low-hanging fruit.
Success factors. Review the extent to which you achieved success based on the outputs and short-term outcomes you determined. (Refer to Tables 1 and 2)
(More details in Section 5 of this toolkit.)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Follow-Up/ Information Use</td><td>➢ To whom will we report the process and outcomes?
Participants
College leadership
CBD leadership
Wider campus community
Others? (You can use the stakeholders you listed at the beginning of this table.)
➢ What will we report?
Determine whether the information reported will be the same for all stakeholder groups you are generating reports for.

➢ How will we report back? Can we use online and Web-based tools to help with this?

(More details in Section 5 of this toolkit.)</td></tr>
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The overall purpose of the internal stakeholder engagement workshop discussions is to get a firm handle on the experiences, needs, and interventions to help your target student populations persist through loss points and build momentum through their college experience. To help structure these conversations we have created a model discussion guide to serve as a starting point to open up creative and inclusive dialogues about how to better serve current and prospective students at your college. Rather than adhere to a strict discussion format, colleges should consider the agenda and discussion guide that follow as basic frameworks that can be modified and tailored to meet local and institutional needs as well as the particular internal stakeholder engagement workshop context and goals. When you begin your workshops, you may want to highlight the following topics to help manage the conversation:

- Acknowledge that the college is confronting tough issues, some of which people may have strong feelings about, and that everyone needs to work together to make sure they are handled constructively.
- Remind people of the purpose of the dialogue and suggest that tough issues are fair game to the extent that they relate to and inform that purpose—in that case, they are worth the effort they will require to deal with them.
- Reinforce the idea that in a dialogue it is fine to agree and disagree, but that it is best not to get personal with disagreements. Disagreements should be dealt with on the level of ideas, not personalities.
- In addition to making these points to participants in introducing and setting the tone for the dialogue session, remind your facilitator (or facilitators if you are using several for breakout groups) so he or she can reinforce them as well.
- Provide moderators with guidelines to help them do a good job. On the most basic level, the task of the moderators is to make sure that participants—in each small group if that is how things are organized—understand what they are there to discuss, understand the ground rules, and stay reasonably focused and on schedule. Beyond this, they work to make the conversation as highly participatory, constructive, and productive as possible. In Section 4 we provide additional guidance for workshop facilitators and recorders.

Sample Workshop Agenda

For a two-and-a-half-hour workshop your agenda might be something along the lines of:

Part I **10 minutes:** Welcome by college president, senior administrator, or college team lead covering:

- Purpose of dialogue.
- Brief background on your college's focus on making a significant impact on completion over the next several years, your participation in Completion by Design, and the planning process you are engaged in. This is the place to present the student populations your college has chosen.
- Turn over meeting to neutral facilitator and recorder (at a flip chart).

Part II **2 hours:** Dialogue (in breakout groups of 10 to 12 each if numbers warrant it)

- Ground rules and introductions
- Discussion of Loss and Momentum Framework (DISCUSSION GUIDE)
- Bridging from Dialogue into Action

Part III 20 minutes: Discussion of Next Steps

- How should we follow up on today's session?

Workshop Moderator and Recorder Guide

As a moderator or recorder for the internal stakeholder engagement workshop your primary role is to facilitate the Part II and Part III discussions. The following notes will help to guide you through the workshop dialogues (according to the sample agenda above) and provide recommendations for how to use the discussion guide.

Activity (Time)	Description
Ground Rules (3 min.)	Ground rules should be few, simple, and basic. Complicated ground rules that require people to think before they talk could stifle expression. The purpose should be to create an environment that is safe for people to participate and in which there are equal opportunities for them to do so. A simple set of ground rules that will generally be useful is something along these lines: • Let's work together to make sure everyone has good opportunities to participate. To do that, let's try to keep our statements at a reasonable length so no one inadvertently monopolizes the time.

Activity (Time)	Description
	• In this dialogue we are free to agree and to disagree with one another. If we disagree, let's do it respectfully, keep it on the level of each person's ideas, and avoid any personal attacks. • Whatever is said here will only be recorded as a general statement, without names attached. While everyone has to take care of themselves as far as what they are willing to say in public, let's agree in principle that we should respect each person's privacy and that we will not talk to others about specific things people say. If we talk with others about this discussion, we will only talk about what was said in general, without quoting anyone. Agreed? **The Basic Ground Rules** The recorder might want to write down the basic ground rules and make them visible for the group during the workshop. • Be honest and respectful. • Listen to understand. • It's okay to disagree, but do so with curiosity, not hostility. • Be brief, so everyone has an opportunity to participate. • Put your phone on vibrate and resist the temptation to check e-mail or multitask.
Introductions (10 min.)	• Participant introductions, with brief comments on how the work of each relates to the community college and its students. The moderator can take note of where in the Loss and Momentum Framework each participant's work seems the most relevant.
Warm Up/Get into the issues (10 min.)	• How have the student populations that you work with changed in the past 10 years? How do you know? • Based on your experience at the college and with students, what do you see as some of the biggest obstacles to student success?
Introduce the Loss and Momentum Framework Discussion Guide (1–2 min.)	• As you know, the college is participating in a student completion effort called Completion by Design, in which we are focusing on [name the student populations] to understand better their college experience and plan for ways to help more of these students complete college. To help us talk about their college experiences and think critically about ways to improve their outcomes, we are going to use a Discussion Guide and focus on some key questions.
Discuss the Student Pathway (50 min.)	**Use the Discussion Guide** [*Distribute copies of the Discussion Guide.*] • Read through the first page of the Discussion Guide and make sure everyone is clear on the task at hand.

