

# Assessing Institutional Capacity for Mission-Fulfillment and Student Success

Greg Brazell

Director of Employee Engagement, Learning & Development, Pierce College

Thomas Broxson

District Dean, Natural Sciences & Mathematics, Pierce College

Laurie Heacock

Senior Advisor, Data & Analytics, Achieving the Dream

# AUDIENCE POLL: WHO IS WITH US TODAY?

Community College

Four-year public liberal arts university

Four-year public doctoral-granting research institution

Four-year private university

For-profit university

Private sector

# COMMON CHALLENGES BEFORE US

- Funding uncertainty
- Changes in student populations served
- Social Inequality in educational attainment
- Accreditation pressures
- Change management
- Competing priorities
- Engaging stakeholders
- Planning alignment

# ATD'S "WHY"

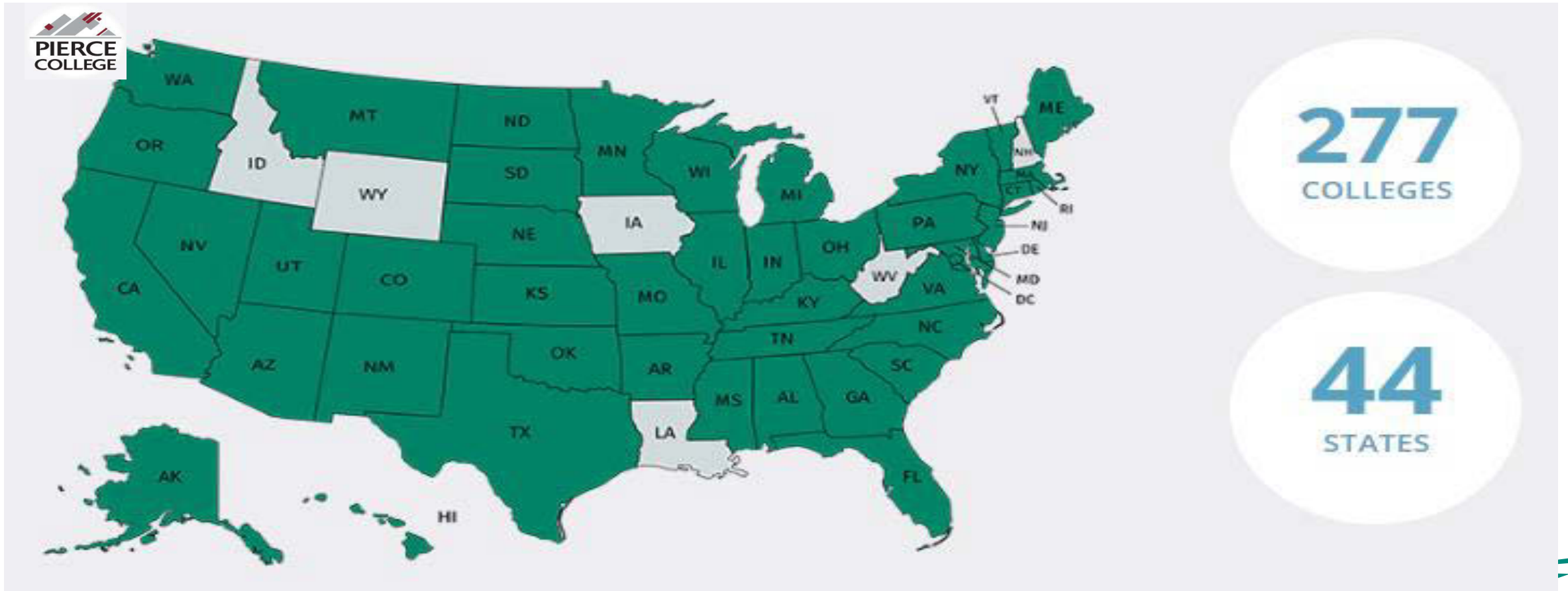
Achieving the Dream believes its mission is **urgent** and that the stakes for success have never been higher.

The **future of our country** requires that we strengthen our **communities** by relentlessly addressing **systemic inequities** within higher education to increase **social and economic mobility** for all students and families.

We're leading America's largest **network** of community colleges working to become strong engines of student and community growth.



# OUR NATIONAL NETWORK AND SERVICE REACH



# OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

ATD and our Network colleges will help all students—particularly the most underserved—**realize substantial value from their postsecondary experience and their earned credentials**, thereby strengthening their communities.

# CORE PRINCIPLES

## **The Power of Fundamentals**

Advancement through Relationships

The Ecosystem of Reform

Equity

# INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FRAMEWORK: OUR FUNDAMENTALS FRAMEWORK

Our **Institutional Capacity Framework** helps us integrate and align 7 essential capacities at all colleges to support a student-centered culture that promotes student success.





# EMBEDDED CULTURE OF EVIDENCE



# WHAT IS THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL (ICAT)?

An online assessment to help institutions assess their strengths and areas for improvement in the seven key dimension encompassed in the Institutional Capacity Framework

Asks a broad range of colleges stakeholders to assess their institution's capacity across four levels, from minimal to exemplary

Once completed, participants engage in a large group dialogue using the Institutional Capacity Framework and discussion prompts to celebrate strengths, prioritize areas for improvement and develop concrete actions for building capacity to support student success efforts

# INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

## Sample question

Does the college have a clear and compelling vision for student success?

The college has no vision statement for student success nor has it articulated a vision for improvements in student success.

The college seeks to improve student success, but its vision is not formalized.

The college has a clear vision statement focused on student success, but it is not widely understood or shared.

