

ICAT Results Report: Strategy and Planning

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Summary

During a Capacity Café exercise at Convocation in September 2017, the college community discussed the results of the ICAT. Below are the main themes that emerged from the table discussions.

Strengths

The areas of high energy for this capacity were that the NECC 2020 Strategic Plan focuses on student success – it is integrated and there is clear responsibility for executing.

Areas for Improvement

Ensuring a consistent and understood definition for student success was identified. Other key gap areas included questioning if recent budget cuts and position cuts would impact the focus on students success, a question of whether resources were being allocated appropriately to student success, and general communication to campus community.

I Don't Know

The overarching theme in this section was about communication and ensuring that all areas – faculty, staff (especially in student services), and administrators – know about the priority of and initiatives happening regarding student success. A second area of concern was knowing about performance measures for student success.

Communication and Awareness

Not surprisingly, this section notes the need to communicate more and to enable opportunities for more collaboration. Specific areas of interest for communication were financial and measurement related.

Action Steps

There were a number of varied and specific actions that were suggested in order to more strategically focus on student success. Many of the suggestions related to how communication could be enhanced.

Convocation Table Reports

At the end of the Capacity Café discussion, each table selected a strength, a gap, and an action step to report to the rest of the group. These were recorded and are available below.

Strengths

- Strategic plan is focused on student success
- We have a plan and a lot of people working on it
- Commitment to student success

Gaps

- Lack of transparency about resources
- KPI and how to apply to daily work
- Agreeing on a shared definition of student success

Action Steps

- Biannual report of what money is being spent on
- More short-term measurements
- Faculty and staff discussions of student success

Table Notes

The actual notes taken at each table during the Capacity Café discussion were transcribed and are available below.

Strategy and Planning – Strengths

- Question #1 (1 - Does the college's strategic plan focus on student success?) – strength in that the strategic plan focuses on it
- Strength – Question #2 (2 - Is the student success agenda integrated into other core work?) – it is integrated
- Strength – Question #6 (6 - Does the college focus on a set of high-priority student success goals?) – it is a high priority
- Strength – Question #8 (8 - Does the college have a group of individuals responsible for coordinating and executing the student success agenda?) – our group sees it as a strength but see the gap questions page
- Communicate about student services we have
- Consistency – top strength!!
- Student success – 2nd
- Recruitment in the area
- Or #6 (6 - Does the college focus on a set of high-priority student success goals?) – 3rd best
- It is clear that we focus on student success!!!
- Perhaps, it is difficult to know what you mean by 'student success'
- Strategic plan focusing on student success
- Culture and continuous improvement
- And integrating student success into other core work
- Appears to be less 'I don't know' associated with 1,6, and 11 (1 - Does the college's strategic plan focus on student success? 6 - Does the college focus on a set of high-priority student success goals? 11 - Is there an established culture of continuous improvement?)
- Faculty, staff, administration do think we are trying to improve student success overall. Idea exists, but details are more difficult to communicate to everyone
- Professional Development; seems to be level – (3)
- Room for growth – overall rating 2/9 – student success agenda is moving. Generally happy, but could be happier
- Consistent focus on students in strategic plan
- Solidly 'doing well'
- Awareness that we have a strategic plan and people work on it – fewer 'I don't know'

Strategy and Planning – Gaps

- Implementation of plans
- Defining what student success is
- Agreeing what student success is
- #10 (10 - Are short-term measures defined so that their achievement ultimately leads to the accomplishment of student success goals?) – we don't define
- #5 (5 - Is professional development appropriately aligned to advance student success?) – the next biggest SAP
- #9 (9 - Does the institution use key performance indicators to measure student success?) is bad too