Activity (Time)	Description
	• Discuss one Loss/Momentum point at a time, first reading through the page and then using the discussion questions to prompt dialogue. • Use additional prompt questions provided in Appendix 1 to stimulate deeper discussion of each of the Loss/Momentum points. • At the end of each point in the pathway, the moderator should do a quick summary of the key points that were discussed (e.g., what is working and what is not working for students at each point). As the summaries are being compiled, the recorder should capture them on a separate flip chart page and set aside. These summaries will be used for the Bridging from Dialogue into Action section, which follows the discussion of each point along the pathway.
Bridging from Dialogue into Action (40 min.)	• Now that the group has discussed each point in the student pathway in some detail, the stage has been set for thoughtful brainstorming and discussion of ways to help students persist through the pathway. • Begin by reading the full page of the participant discussion guide. • Refer to the summaries of the discussion of each point along the pathway, then pose the question: ○ At what point in the framework/pathway should the college be focusing resources and investing the most time? • In order to help guide the discussion of priorities, the moderator can ask participants to take a simple vote. One way is to ask everyone to raise a hand for their preferred "point" in the pathway. Another way is to distribute dot stickers (two colors: one for first choice, another for second choice) and allow participants to get up and place their first- and second-choice stickers on the flip chart pages of the preferred points in the pathway. Whichever method the moderator and recorder choose, the voting exercise is intended to be a tool to focus the conversation about actions. It will be up to you to determine if such a voting exercise will be necessary or helpful. • After determining which points to zoom in on, use the questions in the guide to brainstorm and discuss actions.
Wrap-up and Next Steps (20 min.)	• If there are breakout groups in your workshop, you should take the next 5 to 10 minutes to allow each group to share with the full group of workshop participants and facilitators 1) its student pathway priorities, and 2) its top ideas for action. • Use the remaining time to discuss how to follow up on the workshop deliberations, what will be done with the notes and recommendations, and how any open questions that have arisen will be addressed.

Discussion Guide

Loss Points and Momentum in the Student Pathway

Students entering community colleges face a series of high-risk moments or junctures at which they are most likely to drop out or give up. These moments, which we will call "loss points," are concentrated early in the college experience—some even before they reach their first class—and occur less frequently as students build academic momentum and the confidence required to persist. The Completion by Design Loss and Momentum Framework depicted above represents a model college journey from preparation through completion.

Today we will use this framework to help guide the discussion of our prospective and current students' experiences. From students transitioning from high school to the adult learner reentering the system, each student's journey is unique. No matter the path, their success depends on support and guidance throughout the college experience.

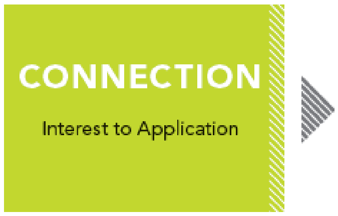
As we go through each point along the student pathway, consider what we know about the students' experience at that point. What is easy or difficult about this particular point in the pathway? What is the college already doing to help students at this point? What is working and what could be done differently to help more students persist through this point?

We will talk more later about your recommendations for how to change the students' experience in a positive way; for now, let's focus on what we know about the student experience and try to identify information gaps that, if filled, could help us understand the experience better and move toward solutions.

At each point in the pathway we will address the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of students in our target population at this point in the pathway?
- How do students move through this point in the pathway?
- What are the bright spots in innovations/ programs to help students persist through their pathways? What are the lessons we can harvest from these bright spots? What lessons can we take with us and apply to new innovations?
- What is not working and why/how is it not working? What are the things that we could be doing differently?
- What are the various informational needs (for us, as stakeholders, and for students) at different points along the framework?

1. CONNECTION – *First Contact Experiences*



A student's pathway can begin well before enrolling in classes at a community college, making CONNECTION to postsecondary education the first juncture at which prospective students might either give up or build momentum. A number of factors can shape the CONNECTION experience, including levels of awareness and understanding of community college options among high school students; alignment of high school and community college expectations, policies, and practices; outreach efforts to prospective students by the college; degrees of academic and noncognitive preparation for college; and availability of placement assessments and dual-enrollment opportunities for prospective students.

- What are the characteristics of students in our target population at this point in the pathway?
- How do students move through this point in the pathway?
  - Where are students most likely to build momentum and why?
  - Where are students most likely to fall off and why?
- What are the bright spots in innovations/programs to help students persist through their pathways? What are the lessons we can harvest from these bright spots? What lessons can we take with us and apply to new innovations?
- What is not working and why/how is it not working? What are the things that we could be doing differently?
- What are the various informational needs (for stakeholders and for students) at different points along the framework?

Other Key Questions to Consider about CONNECTION:

How do prospective students first learn about and engage with our college?

How does our college communicate its expectations about readiness (both academic and nonacademic) to our community? Are expectations clear and accessible?

How does our college work with feeder high schools to ensure alignment of curricula or offer pre-dual-enrollment opportunities?

How do early interactions with the college set the stage for a student's experience over time?

