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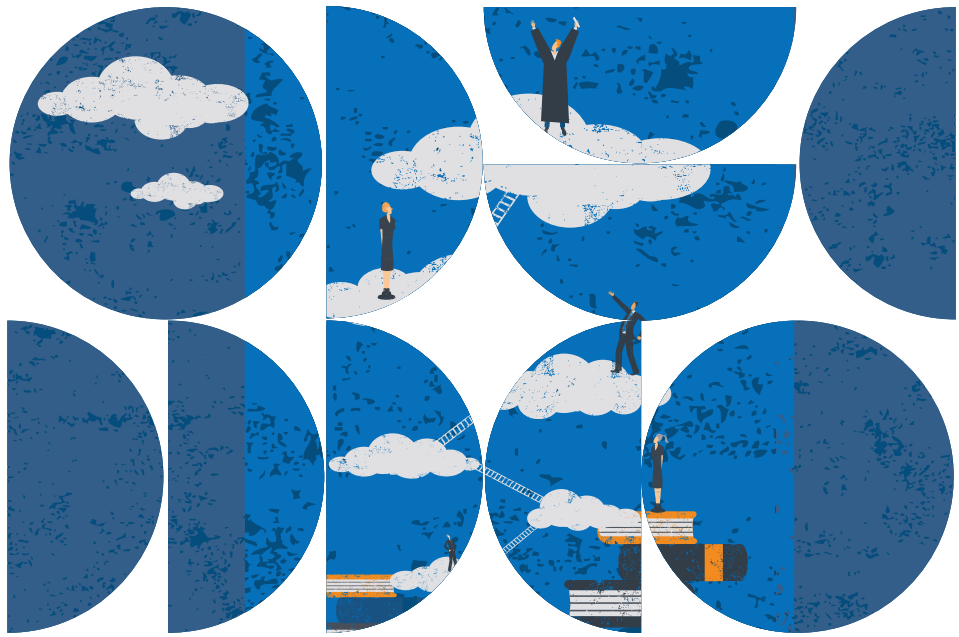
Sustaining Momentum During **Presidential Transitions**

Community College New President Guide

Community College
Executive Forum



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Community College New President Guide

Community College Executive Forum

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Supporting Members in Best Practice Implementation

Resources Available Within Your Membership

This publication is only the beginning of our work to assist members in presidential transitions. Recognizing that ideas seldom speak for themselves, our ambition is to work actively with members of the Community College Executive Forum to decide which practices are most relevant for your organization, to accelerate consensus among key constituencies, and to save implementation time.

For additional information about any of the services below—or for an electronic version of this publication—please visit our website (eab.com/ccef), email your organization's dedicated advisor, or email research@eab.com with "Community College Executive Forum 'Community College Presidential Transition" in the subject line.

Implementation Road Maps and Tools

Throughout the publication, this symbol will alert you to any corresponding tools and templates available in the Toolkit at the back of this book. These tools are also available on our website at eab.com.

Recorded and Private-Label Webconference Sessions

Our website includes recordings of hour-long webconferences walking through the practices highlighted in this publication. Forum experts are also available to conduct private webconferences with your team.

Unlimited Expert Troubleshooting

Members may contact the consultants who worked on any report to discuss the research, troubleshoot obstacles to implementation, or run deep on unique issues. Our staff conducts hundreds of telephone consultations every year.

All Community College Executive Forum resources are available to members in unlimited quantity.

To order additional copies of this book, or to learn about our other services, please visit us at eab.com or contact us at 202-266-6400.

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Beyond the Community College Executive Forum

Additional Resources and Services for Community College Leaders

Community College Executive Forum members have access to the research, webconferences, toolkits, and publications from all of EAB's best practice memberships. These programs provide strategic guidance for leaders at four-year institutions within functional areas such as academic affairs, business affairs, continuing and online education, student affairs, advancement, enrollment management, information technology, and facilities. The Community College Executive Forum also provides two unique services to help leaders understand the state of their Title IX compliance and onboarding processes.

