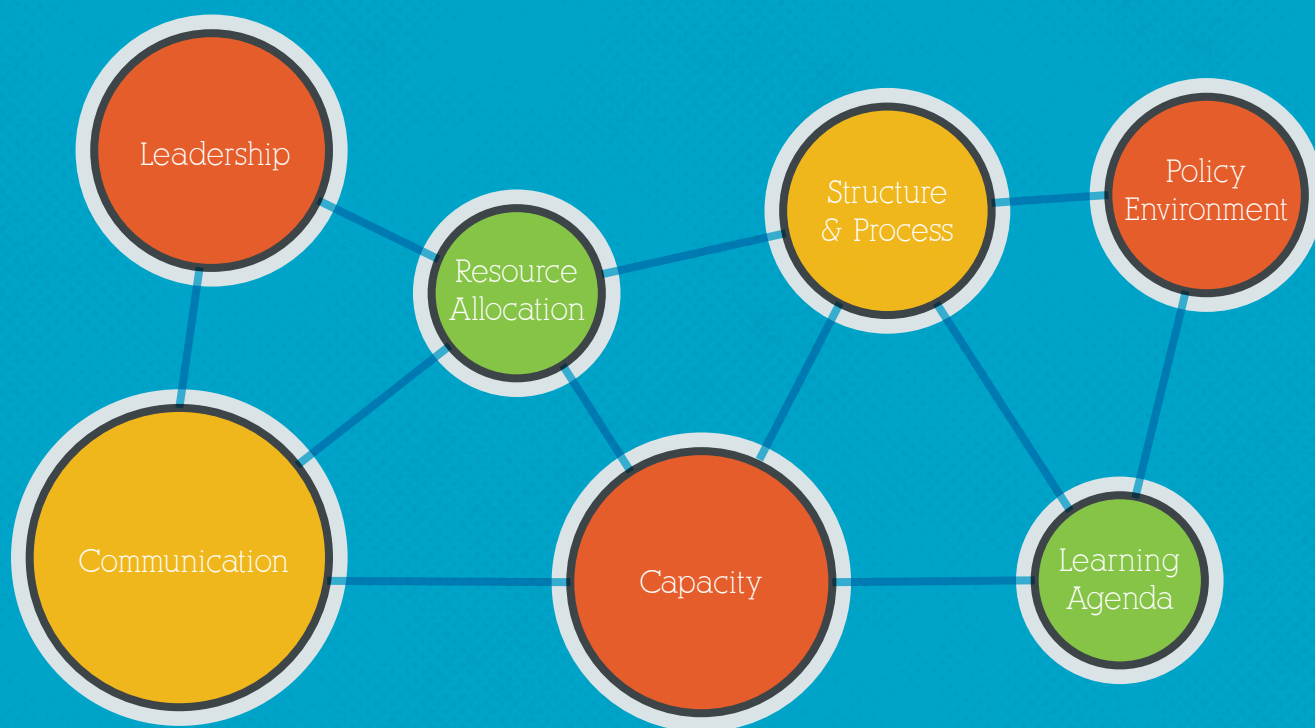


Building a Culture of Innovation in Higher Education: Design & Practice for Leaders

Emerging Lessons and a New Tool

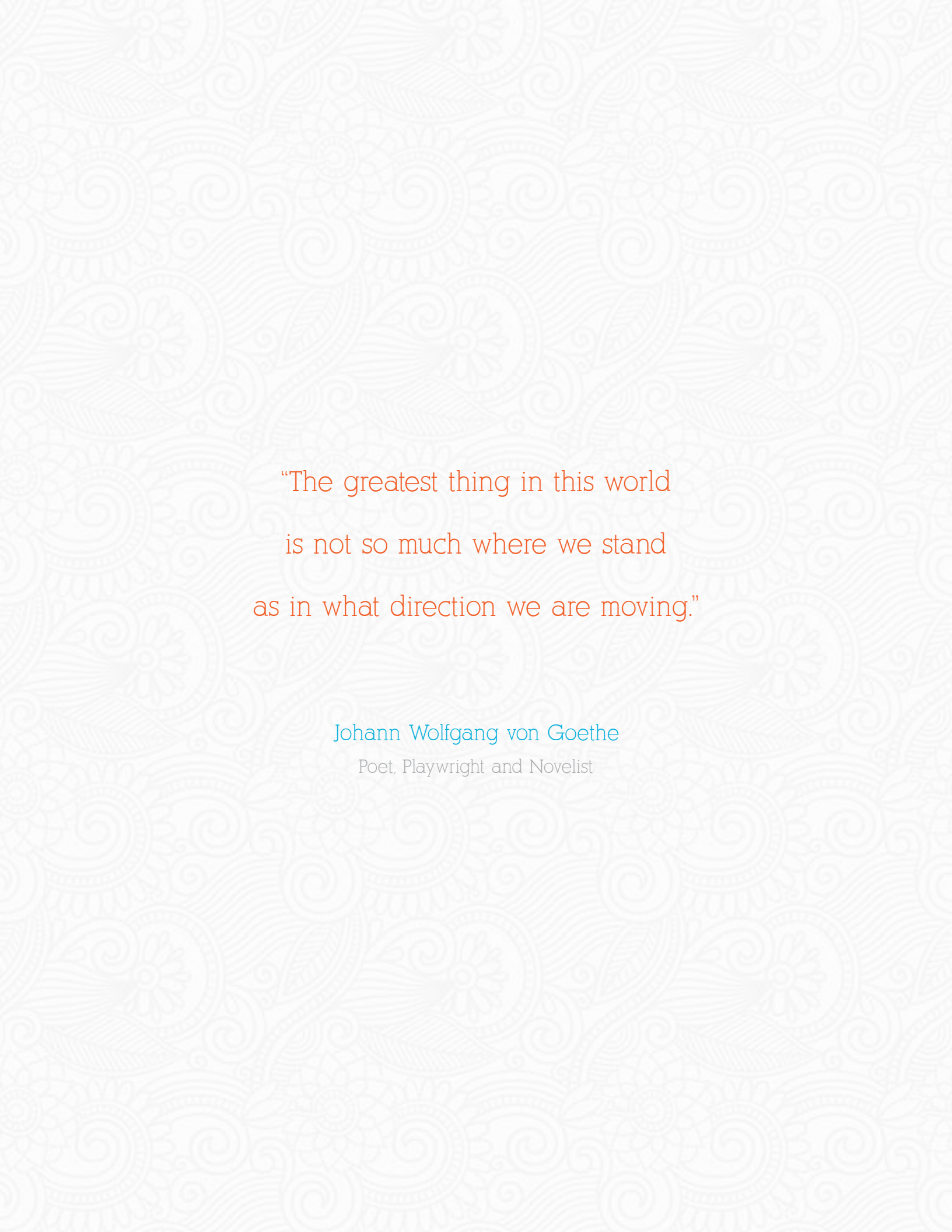


April 2015

Created in partnership between

2Revolutions &
Do What You Love For Good

EDUCAUSE



“The greatest thing in this world
is not so much where we stand
as in what direction we are moving.”

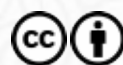
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Poet, Playwright and Novelist



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Introduction

2Revolutions, in partnership with The Learning Accelerator, released a publication in 2014: *So You Think You Want to Innovate? Emerging Lessons and a New Tool for State and District Leaders Working to Build a Culture of Innovation*. The publication provided an analysis of what innovation culture means within an education context; described why it's essential that we all get better at building it; introduced a new framework that defines the factors that influence a robust and healthy culture of innovation; and shared a self-assessment tool that educational leaders can use on their path to building innovation culture. This work builds on that effort and methodology, but focuses, instead, on the higher education landscape.

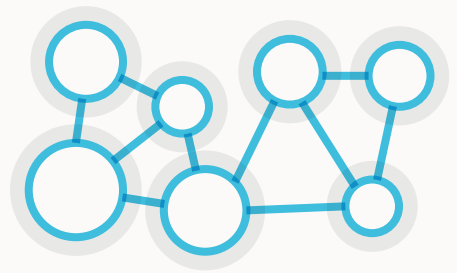
Now more than ever we have to fulfill our promise to provide a viable path for young people from college to the workforce that equips them with the intellectual, emotional and experiential preparation necessary to face, tackle and solve complex social problems. Transformative solutions to the challenges before us are within sight, if we cultivate our human capital to respond thoughtfully and courageously. To prepare today's students to meet our most pressing challenges, we need to build the future of higher education...now.

This report and toolkit is meant for universities, colleges, community colleges, not-for-profits and organizations that serve the higher education landscape who want to do this work; who want to reimagine their vision of higher education.

Rethinking something, tinkering with it, breaking it apart and starting over, all requires an innovator's mindset. But how can higher education institutions cultivate that? And who is already doing work in this area to make it happen? That's what this report works to uncover and share.

To do this next round of research and analysis, 2Revolutions partnered with EDUCAUSE's Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC). For the past five years, NGLC has accelerated educational innovation by encouraging institutions to strategically and creatively apply technology to dramatically improve college readiness and completion in the United States. Providing investment capital to expand the use of proven and emerging learning technologies, collecting and sharing evidence of what works and fostering a community of innovators and adopters, NGLC has stimulated the development of a variety of tools, solutions and institutional transformations that are poised to significantly improve the quality of learning experiences in the United States.

Because many potentially breakthrough solutions are being developed and tested by educators, institutions, technologists and entrepreneurs, too often they operate with little access to each other or to opportunities to disseminate their innovations. Support is needed to refine and rigorously test their solutions, to connect with other like-minded innovators, and to develop strategies to broaden their reach and impact. This is the "why" behind our partnership.

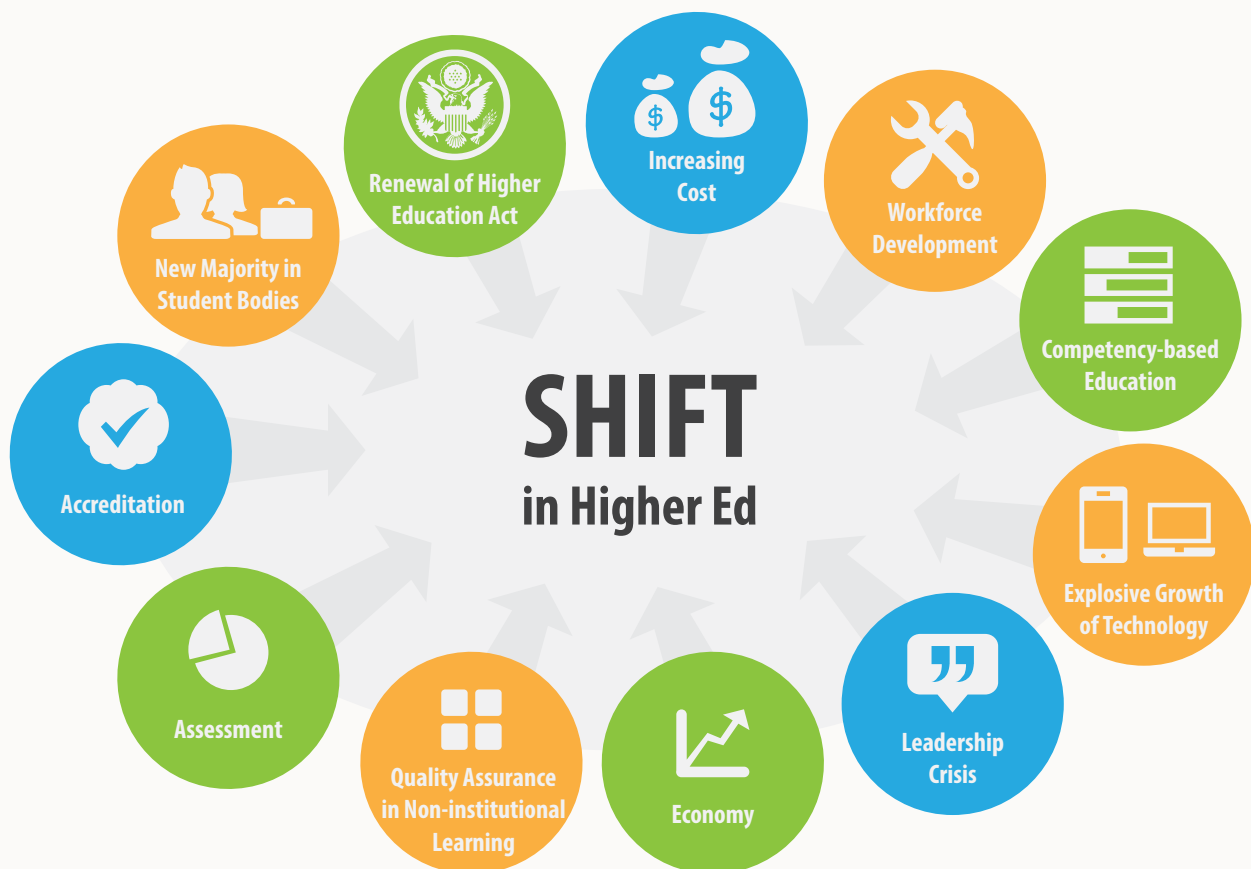


Why Focus on Higher Ed?