2. ENTRY – *Education Planning and Entering a Program of Study*

Between the time students enroll at the community college and complete the gatekeeper courses for their programs of study they can encounter a number of forces and experiences that might either encourage or discourage continuation along their educational pathway. Students' levels of academic preparation, knowledge of programs of study, and clarity about their education or career goals shape experiences in the ENTRY phase, as do their interactions with the college-level supports and services that are intended as resources. Based on the emerging evidence that students who commit to a program of study within their first year of college fare better in terms of completion and transfer than those who don't, colleges are encouraged to think critically about how to help students persist and gain momentum through the ENTRY phase.

- What are the characteristics of students in our target population at this point in the pathway?
- How do students move through this point in the pathway?
  - Where are students most likely to build momentum and why?
  - Where are students most likely to fall off and why?
- What are the bright spots in innovations/programs to help students persist through their pathways? What are the lessons we can harvest from these bright spots? What lessons can we take with us and apply to new innovations?
- What is not working and why/how is it not working? What are the things that we could be doing differently?
- What are the various informational needs (for stakeholders and for students) at different points along the framework?

Other Key Questions to Consider About ENTRY:

How does our college work with prospective and current students to help them understand their education options and goals and select a program of study?

How does our college support students in catching up academically and succeeding in entry-level gatekeeper courses for their program of study?

What incentives (financial or otherwise) do students have to choose a program of study as soon as possible? Do students know about these incentives?

What other college or departmental policies and practices encourage or discourage students to enter a program of study as soon as possible?

What can we learn from students in the target group who succeed in entering programs of study? Are there particular characteristics or behaviors of these students that we can use to help other students?

How would we characterize developmental education at our college? Are the components of developmental education communicated clearly across all program and service units of the college?

3. PROGRESS – *Making Progress in a Program of Study*

PROGRESS along the pathway is defined here as the period from entry into a chosen program of study to completion of 75 percent of that program's requirements. During this time, students need assistance in making consistent progress toward their goals through financial incentives, social supports, and pedagogical approaches. Colleges, while offering a large number of support systems and programs, often struggle to coordinate these services or connect them to the right student at the right time. In addition to making progress, students often need help tracking progress toward educational goals, adjusting goals as changes occur, and evaluating how their progress and learning outcomes will connect to their goals beyond the community college.

- What are the characteristics of students in our target population at this point in the pathway?
- How do students move through this point in the pathway?
    - Where are students most likely to build momentum and why?
    - Where are students most likely to fall off and why?
- What are the bright spots in innovations/programs to help students persist through their pathways? What are the lessons we can harvest from these bright spots? What lessons can we take with us and apply to new innovations?
- What is not working and why/how is it not working? What are the things that we could be doing differently?
- What are the various informational needs (for stakeholders and for students) at different points along the framework?

Other Key Questions to Consider About PROGRESS:

Which student supports, incentives, and requirements encourage students to remain engaged and to make progress in a program of study?

What mechanisms does our college have in place to help students track their own progress toward the goals established in their education plan? Has our college, or its programs, identified learning outcomes expected from students at each milestone of their progress, including at program completion?

How do students find out about the requirements for program completion? Are these requirements clearly delineated for students?

Do the relevant departments or divisions track which of these students are in their programs of study (as opposed to whether they are taking individual courses in an area)? If so, how do these departments or divisions use this information?

Is any program-specific advising or guidance provided to these students? If so, by whom? How are the students identified? Is it required?

Does the college or individual departments take steps to engage students (such as discipline- or field-specific clubs) in the field related to the target programs of study? If so, approximately what proportion of these students takes part?

4. Completion – *Earning a Certificate or Degree*

Though in the final stages of completing a program of study and earning a credential, students in the COMPLETION phase can still drop out or give up if, for example, the credits earned do not match degree attainment, if they find that credits will not articulate to a transfer institution, or if the credential earned will not garner a family-supporting-wage job. To help students succeed, colleges can make sure that their systems, policies, and practices facilitate rather than present roadblocks to COMPLETION.

- What are the characteristics of students in our target population at this point in the pathway?
- How do students move through this point in the pathway?
  - Where are students most likely to build momentum and why?
  - Where are students most likely to fall off and why?
- What are the bright spots in innovations/programs to help students persist through their pathways? What are the lessons we can harvest from these bright spots? What lessons can we take with us and apply to new innovations?
- What is not working and why/how is it not working? What are the things that we could be doing differently?
- What are the various informational needs (for stakeholders and for students) at different points along the framework?

Other Key Questions to Consider About PROGRESS:

What incentives and supports encourage students to complete their programs, transfer, and/or attain employment related to their education? What barriers to completion can be eliminated?

Which course sequences for certificates explicitly build toward a degree? Which do not? How do students find out about which do and do not?

Does our college have articulation agreements with nearby and online four-year colleges and universities regarding transfer of credits?

Is there anything distinctive about the behaviors of students in the target group who complete programs of study in these program areas? What can we learn from the course-taking patterns and other behaviors of completers in the relevant programs?

Does the way students receive financial aid encourage or discourage them from completing their program of study as soon as possible?

What other college or departmental policies and practices encourage or discourage these students to complete their program of study as soon as possible?

What kinds of incentives (financial or otherwise) do students have to complete their program of study as soon as possible?

