

# Student Success Center Self-Assessment Planning Tools

Student Success Center Network Webinar  
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# Webinar Agenda

- Origins of the tools
- Purpose and organization of the tools
- Overview of the seven core capacities
- Approaches for using the tools
- Reactions and questions

# Origins of the Self-Assessment Tools

- Interviews with the SSC staff in early 2018
- Deeper strategy and sustainability discussions with most of the SSCs over the past 18 months
- Facilitating the launch of many SSCs over that past three years...most recently Florida and Arizona

# Recurring Themes from Discussions

- Strategic positioning – Aligning with broader strategic direction including bolstering the SSC role in policy
- Communications – Raising awareness of role/value/impact
- Engagement strategy – Consistent approach to convening and supporting colleges as well as engagement with other stakeholders
- Programming – Balancing current work with new opportunities
- Fundraising support – Targeting potential funding with a focus on flexible funding
- Staffing and operations – Augmenting limited capacity and ensuring stability

# Purpose and Organization of the Tools

- Purpose – to help SSC staff and partners assess the capacity of the SSC and to make decisions about areas that need greater focus.
- Defining capacity development – Similar to the SOAA for colleges, this tool is designed to help SSC's gauge their strengths and weaknesses by integrating four levels of development to identify gaps:
  - Under Developed – The SSC has not yet considered or implemented the capacity/practice
  - Moderately Developed – The SSC has considered and begun to implement the capacity/practice
  - Well Developed – The SSC has implemented the capacity/practice
  - Not applicable/not needed
- The tool also includes a column for SSCs to evaluate the level of priority (low, medium, high) for the various capacities.

# Seven SSC Core Capacities

1. Strategic Vision & Direction
2. Communications
3. College & Stakeholder Engagement
4. Delivering Content & Assistance to Colleges
5. Evaluation & Impact
6. Fund Development
7. Operations

# Core Capacity #1

## Strategic Vision & Direction

- Rationale - to encourage the SSC staff to take the time to articulate the SSC vision and engage in conversations that will help to implement it.
- Subtopics covered in the tool:
  - Relationship to the SSC Host Organization
  - SSC Strategic Plan
  - SSC Role in Supporting State Policy

# Core Capacity #2: Communications

- Rationale - to help SSC staff think through the dimension of their communications strategy and help them develop a plan that keeps key groups informed and aware.
- Subtopics covered in the tool:
  - Audiences
  - Messaging and Communications Channels
  - Knowledge Development & Management



# Core Capacity #3:

## College & Stakeholder Engagement

- Rationale - to help SSC staff think through the aspects of their interaction with colleges and to evaluate how they can expand the breadth and depth of the engagement from their colleges and other stakeholders.
- Subtopics covered in the tool:
  - College Engagement with the SSC
  - Advisory Board and/or Steering Committee
  - Approach to Convening Colleges
  - Broader Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships

# Core Capacity #4:

## Delivering Content & Assistance to Colleges

- Rationale - to help SSC staff think through the dimension of the collective and individual support they provide colleges and to evaluate how they can adapt the assistance they provide over time as the colleges' needs evolve.
- Subtopics covered in the tool:
  - Programmatic Emphasis of the SSC
  - Coaching/Mentoring Strategy

# Core Capacity #5: Evaluation & Impact

- Rationale - to help SSC staff think through how they should evaluate how well they are serving their colleges and how best to learn from their experience to improve what they do.
- Subtopics covered in the tool:
  - Formative Evaluation of the SSC
  - Summative Evaluation of the SSC
  - College Progress, Assessment, and Documentation

# Core Capacity #6: Fund Development

- Rationale - to help SSC staff think through the aspects of their interaction with potential funders and to evaluate how they can deepen relationships with existing funding partners as well as diversify the sources of the financial support.
- Subtopics covered in the tool:
  - Defining SSC Funding Needs
  - Targeting SSC Funding Options
  - Developing SSC-Funder Relationships

# Core Capacity #7: Operations

- Rationale - to help SSC staff think through the dimension of the Center's operations and how, as a small team, they might function more efficiently and effectively to help maximize the quality of support they provide to their colleges.
- Subtopics covered in the tool:
  - SSC Staff Capacity
  - SSC Finances

# Approaches for Using the Tools

- The sections of the tools can be used in one sitting to take a holistic look at the SSC or it can be used to focus on one of the seven core capacities at a time.
- The tool is designed with flexibility in mind and can be completed in different ways:
  - The questions can be completed by the executive director alone as a snapshot of their own thinking or used as rubric for larger group discussion.
  - The corresponding facilitation guide can be used in conversations with groups of stakeholders to help the SSCs explore their strategic direction and map out priority next steps to strengthen mission and impact.

# Connection to SSCN Services

Core Capacity	Related SSCN Service	Provider
Strategic Vision & Direction	Strategy & Sustainability Policy & Advocacy	Baldwin Consulting JFF
Communications	Communications	Next Chapter Communications
College & Stakeholder Engagement	Change Leadership Strategy & Sustainability Building Statewide Guided Pathways TA Strategies	Aspen Institute Baldwin Consulting National Center for Inquiry & Improvement
Evaluation & Impact	Data & Evaluation Assessment for Guided Pathways	ASA & Research for Action Community College Research Center
Fund Development	Strategy & Sustainability	Baldwin Consulting JFF

# Discussion Questions

- How might you want to use this tool?
- Are there any major topics missing?
- What questions do you have?





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