THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
COLLEGE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Leading Internal Transformational Change Aligned to Student Success Goals

| Communicate a Vision and Create Urgency | Build College-Wide Ownership for Change | Align Structures and Resources | Build a System to Support Disciplined Execution | Establish Routines of Inquiry and Evidence Use |

Create Routines of Effective Communication
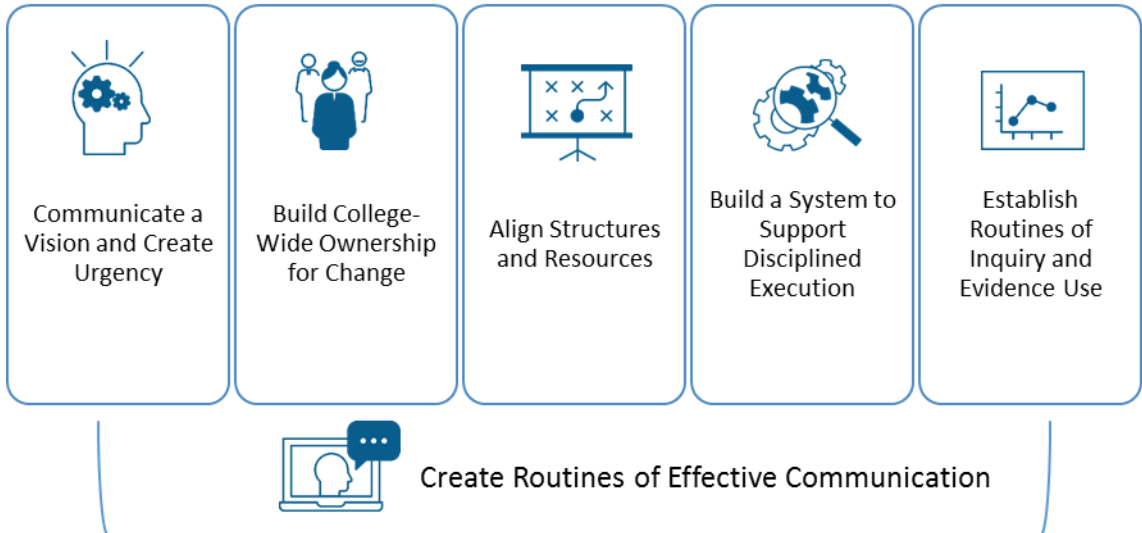
Building College-Wide Ownership for Change

Create time and space to discuss data and the student voice

Create shared language and lead the college in dialogue

Build a team of "champions" for the change

Ensure the presence of forums to communicate the need for change

Use every vehicle to convey the reasons for change

Model the vision through how time and money are spent
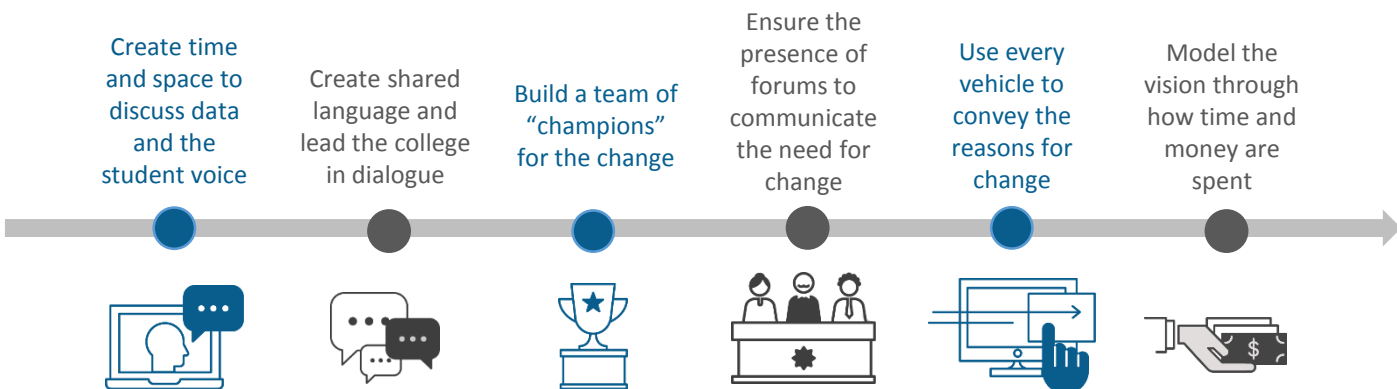
Dear Change Leadership Guru,