Bridging from Dialogue into Action

Given that students' pathways from connection to completion of a college degree are varied as well as complex, planning and implementing changes to help more students succeed is a significant charge. In an environment of tighter budgets and heavier workloads, as college stakeholders we know that we cannot do everything we want to do at once. We are going to have to make some tough choices about where to focus our energy and resources so that we can "get the most juice for our squeeze." We must also keep in mind that implementing isolated practices or small pilots is unlikely to benefit large numbers of students or be sustainable over time. Instead, we must think about planning and developing pathways to completion that integrate our college's policies, practices, and programs to help students succeed at every point from connection to completion.

- At what point in the student pathway should the college be focusing resources and investing time?
- At different points in the model pathway, what are our responsibilities to our students? What are the constraints placed on our ability to fill those responsibilities?
- What are the most high-impact and quick solutions that we can implement immediately? In other words, where is there low-hanging fruit? How will these solutions help students move along the pathway?
- What are the high-impact and medium- or long-term implementation solutions for which we can build up the conditions for innovation? In other words, what solutions should we begin investing in and planning for now so that they can be implemented in coming years? How will these solutions help students move along the pathway?
- Where do we need fundamental changes in workflow (not just program modifications or innovations) in order to help students succeed and complete their college degree?
- How can we think about choosing, sequencing, and prioritizing solutions?
- What are the trade-offs we will have to make along the way?

Facilitation is about supporting a productive, respectful conversation that helps participants better understand the issue and each other. The quality of facilitation can make or break the success of current and future stakeholder engagement; unfortunately, some people who are likely to self-identify as strong facilitators may not have the qualities necessary for effective facilitation of internal stakeholder engagement workshops. The facilitators of the conversations must be neutral, credible, and able to create environments that allow stakeholders to be candid or critical.

Regardless of the specific goals, deliberative conversations always begin with "starting questions," which are open-ended questions that get people talking about the issue at hand. Once the facilitator poses an initial starting question, the deliberation begins when someone starts talking. The facilitator must both listen carefully to what is being said and plan his or her next move.

This section provides guidance on the *basic* responsibilities, characteristics, and techniques of successful facilitators and recorders. Those who are looking for deeper support can refer to the Completion by Design Facilitator's Handbook, available on the Completion by Design Knowledge Center: http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org.

To be clear, no single person possesses all the characteristics described here; instead, we encourage facilitators to be aware of their individual strengths and weaknesses. The Recipe for a Great Moderator provided in this toolkit can serve as a useful self-assessment tool for moderators looking to improve their skills over time.

Responsibilities, Characteristics, and Techniques of the Effective Facilitator

Main Responsibilities of a Facilitator[1]

Motivator*:* From the rousing opening statement to the closing words of cheer, you must ignite a fire within the group, establish momentum, and keep the pace.

Guide*:* You must know the steps of the process the group will execute from the beginning to the end. You must carefully guide the participants through each of the steps.

Questioner*:* You must listen carefully to the discussion and be able to quickly analyze and compare comments and formulate questions that help manage the group discussion.

Bridge Builder*:* You must create and maintain a safe and open environment for sharing ideas. Where other people see differences, you must find and use similarities to establish a foundation for building bridges to consensus.

Clairvoyant*:* Throughout the session, you must watch carefully for signs of potential strain, weariness, irritation, and disempowerment—and respond in advance to avoid dysfunctional behavior.

Peacemaker: Although it is almost always better to avoid a direct confrontation between participants, should such an event occur, you must quickly step in, reestablish order, and direct the group toward a constructive resolution.

Taskmaster*:* You are ultimately responsible for keeping the session on track; this entails tactfully cutting short irrelevant discussions, preventing detours, and maintaining a consistent level of detail throughout the session.

Champion*:* At every opportunity, you should praise participants for the effort they put forth, the progress they make, and the results they achieve. Praise well, praise often, praise specifically.

[1] Adapted from Michael Wilkinson's *The Secrets of Facilitation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), pp.24–26.

Key Characteristics of an Effective Facilitator

Remains impartial about the subject. Avoid expressing your own opinion or evaluating the comments of the participants (be careful with saying "Good point!"). However, facilitators are not "neutral" or disengaged, and in fact they should be passionate about the process itself.

Manages the group well. Find the right balance between too much and too little structure in the conversation.

Models cooperative attitudes and skills. By exhibiting strong listening skills and asking good questions, you can model the behaviors you are hoping the participants will develop.

Does not take on an "expert" role with the subject matter. Your role is not to teach the participants about the issue—even if it is a subject you know very well.

Keeps the deliberation focused and on track. When comments go astray, bring participants back to the goals of the session. Make sure the goals are clear, even if the conversation is wide-ranging.

Intervenes as necessary. If the conversation begins to focus on personalities rather than issues, gently remind the group of guidelines or refocus the dialogue on the issue. An effective facilitator creates an atmosphere of acceptance of all ideas and persons, and helps give an equal hearing to all perspectives.

Asks clarifying questions when necessary. If you are not sure what a participant means, chances are good that others are unclear also. You may ask participants to clarify what they are trying to say and ask if you have understood correctly.

Encourages everyone to join in the conversation. Be careful: Comments such as "That's a good idea" may make the speaker feel welcome in the conversation, but participants who disagree may think you are being biased.

Asks thoughtful and probing questions to surface trade-offs and consequences. Make sure the participants have considered the potential outcomes of their comments and ideas.