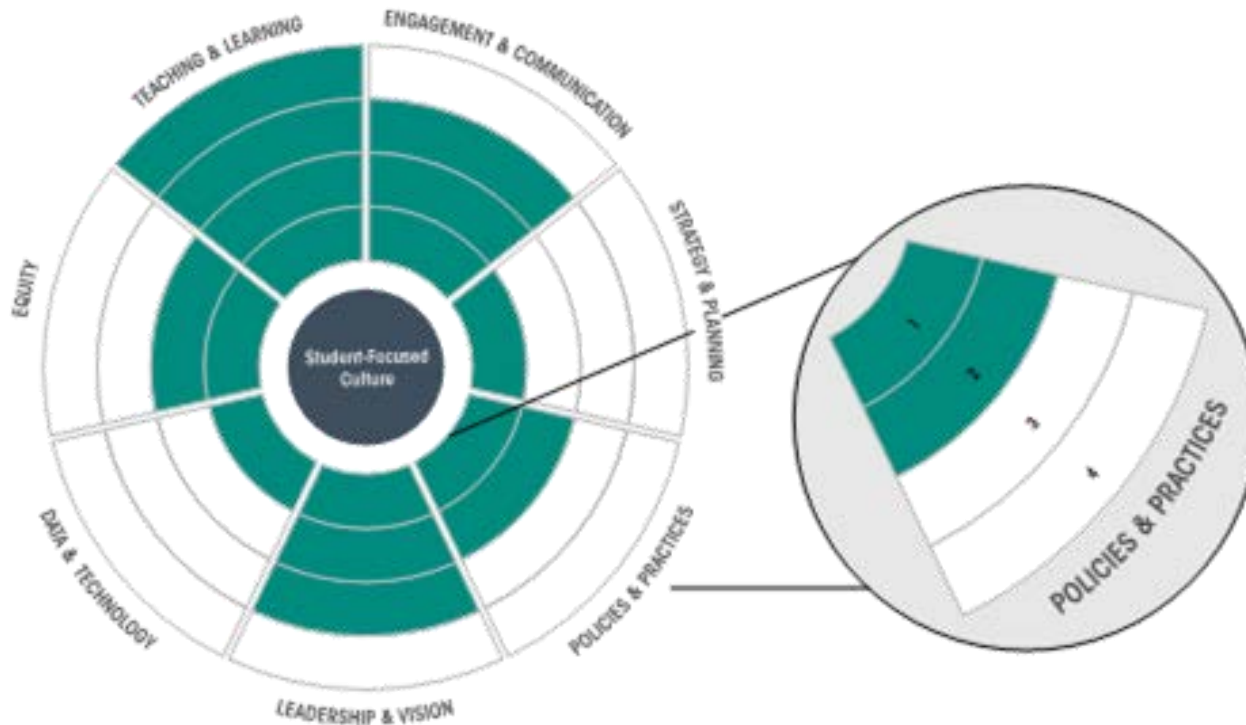
Example: A vision statement for student success has been developed, perhaps by senior leadership, but most employees are not aware of it.

The college has a clear and compelling vision statement for student success that is widely shared and understood.

Example: The vision statement for student success is visible and reaffirmed at multiple college meetings.

I don't know

# SAMPLE RESULTS



**Level 1**  
Minimal level of capacity in place with a clear need to build strength.

**Level 2**  
Moderate level of capacity established.

**Level 3**  
Strong level of capacity in place.

**Level 4**  
Exemplary level of capacity in place.

# DISAGGREGATE RESULTS BY

- Campus (if multi-campus)
- Functional role (administrator, full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, staff, etc)
- Area within institution (academic affairs, student services, institutional research, information technology, noncredit etc)

Allows for identification of perception gaps, communication gaps

# COLLEGES ARE USING ICAT RESULTS FOR...

Strategic planning

Accreditation

Building guided pathways

Identifying areas for professional development

Capacity building

Framework for alignment

Triangulating with CCSSE and other data sources

Implementing high impact practices

Educational master planning

Integration in a comprehensive data and technology assessment

Campus-wide discussions

Implementing improvements

# ICAT STATS

Administered by over **200** institutions since September 2016

Over **33,000** individual responses

**Highest** capacity areas: Leadership & Vision; Policies & Practices

**Lowest** capacity areas: Data & Technology; Equity

# NETWORK RESULTS

All Institutions	Capacity Area	LMA Winners
3.1	<b>Leadership &amp; Vision</b>	<b>3.4</b>
3.1	<b>Policies &amp; Practices</b>	<b>3.3</b>
3.0	Strategy & Planning	3.3
3.0	Engagement & Communication	3.2
3.0	Teaching & Learning	3.2
2.9	Equity	3.1
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Data &amp; Technology</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>0.4</b>	<b>Range Difference (High-Low)</b>	<b>0.4</b>

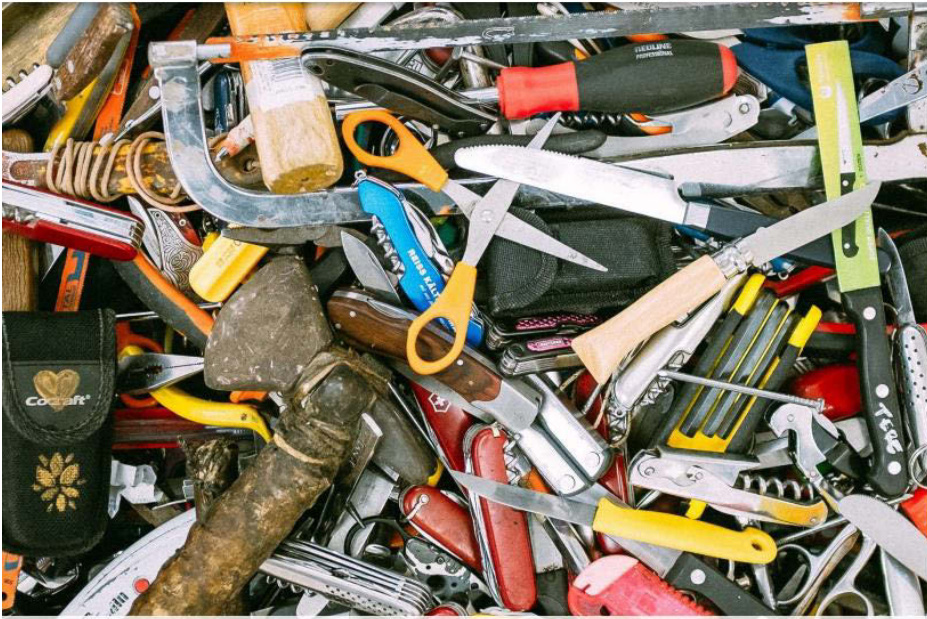


# “THE PROCESS IN WHICH A TOOL IS USED IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE TOOL ITSELF”



## A Guide to Organizational Capacity Assessment Tools

*Finding and Using the Right Tool for the Job*



### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THIS MEMO\*

#### Purpose

- The key functions of an organizational assessment tool are to
  - Provide a framework that facilitates individual reflections about an organization's trajectory
  - Help stakeholders identify shared concerns and priority actions
- A tool provides common language to discuss difficult organizational issues and focuses the conversation on the questions within a tool rather than opinions of specific individuals.

