



# Leading Institutional Change: The Role of the Board

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The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program  
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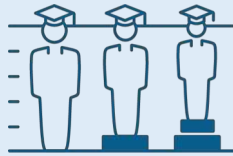
# Who We Are

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The Aspen Institute's College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership in ways that help institutions of higher education make the choices that matter most to improving student outcomes in four areas:



**Completion**



**Equity**



**Labor  
Market**



**Learning**

# Our Work

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Eight major initiatives, including:

- **Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence**
- **Frontier Set**
- **Presidential Fellowship**
- **American Talent Initiative**
- **Tackling Transfer**

# Why is it vital that trustees are involved in institution-wide reform?

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- Own the “why” & understand the “what” of reform, especially when resources need reallocating
- Keep college focused on goals that relate to student success and community vitality, and need for change
- Continue student success agenda if the president changes institutions or retires
- Sustain reform through financial (or other) crisis



# How can trustees support institutional change?



## Understand, Commit, and Set Goals

Understand why institutional change is important to the community and the students we serve.



Understand the reform strategy in broad terms.



Set student success goals, including leading and lagging indicators.



## Operationalize

Monitor progress towards student success goals as a board.

Align presidential hiring, transitions, and evaluation to student success goals.

Align policies and budget priorities to student success goals.

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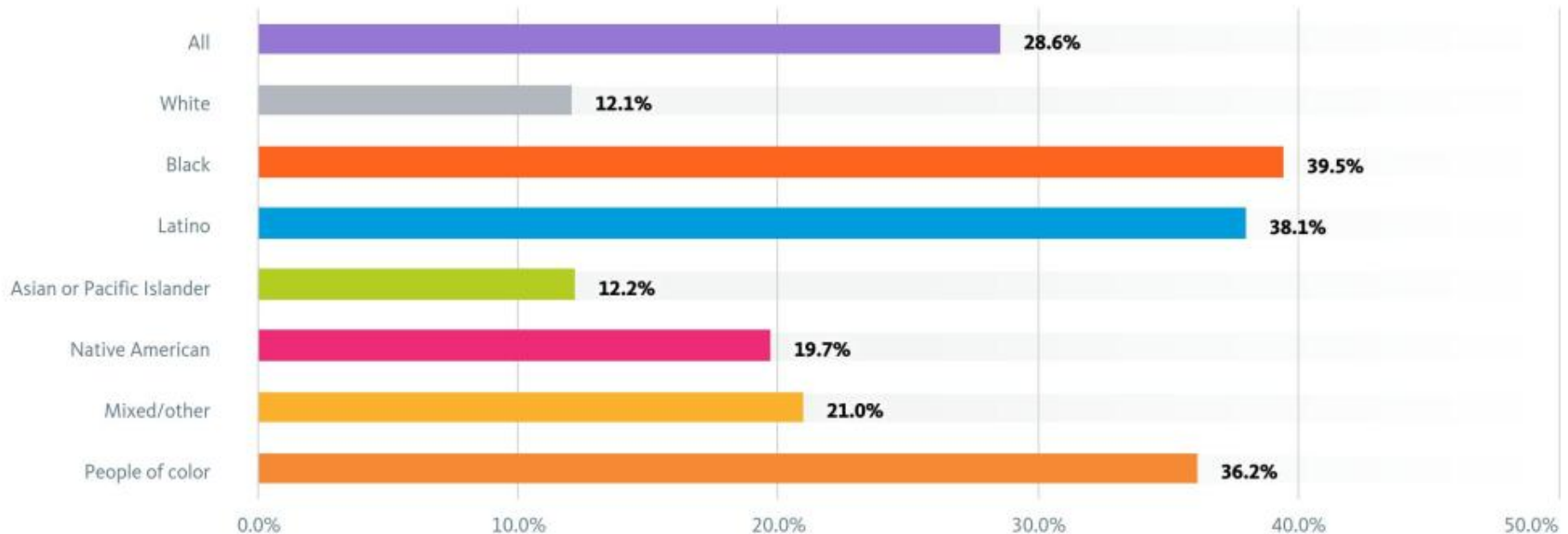
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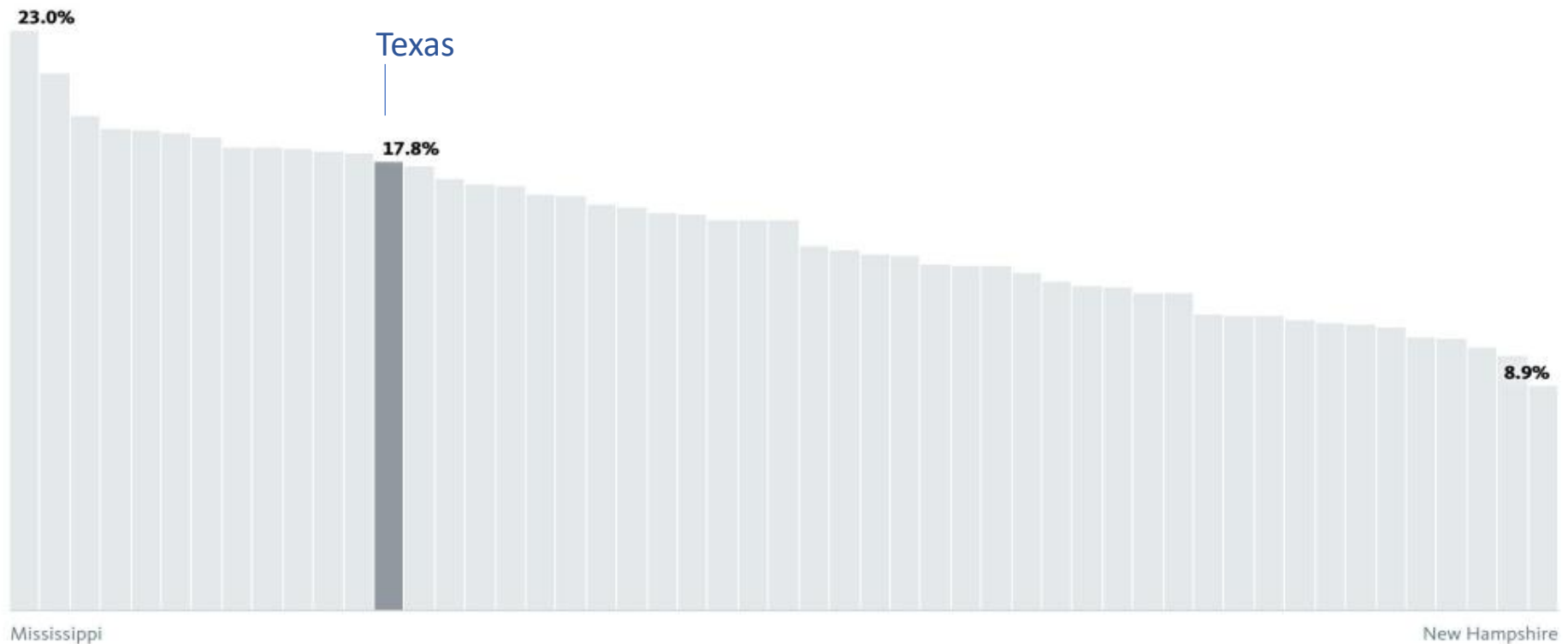
Nearly 40% of African American and Hispanic children under 5 in Texas live in poverty.