Research and Insights

Academic Affairs Forum
Strategy advice for provosts and deans on elevating performance in teaching, research, and academic governance

COE Forum
Breakthrough-practice research and market intelligence to help universities grow continuing, professional, and online programs

IT Forum
Research and advice for CIOs on leveraging information and technology to further the higher education mission

Advancement Forum
Breakthrough-practice research and data analytics to help maximize philanthropic giving and support institutional goals

Enrollment Management Forum
Best practice research and analytics to support enrollment managers as their scope of responsibilities expand

Student Affairs Forum
Research for student affairs executives on improving student engagement and perfecting the student experience

Business Affairs Forum
Research and support for chief business officers in improving administrative efficiency and lowering costs

Facilities Forum
Best practices and executive networking to elevate space forecasting, utilization, and service quality

University Systems Forum
Research for system leaders to understand the challenges faced by systems and institution-level best practices

Community College Executive Forum
Strategic advice for chief executives and their senior leadership teams to improve student success outcomes, win future enrollments, and build financially sustainable college enterprises

Forum-Specific Resources

Community College Climate Survey
An online survey to help institutions better understand the scope of sexual misconduct on campus and develop targeted prevention strategies

Enrollment Pain Point Audit
EAB researchers diagnose an institution's onboarding attrition points by conducting a "secret shopping" exercise and benchmarking results against peers

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The Challenge for New Leaders

INTRODUCTION

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Urgent Need for Transition Support

In the past five years, the community college sector experienced over 1,000 presidential transitions. Much of the turnover can be explained by an aging baby boomer leadership cohort. However, demographics do not account for a more worrying, parallel trend of shortened tenures.

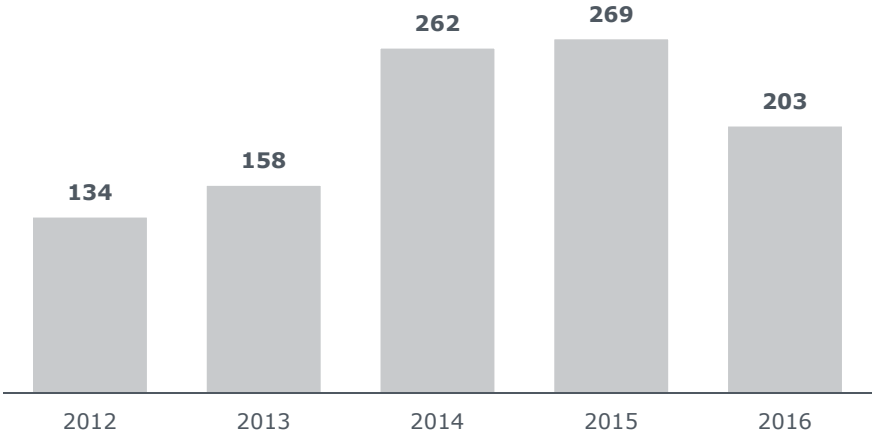
With the advent of performance based funding, community college presidents across the country must contend with heightened public accountability. This added pressure means less patience for improved results. In turn, the average tenure of a community college president has fallen by half in some states compared to their four year counterparts. Additionally, the amount of no-confidence votes against community college presidents have more than doubled.

A concurrent vice president shortage limits a president's ability to rely on highly effective senior staff during their transition process. An Iowa State University survey found 75% of both sitting presidents and vice presidents are expected to retire within the next ten years. An inadequate supply of executive leadership ultimately weakens the sector's ability to fulfill its multiple missions.

Leadership Crisis Threatens Institutional Momentum

"Tsunami" of Leadership Transitions

Total Number of Community College President Changes Since 2012[1]



Extra Scrutiny Without Supplemental Support

"Presidential turnover has become unusually common. **In the last two years, six out of the thirteen system presidents have changed**."

President, Community College (Southeast)

Support Ranks Thinning Too

75% Of presidents and vice presidents expect to retire within 10 years

"Most search committees want a ready-made president… but that's not realistic. Presidents come from someplace, **so the question is, do we have enough vice presidents out there**?"

Narcisa Polonio
Executive Vice President of Education Research, and Board Leadership Services
Association of Community College Trustees

Source: Smith A, "Tension at the Top," *Inside Higher Ed*, May 20, 2016. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/05/20/many-community-college-presidencies-are-upheaval; Duree, et al., "Iowa State Study of Community College Presidents Finds National Shortage on the Horizon," http://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2008/jul/ccleadership.shtml

1) 2016 data collection ended in March of that year

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New Presidents Face Unprecedented Challenges

The sudden increase in presidential transitions occurs at a particularly challenging moment for community colleges. Declining enrollments, state budget cuts, a more "at-risk" student population, and increased public accountability make the community college president's job more difficult than ever.

