



Equity Plans to Address Longstanding Disparities in IL Higher Education

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Partnership for College Completion



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Partnership for College Completion



Mission

The Partnership for College Completion champions policies, practices and systems that increase college completion and eliminate degree completion disparities for low-income, first generation, and students of color in Illinois – particularly Black and Latinx students.

Vision

PCC envisions a state where equitable opportunities to access and complete a college education lead to greater degree attainment, racial equity and socioeconomic mobility for Illinoisans.

Our Work

PCC advances solutions that address historic inequities in our higher education system.



Public Policy

We advocate for bold equity-centered policies that improve college access and affordability and address structural barriers to persistence and completion.



College and University Partnerships

We partner with Illinois colleges and universities to provide support as they develop and deploy equity-centered strategies on campus.



Research and Data

We use data and research to advance both transformational equity change on college and universities campuses and through state policy efforts in Illinois.



The Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative

- An initiative that brings together a diverse group of 25 Illinois colleges and universities; launched in late 2018
- Public commitment by institutions to eliminate racial & socioeconomic inequities
- Led by senior leadership team, including president
- Focus on institutionalizing equity efforts
- Sharing disaggregated data over time
- Working within a community of practice
- Evolving supports from PCC



ILLINOIS EQUITY
IN ATTAINMENT

ILEA Core Beliefs

Colleges are responsible for graduating

all of their degree-seeking students

All college students can graduate

with the right information, tools, and supports

Racial and socioeconomic completion inequities are unacceptable

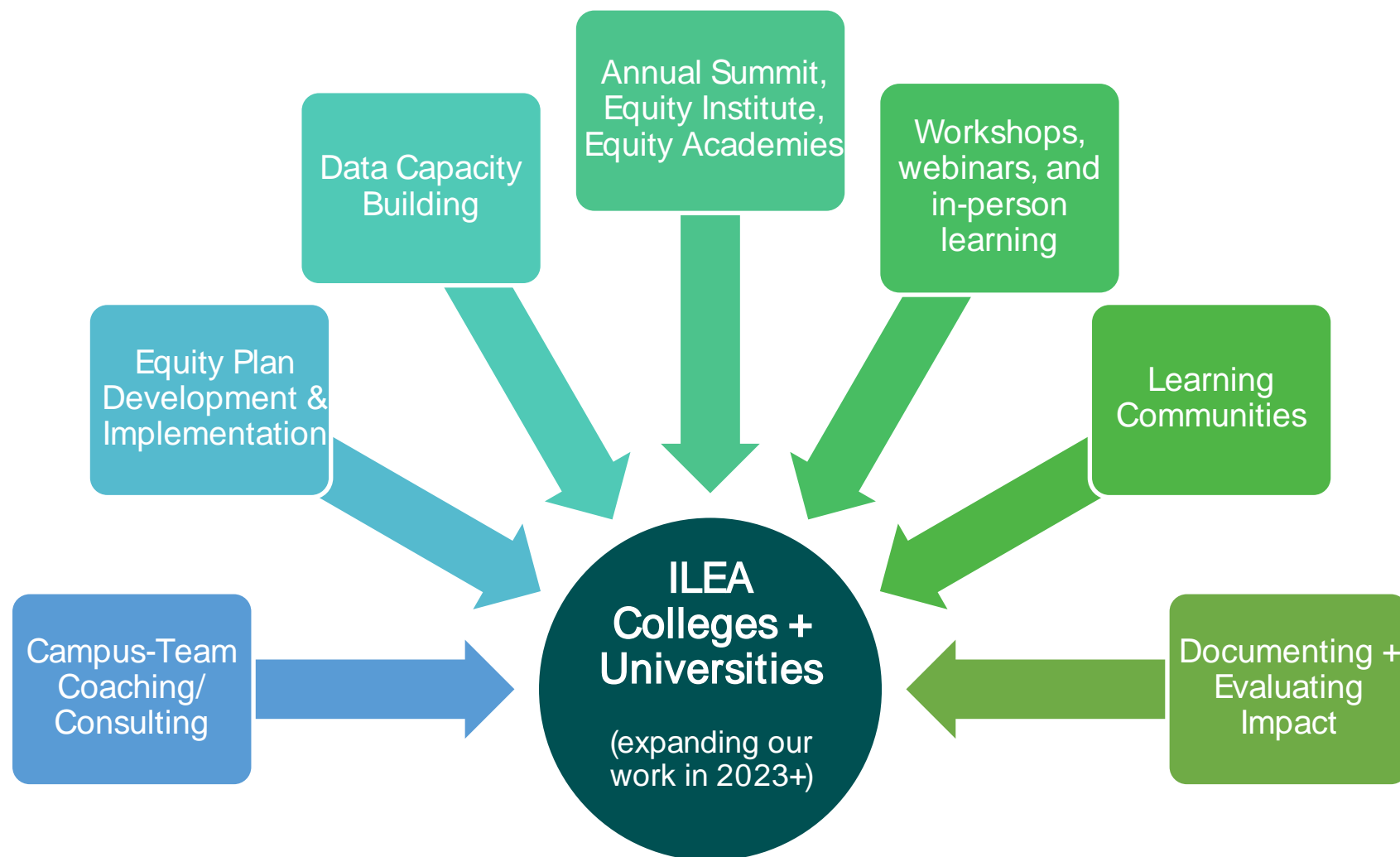
and should be eliminated with urgency

Solutions and resources exist to address disparities

in higher education outcomes

The actions that colleges take or fail to take can determine a student's ultimate trajectory in college

PCC Supports for ILEA Institutions



ILEA Equity Plan & Program Model



Starting Place for Equity Planning

- Vision and sense of urgency
- College-wide engagement & critical mass
- Student engagement & student voice
- Sustaining momentum and reporting outcomes
- Routine communication on multiple initiatives and outcomes
- Institutional Research at the center of this work
 - Strategic importance of disaggregated data and the centrality of IR in the conversation
 - Moving from IR to IE – applied research to shift policy and practice and target supports, remove barriers
 - Guides the conversation, not a compliance function
 - Being open to seeing new insights in the data

After 1+ year of organizing, planning, and level setting around equity, 22 ILEA colleges and universities published equity plans in 202 that aim to **eliminate disparities in degree completion by race and Pell-status**