Percent people below poverty by race/ethnicity and age : Texas, Under 5, 100%, 2014



Texas ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in the US on the number of people living in poverty.

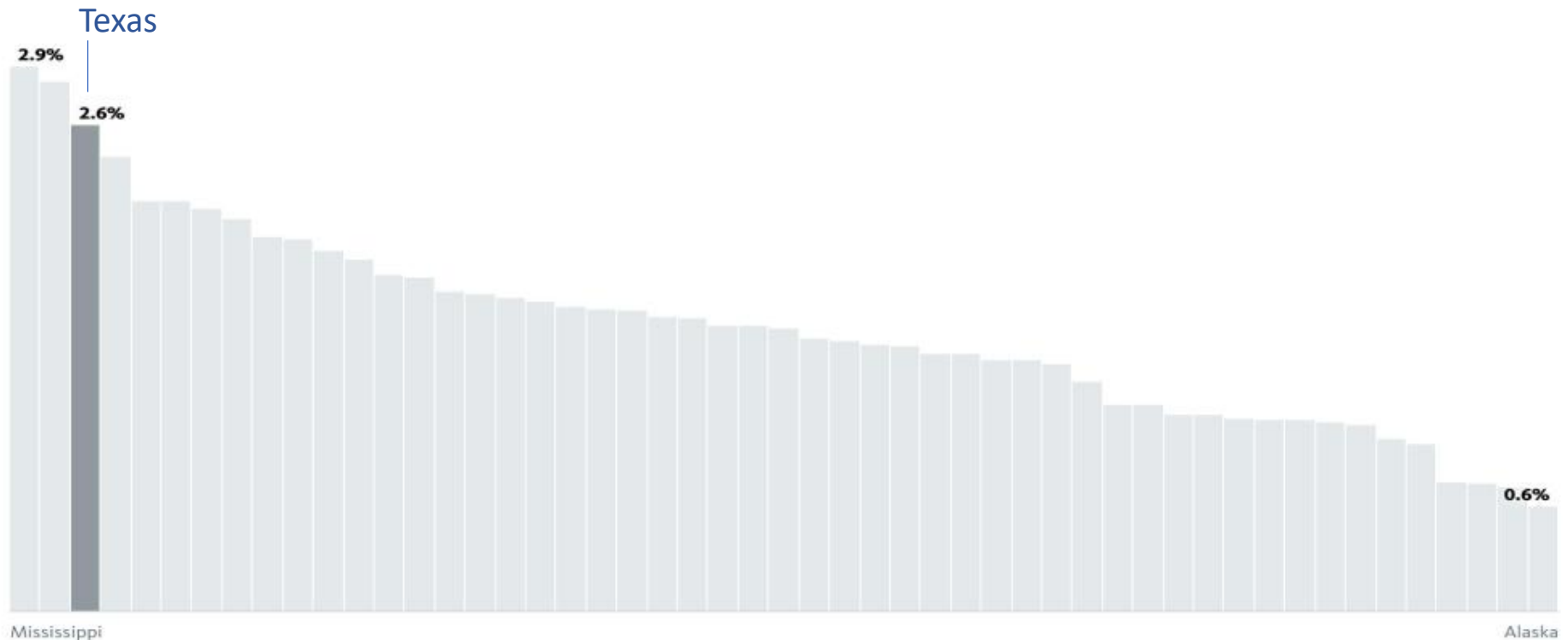
Percent people below poverty, ranked: United States vs. TX, All, 100%, 2014