These new mandates come on top of an existing list of critical presidential tasks and responsibilities, including advancement, public relations, labor management, employer partnerships, and completion rates. Meanwhile, many university-lead executive training programs have shut down, leaving new and prospective presidents with less opportunities to prepare for such a demanding role.

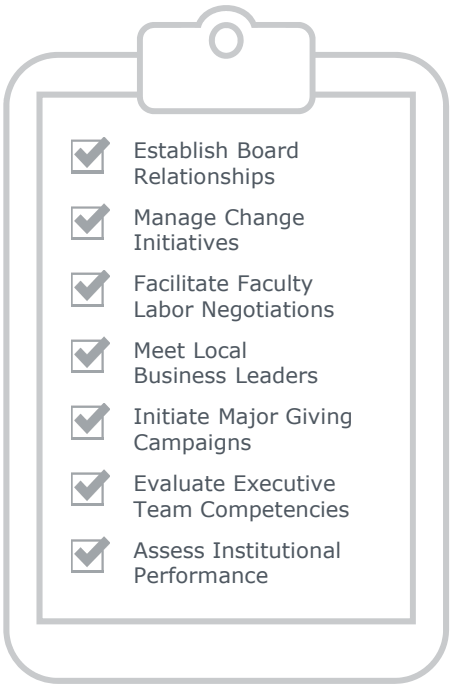
Everything Has Become First Priority

Burgeoning Portfolio Divides Mindshare

Partial List of New Mandates in Response to Emerging Pressures

Emerging Pressure	New Mandate
Declining enrollments and market share	Change marketing to compete with four-year colleges for students
Tightening budgets through funding cuts	Promote long term fiscal viability while maintaining academic quality
Increasing regulatory scrutiny	Adopt initiatives to drive completion and ensure compliance with Title IX
Ensuring workforce credential relevancy	Grow a portfolio of employer partnerships while preserving curriculum
Serving a more "at risk" population	Invest in academic innovation of technology and delivery
Responding to local needs and issues	Provide new safety and security protocols to meet community expectations

An Endless List of Tasks…



…Without Explicit Guidance

"A number of community college leadership programs have closed at major universities across the county.

We're not preparing as many leaders as we have in the past and there's tremendous turnover.

We're seeing people approaching retirement age, and I've heard from search firms they're not getting qualified applicants for leadership positions at community colleges."

Dr. Terry O'Banion
Graduate Faculty Chair
National American University

Source: Smith A, "Tension at the Top," *Inside Higher Ed*, May 20, 2016. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/05/20/many-community-college-presidencies-are-upheaval; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Margin of Error Shrinking

In recent years, the consequences for inadequate preparation for the role have become more severe. Stories of presidents facing votes of no confidence, board terminations, or early resignations have proliferated.

While some of the headlines depict justified terminations (e.g., improper conduct, financial impropriety), others reflect avoidable conflicts with either one or several key constituency groups: system leadership, the board of trustees, faculty, union leaders, or influential community members.

Even sitting presidents feel worried about the trend of high executive turn-over. For example, the University of California Davis' Center for Community College Leadership and Research conducted a survey and found more than half of current California presidents or district chancellors believe they will not remain in their role for more than three years. Worse still, almost one third believe their tenure would end within a year.

Rising Anxieties Over Job Security

Tenures Being Cut Short

Selection of Recent Presidential Transition Headlines

"Lake Michigan College's board ousts president after three months…"
Inside Higher Ed

"Essex County College's board fired its president and vice president…"
NJ.com

"Embattled Rochester Community College President resigns after 18 months…"
Star Tribune

"City Colleges' faculty votes no confidence on their president…"
Chicago Tribune

Commonly Reported Reasons for Early Termination

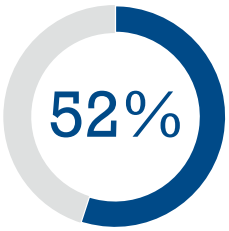
- Conflict with governing board
- Disagreement with a key campus constituency
- Falling out with major community leaders

"A colleague of mine recently became president. He immediately cracked down on union negotiations. So the union ran a slate of officers for the next board election. All three of their candidates won. **When the next board meeting rolled around, their first order of business was to fire the president**."