- #6 (6 - Does the college focus on a set of high-priority student success goals?) is bad too
- The group stated that it is great that the language of the Strategic Plan focuses on student success, but 'Do we execute this?' Question 7,8,9, and 10 show the gap (7 - Is responsibility for student success goals clearly defined and broadly shared? 8 - Does the college have a group of individuals responsible for coordinating and executing the student success agenda? 9 - Does the institution use key performance indicators to measure student success? 10 - Are short-term measures defined so that their achievement ultimately leads to the accomplishment of student success goals?)
- Some areas of the college are better equipped for/with student support (equity and distribution of resource and class size)
- Gap – Question #8 (8 - Does the college have a group of individuals responsible for coordinating and executing the student success agenda?) – Our group wonders now if this would still be the case given the current reduction in workforce
- 2nd round – The timing of this survey preceded retrenchments and now confidence may be different
- #5 (5 - Is professional development appropriately aligned to advance student success?) – More professional development focused on what faculty need to teach their subject; less time for faculty to do professional development due to expanded class sizes; 3rd group: resource allocation to what is needed to teach and sharing of resources
- Support staff jobs are too wide to support faculty
- Departments need better alignment i.e. dev. math with math
- Communication to employees
- Transparency regarding fund distribution
- Loss of staff positions recently
- #3 (3 - Do revenue and resource allocation decisions support student success?) – Revenue and resource allocation both clearly communicated ?? justification for recent position eliminations
- What is college defining as 'student success'? It is different for various divisions/majors
- Rubrics
- Communication and argument on our shared definitions of student success
- Lack of understanding about key performance indicators
- Lack of information about grants, external funding – better communication within the college
- Professional Development scored mostly as a Level 2; we felt that professional development is well supported and understood, but survey didn't indicate this
- Getting all members of the college to buy into all the college's goals and maintenance. Do they really need to know?
- Lack of knowledge about details
- Some staff responsible for areas in these questions are no longer at college
- PT faculty seem seem best informed (vs. FT and staff)
- PD should always guide the pedagogy – faculty need to take better advantage of the opportunities and be proactive about PD

Strategy and Planning – Lack of Information or “Don’t Know”

- Key performance indicators to measure student success
- Short-term measures defines so that their achievements lead to accomplishment of student success
- Across institutions, few people know this and it is incredibly important

- Same with allocation of resources for student success
- What are we spending and how is it spent?
- #3, 4 (3 - Do revenue and resource allocation decisions support student success? 4 - Does the college pursue external grant funding to support student success?) - it seems to not be a surprise – how do you know? Also due to lack of communication
- #9,10 (9 - Does the institution use key performance indicators to measure student success? 10 - Are short-term measures defined so that their achievement ultimately leads to the accomplishment of student success goals?) – an issue – not surprised
- Student service staff –‘I don’t know’ response is alarming. They are the front line. We need to involve them more (2nd group also)
- Faculty – ‘I don’t know’ is also an area for concern (2nd group also)
- Question – is there a group that does not need to know about this? Our group responded with ‘student success is what the college is about. Thus, this is critical!’ (2nd group also)
- Note: good thing that administrators do not have a lot of ‘I don’t know’
- 2nd round – all a surprise. Staff and faculty don’t know
- 2nd round – admins need to communicate better – they know!
- 2nd round – don’t know because lack of communication between admins and faculty
- Key performance indicators – surprising that more full-time faculty are unaware – might be result of lack of communication channels
- What are the percentages of each category who responded to survey?
- Academic Affairs responded ‘I don’t know’ in question 9 and 10. (9 - Does the institution use key performance indicators to measure student success? 10 - Are short-term measures defined so that their achievement ultimately leads to the accomplishment of student success goals?) This is a large number for key indicators an short term measures from a group that should know more about them
- Echo this – also student services
- Communication issue? Do people working with students know how we’re measuring success?

Strategy and Planning – Action Steps

- Instead of focusing on enrollment – value transfer
- Focus on quality of teaching as a way to retain students
- Have more full-time faculty
- Access to Degree Works
- More involvement to define short term measures
- Pay adjuncts to go to meetings
- Use adjunct faculty fellows to reach out to other adjuncts
- Perhaps minimize ‘all’ the initiatives (2nd group – concern of dismantle initiatives for ‘new’ ones)
- More transparency on how decisions are made
- Need orientation for faculty on initiatives and how to access
- Communication: additional presentations, re-administration of test for those who attend presentations, department meetings (to discuss knew items each semester)
- Sharing minutes with other areas. Streamlined communication – reconstructing NECC Announcement format – Resource fair
- We agree with above – each area needs to express importance of data collection/survey
- What is the breakdown of respondents by division?

