LEVERAGING OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING TO SUPPORT EQUITY

Series	INSTITUTIONAL AGENCY: IMPROVING PERFORMANCE AND THE SUCCESS OF UNDERSERVED STUDENTS WITH OBF
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Module	
4.2	**INSTITUTIONAL CHECKLIST FOR EFFECTIVE RESPONSE**

Module GOALS

THIS MODULE addresses equity in OBF at the instiutional level as outlined in our OBF Equity Overview. It will help state policymakers and institutional leaders consider:

- Strategies used by **institutions** to navigate OBF policy reform; and
- Strategies used by **institutions** to improve outcomes for underserved students.

About This TOOLKIT

THE OBF EQUITY TOOLKIT provides practical lessons on how states, systems, and institutions work to address equity in the development and implementation of OBF policy. Broken into four Series focused on equity challenges in distinct phases of the OBF policy process, the Toolkit contains short, individual modules that consider specific topics and provide lessons learned and recommendations for policymakers and institutional leaders to consider. Content is derived from in-depth study of six states (Tennessee, Indiana, Ohio, New Mexico, Oregon, and Kentucky) and 13 institutions in them. See the Research Methods section of the Overview for more information.

EQUITY CHALLENGE

How institutional response to OBF can improve outcomes for underserved students

States often adopt OBF as part of a plan to improve student outcomes and increase higher education attainment rates. This goal cannot be accomplished without institutions doubling down on their efforts to serve students, particularly those historically neglected by higher education. Yet institutions that serve a high number of underserved students often have the fewest resources and least capacity to respond to state policies or to improve student success. For a more complete discussion on how states can support institutions during the transition to OBF see, <u>Module 3.1: Identifying the Capacity Needs of Disadvantaged</u>

Institutions to Increase Outcomes Under OBF, and Module 3.2: Strategies for Supporting Institutions During OBF Implementation.

When institutions do have the resources to change administrative practices or implement new student success strategies, it can be difficult to determine which course of action will deliver the best return on their efforts. The following checklists were drawn from conversations with institutional leaders and administrators at 13 institutions serving low-income and other marginalized students. The lists include examples of what institutional leaders believed were effective ways to engage with OBF policy. This list provides a starting point for institutions to navigate the transition to OBF, take stock of institutional practices, identify barriers to student success, and strategically align institutional efforts to better serve students.

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

In transitioning to OBF, institutions provided examples of strategies for navigating policy reform and improving student outcomes. This section outlines a range of approaches.

Navigating the transition to OBF

When states adopt OBF, institutions are often uncertain about how best to navigate the transition. Table 1 lists effective strategies as described by institutional leaders.

Table 1. Institutional strategies for successfully navigating the transition to OBF

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD	RATIONALE
ANTICIPATE THE SHIFT TO OBF	Listen to state-level conversations to determine if the governor or state legislators are considering a transition to OBF.	To allow ample time for institutional leaders to consider and pre-emptively adjust resources and strategies to "hit the ground running."
PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FUNDING FORMULA	Advocate for a seat at the table. Identify high-capacity staff members who will be effective participants in the policy development process. Ensure that participating staff members have the time and resources to fully engage in the development process. Meet regularly with participating staff and other institutional leaders to create a feedback process of institutional needs and policy development progress.	To advocate for institutional needs (such as securing a higher level of funding for higher education or underserved student success) and identify where institutional and state needs align. To make policymakers aware of the potential impacts of their decisions on institutions and students.
ALIGN STRATEGIC PLANS AND GOALS	Assess where institutional and OBF goals align and converge.	To align institutional work to the goals of OBF when appropriate.

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD	RATIONALE
	Determine where OBF will support institutional strategies and if data points that indicate success can be aligned to formula metrics.	To align institutional work toward securing more funding.
BUILD STAFF AND DATA CAPACITY	Identify if and where more student data may be helpful to improve institutional performance. Increase data and IR capacity. Train key staff in the formula. Recruit staff knowledgeable in the formula.	To ensure the institution has the information and staff needed to improve institutional performance.
DEVELOP A PLAN FOR ENGAGING WITH AND LEVERAGING THE FORMULA	Develop a plan for continued participation in OBF policy refinement. Determine when to leverage OBF to motivate faculty and staff to adopt new policies or practices.	To help institutional leaders effectively communicate the OBF policy to faculty and key staff.