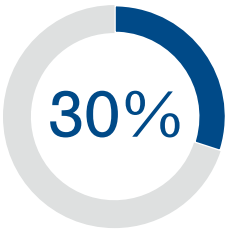
President, Community College (Southeast)

Challenges Rattling Sitting Presidents Too

Surveyed Community College Presidents' Attitudes Toward Job Security[1]



Of presidents who expect to remain no more than 3 years



Of presidents who expect to remain for less than 1 year

1) The Center for Community College Leadership and Research survey of 64 California community college executives

Source: Marwa E, "City Colleges' Faculty Votes No Confidence in Chancellor," *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 4, 2016. http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-city-colleges-no-confidence-vote-met-20160204-story.html; Smith AA, "Lake Michigan College Board Terminates President," *Inside Higher Ed*, May 6, https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2016/05/06/lake-michigan-college-board-terminates-president; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Opaque Expectations Nullify Experience

New presidents cannot just rely on their past experience to serve as an effective president. Each community college differs significantly in terms of institutional rules, culture, and traditions—within the same region too. Moreover, even the most tenured candidate cannot anticipate the unique challenges that can create a drag on a president's term, such as local politics, obscured institutional barriers, or interpersonal conflict.

Conventional advice recommends presidents gather information on the position from the interview process, executive colleagues, or tenured faculty. While these are important sources to consult, they leave blind spots that could affect the outcome of a presidency.

Difficult to Prepare for Role Alone

Even Institutional Experience Can Be Insufficient

> "One thing I realized quickly was that until you sit in the chair, you really don't know what the responsibilities, requirements, and challenges are really like. **I used to work very closely with my predecessor, and I saw what I could see, but I did not grasp the full perspective**. New presidents should realize the unprecedented scope of the position, and should not be surprised if brand new aspects or demands of the job appear—it's going to occur a lot."
>
> *Dr. Liang Chee Wee, President*
> *Northeast Iowa Community College*

Traditional Information Sources Leave Critical Questions

Incomplete Preparation Creates Lingering Questions

Information Source	Useful Knowledge	Missing Answers
Interview Process	What institutional direction does the board envision?	What are the individual priorities of board members?
Executive Colleagues	What are the strengths of the institution?	How is our particular institution received politically?
Tenured Administrators	What is the faculty culture and morale like?	What are the common pain points for change management?
Prior Experience	What are my personal leadership strengths?	What responsibilities did my predecessor perform behind the scenes?

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Ensuring a Successful Tenure

The first 100 days present the best opportunity for a president to establish invaluable relationships, understand the challenges facing the institution, and outline an agenda for a successful tenure. Despite the availability of leadership resources and advice, new presidents can still become overwhelmed by the number of appointments, task-force meetings, board of trustee deliberations, and speaking engagements.

Guided by conversations with recently appointed and long-tenured presidents, this primer captures the four key areas of focus for all new college leaders. It provides specific, detailed advice for how to accelerate your transition and create immediate impact for the college from day one.

Road Map for the First 100 Days

1. Navigate a New Campus

Improving Organizational IQ

- Prepare a Strong First Impression (p.16)
- Design a Breakthrough Listening Tour (pp.17-18)
- Understand System Leadership (p.19)

2. Form Connections

Building Essential Relationships

- Solidify Executive Team Around Mission (p.22)
- Manage Labor Relationships (p.23)
- Connect with Students (p.24)
- Initiate Political Support (p.25)
- Cultivate Development Prospects (p.26)

3. Clarify Performance

Understanding the State of the College

- Determine Fiscal Standing (p.28)
- Assess Institutional Performance (p.29)
- Set Presidential Workflows (p.30)

4. Shape the Future

Accelerating Your Impact After the First 100 Days

- Harness Storytelling (p.32)
- Distill Lessons from Peers and Predecessors (p.33)
- Maintain High Performance (p.34)

5. Leadership Transition Toolkit

Implementing Specific Advice

- Industry Primers for New Leaders(p.37)
- Glossary of Terms for New Leaders(p.38)
- Listening Tour Checklist (p.41)
- Guide for Presidential Fundraising (p.42)
- Presidential Messaging Template (p.45)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Understanding Your Current Practice

The following questions are designed to help you evaluate your current activities. Use them to determine which of the strategies presented are most relevant and needed for your transition.