Helps participants find common ground and identify and work through key tensions. Participants will not always agree and may sometimes be in direct conflict with each other. Helping them identify both common ground and key tensions will help move the conversation forward in important ways.

Encourages deeper reflection. Ask participants to share what is important to them about the issue or why they feel a particular approach or strategy is valuable.

Helps people prioritize their ideas for action. Helping people move from exploratory dialogue to concrete action planning is an important role of a facilitator.

Fundamental Techniques of an Effective Facilitator

The Six Basic Facilitator Choices

When facilitating dialogue and deliberation, the facilitator has six basic "moves" at her disposal for helping keep the conversation productive, inclusive, and on track.

1. **Ask a "reaction" question** that seeks to have *other* people respond to the last speaker's comments in some way.

   Ex. "Does anyone else have a different view?"

2. **Ask a new starting question.** Depending on the goals of the session, you may have a set of questions you are supposed to ask, or you may have certain issues you want to discuss, so you may just jump in to take the conversation in a different direction. Based on the responses, you may also develop a question that works to combine or compare opinions that were shared. A new starting question may be particularly important if the conversation has gotten off track and the participants need to be redirected to the issue.

   Ex. "Many argue that one of the key topics with this issue is X. What are your thoughts on its importance?"

3. **Let there be silence.** Often, facilitators feel pressure to keep the conversation flowing, so they are troubled by silence and seek to fill it with probing questions or a change of topic. However, sometimes the right thing to do is to sit with the silence and give people a little space to find their way to what they want to say.

4. **Move on** to the next speaker by simply pointing to the next person in line or asking the group for additional comments. People like to talk, and in many cases you will have a line of people ready to speak and can simply move from one to another.

5. **Paraphrase** what a person has said in order to clarify the point, help the recorders, and/or move the conversation to a deeper level. When paraphrasing, always do so in a way that makes it easy for the speaker to correct you ("So what I'm hearing is that . . . Is that right?")

6. **Ask a "probing" or "follow-up" question** to the *same speaker* to get clarification or dig deeper.

   Ex. "Why is that important to you?" or *"Can you say more about that?"*

Basic Facilitator Practices

Below we describe the basic practices involved in facilitation. We recommend that facilitators review this material as a refresher before facilitating new groups, and jot notes about specific techniques that may be especially important given the goals of the conversation.

- **Paraphrasing** is fundamental to active listening. It is the most straightforward way to demonstrate to a speaker that his or her thoughts have been heard and understood.
- **Summarizing** is an important technique because the most interesting conversations can also be the hardest ones to close.
- **Stacking** is a procedure for helping people take turns when several people want to speak at once.
- **Tracking** means keeping track of the various lines of thought that are going on simultaneously within a single discussion.
- **Listening** for common ground is a powerful intervention when group members are polarized. It validates the group's areas of disagreement and focuses the group on areas of agreement. Just be careful not to overuse this strategy, or you'll end up whitewashing important disagreements that ought to be aired.
- **Linking** is a listening skill that invites a speaker to explain the relevance of a statement he or she has just made.
- **Intentional silence** is highly underrated. It consists of a pause, usually lasting no more than a few seconds, and it is done to give a speaker that brief extra "quiet time" to discover what he or she wants to say.
- **Empathizing** is commonly defined as the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.
- **Validating** is the skill that legitimizes and accepts a speaker's opinion or feeling, without agreeing that the opinion is "correct."
- **Acknowledging feelings** is important because people communicate their feelings through their conduct, their language, their tone of voice, and their facial expressions, and these communications have a direct impact on anyone who receives them.
- **Making space for a quiet person** sends that person and the group the message: "If you don't wish to talk now, that's fine. But if you would like to speak, here's an opportunity."
- **Balancing** is a critical task that allows a facilitator to broaden a discussion to include perspectives that may not yet have been expressed.
- **Encouraging** is the art of creating an opening for people to participate, without putting any one individual on the spot.
- **Drawing people out** is a skill that supports people to clarify, develop, and refine their ideas. Another version of this is helping the group see that some of the ideas are in tension and bear further exploration.

Facilitators should both model these behaviors as well as help participants adopt them themselves. A summary of the facilitator behaviors and tips or examples of ways to practice them is provided in the Art of Active Listening Tool. [2]

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[2] Adapted from International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) training materials.

The Art of Active Listening Tool

Behavior	Purpose	Tips	Examples
Encouraging	• Conveys interest • Encourages the person to keep talking	• Don't agree or disagree • Use neutral words • Face the speaker and nod as he/she speaks • Ask probing question	• "Can you tell me more?" • "And then what happened?"
Clarifying	• Ensures understanding • Avoids confusion • Obtains additional information	• Ask questions • Restate understanding • Ask if interpretation is on track	• "When did this happen?" • "By impacts you mean…?"
Restating or Paraphrasing	• Shows you are listening and understanding what is being said • Checks meaning and interpretation of message	• Restate basic ideas and your understanding of what was said in your own words	• "So you would like NGE to provide materials in Spanish. Is that right?" • "You thought that this action was required at this time?"
Reflecting	• Diffuses difficult situations • Shows understanding of feelings and emotions • Helps the speaker evaluate his/her own feelings after hearing them reflected by someone else	• Reflect the speaker's basic feelings • Listen to the tone of your voice • Watch body language • Interpret his/her feelings and reflect them back	• "This has really been frustrating to you." • "You sound disappointed." • "I hear anger in your voice."
Summarizing	• Reviews progress • Pulls together ideas, facts, and feelings • Establishes closure; allows people to move on	• Restate major ideas, thoughts, and feelings	• "These seem to be the key ideas you have expressed…." • "You main priorities were…."
Validating	• Acknowledges the worthiness of the other person	• Acknowledge the value of his/her issues and feelings • Show appreciation for his/her efforts and actions	• "I appreciate your willingness to resolve this issue."
Questioning	• Gathers information • Focuses discussion • Expands understanding	• Use open-ended questions starting with what, how, when, or where • Seek specific details to help understand and clarify	• "How did that new road surprise you?" • "What made you think that?"