Please help! Our college is about to undergo guided pathways redesign, yet another major change initiative, and my faculty colleagues and I have reached the point of initiative overload. We love our students and want the best for each and every one of them, but how much more of our time can we give for activities that go above and beyond our teaching commitments? Now, administrators are adding onto our plates even more formal responsibility for advising students (without, of course, adding on any more pay or reducing our teaching loads). I am not a trained advisor, I didn't go to graduate school for counseling, and I'm exhausted from taking on more and more responsibilities each year as we add one "student success" initiative after another without ever stopping to figure out if the last one worked. It seems like all of these changes are whims rather than well-thought-through strategies. For a number of months we have been losing some of our very best and most committed faculty who have left exasperated over the growing workload and initiative fatigue. Many of our remaining colleagues are in the process of looking for other employment. Before we lose any more of our precious faculty, help us help our administration understand why we aren't enthusiastic about this change.

Sincerely,
Survival of the Fittest

- What are the truths in this sentiment that presidents need to acknowledge? How would you respond?

- How can the president change the conversation around pathways implementation?

- How can the president engage faculty in guided pathways so they feel they "own" the redesign?

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Goal: In the next 5 years, the college will increase the percentage of students who complete credentials while reducing excess time and credits-to-degree, and closing equity gaps.

Strategy – Guided Pathways

- Build clear pathways
- Get students on a pathway
- Help students *stay* on the pathway
- Ensure students are learning
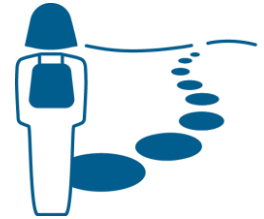
- Take 15 minutes with your table. Assume that, five years from now, your college has failed to achieve this goal. Identify the likely major causes of that "mortality."
- What specifically might happen that could derail the effort? Consider the following areas of institutional culture: strategic finance, HR polices, and data use protocols. Record your thoughts on the chart on the next page of your packet.
- For each cause, what strategies could you employ to anticipate and avert or address the challenges?

Pre-Mortem Analysis

Goal: In the next 5 years, the college will increase the percentage of students who complete credentials while reducing excess time and credits-to-degree, and closing equity gaps.

Cause of "mortality"	What specifically might derail the effort? (Consider strategic finance, HR systems, data use protocols)	Strategies to address the challenge
Example: Students are not being adequately advised onto pathways when they enter the institution – they are still picking courses "cafeteria style."	*-**HR:** Advisers at the college are being evaluated based on how many advising conversations they have, not on whether or not students are effectively counseled onto a pathway that meets their career goals.* *-**Data protocols:** College leadership is not reviewing metrics re: how many students are entering pathways and whether or not they are changing pathways.*	*-Alignment of adviser evaluations with student success goals.* *-Regular review of KPIs re: students entering and staying on pathways by key decision makers.*

Why Initiatives Fail

Notes

Reasons Initiatives Fail

People blame the student.

What can be done?

Repeatedly activate the student voice.

Reasons Initiatives Fail

People don't believe this is going to get done—they think it will "blow over" and the college will move on to the next thing.

What can be done?

Persistently repeat the message about *why and what*, using every possible vehicle.

Reasons Initiatives Fail

The college is suffering from a failure to focus and from initiative fatigue.

What can be done?

Maintain discipline for multiple years before taking on major new initiatives.

Reasons Initiatives Fail

The college failed to engage external partners so they don't have what they need to ensure student success.

What can be done?

Build partnerships, considering:
- **Where is the student coming from?**
- **Where is the student going next?**
- **What students need:**
  - **That may not be within the college's core strengths.**
  - **That can be more efficiently delivered by others.**
  - **For which external resources may be available.**

Reasons Initiatives Fail

Lack of infrastructure to know what is working and what isn't. Goals and measurements are not defined clearly at the outset; outcomes are not being regularly tracked.

What can be done?

- **Use common data definitions.**
- **Set a schedule for tracking outcomes.**
- **Frequent communication among stakeholders.**