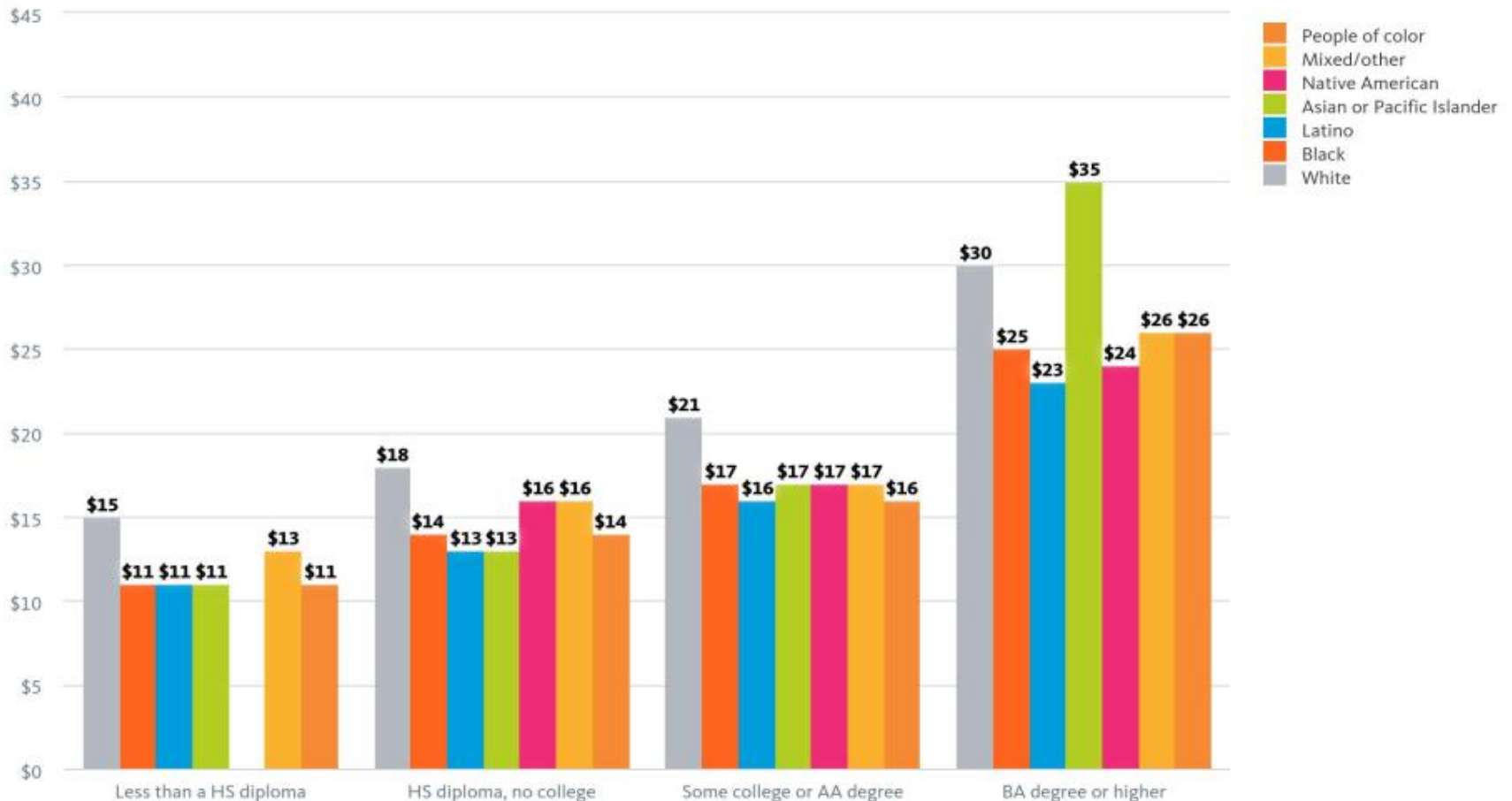
Texas ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the US on the number of adults working *full-time* but still living in poverty.

Percent working poor, ranked: United States vs. TX, All, 100%, 2014



## Median wages in Texas vary by educational attainment.

Median hourly wage by race/ethnicity and education: Texas, 2014

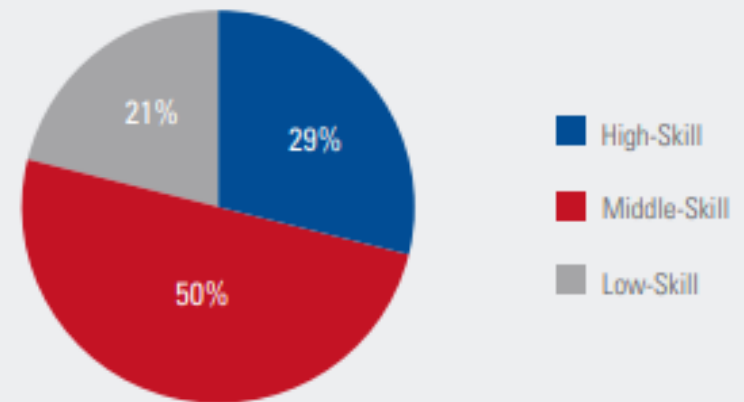


There is a demand for middle-skill jobs in Texas....

## Demand for Middle-Skill Jobs Will Remain Strong

Between 2014-2024, 50 percent of job openings will be middle-skill.

Job Openings by Skill Level, Texas, 2014-2024



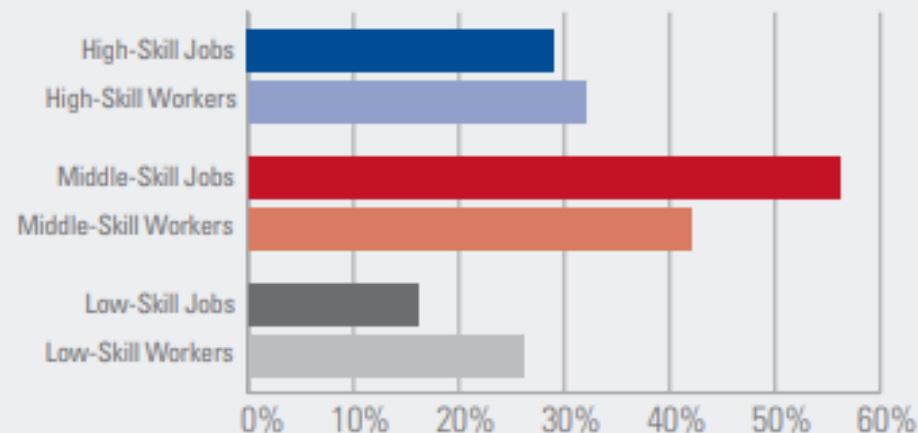
*Source: NSC analysis of long-term occupational projections from state labor/employment agency.*

...but workers lack the training needed to fill these jobs.

