

A Brief Guide on the Tools of The Equity Scorecard™ Process

Phase One: Laying the Groundwork

The Evidence Team:

One of the Center for Urban Education's (CUE) key principles is that *learning and change are:*

socially constructed, meaning that ideas and concepts are mutually defined within a group using existing cultural ideals or through shared experiences,

and facilitated through collaborative “action inquiry,” a systematic process of problem identification, data collection, reflection, decision making, action and assessment.

The first step in initiating action inquiry is to create a campus “evidence team” of about ten individuals. CUE then trains these individuals to take on a “practitioner researcher” role and conduct inquiry into existing institutional data to identify and address gaps in student outcomes by race and ethnicity. Essentially, these practitioner researcher teams collaborate to transform numerical data into actionable knowledge.

The teams also function to bring together individuals from across the infamous “silos” of higher education: instruction, administration, student affairs, and institutional research. CUE knows that these cross-functional teams bring different perspectives and experiences to negotiate the meaning, values, and goals of equity, or parity in educational outcomes.

Phase Two: Becoming Practitioner Researchers

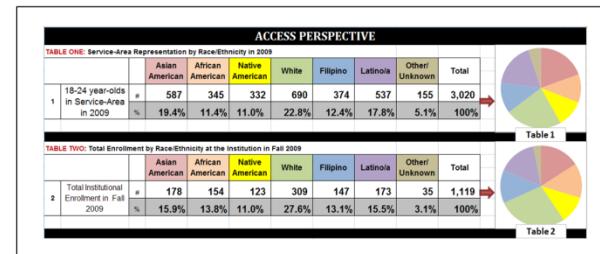
The Vital Signs:

The Vital Signs present institutional data disaggregated by race and ethnicity and serve as a starting point when investigating system or college equity.

The Vital Signs provide four perspectives on institutional performance with respect to equity in educational outcomes: (1) Access, (2) Retention, (3) Completion and Excellence, and (4) Campus Effort. Each perspective has several indicators selected to represent key points of student progression in the curriculum.

These data allow faculty members, counselors, administrators, and others to see where inequities are occurring. They draw attention to where policy makers and educators must intervene to produce equity in educational outcomes for underserved populations.

A Vital Signs template for the Access Perspective.



Phase Three: Becoming Best Practitioners

The BESST™: The Benchmarking Equity and Student Success Tool™

We developed the Benchmarking Equity and Student Success Tool™ (BESST™) to make college completion goals real and actionable for higher education systems. Its interactive format allows practitioners to keep their “eyes on the prize” by setting goals for equity and student success. These goals then become actionable when teams of stakeholders set performance benchmarks at specific intervention points, which they agree to improve and monitor continuously. The BESST™:

- Tracks outcomes for a cohort of students through selected milestones to a completion outcome, such as graduation.
- Simplifies the calculation of rates of success by race and milestones.
- Pinpoints trouble spots along the educational pipeline to develop appropriate interventions.
- Breaks down an abstract college completion goal into specific rates of success that students must meet at key milestones along the educational pipeline.
- Makes it easier for busy leaders and educators to plan a focused inquiry into the factors affecting student success.

Phase Three Continued: Becoming Best Practitioners

Self-Assessment Inventories (SAIs)

Focusing on the BESS™ identified points for intervention, the *Self-Assessment Inventory Tools (SAIs)* guide Evidence Teams to inquire into how existing support services and instruction affect student retention.

CUE's SAIs bring faculty and staff together to collect data and assess what is and is not working in their teaching and support practices. This space for discussion and design allows practitioners on the ground level of student interaction to determine what interventions fit into their current practices, as well as create buy-in for their data-based recommendations.

Phase Four: Setting Goals

Dissemination Templates

The templates provide easy-to-use guides for sharing the Evidence Team's findings and recommendations. This streamlines the teams' efforts to share their work with key audiences who are in a position to improve outcomes for underserved and underrepresented students of color.



Phase Five: Advancing Solutions

The Equity Scorecard™

The *Equity Scorecard™* includes a summary sheet that captures the results from team inquiry, the actions the campus will take to meet their graduation goals, and any additional benchmarks they identified in the process. The completion of the *Equity Scorecard™* is the culminating event in the process.

The *Equity Scorecard™* provides an accessible means for tracking and disseminating the status of campus goals, such as degree conferral by race and ethnicity, over time. It also provides the criteria for evaluating institutional progress toward closing equity gaps and improving college completion for all students.