#### Using the tools successfully

- The process in which a tool is used is more important than the tool itself.
- Tools work best in a process facilitated by a skilled consultant.
- Funders tend to believe it is better to ask a nonprofit to share a summary of its organizational assessment findings with them rather than ask to see the actual results from the tool.
- Funders do not frequently use organizational assessment tools to assess grantee progress over time. Only a few funders report good experiences using a tool for this purpose, and these experiences were all facilitated processes with a small group (e.g., a learning community) using an adapted or custom-designed tool.
- An organizational assessment tool, when used within a nonprofit learning community, can be used successfully to monitor progress to organizational capacity benchmarks.
- Program officers may not feel knowledgeable enough about nonprofit organizational capacity and effectiveness to confidently participate in conversations about organizational assessment; these individuals would welcome some training or help from a more knowledgeable colleague within their foundation.

#### Tool variations

- The tools that are most highly regarded by funders, consultants, and nonprofits are ones that were adapted or custom-designed for the particular organization and its context and needs.
- Rubrics in tools help users understand what “doing better” could look like.



# SUCCESSFUL COLLEGES...

Have intentionally tended to building strong **fundamentals**.

Have adopted an **organizing framework** (culture and context matters) to bring alignment to all the work necessary to advance accelerated improvements.

Have adopted their **own unique theory of change** (culture and context matters) around the lever that will drive scaled gains at their institution.



**PIERCE COLLEGE**



**DISTRICT**



**SERVING**

*Pierce County*

*Two colleges and a military campus*



Achieving  
the Dream™



PIERCE COLLEGE



DISTRICT

- Two colleges and several sites including a large site at JBLM
- 15,687 students
- Ages range from 13 to 83
- 51% are full time
- 51% are first generation
- 14% are Running Start
- 50% non-White
- 28% have dependents



# WE STARTED BY LOOKING AT OUR DATA

80%

87%

51%

62%

19%

39%

10%

70%

19%

38%

# BIG GAINS: MULTIPLE ACTIONS

- Mission Driven
- Mandatory New Student Experience
- Moved to a Pathways Model
- Redesigned Precollege Math and English
- Focused on Equity
- Democratized Our Data
- Boldly Reallocated Funds
- Created Center for Engagement & Learning (CEAL)



Achieving the Dream™

Community Colleges Count

2017

LEAH MEYER  
AUSTIN AWARD

SPONSORED BY THE KRESGE FOUNDATION



PIERCE  
COLLEGE  
DISTRICT



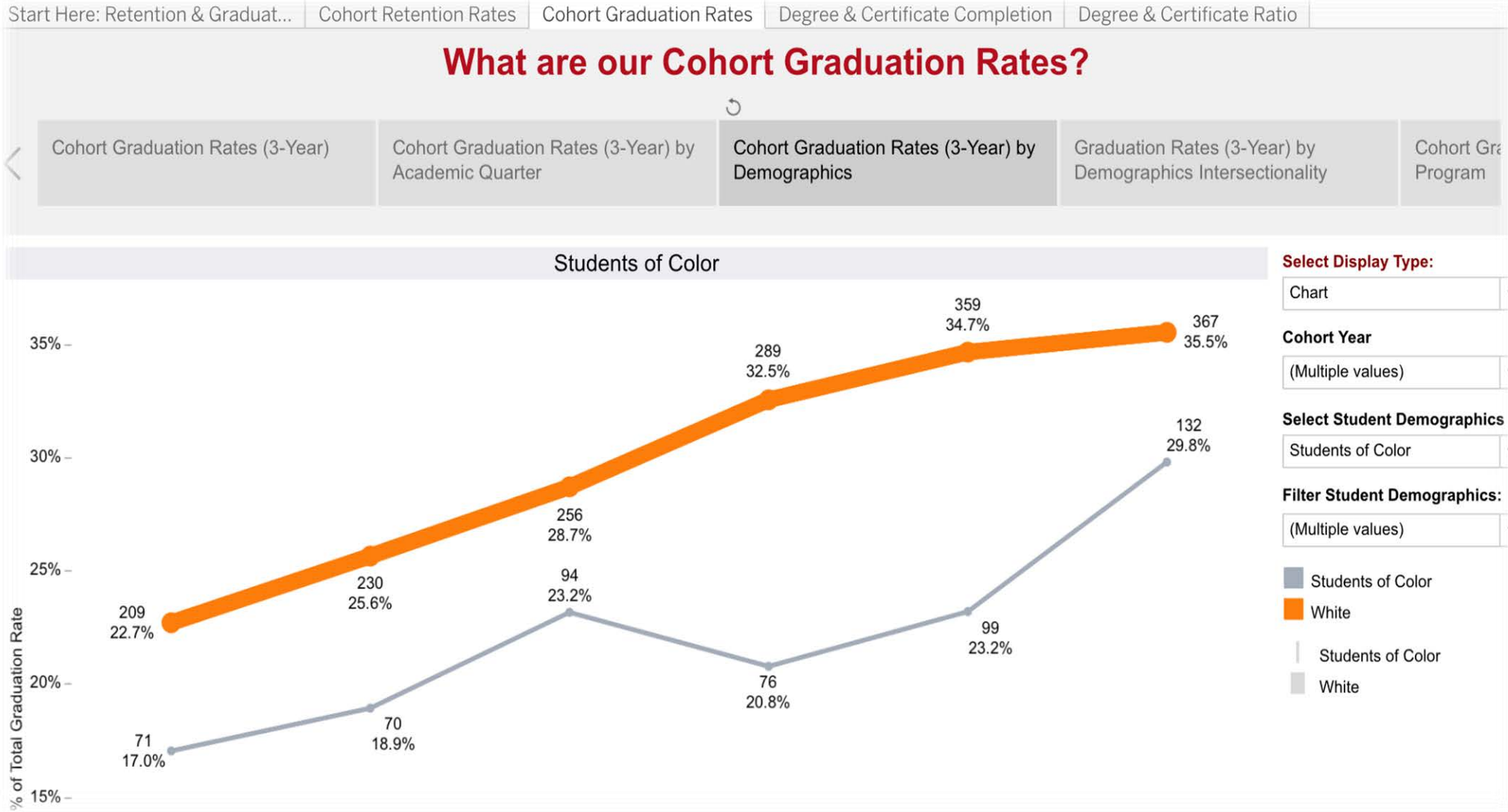
Achieving the Dream  
LEADER COLLEGE  
OF DISTINCTION