## A Middle-Skill Gap

Middle-skill jobs account for 56 percent of Texas' labor market, but only 42 percent of the state's workers are trained to the middle-skill level.

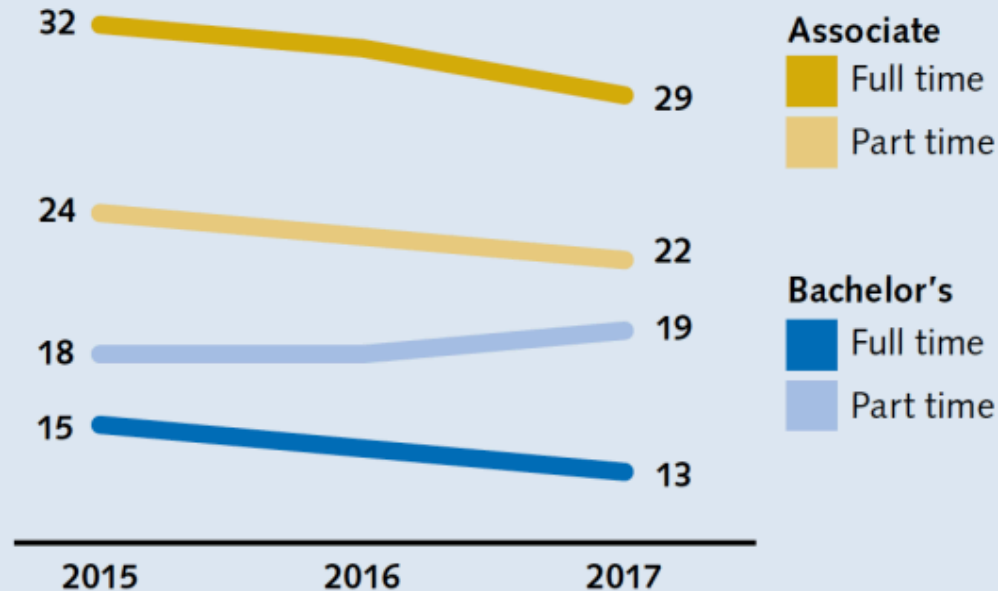
Jobs and Workers by Skill Level, Texas, 2015



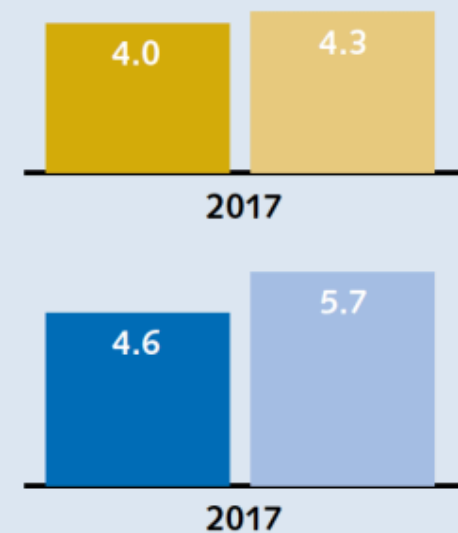
Source: NSC analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics by State, May 2015 and American Community Survey data, 2015.