New to the Community College Sector	Yes	No
Do you have experience reporting to a board or chancellor's office? *If you answered "No" to this question, please refer to page 19.*		
Do you have familiarity with community college-specific terms, rules, and policies? *If you answered "No" to this question, please refer to pages 37–40.*		
Do you have experience working with unionized faculty or staff? *If you answered "No" to this question, please refer to page 23.*		

New to the Community College Presidential Role	Yes	No
Have you conducted a listening tour in a previous leadership position? *If you answered "No" to this question, please refer to pages 17–18 and 41.*		
Do you have experience leading advancement initiatives? *If you answered "No" to this question, please refer to pages 26 and 42–44.*		
Do you have executive experience managing institutional financial performance? *If you answered "No" to this question, please refer to pages 28.*		

New to Particular Institution	Yes	No
Do you have any existing political relationships with local and state leaders? *If you answered "No" to this question, please refer to page 25.*		
Do you have familiarity with the college's enrollment and academic performance? *If you answered "No" to this question, please refer to page 29.*		
Do you have pre-fabricated anecdotes to assist with presidential messaging? *If you answered "No" to this question, please refer to pages 32 and 45–46.*		

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Navigate a New Campus

Improving Organizational IQ

SECTION 1

Key Tasks:

- Acquire institutional and personnel knowledge
- Learn, don't teach, in early meetings
- Project core values in listening tour
- Internalize system leadership priorities

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Prepare a Strong First Impression

New presidents are expected to make hundreds of introductions during their first 100 days. A strong foundation of both institutional and personnel knowledge will make these interactions easier and more impactful.

New presidents should expand their fact-finding beyond the standard information provided by the search and interview process. Contacts recommend that new presidents consult a variety of additional sources, both objective and subjective, to gain a more in-depth view of the institutional characteristics.

What the President Should Know Before Day One

Two Broad Categories of Knowledge to Acquire

Institutional Knowledge

Learn Community Perceptions
Key Questions to Ask:

- How is the college regarded in the community?
- What local organizations (e.g., chamber of commerce, rotary club) exert the most influence?

> "I learned from the interview process that the board wanted someone to lead a shift from access to outcomes. **I wanted to know more about where the college is now**, so I know how far we needed to go."
>
> *President, Community College (Northwest)*

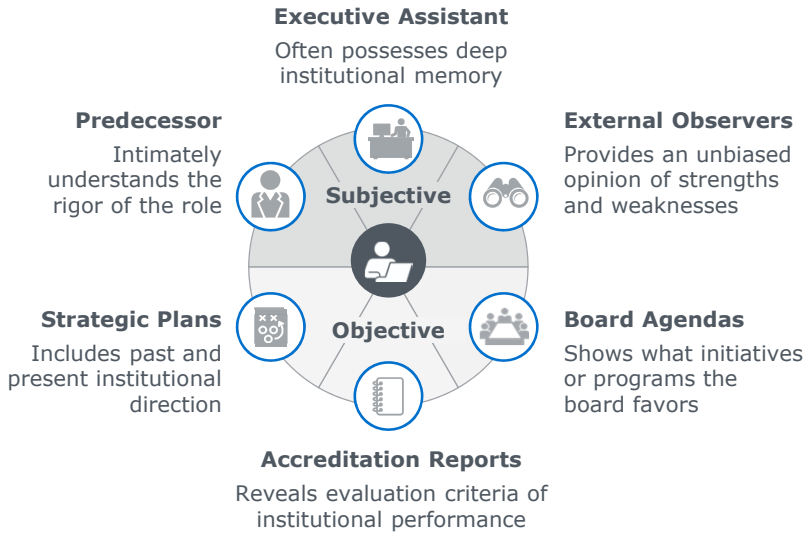
Personnel Knowledge

Uncover Staff Dynamics
Key Questions to Ask:

- Who are the significant change agents on campus?
- Who are the problematic administrators or those with standing grievances?

> "My predecessor had a very difficult period with union leaders. **There was still some residual animosity**. New presidents should identify and address such issues immediately."
>
> *President, Community College (Midwest)*

Consult a Variety of Information Sources



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Design a Breakthrough Listening Tour

Most leadership advice recommends a "listening tour," or a way to gather information and input from key constituency groups. It enables the president to synthesize the thoughts and insights of the community into their vision for the college.