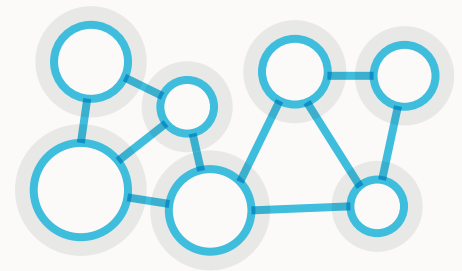
We all recognize that our economy is changing rapidly. The forces of globalization are creating more opportunity and less certainty—punishing stasis while rewarding creativity, flexibility and agility. At the same time, shifting labor economics and advances in mobile technologies are fundamentally changing how people work. A growing number of knowledge economy professionals are taking a more entrepreneurial approach as they pursue the goals of intellectual and economic independence and balance in an unbalanced world.

In addition to the workforce shifts and the changing economics, the graphic below illustrates many of the other reasons ‘Why’ higher ed needs to shift, including moving to a more competency-based system to create more flexible options for students.

Many of the models featured in this report harness these powerful trends and enable multiple "economic free agents" to take a step in framing the future of higher education to impact a labor market revolution.

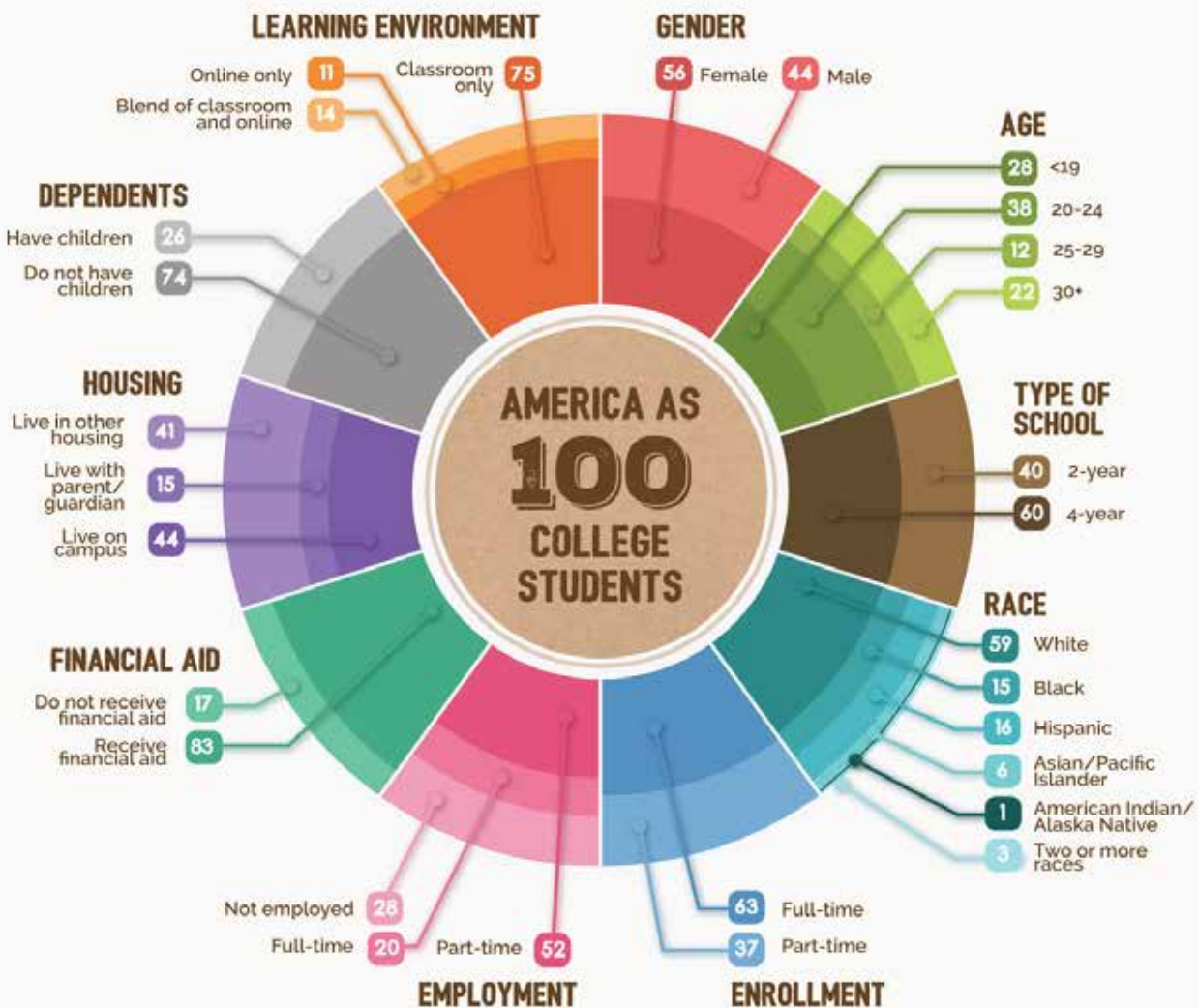


Trends taken from Forbes' "Top Issues Facing Higher Education In 2014"



Adding to the ‘Why’ higher ed needs to shift, is the consideration of who you’re serving. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation created the infographic below to illustrate the diversity of higher education students across the United States. According to its data, if 100 students were chosen to represent the population of America’s colleges and universities, 56 of the students would be female, and 26 would have children. The majority of them would be working while in school, one-fifth with full-time jobs. Thirty-four of the

students would be over 25-years-old. It’s obvious there’s no one-size-fits-all path to (or through) college for our future students, which reinforces the need to think creatively and strategically about how to use technology to personalize and strengthen the roadmap markers for everyone. It also shows clearly why higher ed cannot allow a very small segment of the market, the 18-22 year-olds often living on-campus, to dominate the policies and practices.



“America as 100 College Students” A Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation graphic:
<http://postsecondary.gatesfoundation.org/student-stories/america-as-100-college-students/>



What We Learned

1. **Accountability and a return on investment is becoming more commonplace in higher education.** Breakthrough business models have gone from “Nice to have,” to essential, as university and college presidents and chancellors respond to internal and external economic pressures.

2. **Time matters as much as money.** Competency-based education, accelerated learning, 24/7 access to content and professors are ways of responding to the primary need of the “new traditional” student who needs flexibility and options with time and money. Continuing to focus on convenience is a strong strategy among the innovators studied for this paper.

3. **Technology is exploding**, and as *New York Times* op-ed columnist Tom Friedman notes, “We are in the alta vista stage of MOOCS.” Preserving our humanity and the strengths of formal education alongside the potential of technology will be a key balancing act in designing our collective futures.

4. **Talent matters.** The ivory tower is showing signs of erosion, and tenure models are being rethought and redesigned. As new models emerge, the role of faculty is being reimagined, skilled up and parsed out so that the institution’s top talent is performing at its best and highest use and ONLY that use. For example, we might soon see the transition from endowed professors to an endowed fleet of 1099-contractors, capable of assessing higher ed credentials and providing as-needed support to students through mobile and other social platform technologies.

5. **Higher ed needs a modern context makeover.** Students and employers are wrestling with a critical question—what exactly is a Bachelor of Arts worth? What does it mean? The new learner is here for deep, relevant, applicable learning and a credential with the signaling strength to reflect it to employers. Higher ed needs to create a space for that type of learning to happen and rethink how it’s approaching demonstration of what students have learned and are able to do.

Our Methodology

This report builds on our first iteration of work, which began by reviewing existing literature and research from both within and outside the education sector. We discovered a range of interesting and relevant insights (see Consulted Works on page 57), which we used as the jumping off place for our more targeted explorations. For this piece we spoke with higher education leaders and faculty; unpacking how they see innovation in their organizations and what can better enable it in the future, and incorporated observations from our work with higher ed leaders in the field whose institutions participated in the EDUCAUSE/ NGLC Breakthrough Models Incubator and the American Council on Education’s Change and Innovation Lab.

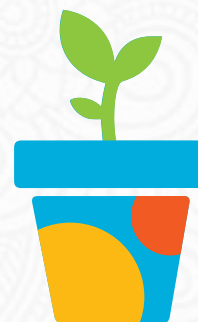
The resulting framework and tool is our best attempt to synthesize our learning into a form that we felt could be useful to higher education leaders. We are very thankful for the thoughtful critiques, insights, ideas, and stories our colleagues shared with us for this piece. We are emboldened by what the future of learning can look like for our higher education institutions, and the impact it will have on our country as a whole.

What's Innovation & Culture All About?

Through our research and conversations with industry leaders, it became clear to us that the term “innovation” is overused, under-defined and often means something different depending on who you ask. In order to build a culture that champions and supports innovation, it's critical that each organization *develops a shared definition of what innovation means* within the

context of its work. (Our definition, which can serve as a starting point if helpful, is on the next page.)

Before we get to the definition of a culture of innovation, though, let's consider what innovation and culture mean as things people *do* in an organization and *a way of being*.



An Innovator's Way of Being (What Is It That Innovators Do?)

Grab and apply what they can. Innovators leverage existing, new, proven or unproven methods or tools to improve practice, solve persistent problems or create a completely new offering, service, solution, product or idea.

Do not shy away from choices. Innovators make important choices and trade-offs throughout their process.

They are inspired by their world and use it. Innovators identify tools, ideas, strands or practices from other fields and apply it to a new context.

Try, try and try again. They don't view innovation as “right or wrong,” “a failure or success,” instead all approaches are considered, tested, prototyped and learned from.

And What's Culture?

Culture is the **water** your organization swims in.

It's not only the policies and practices your team creates, but the **daily habits, values and mindset** of your team.

Culture needs to be **deliberately built, nurtured, talked about and managed** over time.

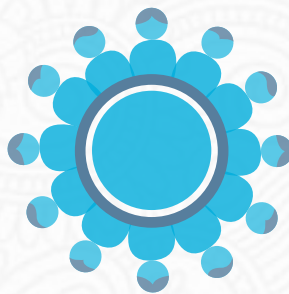
Putting It Together: “Culture of Innovation”

By merging what we learned about “innovation” and “culture,” we offer this shared definition of what “culture of innovation” can mean within an educational context. Feel free to use this definition as a starting point for your own work with your organization.



Innovation

The act or process of building on existing research, knowledge and practice through the introduction or application of new ideas, devices or methods to solve problems or create opportunities where none existed before.



Culture

The way of thinking, behaving and working that exists in an organization, such as universities and community colleges.



Culture of Innovation

Nurturing an environment that continually introduces new ideas or ways of thinking, then translates them into action to solve specific problems or seize new opportunities.

Why Education Innovation Can Be Difficult

We recognize that the process of moving from a culture of improvement focused on fixing current problems, to a culture of innovation that builds and tests new solutions, is incredibly challenging.



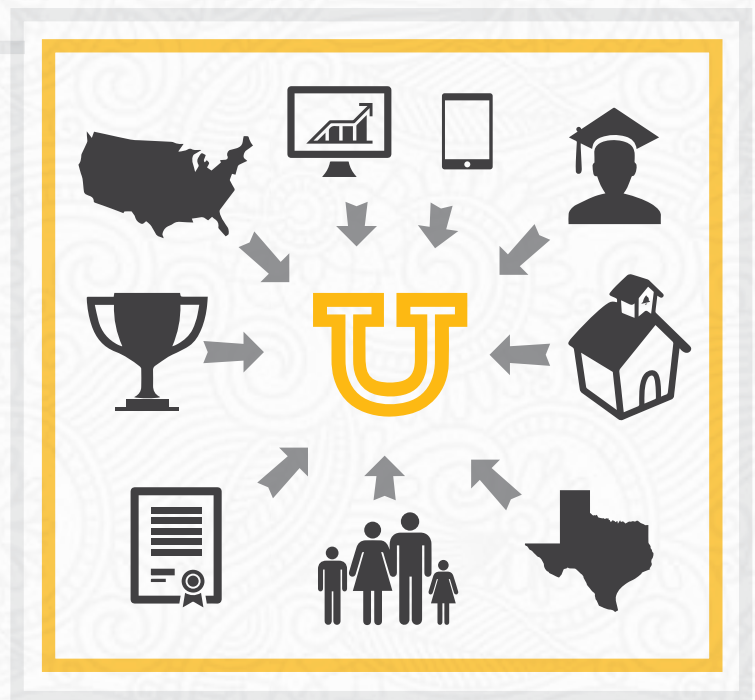
Figure I: Why Innovation Is Hard

It's often difficult—in any context—to make a compelling argument for new approaches that do not yet have evidence of effectiveness. Innovation is also a cultural change: It requires a significant shift in mindset and approach as you leave behind the comfort of what is known and head into new grounds and experiences that haven't been traveled. And as this well-known quote, attributed to Maurice Maeterlinck, articulates, “At every crossway on the road that leads to the future, each progressive spirit is opposed by a thousand men appointed to guard the past.”