Recipe for a Great Moderator: A Self-Assessment Tool

Skill Area	Poor (1)	Great (10)	Personal Score (1–10)	Adaptation Strategies
Listening	Inability to hear what others are saying and to track the line of thought being expressed or pick up on the subtext of the conversation. Short attention span. Cuts people off mid-sentence. Distracting or closed-off body language.	Ability to hear beyond what is being said to identify the core meaning. Can answer the questions: What does this person's statement say about what he/she values? What is the main point he/she is trying to make? What is he/she trying to say that others might miss?		
Objectivity	Biased about the subject matter and groups and/or persons involved with or affected by the subject matter. Unable to refrain from commenting about the subject matter or inserting personal opinion into the conversation. Seen as having a position or agenda with regard to the issue at hand.	Reflects good "behavioral neutrality" on the subject. Able to refrain from making personal comments about the subject matter. Does not reveal his/her personal position on the subject. Remains unbiased and neutral in conversation and when moderating.		
Self-Awareness	Not self-aware regarding the group's perception of and reaction to him/her. Rigid or inflexible style of delivery and speech.	Sensitive to the group's perception of and response to him/her. Can flexibly adapt speech and method to best suit the situation.		
Group Awareness	Poor awareness of group dynamics. Inability to read body language, including participants' confusion or discomfort with the conversation, or when they are tuning out.	Awareness of the group dynamics, including body language. Ability to sense how participants are responding to turns in the conversation. Knows when it is time to move on in the conversation, or when more		

Skill Area	Poor (1)	Great (10)	Personal Score (1–10)	Adaptation Strategies
Responsive Control	Either over controlling or insufficiently assertive. Unable to maintain an appropriate level of control of the group, to moderate the tenor of the discussion, to rein in dominant or aggressive speakers, or to elicit comments from silent participants. Intimidated or cowed by experts, politicians, and loudmouths.	Knows when and when not to intervene in order to reinforce ground rules and keep the conversation on track. Can effectively ensure that all participants have an opportunity to speak, by drawing out silent participants or managing dominant or aggressive speakers.		
Sense of Humor	Either excessively dour or serious, or inappropriately or excessively comedic.	Able to use humor appropriately to set a relaxed, informal tone for the conversation or to defuse a difficult or awkward situation.		
Adaptability	Overly dependent upon scripted, predictable environments. Does not handle last-minute changes well.	Able to adapt to unexpected situations with grace and humor, while keeping the key principles and objectives in mind.		
Public Speaking	Poor verbal communication skills. Either intimidated by speaking in front of groups or needs to be the center of attention.	Comfortable and eloquent when speaking in public settings; sets a relaxed and respectful tone. Uses language appropriate for the audience. Able to verbally synthesize information well.		
Image	Perceived as either elitist/aloof or overly charismatic. Seen as unprepared or disorganized, short-tempered, manic, or volatile.	Seen as warm, calm, approachable. Can connect with people from a wide range of backgrounds, ages, experiences, etc.		

Purpose, Qualities, and Techniques for Effective Recording

The recorder's job is a crucial one: to record the input of internal stakeholders and work with both the moderators and event organizers to create a written record of the workshop proceedings. While the recorder is not expected to write everything that is said word for word, he or she should try to capture the essence of the main points being made by each participant.

During the workshops it is extremely important that information and ideas be accurately captured. This can be done on flip charts, legal pads, or laptops. We recommend using flip charts to serve as "group memory" during the conversation and to help participants remain anchored in the conversation. We also recommend that the facilitator be joined by a recorder whose sole purpose is to capture the key elements of the conversation on the flip chart. It can be useful to have an additional person taking more detailed notes on a legal pad or laptop to supplement and fill out the notes gathered on the flip chart.

Purpose of Recording

- To help establish that what the participants say is valued and being listened to
- To remind participants of their comments, agreements, and action items, particularly during the reflection time
- To support the importance of equality and inclusion. Comments are captured regardless of the source, and the author is not identified.
- To serve as a reference document for future conversations
- To facilitate the writing of the report that will inform a wider audience of the discussion, decisions, and actions

Qualities of Effective Recording

- Brief
- Clear
- Legible
- Accurate
- Well organized
- Uses active verbs
- Reports the appropriate amount of information
- Captures the tensions, trade-offs, and common ground for action
- Notes are distributed soon after the forum
- Treats each person's contribution with equal respect. It is not your role to determine the value of a comment, but rather to capture the discussion.

