

Facilitating the Conversation: Sample Agenda

Introduction

There may be people in the room who haven't worked together before. Discussing the institution holistically with people from a broad range of departments and focus areas allows for better conversation and a diverse set of ideas. Be sure to allow for time for all to introduce themselves.

Purpose

Discuss why you've gathered together and how this conversation ties to existing student success work, and what your role as an external facilitator will be. It's useful to establish your level of familiarity with the institution and its existing student success efforts, opportunities, and challenges. Establish that the goal of the meeting is to identify and reflect on the agreed-upon strengths and weaknesses of the institution and discuss actionable next steps toward transformation and improving student success outcomes. Emphasize that the ITA is a perception-gathering tool, not an evaluation.

Set ground rules

The meeting should be a safe, open environment for people to share their thoughts regardless of rank or position.

Review results

Discuss the group ratings for each category. Do they seem correct? You can use the first of the **Sense-Making Posters** to indicate where the institution is at in each category. The ratings are Developing, Emerging, Accomplished, or Exemplary—except for in Pathways, where the ratings are Not Occurring, Not Systematic, Planning to Implement, Implementation in Progress, or At Scale.

Use the reflection questions in the Conversation Checklist at postsecondaryita.org/intermediaries/?collect-data to drive discussion when needed—e.g., focusing on categories or key indicators that had broad divergence in replies.

Identify and prioritize next steps

Some questions to consider:

- What story do the ratings in each category tell about student success at the institution?
- What would have the most significant impact on student success?
- What are the 3–5 most impactful actions we might take next?
- Do we need to learn more about how others have improved programs in this area?
- Do we need to do more internal analysis or talk to others to help us improve?
- Are there members of the broader campus community who should be engaged further to perform research, serve on the core team, or lead change efforts?

Throughout the conversation, take note of areas that seem to spark excitement for the group. Are there successes to celebrate? Areas that are primed for intervention? The poster set can help guide your team to setting next steps and priorities. The physical artifact often lends useful structure to the conversation.

Record your results

Record the results and discuss what happens next. Take note of the outcomes in the online dashboard.

- Another conversation?
- Assigned research?
- Support from your organization?