Figure II: And Especially Hard in Higher Education

“‘What to do?’ Is the question that so many college and university presidents struggle with right now. We seem to be sitting at the heart of a perfect storm where a lot of things are happening faster than our ability to predict and strategize. We can respond to this stormy weather as medieval farmers did to the next day's weather: by simply waiting to see what arrives and then taking action, often inadequately. Or we can recognize that we actually have the tools, the technology, and the know-how to reinvent U.S. higher education in ways that will address its current failings. After all, it was non-profit higher education that created the tools that the for-profits and the ed-tech startups are now putting to such good competitive use. Online education, MOOCs, adaptive learning science, competency-based education, and most of the learning content in higher education were all invented on traditional non-profit campuses.”

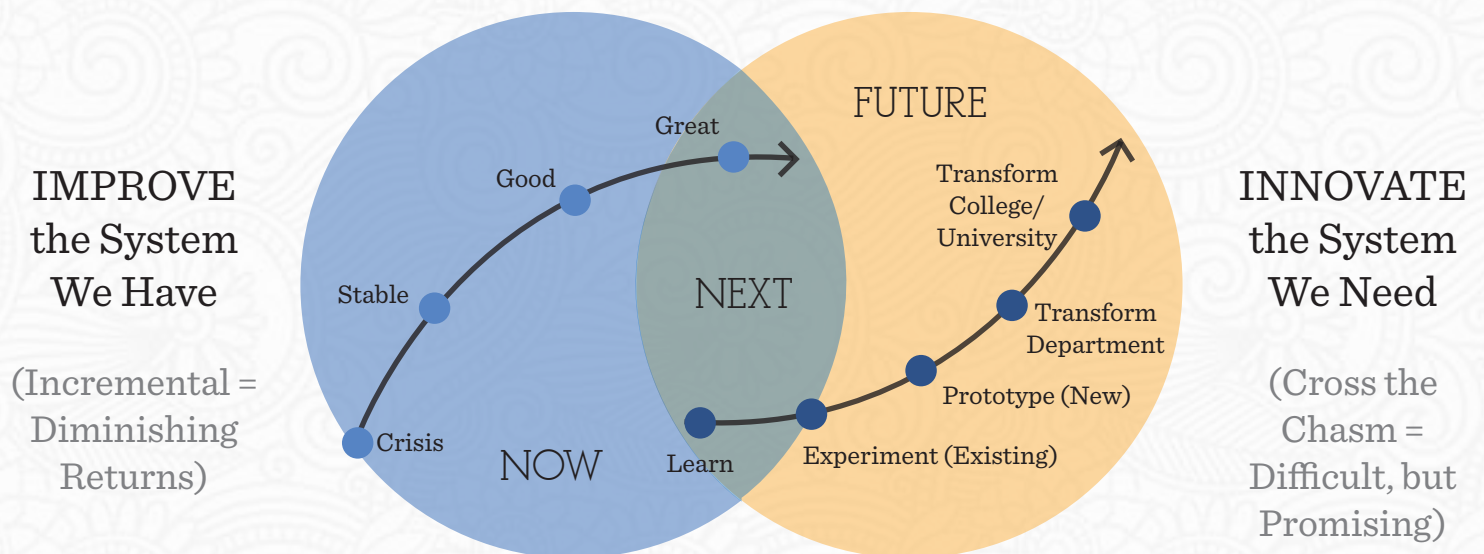
- Paul LeBlanc, President of Southern New Hampshire University



Building Culture Within a Shifting Landscape

As if the dynamic on the previous page was not challenging enough, any efforts to build innovation culture exist within a broader context of transition. Leaders of higher educational organizations are obligated to do as much as possible to improve the current system, while simultaneously building the conditions from which a new system can emerge.

Figure III: Shifting from Improvement to Innovation



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Organization as the Unit of Change

The systems and organizations that each of us work within create “top-down” context for innovation—through policies, leadership, resources and procedures. The individuals and groups that comprise these systems and organizations simultaneously create a “bottom up” push; whether that is through educators who are acting alone, with, or often without, explicit permission to try new things for the sake of their learners, or more formalized structures within an organization.

Each factor of this ecosystem influences, and is influenced by, the others. Effective leadership is essential at all levels.

Within this dynamic, we elected to focus initially on **organization as the unit of change** because we believe this is where many key types of decisions are made that either enable or inhibit innovation within colleges and universities.

Figure IV: Context for Innovation

Systems

(Scale, Impact, Sustainability)

A complex range of organizations comprises the broader system that either enables or constrains innovation

Organizations

(Processes, Rules, Choices, Trade-offs)

A critical unit of change, organizations can prohibit or promote risk-taking and the choice to innovate

Groups

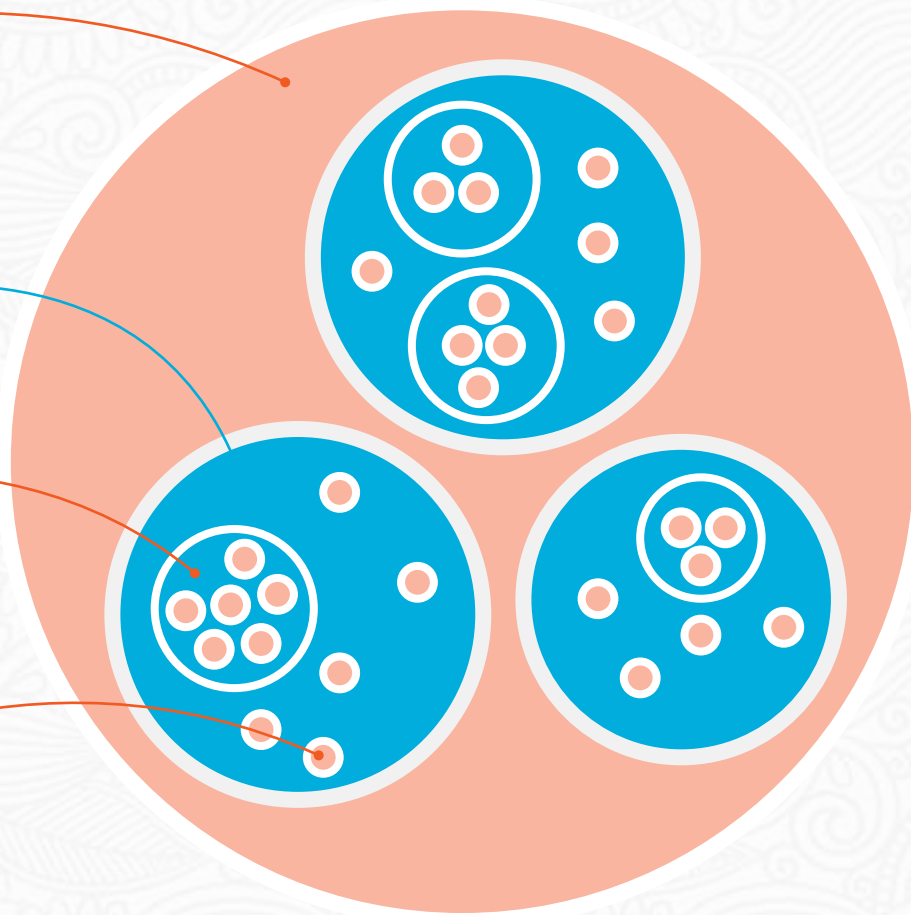
(Peer Collaboration, “Skunkworks”)

Collaborating innovators, which can be acting without explicit support from the host organization and sometimes at the organization’s behest (e.g. exploratory committee)

Individuals

(Brainstorm, Test, Iterate)

Acting alone, often in isolation from other innovators, and experimenting within their immediate context (e.g. classroom or department)

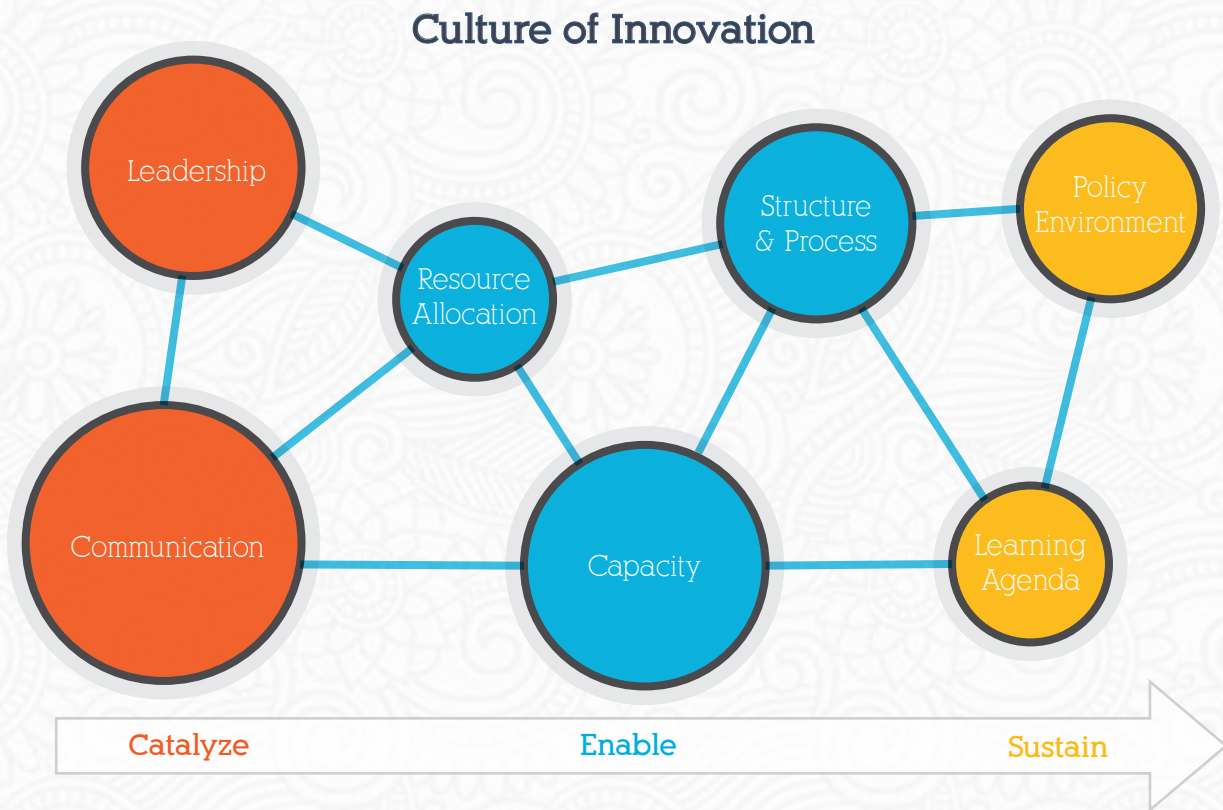


Factors Driving Innovation Culture

Based on our research and considering our working definition for culture of innovation, we have identified **seven factors** that we believe are required to catalyze, enable and sustain an effective culture of innovation over time.

These factors, illustrated in Figure V, are dynamic and interactive, working together to promote or constrain the culture you seek. Similarly, each of these major factors is comprised of constituent elements.