## Excess Credits and Years to Complete a Degree at Public Institutions in Texas

Excess semester credit hours

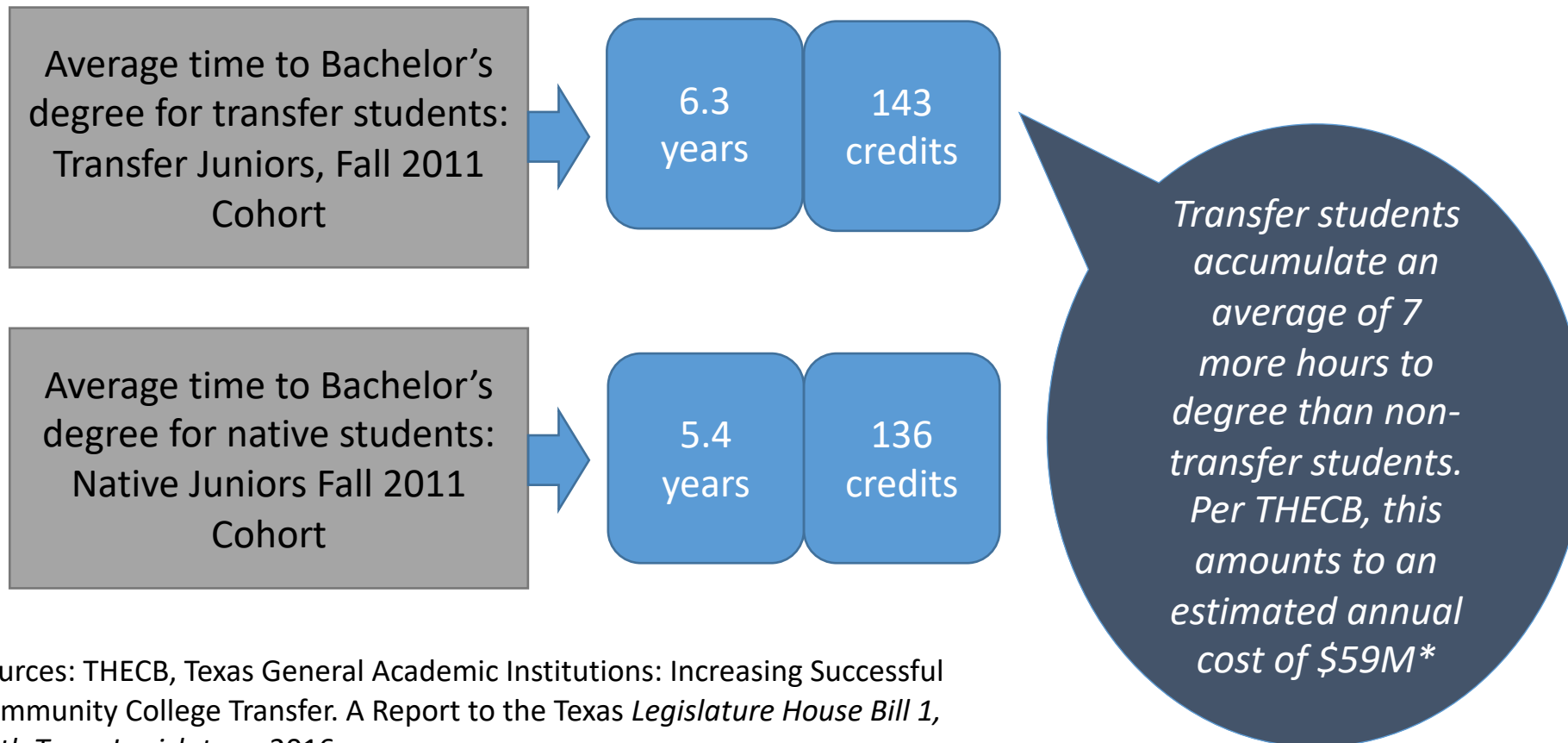


Years to degree



Texas students are losing additional time and money due to inefficiencies in transfer.

## Time and Credits to Baccalaureate Completion in Texas



Sources: THECB, Texas General Academic Institutions: Increasing Successful Community College Transfer. A Report to the Texas *Legislature House Bill 1, 84th Texas Legislature*, 2016

\*General Revenue and tuition and fees

# Why is institutional change important to the community and the students we serve?



## Guiding Questions

- What community factors point to the need for higher education attainment and equity?
- Who are the students at the college and are they meeting their educational goals?
- How do these outcomes vary by different groups of students and why?
- How can employers, the community, and the college benefit from improved student outcomes?



# How can trustees support institutional change?



## Understand, Commit, and Set Goals

Understand why institutional change is important to the community and the students we serve.



**Understand the reform strategy** in broad terms.



Set student success goals, including leading and lagging indicators.



## Operationalize

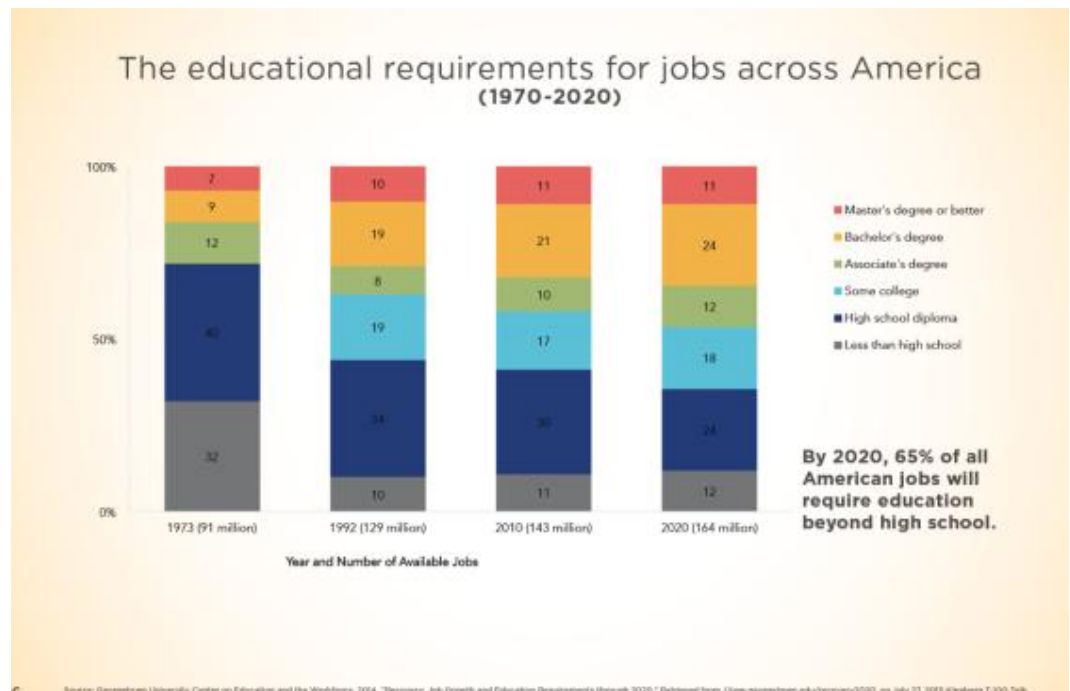
Monitor progress towards student success goals as a board.

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Align policies and budget priorities to student success goals.