- Make the website better, more transparent with up to date information, delete old out dated information
- KPIs could be better communicated, better data sharing tools that are easier to understand (and data is more available)
- We need action steps – people know about broad vision but not specifics/mini goals
- What counts as student success? How do we address issues proactively?
- Need to compare ‘my’ class’ data to our KPI’s – where do I fall?

[Strategy and Planning – Communications or Awareness Steps](#)

- More communication of budget at department meetings
- Faculty need to norm standards across departments
- Explain financial strategy
- Grant writing opportunities – what is available?
- Filter information down through the deans/assistant deans – include adjuncts
- Communication is an area for improvement. One group member recommended that a semester newsletter with what each area is doing would help
- 2nd group – administrators need to communicate to staff and faculty
- Opportunities for faculty/staff to broaden definitions of student success, document student goals for diverse needs of success
- More access for faculty, staff and public in regard to information
- Conversations about measurement

The Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool

Table Handouts



Strategy and Planning

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

RESPONSE DISTRIBUTION

The Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool helps colleges to assess their capacity and identify strengths and areas for improvement. Completion of the self-assessment allows Board members, administrators, faculty and staff to evaluate their institution's level of capacity in relation to what improved capacity could look like. Institutions that complete the assessment tool benefit from: insight on the key capacities for success; engagement of stakeholders from all areas of the college in using a common language to share opinions and discuss perception gaps; prioritization of areas to improve; and the development of strategies to build strength.

This report summarizes the response distribution for each question in the assessment tool. It is a complimentary report to the *Institutional Capacity Assessment Results Summary*.

Northern Essex Community College

Spring 2017



LEVELS KEY	
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.

RESULTS SUMMARY (N=249)

LEADERSHIP & VISION	DATA & TECHNOLOGY	EQUITY	TEACHING & LEARNING	ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION	STRATEGY & PLANNING	POLICIES & PRACTICES
LEVEL 3	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 3				
AVERAGE RATING 3.1	AVERAGE RATING 2.5	AVERAGE RATING 2.7	AVERAGE RATING 3.0	AVERAGE RATING 3.0	AVERAGE RATING 2.9	AVERAGE RATING 2.8

STRATEGY & PLANNING

The alignment of the institution with the umbrella goal of student success and the institution's process for translating the desired future into defined goals and objectives and executing the actions to achieve them.

LEVEL	AVERAGE RATING
3	2.9

RESULTS BY CATEGORY (N=148)

LEVEL 1 2 3 4

Planning

1. Does the college's strategic plan focus on student success?
2. Is the student success agenda integrated into other core work?



Resource Alignment

3. Do revenue and resource allocation decisions support student success?
4. Does the college pursue external grant funding to support student success?
5. Is professional development appropriately aligned to advance student success?



Strategy Execution

6. Does the college focus on a set of high-priority student success goals?
7. Is responsibility for student success goals clearly defined and broadly shared?
8. Does the college have a group of individuals responsible for coordinating and executing the student success agenda?



Culture of Evidence

9. Does the institution use key performance indicators to measure student success?
10. Are short-term measures defined so that their achievement ultimately leads to the accomplishment of student success goals?
11. Is there an established culture of continuous improvement?



STRATEGY & PLANNING

The alignment of the institution with the umbrella goal of student success and the institution's process for translating the desired future into defined goals and objectives and executing the actions to achieve them.