Strategies that may increase success for historically underserved students

Table 2 displays institutional student success strategies that emphasize the success of underserved students. These strategies have the potential to yield resources through OBF funding formulas as they improve student retention and outcomes.

Table 2. Institutional strategies for improving student success and completion

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD	RATIONALE
IDENTIFY AND DISMANTLE UNNECESSARY BARRIERS TO SUCCESS	Eliminate unnecessary administrative tasks, such as graduation applications. Eliminate practices that deter completion, such as unenrolling students with small outstanding balances or overdue library books.	To support first-generation and other traditionally underserved students who may have difficulty navigating administrative and academic hurdles.
IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS	Communicate information about enrollment, registration, and progression tasks frequently and through a variety of platforms (such as mail, email, text and social media). Ensure materials include clear instructions and use language that makes sense to non-academics.	To provide better information to students who may have competing life responsibilities.
IMPROVE ADVISING	Create student-centered advising approaches, such as intrusive and wraparound advising. Some campuses centralized advising for first-year students, transferring them to a faculty advisor their second year.	To improve the quality of information available to guide student decision-making.
IDENTIFY AND REACH OUT TO STUDENTS WHO NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT	Examine student data to identify students who may be less likely to complete, such as those with a low high school GPA or those from a low-income zip-code. Contact them before classes begin to offer additional supports.	To offer early supports to students who may be less likely to complete.
ENGAGE WITH NATIONAL COMPLETION OR STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES, OR LEVERAGE GRANTS	Secure additional resources or leverage current resources to support completion efforts. Examples include Title III grants, TRIO grants, Complete College America, Completion by Design, and Achieving the Dream.	Additional completion-focused resources can bolster institutional efforts to improve completion.
IMPROVE DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION	Identify ways to improve placement by reassessing cut-scores or adding additional placement measures. Adopt co-requisite remediation or provide other supports to students in traditional developmental education.	To reduce or eliminate the time students spend in developmental education, thereby improving completion rates.

STRATEGY	EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD	RATIONALE
INCREASE DATA CAPACITY AND USE DATA IN DECISION-MAKING	Regularly examine course completion and progression data and use information to inform interventions.	To ensure that initiatives align with barriers to completion.
DEVELOP STUDENT-CENTERED COURSE SCHEDULES	Create course schedules to accommodate underserved students, who are often balancing work and family responsibilities and frequently enroll part-time. Centralize course scheduling, create schedules that allow students to take back-to-back courses, and adopt compressed courses when appropriate.	To ensure that degree completions are not delayed because of course scheduling or availability.
REVIEW CREDIT REQUIREMENTS	Reduce credit units to 60 for an associate degree and 120 for a bachelor's degree.	To ensure that students have the possibility of graduating in two or four years.
REVIEW COURSE CURRICULUM	Assess alignment between course content and students' educational and occupational goals. For example, students in a paramedic program and students in a communications program may benefit from different English 101 curriculum.	To ensure students are not derailed by taking coursework they may view as irrelevant.
REALLOCATE RESOURCES AS NEEDED	Assess institutional budgets to ensure they are configured to make the most impact.	To ensure resources are used to effectively support student success.
ENSURE AFFORDABILITY	Establish micro-grants, micro-scholarships, and emergency aid. Bring down the cost of textbooks, fees, transportation, child care, and other barriers that may derail underserved students.	To reduce the likelihood that students do not complete for financial reasons.
ADD ACADEMIC PROGRAMS PRIORITIZED IN THE FORMULA	When in alignment with institutional mission, increase academic offerings and credentials in fields prioritized by OBF policy (e.g., STEM or bilingual teacher education [OR]).	To create academic offerings aligned to state priorities.
SUPPORT FACULTY DEVELOPMENT	Communicate best practices in teaching to faculty. Create a center for teaching excellence for faculty support and resources.	To ensure students have a positive experience, which is important to student retention and persistence, especially for underserved students.