Effective Recording Practices

- Record not only each person's position ("I'm for such and such"), but each person's thinking ("I'm for such and such because . . .").
- Keep your own views out of the way and record the proceedings as faithfully as possible.
- Occasionally ask the group or moderator to clarify a point if it is unclear to you or if things have moved too quickly. However, the recorder should not take on a moderating role unless co-moderating has already been discussed with the primary moderator.
- Use the speakers' words as much as possible.
- If you plan on using "dot voting" at the end of the forum, be sure to leave some space for the dots. You may also want to draw lines between the separate comments.
- When using flip charts, be sure to follow a number of recommended tips and practices:
    - Check whether or not the pages are adhesive, and work with the moderator to determine whether or not they will be posted as they become full.
    - Check flip chart markers before workshop begins.
    - Before taking them down, label the sheets with the group name and page number.
    - Have a pen or pencil handy to write additional clarification comments, if necessary. Have recorders add comments to the sheets before they are taken down.
    - Print in capital letters two to four inches tall.
    - Write straight up and down.
    - Close your letters (don't leave gaps in B's and P's, for example).
    - Use plain, block letters.
    - Alternate colors between speakers, but don't use too many colors on one page.
    - Don't crowd the bottom of the page.
    - Don't bother with people's names; just record their perspectives and ideas.
- If you have decided to audio-record the dialogues, make sure you minimize the chance of technical failures by using the following checklist:
    - ✓ Have you tested your digital recorder before using it?
    - ✓ Is there sufficient space on the recorder to record the whole group?
    - ✓ Is the battery full?
    - ✓ Is the recorder placed to pick up all the voices (center of the table)?
    - ✓ Are you in a location with minimal ambient noise?
    - ✓ Do you have a backup digital recorder you can use in case the primary one falters?

You've finished the workshops—now what? Reporting and making use of the information gained is a crucial piece of effective stakeholder engagement. This is a matter, in part, of taking care to "close the loop" in any given round of engagement. For instance, participants should be informed of the ways their ideas and concerns are being incorporated into the Completion by Design work plan or, more generally, of the work of problem solving among the institution's leaders. Moreover, reporting means taking the time to explain why some ideas are not being incorporated. Doing so deepens people's understanding of the issues and fosters mutual respect.

Stakeholders who participate in the workshops should be encouraged and supported to act on their deliberations and not just wait for the organizers and institutional leaders to implement changes. Well-designed engagement workshops will energize stakeholders and may lead many to want to roll up their sleeves and get involved in either your CBD work or other student success efforts. Encouraging and enabling action in response to deliberation gives internal stakeholders a role and a way to contribute. It gives them a personal stake in the success of the work.

Review and Interpret the Data

Compile the data

Collate the flip chart and facilitator notes from each group discussion into a single document organized around areas of:

- Common Ground
- Concerns/Disagreements
- Outstanding Questions
- Priorities for Action

Review post-workshop feedback from participants, moderators, and organizers (a debriefing meeting is recommended for the latter two), and incorporate findings from these into the document as appropriate.

Analyze the Compiled Data; Identify Major Themes

Analyze the collated workshop notes for major themes that arose across different groups. You should generally be able to identify at least one or two themes for each of the areas detailed above—Common Ground, Concerns/Disagreements, Outstanding Questions, and Priorities for Action. If each small group ranked priorities for action, pay particular attention to which priorities are similarly ranked across groups.

If you used Table 2 in Section 2 of this toolkit, you may also want to review the information from the event and the extent to which it aligned with your indicators of success for use in internal, process-related reports for organizers as well as external reports.

Reporting the Data

Reports summarizing the workshops have many possible functions. They can:

- Serve as a **tangible document concerning the state of the** issue that can then be utilized to clarify necessary next steps in the conversation. In particular, they can help identify tough choices, common ground, key questions to explore more fully, and a broad sense of the potential stakeholders on the issue.
- **Extend the conversation** beyond the participants in the actual event and pass on the important work done during those conversations.
- Serve to **bridge gaps** between different stakeholders, as each can respond to the work done by the others as represented in the report and use that as a point of departure.
- **Provide deeper analysis** of the interactions than were possible during the event by examining the notes and/or audio or video (if applicable), particularly if multiple groups went through the process and cross-group comparisons can be made.
- Serve as a **catalyst for action** and a reminder of the promises or suggestions made during forums.
- Develop a **record of collaborative work** that can be used to increase understanding on the issue across the cadre.

When producing a summary report:

- Have the initial discussion guide used in the workshop serve as the outline template for the report, and gather information under the areas of inquiry covered in the conversation.
- Track down answers to key questions that arose during the workshops, and include those answers in the report.
- Focus on capturing common ground, tensions, and ideas for action.
- Consider including a section of raw notes from the workshop as an appendix so that participants and others can see the relationship between the notes gathered and the report produced.
- Follow up with participants to share the draft report before it is made more widely available, in order to give people a chance to review content. Many will not take the time to review drafts, but providing the opportunity can help build trust.
- Live up to expectations set during the workshop by making clear in the report what the next steps are that will be taken as a result of the workshop.
- Consider using online and Web-based means of sharing information from the workshops.

Sample Summary Report Outline

The summary report can be structured in a number of different ways, and your team should customize the design of the report to suit your needs and preferences. To whom and how you are reporting will impact what is reported.