Figure V: Seven Factors Driving Innovation

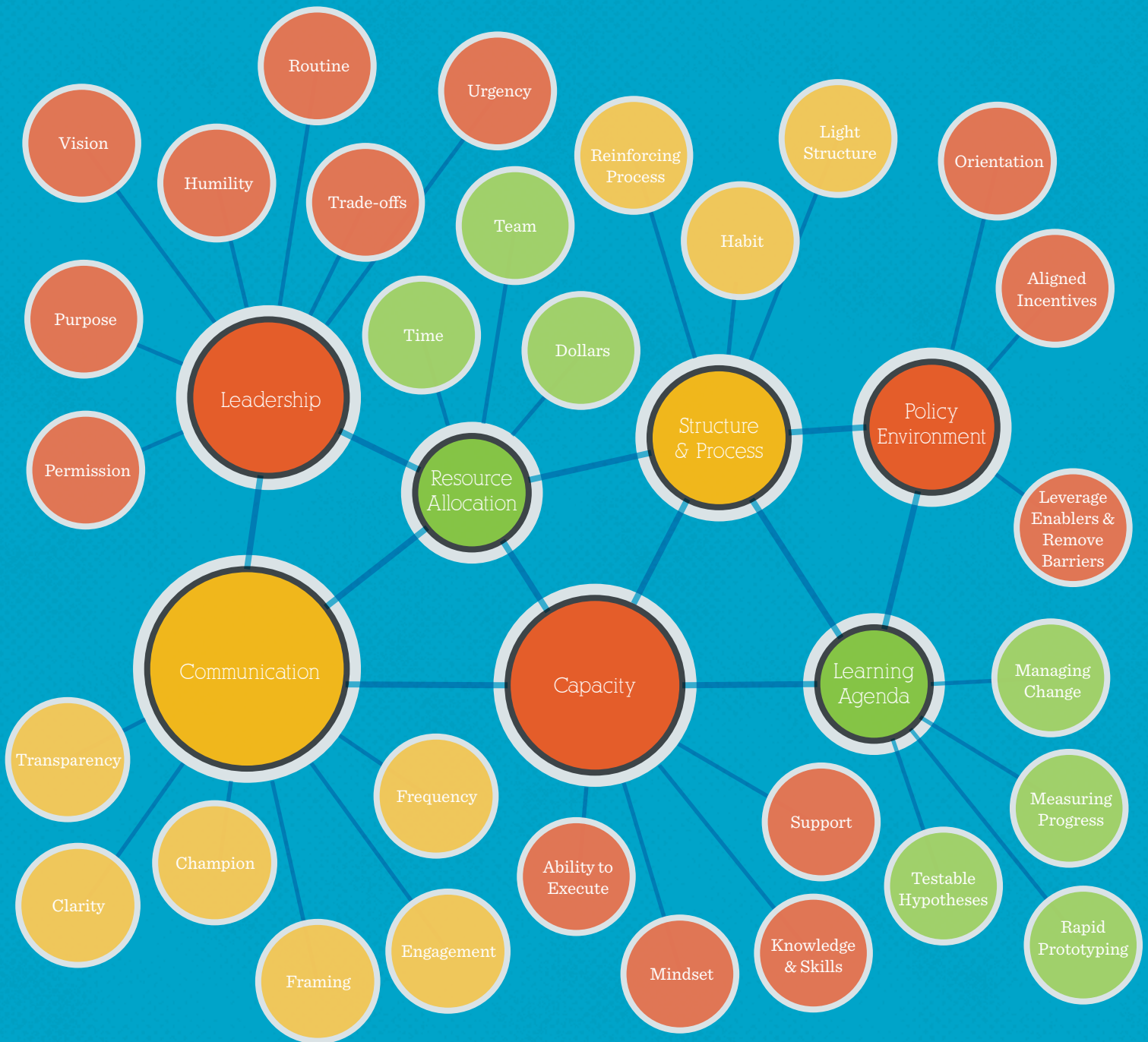


Beginning in the next section, we provide detailed working definitions of each of the factors and sub-factors reflected in the above framework, as well as a self-assessment tool that leaders can use to determine their organization's current level of progress in

establishing a culture of innovation. It is our hope that the tool will provide a new way for leaders to determine what action steps to prioritize and how to track their progress over time.

A New Tool for Higher Education Leaders

Self-assessing Your Organization's Progress in Building a Culture of Innovation



Look for these icons to help guide you through the examples found in the tool:



Learn from compelling research, thought leaders and experiences of others in the field.



View inspiring videos and virtual tours related to culture of innovation.



Apply these tools to help you design and sustain your culture of innovation.

How to Use This Tool

The purpose of this self-assessment tool is to provide “on-ramps” for leaders of higher educational organizations and teams to assess where they are on the path toward building a culture of innovation, and explore examples and resources from inside the higher education field and beyond. Before getting started, here are a few, quick instructions to help orient you to how to use this tool:

Determine Your Objectives

- There are a number of ways to leverage this tool, so you should start by being clear about what you’re hoping to achieve and who will need to participate. With respect to participation, the tool can be powerful for groups of any size. One person can complete it alone and gain benefit; a small group or team working together might complete it individually and discuss it together; an entire organization can complete it, aggregate results and share trends. With respect to objectives, again, the tool can support several, ranging from developing individual insights that can be shared by a single person in various contexts, to generating organization-wide starting points for discussion, to forming the basis of a strategic plan by the leadership team. There is no right answer, but we encourage you to be as explicit as possible up front regarding your desired outcomes and set participation accordingly.

Key Terms in the Tool

- On pages 15-17, we offer starting points for how your team might think of each of the terms that comprise the innovation culture framework. We invite you to adopt them, if helpful, or to modify them in whatever way(s) you like. If working in a group, we encourage you to begin by having a discussion among participating team members to identify where you might have similar or different definitions at work. It will be helpful to resolve any major differences before completing the assessment, as this will make it easier and more powerful to interpret your data in the end. If you are reviewing electronically, you can use the embedded hyperlinks to navigate to specific sections of interest.

Complete the Self-Assessment

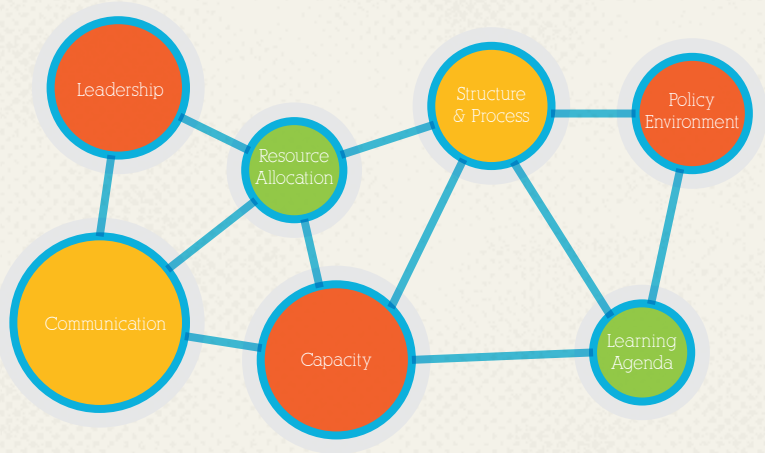
- The tool itself stretches from pages 20-49 and is separated into discrete sections that correspond to the seven factors and their sub-topics that drive an innovation culture.
- For each sub-topic within the seven factors, we provide a rubric that describes actions and characteristics that follow four points along a continuum: from Entering to Emerging to Adapting to Transforming. Where possible, we have included examples—both from within and/or outside of the education sector—that we hope will help you understand the ideas and determine where your organization fits in.
- After reading the descriptions, use the Innovation Scorecard to mark where your organization is on the continuum. (Some pages of the tool also include space for additional notes and reflections.)
- As you work through the tool, set time limits for each section to ensure you’re not overthinking your answers. The goal is to provide a look into where you are on the continuum of building an innovation culture, so being as honest and authentic with your self-evaluation as possible will render the best results.

Identify Action Steps

- Depending on whether you are completing the tool individually or as part of a group, a great first step is to analyze and discuss results with your colleagues. On page 50, we offer additional suggestions for potential next steps.

Innovation Scorecard:

On pages 18-19, we share a simple scorecard that can be used to capture data as you move through the tool.



Defining Key Terms

Each of the seven factors that comprise a culture of innovation are made up of a series of subfactors. Explore each working definition below.

Leadership

Vision You must first recognize and define the problem(s) to be solved and the need to innovate toward radically better solutions for students and families.

Purpose The work should be imbued with a clear sense of purpose and strategic intent. It's the answer to the "so what?" questions that often arise in the context of innovation work.

Permission The clear, explicit directive to others on the team to try new approaches and embrace the learning that comes with failure. To be meaningful, permission has to be accompanied by rewards for taking risks and bringing forth new learning, but it also requires that team members are given the freedom to fail as they design and test new ideas and ways of thinking.

Routine Because it's unfamiliar, team members often need to develop "habits of mind" (i.e., rhythm, schedule) to enable innovation. Setting a cycle or schedule for your efforts helps make innovation practices routine and embeds into the culture quickly.

Urgency If you are to make tangible progress, you must approach the work with an incredible sense of urgency—set aggressive milestones and deadlines.

Trade-offs Innovation often forces hard choices, especially around quality—our first efforts aren't always the best and this is a real and valid concern in higher ed. Understanding up front what your institution's limits are around core values is important, as the choices often put them in competition with each other. Prepare to make hard choices and understand that these choices may come at the expense of something else that is deeply valued.

Humility This is complex work, so it is wise to remain humble about what is known, not known and not yet knowable.

Communication

Clarity Leaders should strive to establish clear definitions, objectives and desired outcomes for innovation, so the targets are evident to all team members.

Framing Effective communication is not just explaining and describing the goals of innovation, but also framing the need for it and how it builds on the experiments and work of the past.

Communication (continued)

Champion It is important to advocate—both for specific innovations and for the environment that will make individuals and groups feel comfortable trying new things, publicly and privately.

Engagement You should engage key stakeholders as often and authentically as possible in the process, through methods like active listening and two-way dialogue. There are ways to structure stakeholder engagement so that it promotes and helps the innovation process without becoming unmanageable. Stakeholders generate priceless insights that can't be secured anywhere else.

Transparency By sharing lessons honestly—even when they arise from failures—you model the behavior(s) you want the system to promote, reward and value.

Frequency Share stories of your work early and often to speed up the learning curve for your organization.

Resource Allocation

Team Investing in your team's capacity to take on and execute innovation work is critical to success—e.g. providing out-of-the-box professional development opportunities or helping them to cultivate and participate in peer networks.

Time Organizations need to explicitly dedicate and carve out time in individual team members' schedules for innovation, as well as secure time across the organization itself.

Dollars It is essential that organizations create or set aside dedicated funds to invest in the development and implementation of innovation. In a perennially resource-constrained environment, where and how an organization spends scarce resources demonstrates its commitment to shifting the culture.

Structure & Process

Light Structures Organizations need light structures—such as design loops, rapid prototyping and short-cycle innovation opportunities—that are deliberately designed to support and allow for a culture of ongoing innovation.

Reinforcing Process Organizations need clear, consistent processes for how innovation is to be promoted, supported and rewarded. These processes must continually reinforce its commitment to innovation—even when those efforts do not always lead to clear “wins.”

Habit With structures and processes in place, team members can begin to develop “habits of mind”—the cadence and routines of regularized innovation.

Capacity

Mindset Everyone on the team must develop a tolerance for risk, comfort with the fear of failure and a “growth mindset.”

Knowledge & Skills Team members at every level of the organization must develop the knowledge and skill competencies to be effective innovators.

Ability to Execute Without the essential capacity to execute, the impact(s) from innovation will be limited and temporary. Successful innovation cultures often involve “distributed leadership,” where all team members, regardless of organizational level, have power to act in service of the project’s success and they do so.

Support Individuals and teams need continual training, support and opportunities to practice their pursuit of new approaches.

Policy Environment

Orientation University and community college environments can be preventive (constrains innovation), permissive (allows, but doesn’t support) or enabling (actively promotes, supports and rewards risk-taking). Indeed a single institution can exhibit all three orientations depending on the department or degree program. In doing the self-assessment, be sure to be clear about the unit of analysis. If the institution exhibits two or three of these orientations simultaneously, consider which one is more prevalent and when.

Leverage Enablers & Remove Barriers Leaders should actively seek to create more policies that promote and reward the innovative behaviors you seek while also stopping the policies that inhibit innovation.

Aligned Incentives Wherever possible, system-level incentives should be aligned to the outcomes you seek.

Learning Agenda

Testable Hypotheses Leaders should be explicit about what tangible problems or barriers innovation will help overcome and the needs that will be better met and served with those accomplishments.

Rapid Prototyping Trying out the idea on a targeted, small group to allow for nimble, fast feedback, or piloting a small-scale version of the full concept for a short period of time will allow you to get quick, actionable feedback and move innovation forward.

Measuring Progress Metrics are necessary to track progress. You must have a clear sense of your intended outcomes and what you’re aiming at, and because innovations are, by definition, different from the old processes and products, the performance indicators will likely need to be new too.

Managing Change Effective and sustainable innovation culture typically does not emerge by itself; it needs to be intentionally pursued and managed over time through a focus on clear metrics and continuous improvement.