The standard listening tour has become common practice for new leader transition periods. Most faculty and staff expect it, which means the act itself does not communicate any genuine interest in learning about the individual needs of campus constituents. Instead, new presidents should use the listening tour to express their personality and leadership style. Contacts explained how a forced attempt at cordial relations can actually cause resistance to relationship building.

New presidents should not feel pressured to exactly emulate a listening tour of a colleague. Each institution has different needs, cultures, and expectations from their leaders. While the breadth of each listening tour depends on the individual preferences of a president, it should still seek to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the institution.

No Cookie-Cutter Approach

Signal Authenticity from the Outset

> "New presidents need to understand that every movement, mannerism, method of dress, and style of speech is constantly assessed. **People will take cues from what they see from the president**."
>
> *Dr. Daniel Asquino, President*
> *Mount Wachusetts Community College*

Listening Tour Should Reflect President's Leadership Style

Spectrum of Approaches

Selective Meetings

"Faculty must trust you, not like you. Authenticity comes from actions."

President, Community College (Southwest)

- Forced "charm offensive" creates resistance to presidential message
- Meet with essential stakeholders
- Accept all invitations and meetings

Comprehensive Tour

"I met every faculty and staff. I wanted them to know I'm here to listen."

President, Community College (Midwest)

- Spend at least 30 minutes speaking with each staff member
- Ask about the strengths and weaknesses of the institution
- Distill and report findings back to faculty and staff

Three Essential Questions to Include in Listening Tour

- ☑ "What are the things we do well?
- ☑ "What areas could we improve?
- ☑ "In what ways could I make your job easier?"

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Remember to Listen on Your Listening Tour

Campus stakeholders learn more about you from your actions than your words. If a new president claims to listen but institutes a new policy, faculty and staff will conclude an overall lack of authenticity. Therefore, the act of listening does more than just acquire information. It is also the necessary first step in building coalitions for future change.

Before meeting with board of trustees, senior administrative staff, and local leaders, a new president should briefly familiarize themselves with their priorities to ensure a productive initial meeting. An executive assistant can gather this information on behalf of a new president.

Learn, Don't Teach, in Early Meetings

Listening Underpins Everything

Enter the College as a Blank Slate

> "It never hurts to listen. **People will discover very quickly if you're truly listening, or coming in with pre-set notions**. Every institution has strengths and weaknesses, and you have to listen to figure out which one's which, and to see where the low-hanging fruit are."
>
> *Dr. Jerome Parker, President*
> *Delaware County Community College*

> "You should assume no knowledge when you enter a new institution. You can reference alternate models from past experience, **but it's never successful unless the idea is collaboratively invented or appears invented at the institution**. Otherwise, that's the first step towards failure."
>
> *Dr. Abu-Ghazaleh, President*
> *Grossmont College*

Light Preparation Goes a Long Way

Sample Meeting Research Document

Constituency	Reporting Line	Background and Career	Key Upcoming Initiative
Board Chair	Voters	• Served on the board for 17 years • Community college graduate • President and CEO of local manufacturing corporation	• Construct on-campus dormitories • Expand corporate training revenue
Executive Cabinet	President	• Combined 48 years of administrative experience • Promoted internally	• Guided Pathways implementation
CEO of Largest Employer	Share Holders	• Donated $250,000 last year • No formal training ties with college	• Increase employee recruitment and retention by 20%
Union Leaders	Faculty Members	• Served at the college for 30 years	• Renegotiating faculty wage scale

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Understand System Leadership

The board of trustees, or chancellor in some states, represent the most critical constituency for community college presidents. They not only make the decision to hire or fire presidents, but their job security often depends on the performance of presidents.

Strong relationships between the two groups ultimately take shape from proactive and frequent communication. For example, presidents should reach out to board members in advance for their support when considering a new campus initiative. For scheduled meetings, contacts recommended calling individual board members in the preceding week. This early outreach enables presidents to identify and preempt any potential items of disagreement. In addition, these calls help build relationships with individual board members.

Tensions between presidents and board members can arise over high-level strategic issues. The most common problem between the two groups typically involves lack of communication. New presidents should establish expectations for communications from the outset. This includes how often a president should speak to board members and their preferred channel of communication (e.g., email, phone call, sit down meeting).