# Guided Pathways is a **strategy** that can support college *and* state-wide **goals**.

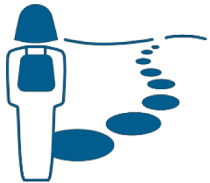


# What are the key components of Guided Pathways implementation?

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**Clarify paths to student end goals**



**Help students choose and enter a path**

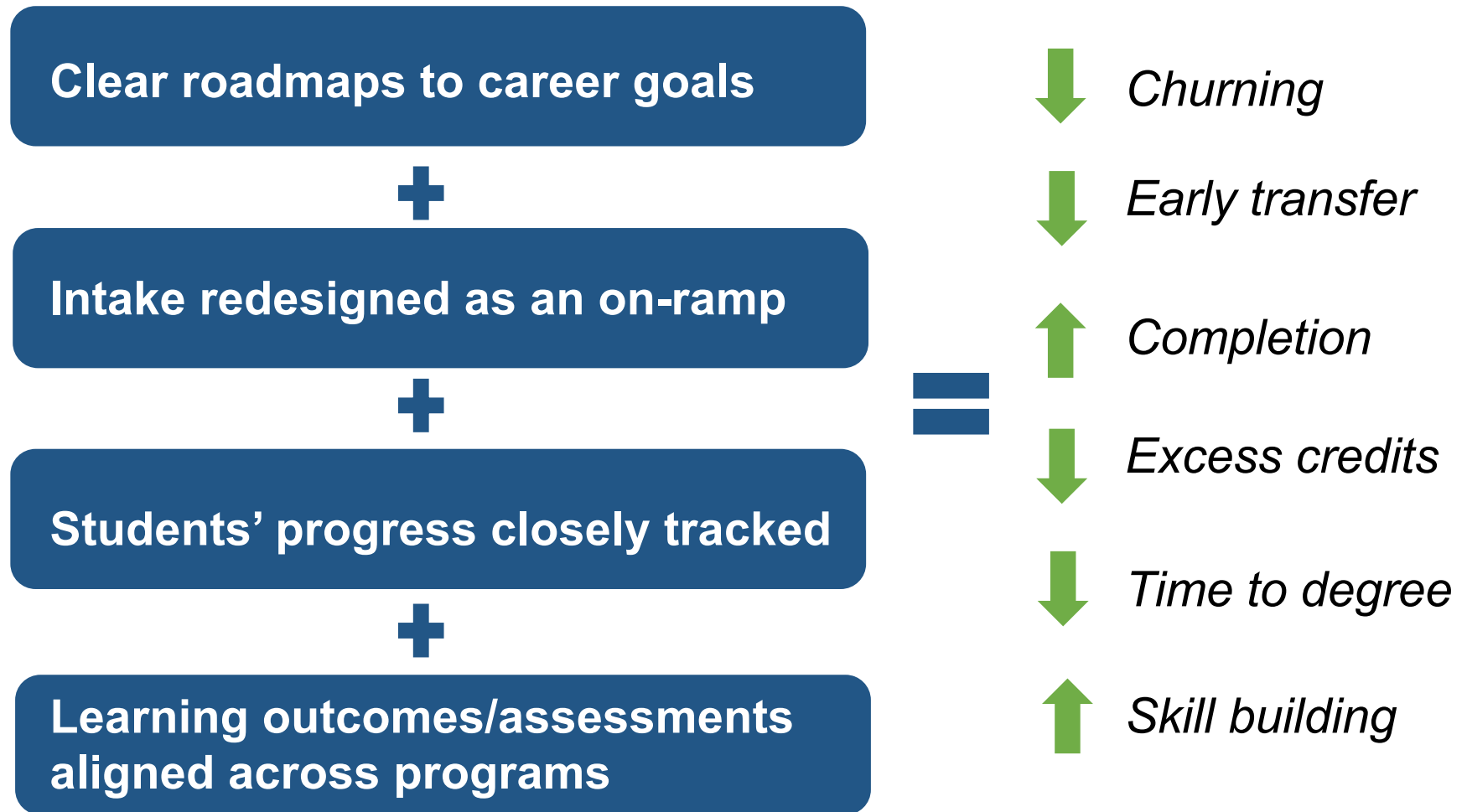


**Help students stay on their path**



**Ensure student learning**

# Guided Pathways College



Guided Pathways is a **strategy** that can support the college *and* state-wide **goals**.



Institutional leaders need **board support** to make this a reality.



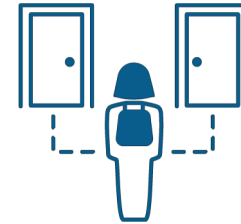
# Activity: Pre-Mortem Analysis

**Goal:** Specific # of additional students complete a credential of no more than 66 credits in no more than three calendar years.



## Strategy – Guided Pathways

- Build clear pathways
- Get students on a pathway
- Help students *stay* on the pathway
- Ensure students are learning



- Assume that, five years from now, your college has failed to achieve this goal.
- Discuss with those at your table. What are the likely causes of that “mortality?” What might have gone wrong in the pathways implementation process?
- Consider specifically the issues that might come before the board (for example, concerns because the college wants to shift money from academic advising to staff advising to lower the adviser-to-student ratio).
- What could the board do to deal with these potential issues?

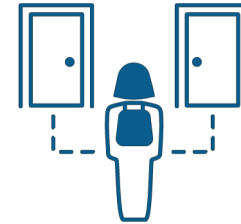
# Debrief: Pre-Mortem Analysis

**Goal:** Specific # of additional students complete a credential of no more than 66 credits in no more than three calendar years.



## Strategy – Guided Pathways

- Build clear pathways
- Get students on a pathway
- Help students *stay* on the pathway
- Ensure students are learning



**What could go wrong here? What issues might specifically come to the board?**

**What could the board do to deal with those issues?**

Pay attention to why reforms fail.

### Reasons Initiatives Fail

**People blame the student.**



### What can the board do?

**Repeatedly activate the student voice.**



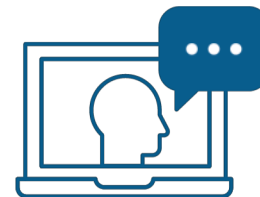
Pay attention to why reforms fail.

#### 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 the board do?

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





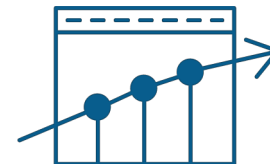
Pay attention to why reforms fail.

### Reasons Initiatives Fail

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

What can the board do?

**Maintain discipline for multiple years before taking on major new college-wide initiatives.**



Pay attention to why reforms fail.