@AchieveTheDream #ATDNetwork #ATDcolleges



Achieving  
the Dream™

# BUT WE HAVE MUCH MORE WORK TO DO...





# INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL (ICAT)



# PIERCE SURVEY: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL (ICAT)



**WOW!**  
(according to us)

LEVELS KEY	
<b>LEVEL 1</b>	Minimal level of capacity in place with a clear need to build strength.
<b>LEVEL 2</b>	Moderate level of capacity established.
<b>LEVEL 3</b>	Strong level of capacity in place.
<b>LEVEL 4</b>	Exemplary level of capacity in place.

	EQUITY	TEACHING & LEARNING	ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION	STRATEGY & PLANNING	POLICIES & PRACTICES
<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
AVERAGE RATING 3.5	AVERAGE RATING 3.2	AVERAGE RATING 3.1	AVERAGE RATING 3.1	AVERAGE RATING 3.2	AVERAGE RATING 3.4

## DATA & TECHNOLOGY

The institution's capacity to collect, access, analyze and use data to inform decisions, and to use powerful technology to support student success.

LEVEL

3

AVERAGE  
RATING

3.2

27

### RESULTS BY CATEGORY (N=112)

LEVEL 1 2 3

#### Data

1. Does relevant data exist to inform decision-making?
2. Does reliable data exist to inform decisions?
3. Are data readily accessible to those who need it?
4. Are measures of student success defined, documented and used?
5. Are data collected at various points along the student experience continuum?
6. Are student success data translated into meaningful information?
7. Do data analyses yield insights about the past and future?



#### Technology

8. Have student success technologies been adopted to improve student outcomes?



#### Culture of Evidence

9. Do the Information Technology (IT) and Institutional Research (IR) staff collaborate to optimize processes for data use?
10. Does the college use benchmarking to identify strategies for improvement and innovation?
11. Does the college use data to examine and improve student outcomes?
12. Does the college evaluate student success initiatives to inform decision-making?



# EQUITY

The commitment, capabilities, and experiences of an institution to fairly serve low income students, students of color and other at-risk student populations with respect to access, success, and campus climate.

LEVEL

3

AVERAGE RATING

3.1

## RESULTS BY CATEGORY (N=121)

LEVEL 1 2 3 4

### Leadership and Vision

- 1. Does the college have a clear and compelling definition of equity?
- 2. Is equity a primary consideration in the college's student success efforts?



### Strategy and Planning

- 3. Does the strategic plan include goals to advance equity?
- 4. Does the college have a formal entity to coordinate equity efforts?
- 5. Are equity considerations embedded in college unit plans and practices?



### Engagement and Communication

- 6. Is the college community broadly engaged in conversations about equity?



### Policies and Practices

- 7. Does the college consider equity when proposing and evaluating policies and practices?
- 8. Are hiring and retention policies in place that address equity and diversity?



### Teaching and Learning

- 9. Are faculty and staff prepared to work with a diverse student population?
- 10. When teaching, do faculty take into consideration the various ways that students learn due to different cultural values?
- 11. Are equity concepts, such as inclusion and social justice, embedded within the curriculum?
- 12. Are equity concepts embedded in co-curricular and academic



### Data and Technology

- 13. Has the college defined metrics to promote and enhance equity?
- 14. Does the college routinely disaggregate student data into sub-populations to identify achievement gaps?



### Culture of Evidence

- 15. Is disaggregated student data used to address achievement gaps?



## TEACHING & LEARNING

The commitment to engaging full-time and adjunct faculty in examinations of pedagogy, meaningful professional development, and a central role for them as change agents within the institution. Also, the college's commitment to advising, tutoring, and out-of-classroom supports as well as restructuring developmental education to facilitate student learning and success.

<b>LEVEL</b> <b>3</b>	<b>AVERAGE RATING</b> <b>3.1</b>
--------------------------	-------------------------------------

### RESULTS BY CATEGORY (N=137)

LEVEL 1 2 3 4

#### Instructional Practices and Support Services

1. Are faculty engaged as change agents in improving student success?
2. Do faculty apply research-based instructional practices?
3. Does the college provide the resources to maximize the use of technology in educational practice?
4. Does the college offer a comprehensive array of learning supports for students?



#### Developmental Education

5. Does the college provide accelerated options to traditional developmental education?



#### Structured Program Maps

6. Are program-level learning outcomes designed to prepare students to transition to the workplace and to transfer to a four-year institution?
7. Does the college regularly monitor student progress and provide focused support?



#### Professional Development

8. Does the college have an effective professional development program for instruction?
9. Do professional development activities support adjunct faculty participation?
10. Do faculty update their instructional practice based on acquired professional development?



#### Culture of Evidence

11. Are data regularly used to improve educational practice in the classroom?



12. Are learning outcomes used to improve curriculum and instruction?



**Capacity Café** is a facilitated large group engagement activity and includes a debrief with your institution's administration, faculty and staff to discuss the results from the ICAT, celebrate strengths and identify potential areas for improvement.