Align Relationship-Building Approach to Board Structure

Chancellor or System Office

- Reports to the board
- Insulates president from electoral politics
- Importance of individual relationship elevated

Ways to Interact

- Schedule regular meetings
- Learn system priorities before first meeting

Locally Elected Board of Trustees

- Most common governance structure
- Often involved directly in campus affairs

Ways to Interact

- Call in advance
- Learn background information
- Organize collective retreats

Governor-Appointed Board of Trustees

- Least common
- More removed from daily campus affairs
- Requires higher-level data reporting

Ways to Interact

- Email monthly updates
- Evaluate power structure of board
- Invite select members to tour campus

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Enabling Mission Creep

"Board members have a large stake in the success of the college, however you do not want them infringing on the president's role. **You do not want to miss the opportunity of setting clear expectations during the 'honeymoon period.'** They hired you for a reason, and want to see strong leadership."

President, Community College (Midwest)

Not Respecting Hierarchy

"I entered the community college system from out of state, though **I still underestimated the differences in doing business.** For example, during one meeting I raised my hand to comment, but I was told I could not speak unless I received the chancellor's permission."

President, Community College (West Coast)

Surprising the Board

"**I made the mistake of announcing a new initiative in my monthly email address before finalizing it with the board.** A trustee was in a delicate re-election campaign, so the surprise was particularly not good timing."

President, Community College (Mid-Atlantic)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Form Connections

Building Essential Relationships

SECTION 2

Key Tasks:

- Evaluate executive team competencies
- Earn goodwill with faculty and staff leaders
- Introduce yourself to students
- Garner political and community support

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Solidify Executive Team Around College Mission

One of the first priorities of new presidents should be establishing personal relationships and professional expectations with the executive team. If a disconnect exists between the cabinet and the president, it will be extremely difficult to advance an agenda. More importantly, the executive team should act as "thought partners" for the president. They should propose, challenge, and explore ideas in line with the college mission. New presidents should feel confident in removing executive team leaders who do not appear capable or motivated to perform this function.

Given the similar level of leadership turnover at the vice presidential level, new presidents should not be surprised if they enter their new role with significant vacancies on the executive team. This provides an opportunity for a new president to select an executive team that embodies the mission of the college.

One-on-One Conversations Precede Team Strategy

Encourage Diverse Thought Leadership

> "A president must know the strengths and tendencies of the senior staff. **A homogenous mindset limits creativity and will eventually implode on itself**. On the other hand, a president must explain to a diverse cabinet that even though we all think differently, we have a common target to work towards."
>
> *President, Community College (Northeast)*

Elevating Executive Competency with Trust and Vision

Conduct Individual Conversations

- Uncover strengths and weaknesses
- Ask where the executive agenda should focus
- Diagnose past grievances or staff conflict

Measure Team Mindsets

- Assess executive team competencies
- Determine where team can improve
- Identify executive team pain points

Ground Change in College Mission

- Explain how changes further college mission
- Request action plans for new initiatives
- Release team members who oppose mission

Selecting an Executive Team

Four Criteria to Judge Vice Presidential Candidates

Evaluating "Right Fit" Mindset

1. How would you describe the mission of the college?
2. In what ways does your role help support that mission?
3. What unique skillset can you offer to advance the mission?
4. How do you create buy-in when leading a new initiative?

Look for an internalized, not recited response

Judge whether they duplicate or accentuate team skills

Identify ambition, vision, and leadership style

Determine if approach contrasts with executive team

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Manage Labor Relationships

A common problem for new presidents involve ongoing labor disputes between faculty and the administration. The nature of union contracts make each situation uniquely challenging. Nonetheless, new presidents can start labor relationships on the right foot.

First, new presidents must diagnose and respect current disagreements. In some cases, labor disputes originate more than a decade before the president arrives to campus. Therefore, a new president must recognize their current role in solving the dispute despite their disassociation from the original cause.

Next, new presidents should schedule monthly meetings with the union representatives. This not only signals a firm commitment to relationship building, but also offers an opportunity to uncover problems before they develop into intractable issues.