ILEA Equity Plan



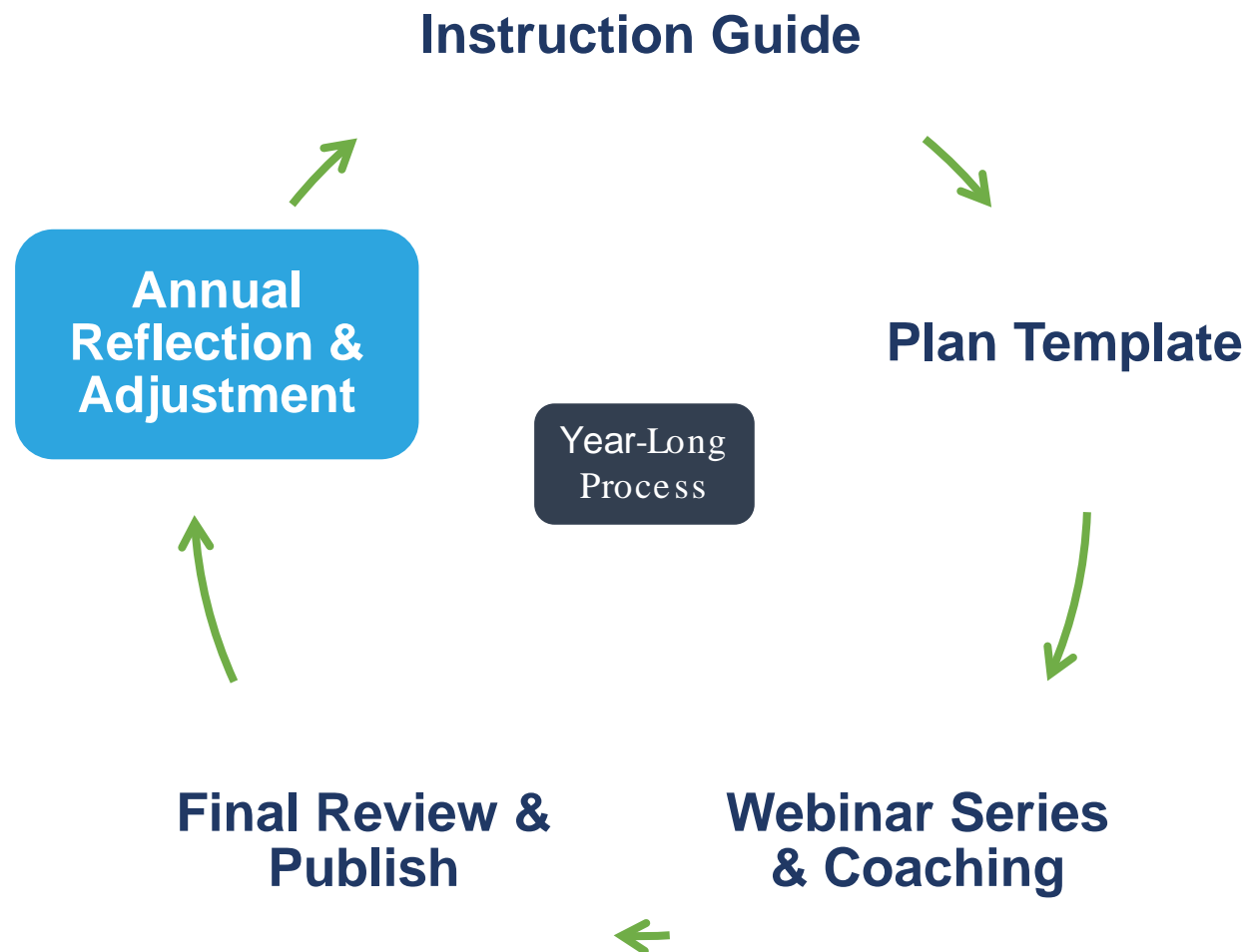
Equity Plan Contents

- 1 Endorsement at Highest Levels
- 2 Who We Are, Clarity of Purpose
- 3 Where We are Today
- 4 Future Vision & Goals
- 5 Institutional Strategies
- 6 Evaluation Plan
- 7 Budget Implications

- National Scan
- Clear & Concise
- Local Customization
- 1 Among Many Plans
- Public Facing



ILEA Equity Plan Development Process



Learning in Community

Equity Speaks Group 1 Q&A

Questions for Panelists

- ▶ What is the primary equity challenge your institution's equity plan is addressing?
- ▶ How is your institution engaging faculty in closing equity gaps?
- ▶ What are the funding sources that support your equity plan work?
- ▶ How does your institution plan to measure success (formally or informally)?
- ▶ What are some key lessons that your team learned while developing your equity plan?
- ▶ What is one obstacle that your team encountered while developing your equity plan? How did you address it?

41:22

2020 ILEA Virtual Fall Summit



Annual Evaluation & Reflection

At the conclusion of each academic year, IHEs submit a reflection assessing progress made during the academic year and what adjustments will be made to the plan for the upcoming year.

- An assessment of the impact of each strategy within the Equity Plan (strategy & institutional level)
- A detailed description of next steps for each strategy (new, adapted, scaled, or discontinued based on data & team analysis)





What PCC is Learning?