<https://youtu.be/BRooWqAZ-n0>

@AchieveTheDream #ATDNetwork #ATDcolleges



Achieving  
the Dream™

PIERCE WORLD  
CAFE:  
  
INSTITUTIONAL  
CAPACITY  
ASSESSMENT TOOL  
(ICAT)

## Top Priorities

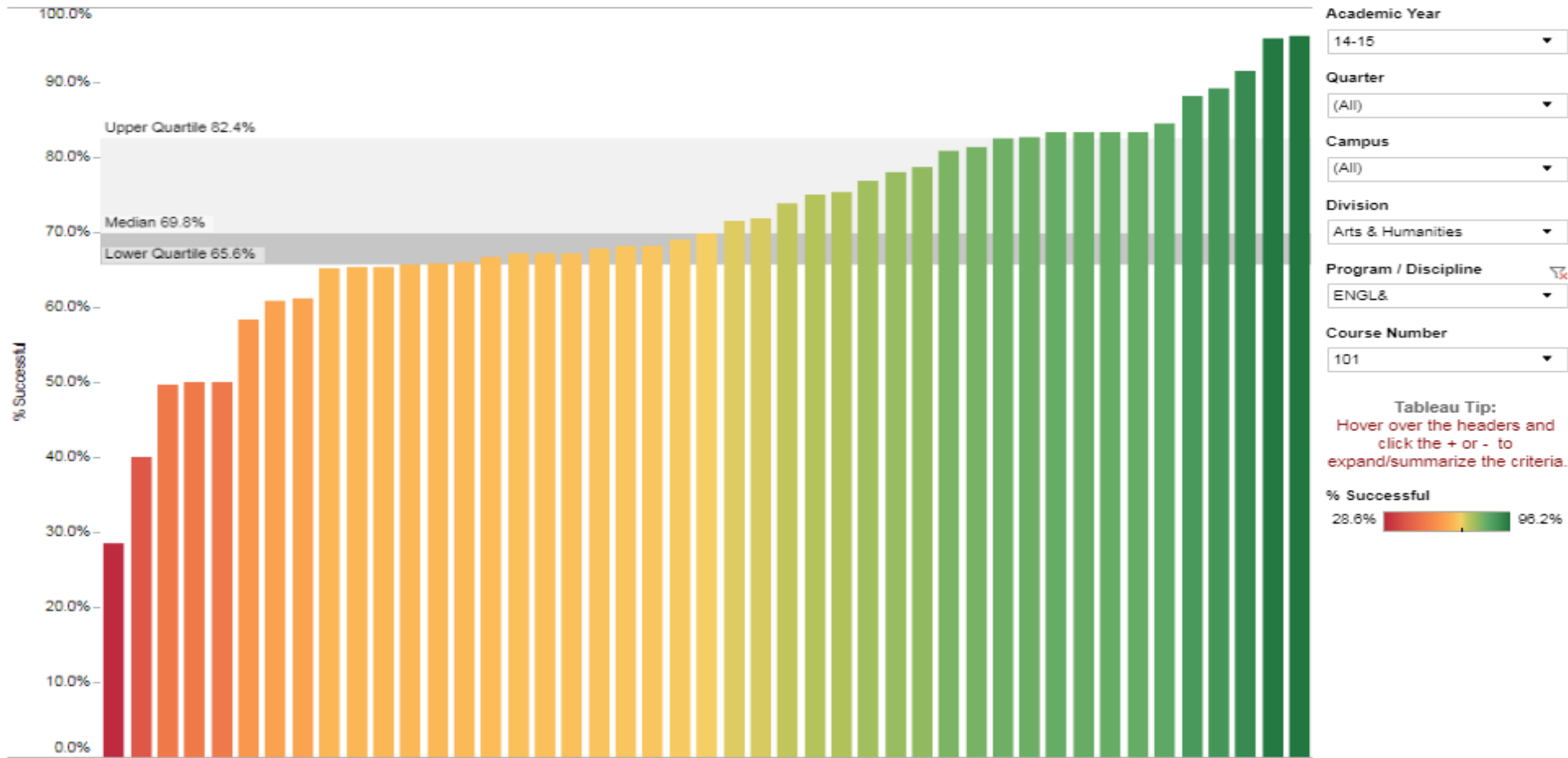
- **Professional development**  
(organized by ICAT categories)
- **Communication**
- **Pathways**
- **Norming assessment and grading across departments and courses**
- **ELearning**



# Norming

## How many students successfully completed their courses?

Navigation tabs: Successful Course Completion Rates by Academic Quarter | Successful Course Completion Rates by Demographics | **Successful Course Completion Rates by Section Distribution**