Innovation Scorecard

As you explore this tool, use this scorecard to self-assess where you are on the path toward building and sustaining a culture of innovation.



entering emerging adapting transforming

Leadership

Vision	1	2	3	4
Purpose	1	2	3	4
Permission	1	2	3	4
Routine	1	2	3	4
Urgency	1	2	3	4
Trade-offs	1	2	3	4
Humility	1	2	3	4

Total Leadership

○ + ○ + ○ + ○ / 4 = ○

Communication

Clarity	1	2	3	4
Framing	1	2	3	4
Champion	1	2	3	4
Engagement	1	2	3	4
Transparency	1	2	3	4
Frequency	1	2	3	4

Total Communication

○ + ○ + ○ + ○ / 4 = ○

Resource Allocation

Team	1	2	3	4
Time	1	2	3	4
Dollars	1	2	3	4

Total Resource Allocation

○ + ○ + ○ / 3 = ○

Innovation Scorecard



entering emerging adapting transforming

Structure & Process

Light Structures

Reinforcing Process

Habit

**Total
Structure &
Process**

/3 =

Capacity

Mindset

Knowledge & Skills

Ability to Execute

Support

**Total
Capacity**

+ + + /4 =

Policy Environment

Orientation

Leverage Enablers & Remove Barriers

Aligned Incentives

**Total
Policy
Environment**

+ + + /3 =

Learning Agenda

Testable Hypotheses

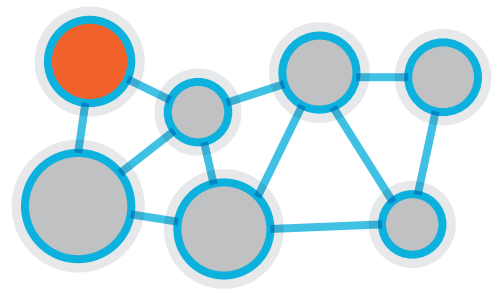
Rapid Prototyping

Measuring Progress

Managing Change

**Total
Learning
Agenda**

+ + + /4 =



Leadership

vision · purpose · permission · routine · urgency · trade-offs · humility

Vision

You must first recognize and define the problem(s) to be solved and the need to innovate toward radically better solutions for students and families.

entering



Vision is incomplete and/or disconnected from innovation. Organization's vision is similar to most other institutions, speaking in a relatively typical way to hopes for student success or other institutional goals and does not recognize the connection between innovation and achieving that vision.

emerging



An innovation-focused vision is emerging. The connection between recognized needs and problems to solve is loosely aligned to and integrated with the organization's broader values and goals. There is acknowledgement, though, and recognition that innovation can play a role in attaining these goals.

adapting



The vision clearly recognizes the needs and challenges facing both the institution and its students, and leadership has aligned and integrated that vision with the organization's values and goals. The role of innovation in supporting the vision is explicit.

transforming



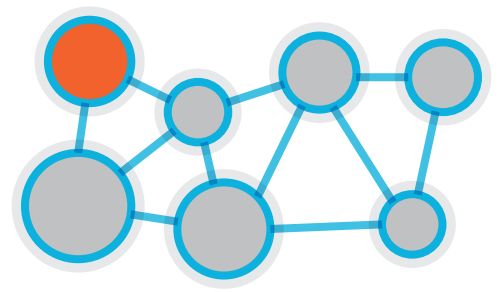
A focus on innovation drives the vision, which is explicitly linked to students' needs. A majority of participants at all levels of the organization can articulate the vision and innovation's role within it. The institution supports innovation both by encouraging experimentation and by removing obstacles.



Now engaged in its second cohort, the [Change and Innovation Lab](#) launched by the [American Council on Education \(ACE\)](#) with support from the Lumina Foundation, brings together teams of senior leaders from colleges and universities working with education design lab [2Revolutions](#) to transform retention and degree attainment for their first-generation and nontraditional students. The lab's vision is centered on an 18-month process that helps these higher education institutions design and implement concrete steps to meet their goals toward helping these learners. The process culminates with a two-day event in which the cohorts reconvene to share their visions and refined prototypes with experts and national funders.



"What is the future of the on-campus experience in the age of online learning?" That's the question [Stanford2025](#) set out to explore with students, faculty and community members. How could you recreate an exercise like this to build your vision for the future? [Watch this video](#) to peek inside the Stanford experience.



Leadership

vision . purpose . permission . routine . urgency . trade-offs . humility

Permission

The clear, explicit directive to others on the team to try new approaches and embrace the learning that comes with failure. To be meaningful, permission has to be accompanied by rewards for taking risks and bringing forth new learning, but it also requires that team members are given the freedom to fail as they design and test new ideas and ways of thinking.

entering



Innovation is not discussed, encouraged or celebrated.

New approaches often suffer critique, with no safe space to share challenges or learn from these early experiences.

Those willing to innovate attempt new approaches at their own risk and suffer the consequences of failure.

emerging



Innovation is permitted in pockets, but not encouraged or celebrated.

New approaches are maintained and talked about by individuals or small groups, but not spread across the organization.

Innovators still feel weary and nervous of “failure,” but there’s a growing space within the organization to talk about these experiences and learn from them.

adapting



Innovation is encouraged widely across the organization.

New forums are established between pockets of innovators to share ideas. Designated time and space is allocated towards these conversations.

“Failed” experiments may carry some stigma, but by and large are viewed as lessons to learn from rather than failures alone.

transforming

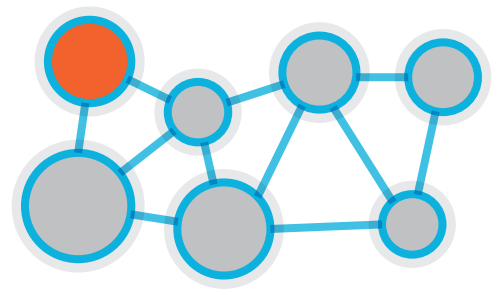


Innovation is explicitly encouraged, celebrated and studied across the organization. All members of the organization feel empowered to design and try new approaches.

Attempts and “failures” are routinely shared and openly discussed across the organization. They are not only tolerated, but are recognized as a vital part of the innovation process. Participation in innovative initiatives is rewarded in formal processes of the institution like tenure and promotion.



In 2014, East Carolina University’s (ECU) education department had seen a 14% drop in enrollment numbers for principal leadership degrees, despite North Carolina districts having a huge need for talented graduates. The department decided to try a new pathway— provide a MOOC, a free and open online course for credit, for 100 teacher-leaders across the state who were interested in exploring whether a being a principal was the right step for them. The course, designed by professors and leaders in the education department, offered synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities with experts; provided a virtual session with a North Carolina principal of the year; and gave participants the chance to “test-drive” the experience of a principal. “Higher ed is facing a new problem, it is called accountability,” says Art Rouse, chair of the department of educational leadership at ECU. “We’ve got to think differently if we want to stay innovative and connected to the customer.” Since the launch of the MOOC, the university has had 100% spike in pre-qualified candidates to its graduate programs for 2015.



Leadership

vision . purpose . permission . routine . urgency . trade-offs . humility

Routine

Because it's unfamiliar, team members often need to develop "habits of mind" (i.e., rhythm, schedule) to enable innovation. Setting a cycle or schedule for your efforts helps make innovation practices routine and embeds into the culture quickly.

entering



Little or no routine exists; innovation is random and sporadic, if it happens at all.

emerging



Pockets of individuals and teams are beginning to develop innovation routines, usually connected to the timetable of whatever they are currently focused on, but there is not a wider understanding of the benefits of establishing routine around innovation beyond the project.

adapting



Teams are disciplined about their project's timetable and they are in the habit of sharing and iterating routinely. There is also a sense of appreciation emerging overall about the benefits of routine sharing with colleagues across the organization to enable collaboration and learning.

transforming



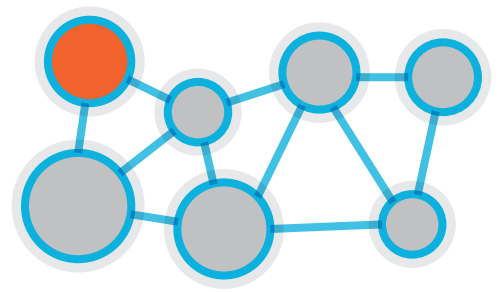
Teams expect to innovate continually and have developed clear, shared routines for doing so, which are continually iterated upon and improved, as needed. Collaboration and learning are anticipated and expected at regular intervals.



Tools for making time for innovation.



In 2014, the [Competency Based Education Network \(C-BEN\)](#) was launched as an initial cohort of 18 college and university institutions and two public systems serving 42 campuses. The network of higher education organizations participate in research and development for what it takes to advance high-quality competency education to support and serve students from all backgrounds—and help answer questions as to its effectiveness and scale. “Experimental sites will allow institutions and the federal government to engage in responsible innovation and learn which types of programs work best for improving student outcomes,” said Laurie Dodge, co-chairman of C-BEN and vice chancellor of institutional assessment and planning for Brandman University, in a press release about the newly launched network. We’re eager to track its progress.



Leadership

vision . purpose . permission . routine . urgency . trade-offs . humility

Urgency

If you are to make tangible progress, you must approach the work with an incredible sense of urgency—set aggressive milestones and deadlines.

entering



Innovation is viewed as an “add-on” and is not prioritized by leadership.

emerging



Innovation is prioritized in rhetoric, but not in actions.

adapting



Leaders prioritize innovation, recognize it can come from anywhere inside or outside the organization and follow words with tangible actions.

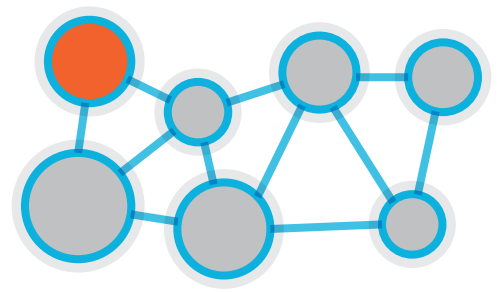
transforming



Leaders not only explicitly prioritize innovation, but they establish clear expectations and timelines as the basis for making organizational progress, which include rapid prototyping as a part of those expectations.

Notes

What would make your team or organization see innovation as an urgent activity? Success of competitive institutions? Recognition of innovation from outsiders? Brainstorm five tangible ways you can build urgency for innovation in your organization.



Leadership

vision . purpose . permission . routine . urgency . trade-offs . humility

Trade-offs

Innovation often forces hard choices, especially around quality—our first efforts aren't always the best and this is a real and valid concern in higher ed. Understanding up front what your institution's limits are around core values is important, as the choices often put them in competition with each other. Prepare to make hard choices and understand that these choices may come at the expense of something else that is deeply valued.

entering



Lack of awareness or acknowledgement of the trade-offs and choices needed to invest time and resources in innovation, or a default assumption that innovation is less important than all other competing values.

emerging



Leaders acknowledge that innovation might require difficult trade-offs, but it is given low priority and minimal resources.

adapting



Innovation is considered important and leadership is willing to make trade-offs, and has already begun to do so, in order to support innovation.

transforming



Innovation is frequently prioritized in decision-making because it is a strong organizational value. Choices are transparently made and communicated across the organization—explicitly sharing the rationale for the trade-offs that make ongoing innovation possible.

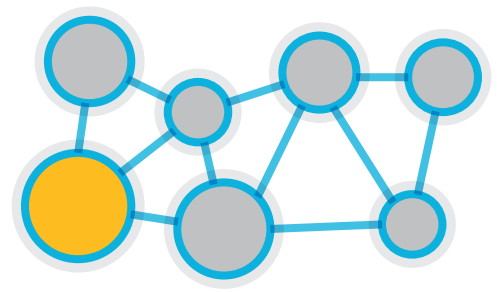


Pat Sellers, vice president of strategic partnerships at [Davidson College](#), understands that in all decisions and partnerships there comes trade-offs. In his position at the college, Sellers leads Davidson Next, an initiative that aims to supplement AP instruction with online modules designed for in-class, blended instruction. To do this work, Davidson is partnering with a slew of organizations, including the Arnold Foundation, the College Board, edX, 2Revolutions and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system.

“With all of these partners, trade offs on politics, funding, design, and culture are a critical component of the choices we make,” says Sellers. “To borrow from Stephen Covey’s work, though, it is all about seeking to understand first, before asking to be understood. In practice that means making sure we have a practice of listening closely and open communication across all partners, with an end-goal of co-creating a vision of what innovation look like in this new space.”



Explore decision-making tools to help with this work, such as brainstorming, cause and effect and SMART matrices, from the American Society for Quality (ASQ).



Communication clarity · framing · champion · engagement · transparency · frequency

Clarity

Leaders should strive to establish clear definitions, objectives and desired outcomes for innovation, so the targets are evident to all team members.

entering



Clear, shared definitions, objectives and outcomes for innovation do not yet exist, and there is little to no recognition of the need for these definitions.

emerging



The organization is in the process of trying to understand and develop early definitions, including surveying those adopted by other organizations.

adapting



Initial definitions have been established and communicated across the organization, but there is room for growth in the definitions' use.

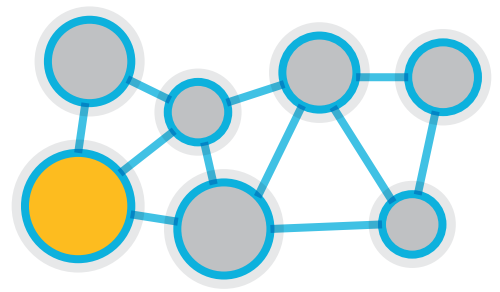
transforming



All leaders, teams and individuals refer to shared definitions, objectives and outcomes. Strategies are in place to monitor adherence to shared definitions, such as consistent use in conversation and publications, while also explicitly supporting efforts to modify definitions over time based on new learning.



Richland College of the Dallas County Community College System, a National Malcolm Baldrige Award Winner, uses other industries as models of what they'd like to achieve amidst their own organization and culture. This includes: sustainable architecture, digital dashboards for decision-making, a "Starbucks culture" at every student community site, diversity in management and a Southwest Airline-like method for hiring and supporting employees. By providing clarity on what they'd like to emulate in other sectors, the college is better able to articulate the experience they are working to create for their customers—the students.