LEVEL

3

AVERAGE RATING

2.9

Response Distribution by Question

Total Number of Respondents: 148

	Level 1 (N)	Level 2 (N)	Level 3 (N)	Level 4 (N)	Don't Know (N)
1. Does the college's strategic plan focus on student success?	1	7	72	63	5
2. Is the student success agenda integrated into other core work?	3	16	70	38	21
3. Do revenue and resource allocation decisions support student success?	7	23	42	27	49
4. Does the college pursue external grant funding to support student success?	2	17	59	24	46
5. Is professional development appropriately aligned to advance student success?	9	50	39	27	23
6. Does the college focus on a set of high-priority student success goals?	16	24	69	20	19
7. Is responsibility for student success goals clearly defined and broadly shared?	12	32	58	23	23
8. Does the college have a group of individuals responsible for coordinating and executing the student success agenda?	2	20	53	34	39
9. Does the institution use key performance indicators to measure student success?	4	17	52	22	53
10. Are short-term measures defined so that their achievement ultimately leads to the accomplishment of student success goals?	14	20	43	21	50
11. Is there an established culture of continuous improvement?	14	29	58	28	19

STRATEGY & PLANNING

The alignment of the institution with the umbrella goal of student success and the institution's process for translating the desired future into defined goals and objectives and executing the actions to achieve them.

Number of Respondents Who Answered "I don't know" by Question and by Role

	Administrator (N)	Full-time Faculty (N)	Part-time Faculty (N)	Staff Member (N)	Other (N)	Total (N)
1. Does the college's strategic plan focus on student success?	-	4	1	-	-	5
2. Is the student success agenda integrated into other core work?	1	10	3	7	-	21
3. Do revenue and resource allocation decisions support student success?	4	19	8	18	-	49
4. Does the college pursue external grant funding to support student success?	2	18	10	16	-	46
5. Is professional development appropriately aligned to advance student success?	3	9	2	8	1	23
6. Does the college focus on a set of high-priority student success goals?	3	2	5	8	1	19
7. Is responsibility for student success goals clearly defined and broadly shared?	2	6	6	9	-	23
8. Does the college have a group of individuals responsible for coordinating and executing the student success agenda?	3	13	8	14	1	39
9. Does the institution use key performance indicators to measure student success?	3	14	11	24	1	53
10. Are short-term measures defined so that their achievement ultimately leads to the accomplishment of student success goals?	6	15	9	19	1	50
11. Is there an established culture of continuous improvement?	-	6	3	10	-	19

STRATEGY & PLANNING

The alignment of the institution with the umbrella goal of student success and the institution's process for translating the desired future into defined goals and objectives and executing the actions to achieve them.

Number of Respondents Who Answered "I don't know" by Question and by Functional Area

	Academic Affairs (N)	Student Services (N)	Admin. Services (N)	Cont. Ed./ Workforce (N)	Other (N)	Total (N)
1. Does the college's strategic plan focus on student success?	2	-	-	-	3	5
2. Is the student success agenda integrated into other core work?	6	5	1	-	9	21
3. Do revenue and resource allocation decisions support student success?	14	14	8	4	9	49
4. Does the college pursue external grant funding to support student success?	17	9	7	3	10	46
5. Is professional development appropriately aligned to advance student success?	7	3	6	1	6	23
6. Does the college focus on a set of high-priority student success goals?	4	4	6	1	4	19
7. Is responsibility for student success goals clearly defined and broadly shared?	11	2	4	1	5	23
8. Does the college have a group of individuals responsible for coordinating and executing the student success agenda?	15	8	6	-	10	39
9. Does the institution use key performance indicators to measure student success?	23	12	7	3	8	53
10. Are short-term measures defined so that their achievement ultimately leads to the accomplishment of student success goals?	23	12	6	2	7	50
11. Is there an established culture of continuous improvement?	10	5	1	-	3	19

AVERAGE CAPACITY RATING BY ROLE

This page presents average capacity rating by respondent role so that institutions can identify areas of consensus and divergence.

A capacity rating of 0.0 from a particular role indicates no respondent from that role has completed the assessment of this capacity area.