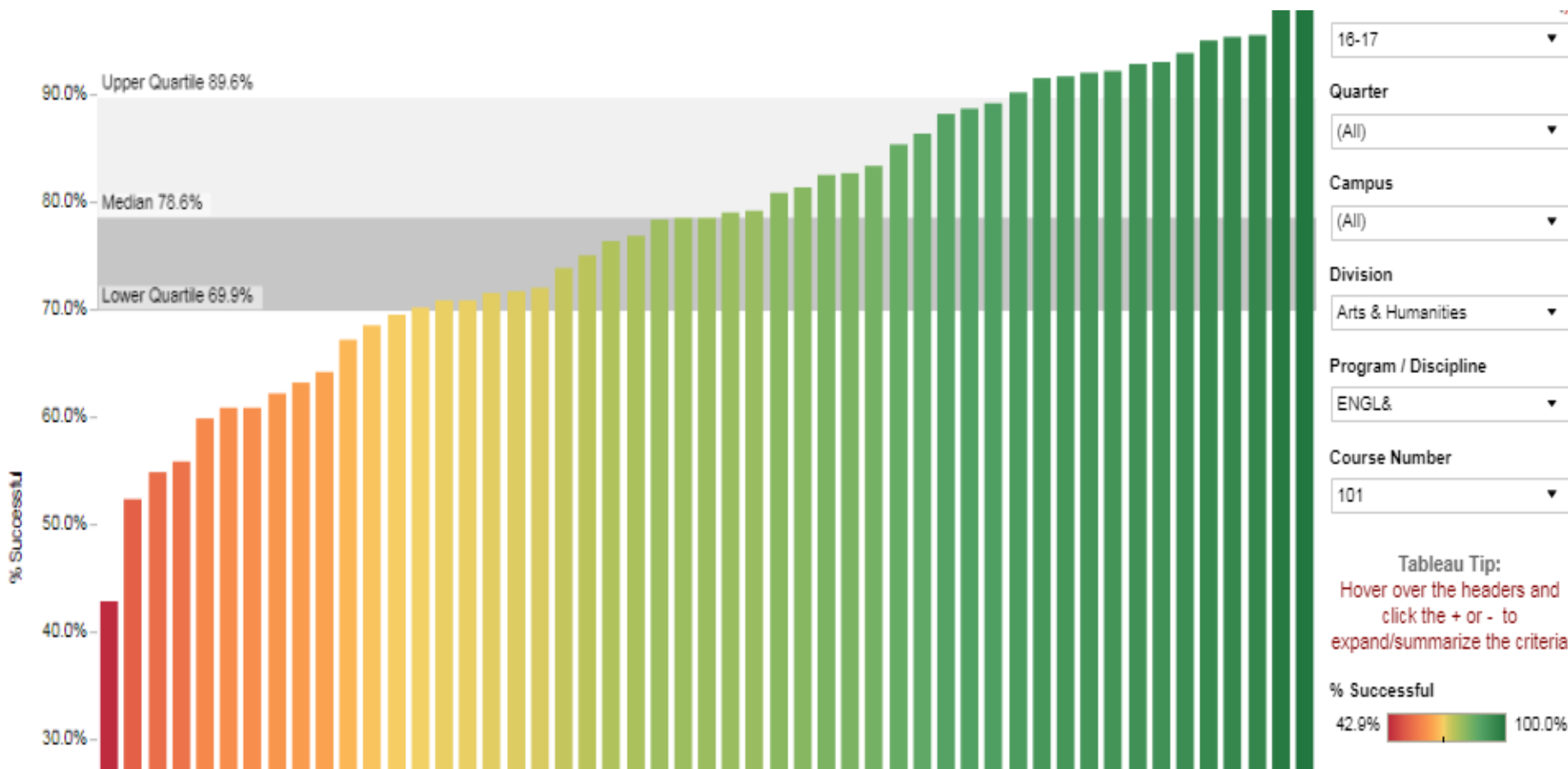


( NOTE: Please note that these data show the total # of successful course completions/enrollments for each area. This will show duplicate students, but allows for equivalent assessment at the course level. Successful completion consists of decimal grades equal to or greater than 2.0 or a letter grade of "P" or "S". This criteria applies to all courses.

# Norming

In 2015, the Median Successful Course Completion Rate was **under 70%** with the lowest rate **under 30%**.

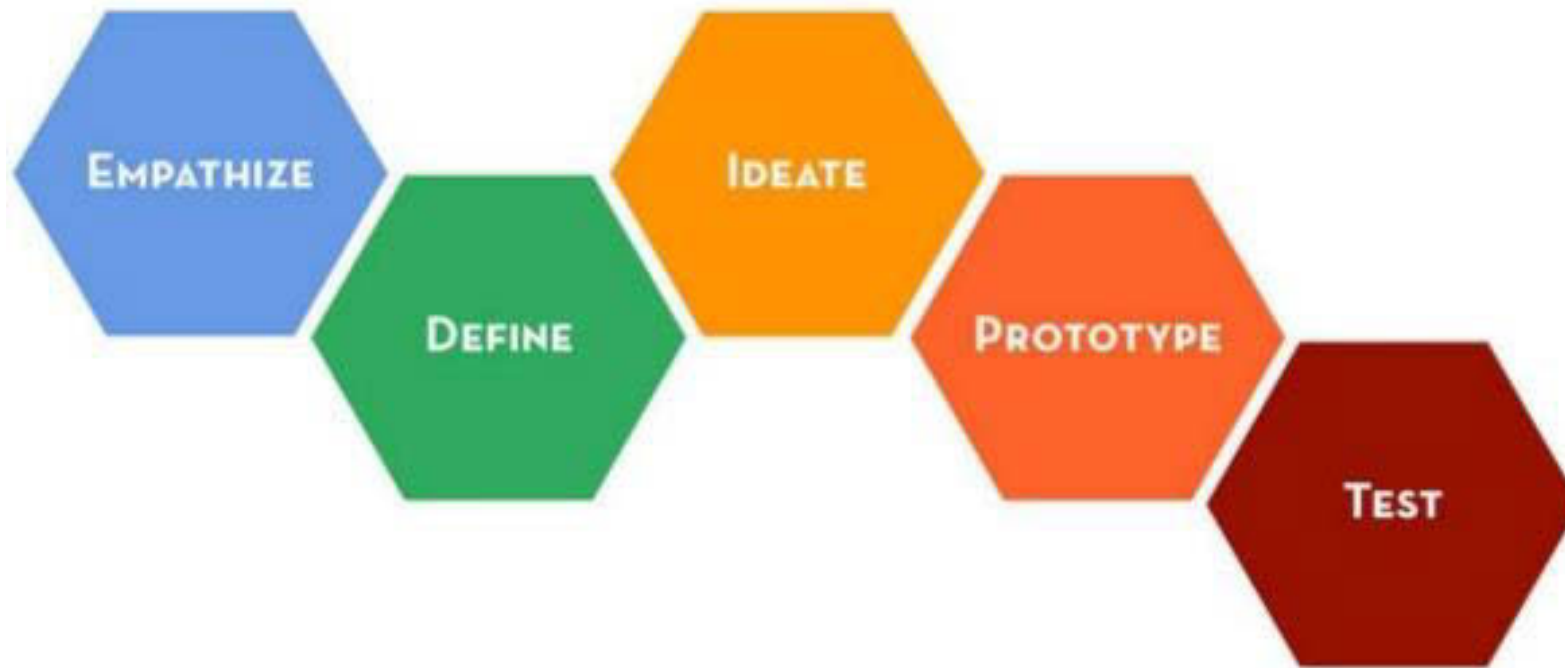
By the end of the 2018 academic year, the median success rate was **nearly 80%** with the lowest rate **over 40%**.