Section	Contents
I. Report Overview	a. Statement of Purpose: What was the purpose of holding the faculty engagement workshop? b. Acknowledgment of the organizational sponsor(s) of the internal stakeholder engagement workshop, as well as any individuals who played a major role. c. Why the workshop matters (i.e., getting key stakeholder[s] involved in the conversation about student completion). d. Day of event, location, number/type of attendees, etc.
II. Workshop Summary	a. Common Ground b. Concerns/Disagreements c. Outstanding Questions d. Priorities for Action e. What's Next? You may also want to include information detailing the successes of the event, such as the success factors detailed in Section 2 Table 2 of this toolkit.
III. Appendix	a. Raw notes from the workshop

Using the Outcomes Beyond the Report

The following are just a few ways to keep the momentum going once the report(s) has been disseminated:

- If you have the capacity to track and respond in a timely manner, consider posting information from the workshop on an online forum that allows for comments.
- Share what actions have been taken—by organizers, participants, or those the report has been shared with—a month or more down the road.
  - Use the attention the workshop has generated, in addition to the process-related lessons learned, to hold additional stakeholder engagement workshops.

Appendix 1. Additional Discussion Questions for Each Point Along the Student Pathway

Moderators should review these lists of questions prior to the workshops to determine which, if any, questions they think it is important to address in each of the points along the student pathway. These lists are not comprehensive; there might be additional questions that are more appropriate for your college, the chosen student population being discussed, or the particular internal stakeholder group being engaged.

Connection

- What opportunities and incentives does our college provide to help prospective and incoming students prepare and plan for college-level programs of study?
- Can prospective students identify where they stand vis-à-vis our college's readiness expectations and/or placement assessments prior to enrolling? Do we have diagnostic assessments available for prospective students?
- Are there college-prep courses for prospective students? Summer options? Adult education options? Are these options available at different locations or online?
- Does our college encourage dual-enrollment programs? Can high school students take dual-enrollment courses that are prerequisites for college-level programs of study leading to a credential? Do those courses count as program credits?
- What student services (for example, education and career planning, online and in person) does our college provide for prospective students, including dual-enrollment students?
- How are financial aid and grant opportunities expressed to prospective students? What assistance does our college provide for low-income, nontraditional students in filling out financial aid and other forms? Do students receive this assistance in time to be eligible for Pell grants?

Entry

- What are the demographic characteristics of these students (age is particularly important)? At which program levels do these students begin at the college? How much remedial instruction are they referred to?
- Do the college and individual departments track when students have entered a program of study (for example, by taking courses in a required core curriculum)? If so, who looks at this information and how is it used?
- What programs of study do the target students most often declare? How do they make these decisions?
  - Does the college track these students' declared programs of study over time?
  - Who uses data on student majors? How it is used?
- What concentrations (based on students' actual course-taking patterns) do students in the target group tend to enter? What accounts for the choice patterns you observe?
- Are there sets of courses (in addition to developmental courses) that these students frequently take? Of the courses frequently taken by these students, which ones have high failure or withdrawal rates?
- To what extent do students in the target group attempt to enter concentrations in particular fields but not succeed in doing so? Why is this the case?
- Does the way students receive financial aid encourage or discourage them from entering a program of study as soon as possible?
- Does remedial instruction help prepare students in the target group who choose and successfully enter a program of study?

Appendix 1. Additional Discussion Questions for Each Point Along the Student Pathway

Progress

- What are the demographic characteristics of these students (age is particularly important)? At which program levels do these students begin at the college? How much remedial instruction are they referred to?
- What is the process by which the college reviews the programs in question? What measures are used for this purpose? How is the information from such reviews generally used?
- For transfer programs, what policies or agreements are in place to help these students transfer successfully to baccalaureate programs in related fields?
  - Are program completers readily able to transfer to baccalaureate programs with junior standing in relevant fields?
  - Does the college track students in these programs who transfer to baccalaureate programs? If so, how is this done and how is the information used?
- For Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs (some of which may also be transfer), what does the college or relevant departments do to ensure that students who complete the programs in question advance in the labor market?
  - In what ways does the college or departments ensure that the programs in question meet labor market needs/demands?
  - Does the college track the labor market outcomes of students in these programs (including placement rates, satisfaction, and licensure rates)? If so, how? How is this information used?
  - What assistance does the college or departments provide to students to secure internships and/or jobs?

Completion

- How and when do students find out if they have a particular curricular gap that must be filled in order to graduate?
- What kinds of counseling services are available to students as they near completion?
- Is financial aid available to students who are close to completion and in good standing academically, but who might drop out without financial assistance?
- Does our college assess whether students are mastering the skills and knowledge each of the programs seeks to teach? If so, how does our college use that data?
- What kinds of programs and services are available to students to help them prepare to transfer? How do students learn about them? What percentage of students who are eligible for those programs and services use them?
- What kinds of programs and services are available to students to help them prepare to enter the workforce? How do students learn about them? What percentage of students who are eligible for those programs and services use them?
- Has our college engaged with workforce representatives to assess whether our graduates have the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in their chosen career paths?
- Has our college engaged with faculty from nearby four-year postsecondary institutions to assess whether our students have the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed when they transfer? Do we receive information from four-year institutions about our former students' course-taking patterns, grades, and completion rates?
- What feedback does our college receive from graduates that specifically relates to the preparation they received in their program of study?