Leadership & Vision



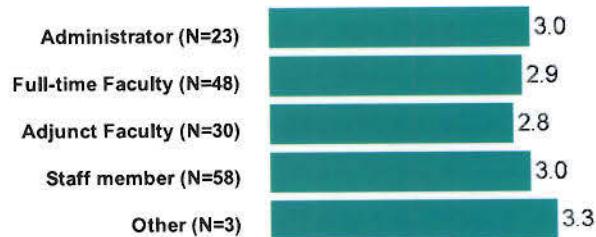
Data & Technology



Equity



Teaching & Learning



Engagement & Communication



Strategy & Planning



Policies & Practice



AVERAGE CAPACITY RATING BY FUNCTIONAL AREA

This page presents average capacity rating by respondent functional area so that institutions can identify areas of consensus and divergence.

A capacity rating of 0.0 from a particular functional area indicates that no respondent from that functional area has completed the assessment of this capacity area.

Leadership & Vision



Data & Technology



Equity



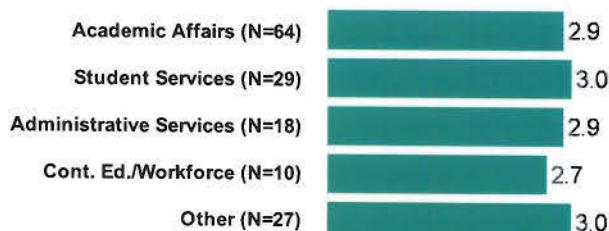
Teaching & Learning



Engagement & Communication



Strategy & Planning



Policies & Practice



ABOUT THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

The Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool is an online self-assessment to help colleges assess their strengths and areas for improvement in the seven key dimensions encompassed in the Institutional Capacity Framework. The assessment asks a broad range of college stakeholders to assess their institution's capacity across four levels, from a low of Level 1 (minimal) to a high of Level 4 (exemplary). The companion *Results Summary* report summarizes the assessment results for the institution by aggregating respondent ratings by capacity area and by respondent roles and functional areas. This *Response Distribution* report provides a response distribution for each of the 77 questions in the Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool.

What Information Is Presented in the *Response Distribution* Report?

The *Response Distribution* report starts with a summary page of the college's assessment results of all seven capacity areas. Following the summary page, three pages of response distribution information are presented for each capacity area:

- The response distribution across Level 1 to Level 4, in addition to "I don't know", for each question;
- The number of respondents who answered "I don't know" by role for each question;
- The number of respondents who answered "I don't know" by respondent functional area for each question.

The Response Distribution report provides more detail to the college at the question level. It helps colleges to understand the dispersion pattern of respondent opinions as well as the familiarity of respondents from particular roles or functional areas with a specific capacity area.

How Are the Average Ratings on the Summary Page Calculated?

For each question in the assessment, there are four answer choices representing four levels of capacity. Additionally, there is an "I don't know" option if the respondent is unfamiliar with the topic or has no basis to judge. After a respondent makes their selection, the following points are assigned:

- Level 1: One point
- Level 2: Two points
- Level 3: Three points
- Level 4: Four points
- "I don't know": Not calculated

The points are summed for all respondents who completed the assessment of a given capacity area. The average rating is calculated by dividing the sum of points by the total number of questions answered. The "I don't know" responses are not weighted in this calculation.

How Do I Interpret the Ratings?

Collectively, the *Results Summary* and *Response Distribution* reports highlight the average and distribution of responses by capacity area, subcategory and by question. The reports reflect an institution's perspective of their current level of capacity and serve as a springboard for large group dialogue on identified strengths to celebrate and build upon, areas where there are opportunities to improve, areas to build alignment where there is divergence of opinion, and areas to target for improved communication where there are large numbers of "I don't know" responses.

Please note that the Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool is not a scientific tool based on rigorous psychometrics principles and should not be used as one. The ratings are meant to provide a general indicator of institutional capacity at a given time and to provide actionable insights.

Additional Questions

For additional questions, please email Achieving the Dream at ICAT@achievingthedream.org.