Communication clarity · framing · champion · engagement · transparency · frequency

Framing

Effective communication is not just explaining and describing the goals of innovation, but also framing the need for it and how it builds on the experiments and work of the past.

entering



Because the role of innovation within the organization is not yet explicitly valued by the organization, little or no effort is invested in framing innovation's role in helping the organization meet needs and solve problems.

emerging



Some individual leaders are beginning to communicate the need for, and role of, innovation, but these conversations are sporadic, inconsistent and not part of an aligned communications strategy.

adapting



Organizational leaders are communicating the need for, and role of, innovation with increasing clarity and consistency.

transforming



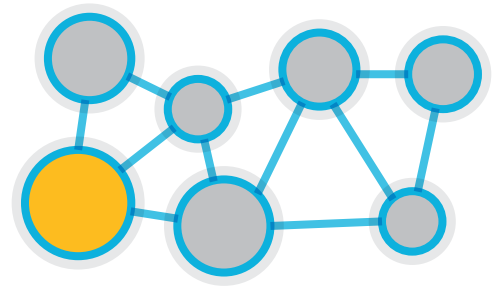
The role of innovation within the organizational life cycle is framed in consistent and compelling ways through the lens of the organization's past, present and future. Deep understanding exists across all stakeholders of where and how "innovation" fits within the organizational narrative.



At Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina, departments and services came together for a movie event with a twist. Each group within the college chose a movie to frame their mission, and illustrate their role on campus and how they serve students. The event was called "Big Picture," attended by students and faculty, and is one avenue the community college is working to bridge the gap between departments and provide a holistic approach to education and communicating the college's work.



In Georgia, the University System is crowd-sourcing the architecture for the future of higher education learning in a MOOC called "Invent the Beyond," facilitated by university faculty. The purpose of the course? Celebrate and design what education can and should look like in 2030 while taking into consideration the various stakeholders: students, institutions and faculty. Explore the course and see how it frames your view of the future of higher ed.



Communication

clarity · framing · champion · engagement · transparency · frequency



Champion

It is important to advocate—both for specific innovations and for the environment that will make individuals and groups feel comfortable trying new things, publicly and privately.

entering



Organizational leaders are not advocating for the role of innovation, and they respond to the suggestions of potential innovators in ways that curb additional risk-taking from others.

emerging



Some individual organizational leaders explicitly champion the role of innovation and risk-taking, but this is not an organizational value and tends to be driven by individual preferences.

adapting



Multiple leaders across the organization are collaborating to create innovation-friendly environments, with increasing alignment and consistency across the organization.

Leaders are beginning to identify and engage with their colleagues, championing the work they are doing.

transforming



Leaders at multiple levels of the organization are held accountable for creating environments that promote innovation, risk-taking and new approaches.

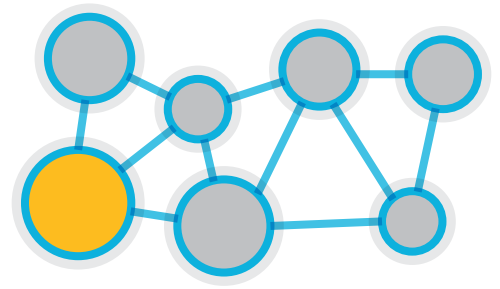
Leaders are consistently championing innovation with all key internal and external stakeholders.



Watch how Georgia State University champions its method for using a personalized model of advisory and data to boost graduation rates.



The leaders at [Educate Texas](#), a public-private partnership focused on improving public education, understand well the importance of championing new innovations. One example is its work to create a robust early college movement, aimed at saving young people and families money on college tuition and providing high return on investment. “We want to help build the work force of the future, and that means kids who have college skills, work skills and the ability to be good citizens,” says President John Fitzpatrick.



Communication clarity . framing . champion . engagement . transparency . frequency

Engagement

You should engage key stakeholders as often and authentically as possible in the process, through methods like active listening and two-way dialogue. There are ways to structure stakeholder engagement so that it promotes and helps the innovation process without becoming unmanageable. Stakeholders generate priceless insights that can't be secured anywhere else.

entering



Early internal innovators feel isolated, and external innovators are excluded almost entirely from discussions.

emerging



Organizational leadership recognizes and is taking steps to include ever-wider rings of internal organizational stakeholders in the conversation around innovation. Some efforts to include key external stakeholders are taking hold.

adapting



Internal innovators of the organization feel comfortable initiating and engaging others in the conversation about change and innovation. Efforts to engage external partners in two-way dialogue and active listening are becoming more explicit, robust and organized.

transforming



Current and potential innovators—both within and outside the organization—feel valued, listened to and are consistently included in the conversations and work. Everyone in the organization knows that initiating conversations around innovation is acceptable and welcome.



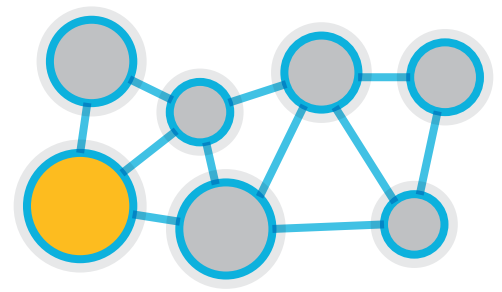
Winston-Salem State

Chancellor Elwood Robinson is a “Social Media Chancellor” — from selfies with student bodies, to tagging accomplishments, to promoting alumni, his twitter feed is worth a follow.

“Sure social media has to be managed, but you can't meet students where they are unless you go to where they share, collaborate, and promote things that are important to them in their lives. Social media allows me to get to know them, and for them to engage with their Chancellor. Not to mention they provide me with a lot of great ideas that help our university succeed”



Explore IDEO's [compilation of digital tools for design research](#) to explore a range of methods for engaging your community around change—and figuring out where your communication is not working as effectively.



Communication

clarity · framing · champion · engagement · transparency · frequency

Transparency

By sharing lessons honestly—even when they arise from failures—you model the behavior(s) you want the system to promote, reward and value.

entering



Stories of lessons learned remain private. No space exists for these conversations and any attempts by innovators regarded as mistakes might be ignored, covered up or even penalized. Given the environment, there is a lack of willingness to share across team members or openly with other stakeholders.

emerging



Some (but not all) leaders embrace a transparent approach to learning and believe failure is an inherent component of learning. However, because of the inconsistency in viewpoints, many within the organization may be confused about when and whether transparency is, in fact, valued. And although intention to share might exist, it's often inconsistent and in one-off instances or small groups.

adapting



Leaders embrace transparent learning with increasing consistency. The value of, and desire to move toward, increasing transparency is communicated across the organization and increasingly with external stakeholders.

transforming



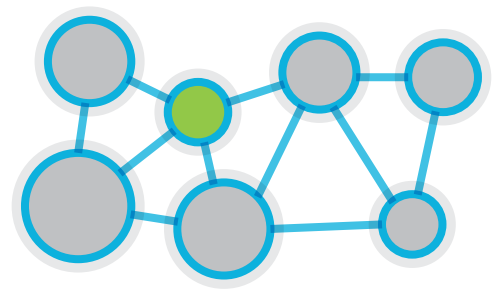
The organization not only explicitly values transparency around lessons learned, but it has systems in place to regularly communicate lessons learned. What could be considered failures and “mistakes” are viewed as building blocks for addressing future needs. There is recognition, both within and outside the organization, for the messiness of innovation and a willingness to keep talking about it.



All industries wrestle with failure and how to approach and share it broadly. [Watch this TED talk](#) by physician Brian Goldman on “medicine’s culture of denial” and its impact.



“The financial crisis is a stark reminder that transparency and disclosure are essential in today’s marketplace.”
- United States Senator Jack Reed



Resource Allocation team . time . dollars



Team

Investing in your team’s capacity to take on and execute innovation work is critical to success —e.g. providing out-of-the-box professional development opportunities or helping them to cultivate and participate in peer networks.

entering



Little or no investment is made in internal organizational capacity to innovate.

emerging



Some investment in leadership capacity to support innovation is made, but it is inconsistent, episodic and not followed by adequate investment in team capacity.

adapting



Investment is made by the organization to support capacity for innovation at certain levels or departments more consistently.

transforming



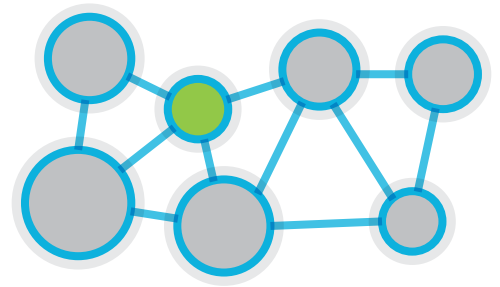
The organization consistently invests in its capacity to innovate and communicates this value across the organization as a way to signal its importance. Leaders across the organization are held formally accountable to develop their own teams’ capacity to innovate.

Notes

What roles does your organization need to support innovation? Is this consistent with how resources are allocated?



Cambridge College President Deborah Jackson offers financial incentives to her faculty teams to encourage the design of new models for business, education and organizational change at the college. Winning prototypes are pitched to the executive team and the best of the bunch are provided \$1,500 to further develop their prototypes to improve the college’s offerings. “To create a culture of innovation, it does require vision, skills, resources and a plan,” says Jackson, “but I think you have to also incentivize people to act. By funding our prototype cycles, our faculty know we are serious about prototyping tomorrow.”



Resource Allocation

team • time • dollars

Dollars

It is essential that organizations create or set aside dedicated funds to invest in the development and implementation of innovation. In a perennially resource-constrained environment, where and how an organization spends scarce resources demonstrates its commitment to shifting the culture.

entering



Even if some rhetoric around innovation exists, little or no resources are provided to support increased organizational capacity to innovate.

emerging



Some initial resources to support innovation are invested, usually in connection with a particular project, but are not followed by consistent or large enough investment to maintain a focus on innovation.

adapting



A commitment to support an innovation agenda receives a sufficiently large and consistent investment apart from a particular project.

transforming



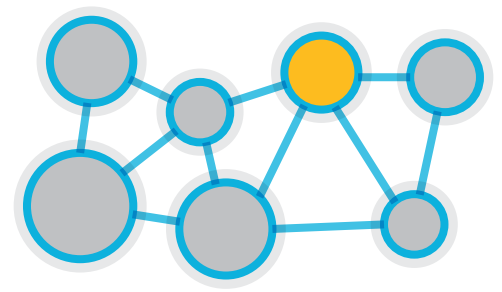
Internal and external investment in an innovation agenda increases over time. Required trade-offs to protect resources for innovation are understood and clearly communicated across the organization.



“Kansas State University’s **Innovation Campus in Olathe** (greater Kansas City) was launched by funding from a county sales tax increase,” says Prema Arasu, CEO and vice provost. “With a mandate for regional growth and economic development, we are working closely with business, government and community to forge new integrated approaches in learning and discovery. Investing in a design-thinker in residence is one of many ways that we are approaching educational innovation.”



“Each year we dedicate priority resources to our campus-wide leadership academy,” says Chancellor Nicholas Zeppos at **Vanderbilt University**. “I love seeing the head of thoracic surgery working on a university challenge with our head of maintenance. The more you invest in leadership across your teams, the more great solutions you gain to common problems.”



Structure & Process

light structures . reinforcing process . habit

Light Structures

Organizations need light structures—such as design loops, rapid prototyping and short-cycle innovation opportunities—that are deliberately designed to support and allow for a culture of ongoing innovation.

entering



No organizational structures—either formal or informal—exist to support innovation.

emerging



Some informal organizational structures are emerging to support early innovators (e.g., communication, habits and routines).

No formal organizational structures exist.

adapting



More robust informal structures have informed the development and implementation of formalized organizational structures to support innovation. However, these formal structures may not yet be well organized or consistently communicated across the organization.

transforming

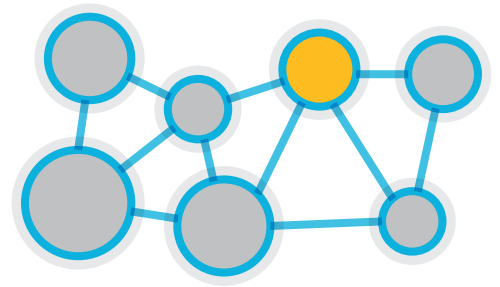


Informal structures continue to emerge and inform ongoing modifications to formal organizational structures.

Formal organizational structures have been designed, implemented and communicated consistently across the organization to support innovation over time.



There are ranges of light structures your organization can use to promote and cultivate innovation. One is lean innovation, which as [Harvard Business Review](#) author [Tom Agan](#) writes, “Lean innovation embraces a philosophy of not letting perfection get in the way of progress. It leverages the Pareto principle that 20% of a product’s features (what’s distilled down into the minimal viable product) will most likely deliver 80% of the benefits sought by customers.” Adopting a structure of lean innovation that allows for quick decision-making, prototyping and testing will be a huge shift if you’ve typically made choices after countless hours spent in meetings. The true magic of a lean structure lies in the learning experience it provides, continues Agan, so considering how to make that learning explicit will be a critical input.