### Reasons Initiatives Fail

**There is an absence of timelines for execution or evaluation.**



### What can the board do?

#### When beginning an initiative:

- **Work with president to decide how board will know if progress is being made**
- **Collect baseline data**
- **Set a specific timeline for measuring success**

Pay attention to why reforms fail.

### Reasons Initiatives Fail

**Questions about scale and sustainability are not considered at the outset of initiatives.**



### What can the board do?

**Ask as each initiative is considered:**

- **What is the cost per student?**
- **How many students could benefit?**
- **If this works, can we afford to scale and sustain?**

## Pay attention to why reforms fail.

### Reasons Initiatives Fail

**The college has failed to engage external partners so they do what they need to ensure student success**



### What can the board do?

**Develop time to discuss with the president:**

- **Where are our students coming from?**
- **What are the students' goals? Where will they go next?**
- **How will we know if students are attaining their goals?**

# How can trustees support institutional change?



## Understand, Commit, and Set Goals

Understand why institutional change is important to the community and the students we serve.



Understand the reform strategy in broad terms.



**Set student success goals, including leading and lagging indicators.**



## Operationalize

Monitor progress towards student success goals as a board.

Align presidential hiring, transitions, and evaluation to student success goals.

Align policies and budget priorities to student success goals.

# How can trustees use student success metrics and goals to support reform?

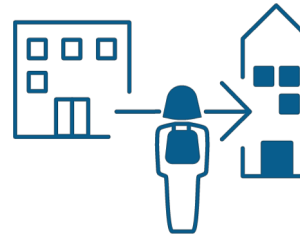
- Work with leadership to set clear and specific goals for student success.



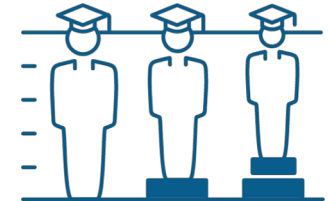
Labor Market



Completion



Transfer



Equity

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## Operationalize

**Monitor progress towards student success** goals as a board.

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Align policies and budget priorities to student success goals.

# How can trustees use student success metrics and goals to support reform?

- Set clear and specific goals for student success.
- Work to standardize data reports for regular consideration.



- Choose a few high level metrics.
- Include leading and lagging indicators.



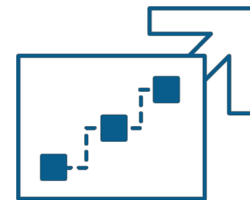


# How can trustees use student success metrics and goals to support reform?

- Set clear and specific goals for student success.
- Work to standardize data reports for regular consideration.
- Monitor progress towards goals.



- Choose a few high level metrics.
- Include leading and lagging indicators.
- Report on progress to goals, including trend lines.



# The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program Framework for Student Success

## Labor Market Outcomes

- Do graduates find strong employment opportunity in well-paying jobs?

## Learning

- Do colleges set expectations for learning, measure what is learned, and use that information in a process of continuous improvement?

## Completion and Transfer with Bachelor's Degree

- Do students earn degrees and other meaningful credentials, and do those who transfer go on to earn bachelor's degrees?

## Equity

- Do colleges strive for equitable access and outcomes for underserved minority and low-income students?



## THE ASPEN PRIZE

### Assessing institutions on the four-part definition of student success:

**High absolute  
performance**

- **Completion** including bachelor's degrees after transfer
- **Learning**
- **Labor market outcomes** including earnings relative to the region and employment, 1 and 5 years out
- **Equity in access and success**

**Improvement  
over time**



# Completion and Transfer with Bachelor's Degree

- **First-year retention rates**
- **Three-year graduation rates (or 150% of expected program time)**
- **Certificates and degrees awarded per 100 full-time-equivalent students** (better accounts for completion of part-time students)
- **Improvement over time index:** Annual change in retention rates, graduation rate, and certificates and degrees awarded per 100 FTE students
- **Transfer outcomes:** Percentage of students who transfer to a 4-year institution within three years, and the percentage of students who transferred and completed a bachelor's degree within six years



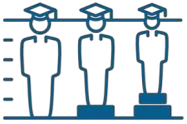
# Learning

- **Benchmarked learning outcomes:** Comparative performance of the institution on nationally normed standardized examinations, licensure examinations in selected programs, and the graduation and GPA performance of the institution's transfer students at four-year institutions
- **Assessment practice:** What the institution is doing to assess student outcomes in general education or for the college as a whole, and assessment activities in each program
- **Assessment culture & support:** How faculty engage with assessment and how it is supported through funding, coordination, and faculty development



# Labor Market Outcomes

- **Employment:** Percentage of students who left or graduated from the institution in a given year who are employed 1 year and 5 years after leaving
- **Annual/annualized earnings** of students who left or graduated from the institution, 1 year and 5 years after leaving, relative to the median earnings of all high school graduates, all new-hires, and all workers in the region



# Equity

- **Graduation Rate for Underrepresented Minority Students**
- **Certificates and Degrees Awarded per 100 Full-Time Equivalent Students for Underrepresented Minority Students**
- **Equity in access:** Percent student of color enrollment relative to service area demographics

# How can trustees support institutional change?



## Understand, Commit, and Set Goals

Know the data and be able to clearly explain why change is needed.



Understand the reform strategy in broad terms.



Set student success goals, including leading and lagging indicators.



## Operationalize

Monitor progress towards student success goals as a board.

Align **presidential hiring, transitions, and evaluation** to student success goals.