Use this strategy!

Design Thinking...

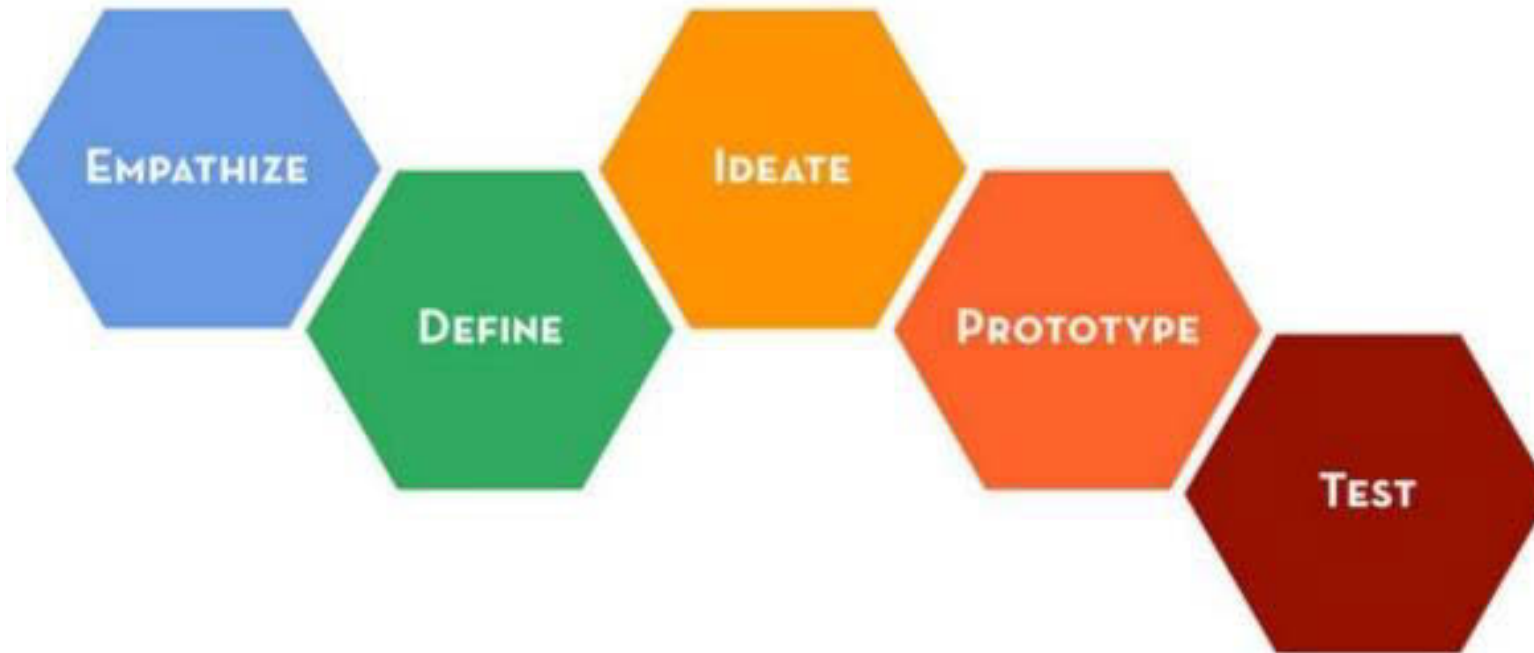
The group utilized the first two steps of the Stanford Design Thinking Process.



Use this strategy!

Design Thinking...

**Look at the “Empathy Interview”  
This was big! How would you**



# EMPLOYEE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Adjunct Professional Development
- Communities of Practice
- First-Year Faculty Cohort
- Master Teaching
- Targeted Skills Training
- Faculty In-Service Proposals
- Staff training
- Exempt Employee Training