Equity Plan Strategies

The “What”

- **Student Access and Onboarding:** Student enrollment, orientation and first-year experiences, student pathways, efficacy of advisement
- **Credit Accumulation:** Reaching 15/30 credits within the first term/year
- **Hiring and Professional Development:** Staff and faculty training on diversity, inclusion, equity, and integrating equity into daily work
- **Student Supports and Resources:** Retaining students, ensuring students gain momentum year to year, and complete credentials, time to degree
- **Transition Opportunities:** Setting students up for transfer or employment
- **Equity Audits:** Intentional examination of institutional policies & practices

Early Momentum: 2 Years of Implementation

The “What”

- **Bypassing developmental education (placement & co-req models of reform) & embedded tutoring** for developmental math courses yielding academic gains for Latinx and Black students
- **(Re)opening cultural centers** for use by campus community
- **Faculty professional development** for developmental education and in equity-focused teaching & strategy
- **Targeted HR policies** to assess cultural competency among prospective candidates and recruit/hire diverse candidates
- **Success frameworks** created for faculty & staff integrating DEI principles
- **Revamped New Student Orientation** to be more culturally-responsive

Early Momentum: 2 Years of Implementation

The “What”

- **Implementing a guided pathways model** course sequences and linking adult students with career opportunities
- **Redesigned advising model** integrates supports holistically across areas
- **Outreach to students** to understand reasons for stop out or D/W courses
- **New course times, modalities, sequences, schedules** to optimize SUCCESS
- **Gateway course completion, credit completion, credit thresholds**
- **Scaling programs** to hundreds or thousands of students
- **Budgeting for equity impact**

Implementation Challenges

The “How”

- **Scaling** promising practices
- **Intended impact** not achieved – effectiveness & adequacy
- **Time, effort, choreography required** – to disaggregate and interpret data, to evaluate/revamp systems & processes, to increase student touchpoints
- **Enrollment** declines among Black students & Latinx students
- **Integrating embedded tutoring** in math co-requisite courses
- **Coordination needed across teams** because disparities must be addressed by multiple people/departments/offices
- **Equity plan is a guide** and not an instruction manual
- **Regular convening & conversation** is a necessary component

Leadership is Critical

- The president is critical to the success of equity priorities
- The president needs a strong, effective, aligned leadership team
- The trustees are partners to the president to provide support & leadership
- The scale and momentum in the organization is within the faculty & staff
- **Context:** Resource-constrained and priority-full environment
- Race must be explicitly discussed

Research has found that the support, collaboration, and visible action of senior administrative leaders are among the core elements required for transformational change in higher education. However, it is insufficient on its own. (Eckel and Kezar, 2002)

The Role of Trustees in Equity Accountability

As equity leadership is shared, the notion of accountability expands and the number of people who take ownership for leading accountability increase. Boards also must consider their roles in equity efforts and also hold themselves accountable for expanding their knowledge, conceptualization, and oversight of campus equity goals.

- Create an equity subcommittee that explores equity measures and regularly reviews campus equity work
- Use progress on institutional equity as one component of president/chancellors' performance evaluation
- Prioritize presentations utilizing disaggregated data to monitor institutional progress within board agendas
- Support leadership in allocating resources to encourage required capacity-building
- Participate in equity training offered through organizations such as PCC
- Develop diversity goals and targets in hiring at all levels of the institution to reflect the student body (administration, faculty, staff, Board/trustees when possible)

(Kezar et al., 2021; Rall, 2020)

Recommendations for Campus Leaders & Trustees

- Broad campus-level investment to develop, implement, adjust and celebrate
- Big public goals – accountability for reaching them
- Engagement throughout of leadership
- Equity statements as shorthand
- Real, long-term commitment
- Becoming equity-minded practitioners
- Scale is the goal, not programs
- The role of data within the institution
- Process of inquiry, learning organizations
- Leveraging communities of practice for continuous learning, sharing, and disseminating findings





Questions?

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