Structure & Process

light structures . reinforcing process . habit

Reinforcing Process

Organizations need clear, consistent processes for how innovation is to be promoted, supported and rewarded. These processes must continually reinforce its commitment to innovation—even when those efforts do not always lead to clear “wins.”

entering



No organizational processes exist to support innovation.

emerging



Some informal organizational processes are emerging to support early innovators, but they are not clear or consistent across the organization.

adapting



Some leaders and teams have established formal processes to promote and reward risk-taking, but they are not organization-wide.

transforming



The organization has established agreed-upon processes to promote, support and reward innovation, which are communicated clearly and consistently across the organization.

Organizational leaders at all levels are accountable for adhering to these processes.



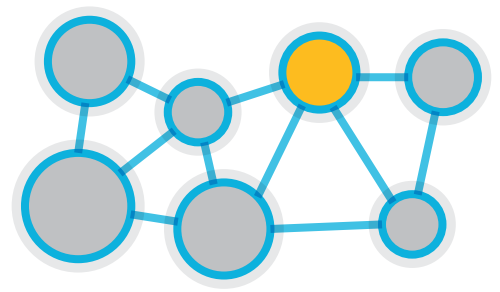
For institutions where faculty are assuming new or different roles, the tenure process should reflect on not only their skill in the new roles, but their willingness to embrace them, learn openly and continuously improve.



High performing higher education organizations often turn to the [American Society for Quality's](#) library for process tools.



[Wake Tech Community College](#) in Raleigh, North Carolina implemented a new process to harness the energy and innovations of faculty-led initiatives. Called [SAIL](#), for “Succeed, Achieve, Improve, and Learn,” the college provides a structured, competitive RFP process that invites employees to collaborate on solutions for the college’s most difficult challenges related to student learning and achievement. Through project support and training, SAIL fosters employee engagement and confidence in developing comprehensive proposals and implementation plans targeted at identified college priorities. It includes rigorous peer and expert review to assure quality, feasibility, and sustainability. In its first implementation, SAIL guided the competitive selection of Wake Tech’s Quality Enhancement Plan, and remaining finalists are being matched with internal and external grants.



Structure & Process

light structures . reinforcing process . habit

Habit

With structures and processes in place, team members can begin to develop “habits of mind” — the cadence and routines of regularized innovation.

entering



No habits, patterns or routines exist on an organizational level.

emerging



Individual leaders and teams are beginning to develop the routines of regularized innovation.

adapting



Organizational leadership explicitly values the creation and maintenance of needed habits to support innovation, but has not yet implemented consistent strategies to enable.

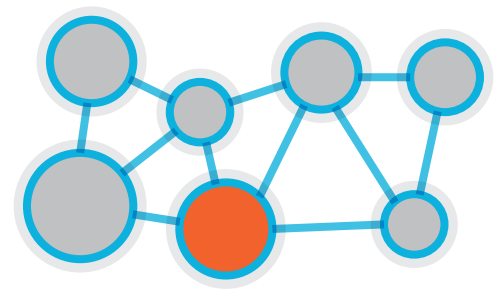
transforming



Organizational leaders have explicitly endorsed specific strategies to promote desired habits/routines, while simultaneously encouraging the ongoing development of new methods to support a robust innovation culture.



To read more on creativity and habit, [explore this piece from Maria Popova's *Brain Pickings*](#) which tackles how to “hone your creative routine and master the pace of productivity” by documenting how many artists, writers, inventors and philosophers have done just that.



Capacity mindset . knowledge & skills . ability to execute . support

Mindset

Everyone on the team must develop a tolerance for risk, comfort with the fear of failure and a “growth mindset.”

entering



Even if they talk about “innovation,” key leaders are unwilling to take risks. This, in turn, discourages team members from embracing increased risk and a growth mindset.

emerging



Individual leaders and team members demonstrate a growth mindset and tolerance for risk, but this is not yet an explicit organizational value.

adapting



The organization explicitly values a growth mindset and willingness to take risks, and regularly celebrates individuals and teams who set a good example for others.

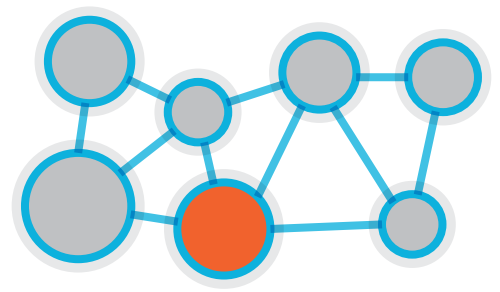
transforming



Senior organizational leaders recognize the importance of a growth mindset, and regularly take public risks in pursuit of bold outcomes. This willingness to take risks comes to be recognized and celebrated as a cultural trait of the organization.



Check out Mindset Works, co-founded by Carol Dweck Ph.D., for open, free tools and information on building a growth mindset.



Capacity mindset . knowledge & skills . ability to execute . support



Knowledge & Skills

Team members at every level of the organization must develop the knowledge and skill competencies to be effective innovators.

entering



There is little or no awareness of the range of new knowledge and skills that are needed to support innovation over time.

emerging



The organization recognizes the need to develop new knowledge and skills to support innovation and is doing so in isolated cases, but has not yet developed an organized strategy to enable ongoing growth of all employees.

adapting



The organization has developed and communicated clear definitions of the knowledge and skill competencies individuals and teams need to support innovation.

Explicit strategies to develop these knowledge and skill competencies are in the process of being developed and implemented.

transforming



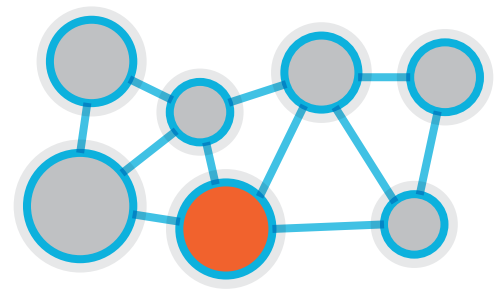
As a result of explicit strategies, professionals across the organization demonstrate increased awareness and mastery of the knowledge and skill competencies needed to support innovation over time.

Notes

How are you building knowledge and skill competencies in your team?



Girl Develop It is a non-profit organization that exists to provide affordable and accessible programs to women who want to learn web and software development through mentorship and hands-on instruction. By linking higher ed succession planning to more females equipped with coding skills, an increase in the IHE's talent pipeline is intentional and also diverse.



Capacity mindset . knowledge & skills . ability to execute . support

Ability to Execute

Without the essential capacity to execute, the impact(s) from innovation will be limited and temporary. Successful innovation cultures often involve “distributed leadership,” where all team members, regardless of organizational level, have power to act in service of the project’s success and they do so.

entering



The organization has limited capacity to execute, and little recognition of the essential link between execution and long-term effectiveness.

emerging



The organization values and is able to attract and retain leaders with the ability to execute against an innovation agenda or has begun pairing or mentoring those who have executed successfully in the past with innovation-minded people.

However, effectiveness results largely from individual strengths, rather than from an organizational commitment to developing needed knowledge/skill competencies to support innovation.

adapting



The organization deliberately attracts and retains innovation-oriented leaders with capacity to execute and cultivates partnerships of top execute-skilled team members with innovate-skilled team members. (Ideally, it’s important to seek leaders who can live in the “both/and” spaces—who can execute, innovate and who want to partner with others who have strengths in each arena.) Explicit organizational strategies are in place to continually enhance the developing skills of leaders.

transforming

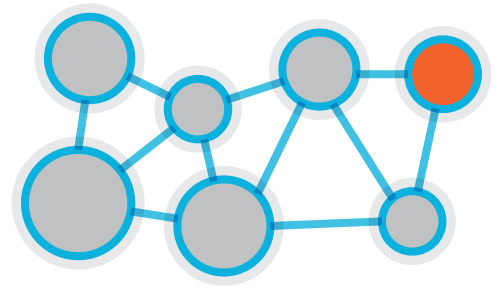


Senior organizational and team leaders recognize that innovation is part of their job and live in that “both/and” space.

Individuals who demonstrate effectiveness enjoy increased opportunity within the organization, while those with limited effectiveness are provided support and coaching until other measures are needed, such as action planning.



Use a Force Field analysis to identify the drivers that help you execute effectively and those that get in your way.



Policy Environment

orientation · leverage enablers & remove barriers · aligned incentives

Orientation

University and community college environments can be preventive (constrains innovation), permissive (allows, but doesn't support) or enabling (actively promotes, supports and rewards risk-taking). Indeed a single institution can exhibit all three orientations depending on the department or degree program. In doing the self-assessment, be sure to be clear about the unit of analysis. If the institution exhibits two or three of these orientations simultaneously, consider which one is more prevalent and when.

entering



Existing policy environment is preventive. Few, if any, avenues to support innovation exist.

emerging



Existing policy environment is transitioning from preventive to permissive, but the organization is constrained by its own culture and by perceptions of circumstances outside the institution (e.g. accreditors) as being hostile to innovation. Some helpful avenues exist to support innovation (e.g., innovation "zones"), but they are isolated and not consistently available for all system participants either internally or externally. Formal policy infrastructure remains misaligned.

adapting



Existing policy environment is transitioning from permissive to enabling. The organization is building on targeted examples of innovation to develop system-wide policies, programs and explicit incentives to promote and reward innovation. The organization is working collaboratively with outside stakeholders to transform the external environment and correct system misalignment.

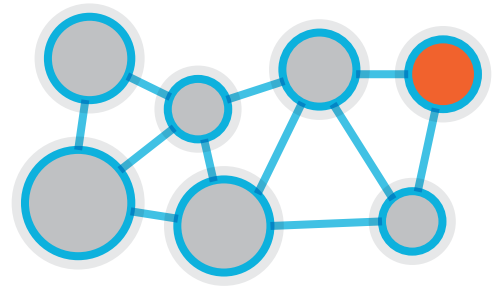
transforming



Policy environment is explicitly enabling; incentive structures are vertically and horizontally aligned; and leaders are regularly pushing to develop new formal and informal vehicles to advance the role of innovation in transforming outcomes for students. The organization is leading and shaping the conversation with external stakeholders and succeeding in creating new standards, measures and opportunities for innovation-related work.



University of Wisconsin is flipping traditional 'college' policy and practice on its head to better meet the new learner, especially working adults who want to receive a college degree, but don't have the time or flexibility in their schedules for a full course load. The self-paced competency-based degree and certificate program gives students the options to "show what they already know" through assessments; begin learning where they need; and participate as they can; and receive personalized support. These changes certainly require a shift in mindset, approach and policy—and the hallmark innovation is the tiered pricing available for students, plus the option for learners to receive financial aid for assessments and credentials.



Policy Environment

orientation . leverage enablers & remove barriers . aligned incentives

Leverage Enablers & Remove Barriers

Leaders should actively seek to create more policies that promote and reward the innovative behaviors you seek while also stopping the policies that inhibit innovation.

entering



Organization and system leaders are not aware of what policy changes or flexibilities could be made to advance innovation.

emerging



Leaders are aware of, but unwilling or unable to facilitate, new policies that would enable increased innovation.

adapting



Leaders are aware of, and are actively pursuing, new policies or flexibilities that would advance system-wide innovation.

transforming

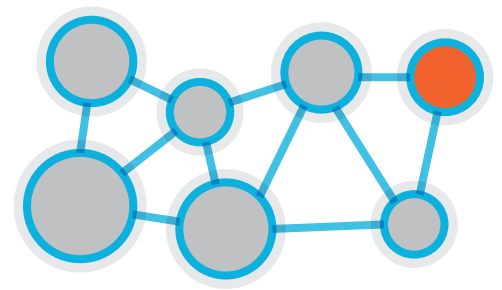


Leaders have successfully removed barriers to innovation, either internally, externally or both, and are now executing against a clear, multi-year innovation policy agenda, with intent to inform the next iteration of policy productively with data and experiential learning.



“The economic urgency around higher education is undeniable: the price of tuition has soared; student loan debt now exceeds \$1 trillion and is greater than credit card debt; the dollars available from government sources for colleges are expected to shrink in the years to come; and the costs for traditional institutions to stay competitive continue to rise. At the same time, more education does not necessarily lead to better outcomes. Employers are demanding more academic credentials for every kind of job yet are at the same time increasingly vocal about their dissatisfaction with the variance in quality of degree holders. The signaling effect of a college degree appears to be an imprecise encapsulation of one’s skills for the knowledge economy of the times. McKinsey analysts estimate that the number of skillsets needed in the workforce has increased rapidly from 178 in September 2009 to 924 in June 2012.”