# FOCUSED TOPICS ALIGN WITH ICF AREA(S)

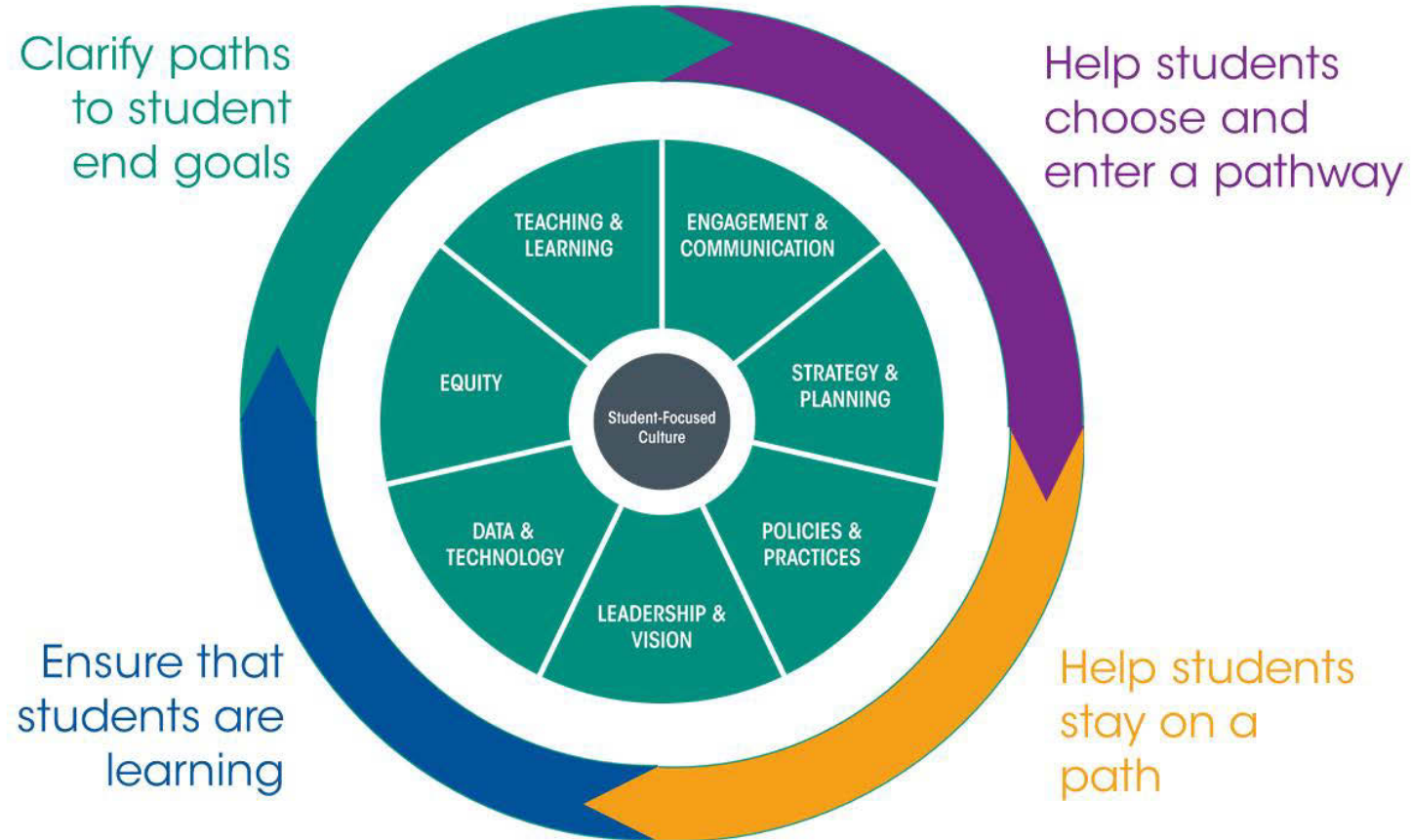
## **TARGETED SKILLS TRAINING**

- Contractual opportunity
- Promotional Salary increase
- Themed cohort model
- Action research project

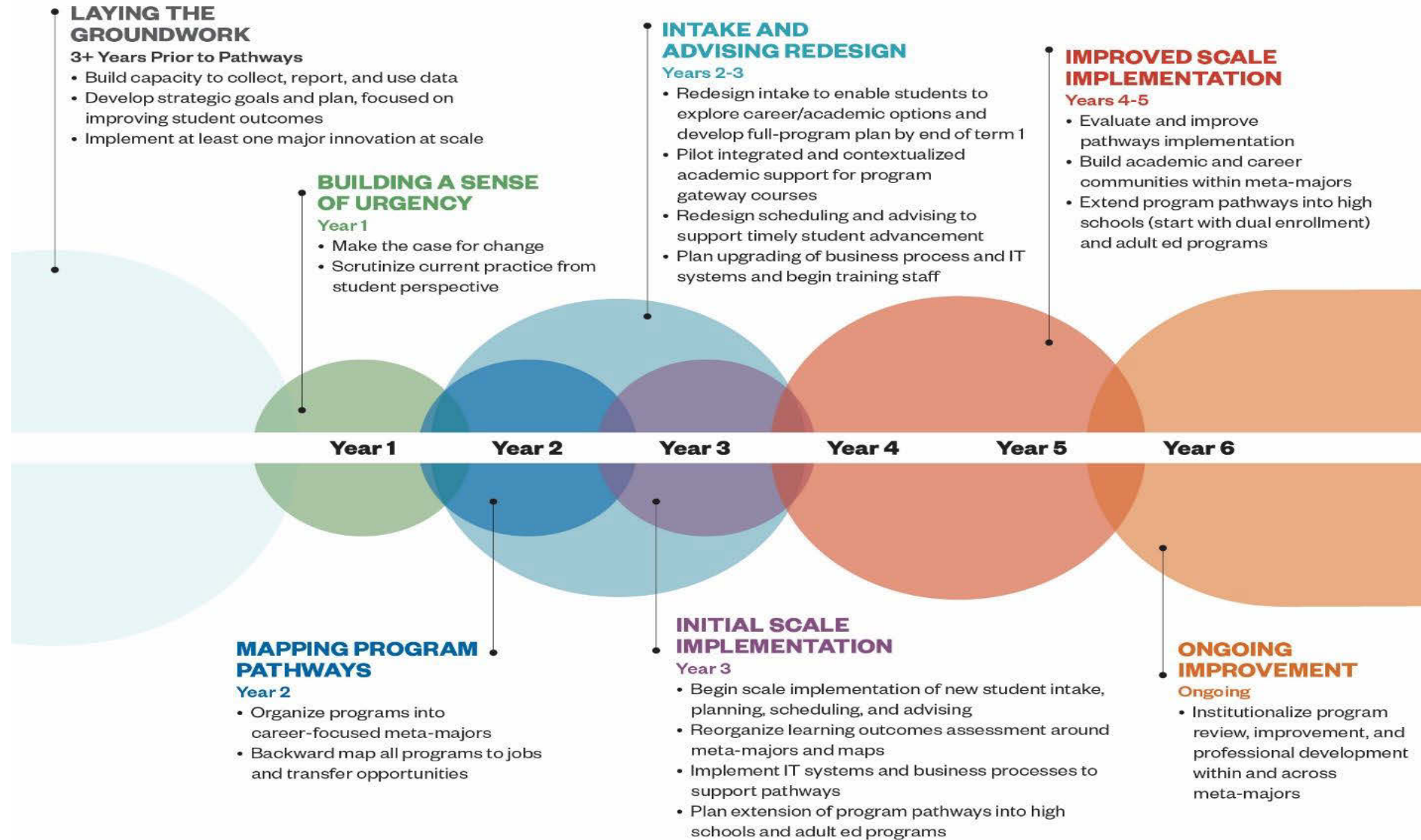
## **ALL DISTRICT DAY**

- All employee meeting and coordinated workshops

# CAPACITIES ARE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING GUIDED PATHWAYS



## Idealized Timeline for Implementing Guided Pathways at Scale





# CONTACT US

Greg Brazell

[GBrazell@pierce.ctc.edu](mailto:GBrazell@pierce.ctc.edu)

Tom Broxson

[TBroxson@pierce.ctc.edu](mailto:TBroxson@pierce.ctc.edu)

Laurie Heacock

[lheacock@achievingthedream.org](mailto:lheacock@achievingthedream.org)

# QUESTIONS