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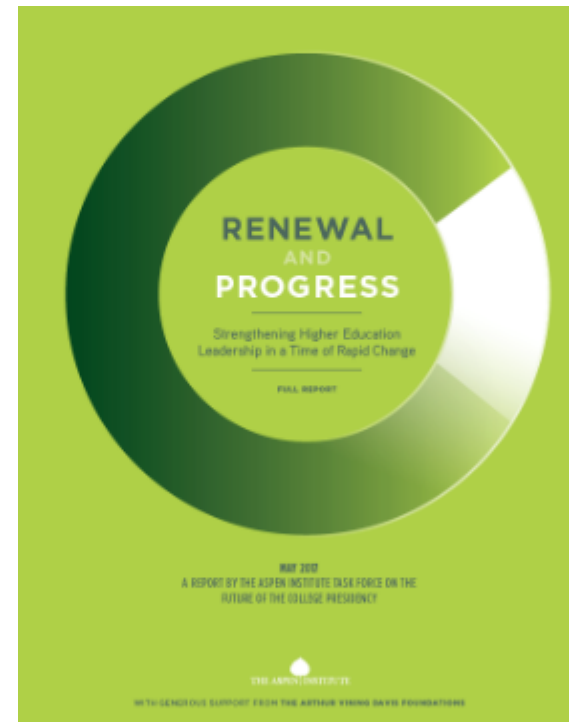


# Our Work: *Renewal and Progress*

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Aspen convened a Task Force on the Future of the College Presidency to examine what will be needed to strengthen the presidency in the coming decades, informed by three major questions:

- What enduring qualities and conditions are critical to the efficacy of future college presidents?
- What new qualities and conditions will be required for effectiveness in the future?
- In light of these qualities and conditions, what need to be done to strengthen the college presidency?



# Key Findings and Recommendations from the Task Force

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1. Expand and improve **transition planning**, professional development, and peer learning opportunities for new and veteran presidents.



## Finding:

The initial year sets much of the tone for an entire presidency.

## Challenge:

How can a new president make the most of their first year? **What is the board's role?**



# What is the role of the board in a good presidential transition?

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- Ensure a strong 1-2 year transition plan is in place
  - *May engage a consultant to support the president in crafting the plan*
  - *Use it to understand what the president does day-to-day*
- Connect president to key community and political actors
- Have the board chair check in periodically on progress and learning
- Meet individually with the incoming president to share priorities and board culture



# Key Findings and Recommendations from the Task Force

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1. Expand and improve transition planning, professional development, and peer learning opportunities for new and veteran presidents.
2. Provide boards greater and more integrated assistance to **set institutional goals** and to **hire, support, and work with presidents**.



# How can trustees contribute to the reform agenda?

- Set clear and specific goals for student success.
- Standardize data reports for regular consideration.
- Monitor progress.
- Align the president's evaluation with organizational mission.



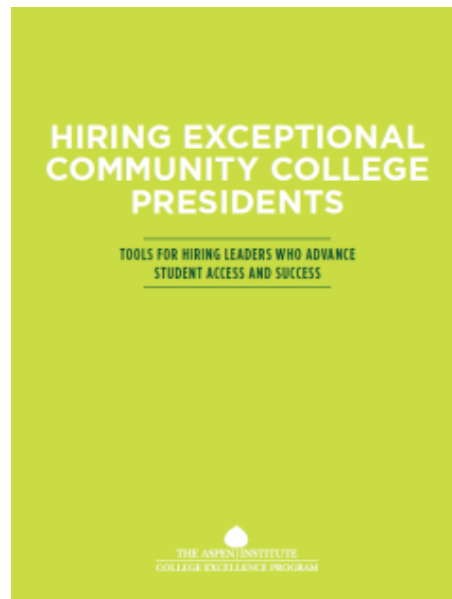
- Long-term goals: completion and post-graduation success.
- Early indicators of progress to goals: college-level Math and English completion in the first year, number of students on pathways.



# Hiring Tools

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- Tools to utilize when there is retirement or turnover
- In the 2015 AACC CEO survey, **80%** of community college presidents indicated that they planned to retire in the next ten years



# Key Findings and Recommendations from the Task Force

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1. Expand and improve transition planning, professional development, and peer learning opportunities for new and veteran presidents.
2. Provide boards greater and more integrated assistance to set institutional goals and to hire, support, and work with presidents.
3. Advance new and expanded ways to identify and develop a diverse presidential talent pool.





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Align **policies and budget priorities** to student success goals.

# What questions and issues may trustees encounter as colleges implement reforms?

## **Is there a need to revisit college policies...for example:**

- When can students enroll? Is late registration allowable?
- What is the assessment and placement process for entering students?

## **Is there a need to reevaluate job descriptions...for example:**

- How might advisors' and career counselors' job functions change as advising processes are redesigned?
- Will faculty play a more prominent role in advising students?

## **Is there a need to reallocate resources...for example:**

- Will the college need to hire additional advisors/counselors?
- In what new or upgraded technology should the college invest?

# How can boards create policies and reallocate resources to support student success?

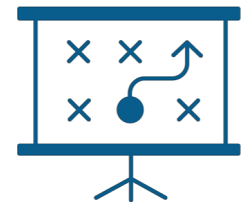
- Alamo Community College (TX) – Adopted a holistic student success board policy and made a substantial investment in the Alamo Advise initiative to get the adviser to student ratio to 1:350
- Jackson College (MI) – Created a mission statement about *Totally Committed to Student Success*, which led the board to support a tuition increase to allow the college to create student success navigators
- Monroe Community College (NY) – Embedded and aligned guided pathways with the college strategic plan, which in turn drives resource allocation

# How can trustees contribute to the reform agenda?

- Set clear and specific goals for student success.
- Work to standardize data reports for regular consideration.
- Monitor progress.
- Align the president's evaluation with organizational mission.
- Adopt policies and allocate needed resources to support implementation of reforms.



- Make a public commitment to reform efforts.
- Reallocate or invest new resources to reduce the ratio of students per advisor.
- Invest in professional development and training that aligns with strategic goals.



## Questions? Reflections?

What follow-up and support do trustees need to effectively support institutional reform?



# THANK YOU

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COLLEGE EXCELLENCE PROGRAM