- Michelle Weise, *Hire Education: Mastery, Modularization, and the Workforce Revolution*, Clayton Christensen Institute



Policy Environment

orientation · leverage enablers & remove barriers · aligned incentives

Aligned Incentives

Wherever possible, system-level incentives should be aligned to the outcomes you seek.

entering



Incentive structures are significantly misaligned, causing innovation efforts to work at cross-purposes with the legitimate outcomes of the current system. Leaders remain largely unaware of this misalignment.

emerging



Incentive structures are still largely misaligned, but leaders recognize this and are in the process of developing solutions to address it.

adapting



Organization and system leaders are making steady progress at achieving more consistent and explicit alignment among incentive structures in ways that promote and reward innovation and risk-taking and are making strides in aligning with external stakeholders as well.

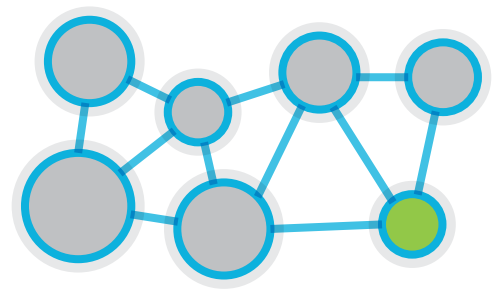
transforming



All formal and informal incentive structures are vertically aligned, and explicitly communicated to all stakeholders, in ways that support the role of innovation in achieving breakthrough results for students. The institution and outside stakeholders are in frequent, open and productive communication to support mutually-serving goals around innovation and student success.

Notes

Can you identify examples of misaligned incentives that hinder your innovation efforts?



Learning Agenda testable hypotheses · rapid prototyping · measuring progress · managing change

Testable Hypotheses

Leaders should be explicit about what tangible problems or barriers innovation will help overcome and the needs that will be better met and served with those accomplishments.

entering



The notion of approaching an innovation agenda as a series of experiments with testable hypotheses is largely unfamiliar.

emerging



Leaders and teams are beginning to view innovation less as a product and more as a continual process, with a few targeted experiments designed to test specific ideas over time.

adapting



Leaders and teams understand that innovation is an ongoing process with a series of opportunities to try new approaches and use data as actionable evidence to determine what should be continued, stopped and/or scaled.

transforming



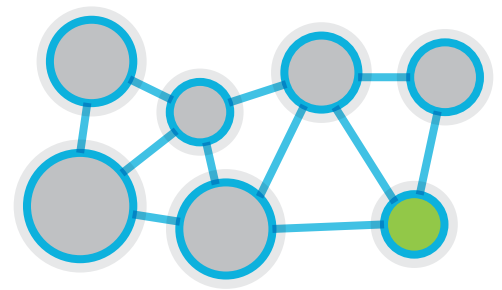
Leaders and teams have a shared understanding about the relationship between innovation and time-bound programmatic experiments with testable hypotheses. All experiments are designed to yield actionable data not only on the project at hand, but on the overall institutional strategy for innovation. The portfolio of various innovations and experiments are aligned to accelerate organizational learning in ways that transcend any one innovation.



Frog Design works with large-scale user experience (UX) and convergent collaborations with organizations like Microsoft and Disney to create new software applications, mobile products and connected experiences that blur the lines between physical and digital, and shape an era of ubiquitous computing. Long-term partnerships with organizations like GE and Intel continue to raise the bar for enterprise, education, and industrial experiences—see some of their tools [here](#) to test hypothesis in their work.



Utah State University is experimenting with a new program to give students more opportunities for self-discovery and actualization. The program allows students to build a personal web of support based on need, issue or circumstance, and gives students the opportunity to solve attainment challenges for themselves via prototyping. What problems are you trying to solve?



Learning Agenda testable hypotheses · measuring progress · managing change

Managing Change

Effective and sustainable innovation culture typically does not emerge by itself; it needs to be intentionally pursued and managed over time through a focus on clear metrics and continuous improvement.

entering



There is no evidence of an explicit organizational change management strategy that includes the role of innovation or building culture of innovation. Even those individuals in the organization who typically handle change management and excel, may not be well-versed in the intersection of their expertise and innovation.

emerging



There is recognition of the need to actively manage the organizational change process, and some recognition of the potential for innovation to play an important role within the change process.

adapting



There is an explicit and clearly communicated organizational change process that highlights continual innovation as a core element.

transforming



A comprehensive organizational change management strategy that integrates the role of innovation exists and is managed against consistently and at all levels of the organization. There likewise is recognition of the ways innovation creates challenges for an organization, and an appreciation for how well-thought out change management plans can support innovation.



As you think about your own change management process, explore Knoster's [model of managing complex change](#), which includes considering the variables of vision, consensus, skills, incentives, resources and action plans.



Explore [Radical Ideas for Reinventing College](#) to see how Stanford d.School reimagines the future of learning for higher education models by involving designers in the change process.

Suggested Action Steps

We're always interested in conversation on these topics; here are a few suggestions for moving innovation forward at your institution after using this assessment tool:

Analyze Results

Depending on how the self-assessment tool was used (i.e., individually, in small or large groups, across the organization), a great first step is to analyze and discuss your results. If multiple individuals completed the assessment, you'll want to aggregate this data—which can be “rolled up” to align with relevant teams within the organization, as well as the full organization (if applicable). Analysis can be as limited to reviewing the full results and seeing what jumps out, or engaging in more sophisticated data analysis to identify key themes, trends or surprises.

Discuss with Colleagues

The opportunity to engage in discussion of self-assessment results with colleagues is often one of the most powerful parts of the process. Typically, because we do not have common language or context for the discussion of innovation culture, it can be difficult to organize these essential discussions. Or they simply do not occur at all. Team discussions become a great excuse to start the conversation, as well as to identify where specific individuals or teams within the organization might have similar or competing definitions, priorities or levels of understanding. To make these discussions

compelling and powerful, set an agenda that has enough structure to be meaningful, but leaves room for thoughtful conversation. For example, take on only one section of the assessment at a time over a series of meetings.

Target Priorities

Based on your analysis, you should be able to identify areas within the framework that represent relative weakness within your organization. These weak areas might represent a good place to focus your energies. If your organization has a documented strategic vision or plan, it can also be very helpful to map the existing strategic vision to what you learned through completion of the self-assessment tool.

Identify Barriers

Depending on what topics or areas of the innovation culture framework you prioritize, it is often helpful to identify the barriers that you believe are preventing you from having made more progress to date. Do you and your colleagues agree on the key barriers? How might your team circumvent them? Who has control over the decisions or systems that keep them in place?

Design Solutions

Working from the identified barrier(s), you can begin to construct potential strategies to make tangible progress. By reviewing specific examples, as well as examining the descriptions

in more mature points along the sections of the rubric (i.e., in Emerging or Adapting, if you self-assessed at the level of Entering), you should be able to begin to brainstorm potential solutions to the barriers you identified. This can also represent the beginning of an explicit design process to chart a course forward for the organization.

Share Feedback

The self-assessment tool itself, only represent a first draft of this complex work. Only by working together will we all learn what is needed to truly understand what it takes to build and sustain a culture of innovation. Therefore, we invite you to access this [Innovation Culture Assessment – Feedback Form](#) and share your thoughts, questions, feedback and additional examples with us. We will use this information to inform future improvements to the framework and self-assessment tool.

Request Support

We would be happy to explore other ways to support you and your organizations in this essential work. If you feel you might benefit from additional guidance or support, please feel free to contact either of our organizations directly through our lead authors: Holly Morris (hmorris@educause.edu) and Bryan Setser (bryan@2revolutions.net).

Concluding Thoughts

Any effort to define what constitutes an effective organizational culture of innovation—much less to commit to deliberately pursuing a strategy to build and sustain one over time—is an inherently tricky business. The key concepts, the language to describe these concepts and the examples of them in practice do not always share a commonly understood meaning as they are sometimes overlapping and continually evolving. This is the context within which we conducted our collective work over the past several months. Nonetheless, the following fact remains true: if we are to make significant progress on radically transforming the learning experiences and opportunities for America’s students, we must give education leaders the tools and support they need to build and nurture organizations to do this work. In other words, we must help them build and sustain an innovation culture within their organizations.

The framework and tool presented here represents a start. It is our goal to engage in the work honestly and transparently with all who share our sense of urgency regarding the need to make tangible progress on this question. At the same time, while we are proud of this effort, we recognize that we don’t know what we don’t know. Therefore, we are currently seeking opportunities to test this new framework and tool in practice with colleagues at both the institutional and state levels. We are confident that the insights and lessons gleaned from these early attempts to implement the tool will lead to improvements in subsequent versions, which we look forward to sharing with the field. In the meantime, we hope this iteration can serve as a helpful tool for those of you already working on this important question.

“There is no finish line.”
- Nike

Who We Are



2Revolutions (2Rev) is a national education design lab that specializes in designing, launching and supporting Future of Learning *models*, and helping to catalyze the *conditions* within which they can thrive.

We apply a design-inspired, action-oriented approach to each of our projects. We are currently collaborating with a range of forward-thinking states, districts, funders, organizations and entrepreneurs who are striving to build or accelerate the Future of Learning.

In addition to our core work, our tagline “Do What You Love, For Good” captures the culture we’re building at 2Rev. We are passionate about helping to fix what’s broken with the way we educate students in this country, but we also want to enjoy the work we do. After all, we believe that happy people are smarter, more creative and more productive. Learn more at www.2revolutions.net.

2Revolutions Social Media:

Twitter: [@2Revolutions](https://twitter.com/2Revolutions)

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EDUCAUSE

EDUCAUSE is a national non-profit that helps those who lead, manage and use information technology (IT) to shape strategic IT decisions at every level within higher education. IT is more than technology to EDUCAUSE members. It is a system of people, processes, organizations and challenges that are constantly evolving.

Next Generation Learning Challenges (NGLC), an initiative of EDUCAUSE, accelerates educational innovation through applied technology to dramatically improve college readiness and completion in the United States. NGLC is guided by the belief that providing investment capital to expand the use of proven and emerging learning technologies, collecting and sharing evidence of what works, and fostering a community of innovators and adopters will result in a robust pool of solutions and greater institutional adoption which, in turn, will dramatically improve the quality of learning experiences in the United States.

EDUCAUSE and NGLC Social Media:

Twitter: [@EDUCAUSE](https://twitter.com/EDUCAUSE) and [@NextGenLC](https://twitter.com/NextGenLC)

Facebook: facebook.com/EDUCAUSE and facebook.com/nextgenlearning

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/educause and linkedin.com/company/next-generation-learning-challenges

EDUCAUSE



NGLC



About the Authors

Holly Morris, Director of Postsecondary Model Development and Adoption, NGLC

As the Director of Postsecondary Model Development and Adoption at NGLC, Holly Morris is responsible for the management of the Breakthrough Models Academy and the Breakthrough Models Incubator, two programs offered by EDUCAUSE through its Next Generation Learning Challenges initiative, which is generously funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Incubator (for C-suite leadership teams) and the Academy (for current and emerging individual leaders) are designed to promote the design and implementation of new models to advance affordability, access, quality and completion.

To this work, Ms. Morris brings 10 years of experience in leadership development coaching with both individual leaders and networks of education professionals. Prior to joining EDUCAUSE, she worked in the Center for Leadership and Professional Development at the University of Washington School of Law. She holds a M.Ed. in education policy from the University of Washington, a J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley and a B.A. from Northwestern University.

Bryan Setser, Partner, 2Revolutions

As a Partner at 2Revolutions, Bryan's portfolio includes some of the most innovative educators in the country at the state, foundation, higher education, school district and organization levels. A curiosity creator and architect of America's "digerati" movement in public education, Bryan revitalized and transformed the North Carolina Virtual School into a national model for e-learning serving over 50,000 students annually. As Chief Quality Officer, his school district was recognized as a Malcolm Baldrige National Award Winner and a national best practice staff development site by the American Productivity and Quality Council.

Bryan has served on numerous national reform efforts including the National Digital Learning Council, Learn and Earn Early College Program, the iNACOL State Leadership Team, NC Education Cloud Team and the State Virtual Leaders Alliance. He has been appointed by three separate Governors in North Carolina to the E-learning and School Technology Commissions. In addition to these accomplishments, Bryan has also served at multiple levels of p-26 education as an award winning teacher, principal, assistant superintendent and e-learning instructor at NC State University.

Bryan completed education specialist and doctoral degrees in educational leadership at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He also earned a masters in education leadership from Winthrop University in South Carolina, and he holds an English degree from East Carolina University.

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This framework and tool would not have been possible without the conversations, insights and reflections shared by the educational leaders here. We want to extend a special thanks to Todd Kern, Co-Founder and Principal of 2Revolutions and Lisa Duty, Partner at the Learning Accelerator, who laid the groundwork for this framework in the first version of this publication, *So You Think You Want to Innovate? Emerging Lessons and a New Tool for State and District Leaders Working to Build a Culture of Innovation*.

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Nicholas S. Zeppos, Chancellor, Vanderbilt University

Consulted Works

We are certainly not the first to tackle innovation cultures, and these works proved to be especially helpful to our research, thought process and subsequent iterations.

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