



# Institutional Capacity Framework & Assessment Tool

ADAPTING ICAT FOR SOUTH AFRICA  
 JAN W. LYDDON, PH.D., DATA COACH | 27 JUNE 2017

## VISION

To lead the most comprehensive, **evidence-based** reform movement for community college student success in higher education history, **resulting in significantly improved lives and greater global economic competitiveness** for the United States.

## MISSION

Achieving the Dream is a national reform network dedicated to community college student success and completion, focused primarily on helping low-income students and students of color complete their education and obtain market-valued credentials.

## VALUES

**Evidence-based**, student centered, and built on the values of equity and excellence. Achieving the Dream, Inc. embraces continuous improvement, fosters creativity and innovation, and operates with transparency and respect.



## ATD STARTED WITH FIVE PRINCIPLES



To improve student success on a **substantial scale**, colleges need to engage in bold and holistic institutional change



## ATD HONORS THE FIVE PRINCIPLES



## INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FRAMEWORK

The framework is designed to provide an assessment of capacities within an institution to aid in both conversation and strategic actions that may guide institutional change.



## INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FRAMEWORK



## STRENGTHS OF THE FRAMEWORK

- Helps colleges to understand the seven capacity areas essential to cultivating a **student focused culture**.
- Elevates the value of capacity building in **systemic institutional transformation** to help colleges move beyond an intervention-only focus.
- Assists colleges in gauging where they are, **assessing** their capacity building needs and **informing action**.
- Integrates and aligns efforts colleges may have already begun to implement such as guided pathways, integrated planning and advising and development education redesign and assesses readiness for future efforts.
- Provides opportunity for tailored coaching services and supports to assist colleges in **optimizing capacity**.



## THE SEVEN CAPACITIES DEFINED

1. **Leadership & Vision** – The commitment and collaboration of the institution's leadership with respect to student success and the clarity of the vision for desired change.
2. **Data & Technology** – The institution's capabilities to collect, access, analyze and use data to inform decisions, and to use powerful technology to support student success.
3. **Equity** – The commitment, capabilities, and experiences of an institution to equitably serve low income students, students of color and other at-risk student populations with respect to access, success, and campus climate.
4. **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.



## THE SEVEN CAPACITIES DEFINED

5. **Engagement & Communication** – The creation of strategic partnerships with key external stakeholders, such as K-12, universities, employers and community-based organizations, and internal stakeholders across the institution to participate in the student success agenda and improvement of student outcomes.
6. **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.
7. **Policies & Practices** – The institutional policies and practices that impact student success and the processes for examining and aligning policies and practices to remove barriers and foster student completion.



## WHAT IS THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL?

- 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.
- Asks a broad range of college 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 identify concrete actions for building capacity to support student success efforts.



## HOW THE ONLINE ASSESSMENT WORKS

- Structured as a rubric with four distinct levels that build from a level 1 (minimal capacity) to a level 4 (exemplary capacity) to assess the seven capacity areas
- Each question includes four response choices reflecting the associated capacity level.
- The participant selects the box with the statement that best describes the college's current environment. The four capacity levels are not meant to be exact but to provide a general indication of where the college lands on the continuum of institutional capacity. If the institution falls between two levels, always choose the lower level.



### SAMPLE QUESTION

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

<p>The college has no vision statement for student success nor has it articulated a vision for improvements in student success.</p>	<p>The college seeks to improve student success, but its vision is not formalized or shared.</p>	<p>The college has a clear vision statement focused on student success, but it is not widely understood or shared.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> A vision statement for overall success has been developed, perhaps by senior leadership, but responsiveness are not aware of it.</p>	<p>The college has a clear and compelling vision statement for student success that is widely shared and understood.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> The vision statement for student success is visible and reinforced at multiple college meetings.</p>	<p>I don't know</p>
---	--	--	--	---------------------



### ASSESSMENT TOOL: RECOMMENDED PROCESS

**PREPARE** → **COMPLETE** → **DISCUSS** → **ACT**

**PREPARE**  
Prepare to use the tool by determining who should take the assessment and when.  
Include a broad range of stakeholders that represent a cross-functional, cross-hierarchical representation of the college community.

Consider your planning cycles, in-service days and ATD coaching visit schedule when selecting your survey administration dates.

**COMPLETE**  
Administer the online Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool to assess your institution's strengths and areas for improvement in the seven key dimensions encompassed in the Institutional Capacity Framework.



**DISCUSS**  
Conduct a large group engagement activity with the participants and your Achieving the Dream coaches to discuss the results, celebrate strengths, prioritize areas for improvement and identify concrete steps to build capacity in areas needing improvement.

**ACT**  
Act on the concrete steps identified to build capacity. Coordinate with your coaches on targeted strategic assistance, participate in learning events and professional development opportunities, access resources from the ATD capacity toolkit.



### 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.



### PURPOSE OF THE RESULTS SUMMARY

- The Results Summary displays the aggregated responses from all college participants and disaggregated results by functional area and role to identify areas where there is a convergence of opinion or divergence of opinion.
- The results may be used for individual reflection and as a springboard for campus conversations on overarching themes, strengths to celebrate and build on, opportunities to improve and actions to build capacity.



### HOW TO INTERPRET THE RESULTS

- The assessment 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.
- The ratings displayed in the results summary represent a convergence of opinion (i.e., where college stakeholders see their institutions' capacities), instead of a measurement of capacity based on objective input and outcome measures.



### DISCUSS: HOST LARGE GROUP DIALOGUE



"The ICAT provides a structure for stakeholders from all areas of the college to collectively examine critical elements necessary to support student success and determine how we are doing in relation to these elements. With a broad focus that extends beyond individual initiatives, we were able to use the tool to identify college strengths within capacity areas and develop a foundation on which to build future efforts. The capacity areas within the ICAT provide a framework for strategic planning, with mechanisms in place to ensure widespread engagement in identifying strategic priorities for improvement and advancement related to building and sustaining a thriving culture of student success."

*Margaret H. Annunziata, Director, Student Success Initiatives & Institutional Assessment, Davidson County Community College*



## HOW ARE RESULTS BEING USED?

- Strengthening institutional strategic plans
- Demonstrating to accreditors broad engagement of internal constituents
- Identifying areas needing improved communication
- Catalyst for ongoing, institution-wide discussion about institutional strengths and weaknesses, progress on systemic change, the adoption of best practices, and improvements in institutional quality.



## ADAPTING ICAT FOR USE IN SOUTH AFRICA

- World café session:
  - Seven groups of 2 – 4 people each
  - Review the definition of the segment on which your group is working.
    - Suggest any wording changes to ensure South African context.
    - Please try not to change the fundamental meaning of the definition.
  - Review all of the questions within the segment your group is working on.
    - Suggest wording changes to ensure South African context.
    - Identify any substantive concerns about questions, and recommendations about them.
- Refer to the rubrics and examples for further insight.



## Thank you

JAN LYDDON – JWLYDDON@GMAIL.COM