Institutional and Labor Interests Not Mutually Exclusive

Expect Some Culpability Regardless of Background

> "I could not believe some of the problems I had to face when I became president. Even though I was new to the institution, **I was still being held accountable for things that happened almost a decade ago.**"
>
> *Dr. Liang Chee Wee, President*
> *Northeast Iowa Community College*

Early Outreach Creates Goodwill

Invite union leaders for a meeting during the first month

Inquire about past differences or ongoing grievances

Schedule regular, monthly meetings to maintain relations

Look for Common Ground

Comparison of Positional vs. Interest-Based Bargaining[1]

Positional

1. Two sides treat negotiations as a zero-sum game
2. Each side seeks to maximize concessions
3. Strategies entail pressuring and misleading
4. One side looks "to win" exclusively

Maintains tension moving forward

Interest Based

1. Each side regards other as joint-problem solvers
2. Negotiations focus on common goals and interest
3. Bargaining incorporates other side's concerns
4. Both sides look for "win-win" opportunities

Both sides feel like they won

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1) Adapted from Roger Fisher and William Ury's *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In.*

Source: Spangler B. "Integrative or Interest-Based Bargaining", *Beyond Intractability*, http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/interest-based-bargaining; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Connect with Students

Unlike other key constituencies, presidents lack a manageable way to meet students all at once. Open forums or walks across the campus are common strategies, but they fail to reach most students. Nonetheless, students' perceptions of the college president can have a significant affect on campus culture. These negative perceptions, while intangible, can negatively impact enrollment.

In 2015, Dr. Jay Box, the newly appointed president of Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) conducted a system-wide listening tour that visited over 5,000 students, faculty, and staff at all 16 member institutions. The president specifically asked students for their opinions of the system office. To his surprise, many students felt disconnected and requested more information about the decisions of the KCTCS office. In response, the president launched the "Out of the Box" blog (a pun from his last name) to share bi-monthly updates and major system news.

The president writes about timely topics that directly impact students' experience. For example, at the beginning of the term, the president released an update about purchasing affordable textbooks.

Balancing Transparency with Time Commitments

Can't Realistically Speak with Everyone

> "I wanted to hear from every student, but there's only so much time in the day. **You have to make choices about how to allocate your time during those first 100 days**."
>
> *President, Community College (Northeast)*

Meeting Students at Scale on Preferred Channels

Increasing Social Media Usage for Students and Presidents

90%
Of US adults, age 18-29, use social media

58%
Of college presidents have a Facebook page

55%
Of college presidents have a Twitter account

35%
Of college presidents publish their own blog

"Out of the Box" Blog Inspired by Popular Demand

- Initiated in follow up to a system wide listening tour
- Met with over 5,000 students and faculty who requested more information about system office activities

Makes system updates relevant to student lives

Emails blog updates to over 80,000 students

Re-posts messages on social media

Source: Barnes NG and Lescault AA, College Presidents Out-Blog and Out Tweet Corporate CEO's", *UMass Dartmouth's Center for Market Research,* 2013; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Initiate Political Support

Given increased public scrutiny and declining state funding for community colleges, new presidents must assume greater responsibility in influencing the opinions of state policy makers. While this capacity develops organically overtime, contacts urge new presidents to begin to cultivate relationships with local and state legislators from day one.

If a president arrives from out of state, it is especially important to determine what local law makers think of the community college. Even in states with favorable opinion of community colleges, new presidents should arrange individual meetings with local legislators. New presidents should request their director of public relations or marketing to draft a form letter to legislators to conserve time.

Leaving Nothing to Chance

Prepare for Increased Public Scrutiny

> "If I could go back and redo the first 100 days, I would have sat down with each member president to go through a very simple form and asked them to identify their main political advocates, who are detractors and who do we need to work on. **Now, lessons learned, this fall I'm touring the 16 colleges and each trip I have to schedule individual meetings with the local legislators** and this would have been great the first time around, but I just did not think about it."
>
> *President, Community College (Southeast)*

Reach Out to Lawmakers in Advance

Four Steps to Solidifying Advantageous Relationships

Investigation

Find the contact information of each local legislator in the service area

Outreach

Send a letter to each local legislator and invite them for a campus visit

Meeting

Set aside an hour to speak exclusively about college funding needs

Relationship

Maintain contact with legislators on an at least annual basis

> **"The first thing we ask new presidents during orientation is to send a personal letter to each of the legislators within their service area**.
>
> We had never been proactive in relationship building with local leaders in the past. Now we say 'no, this has to be front and center for all new college presidents.'"
>
> *Dr. Jay Box, President Kentucky Community and Technical College System*

Conserve Time with Form Letter

Salutation,

- **Provide brief description** of the new president and of the community college.
- **Describe recent success** of the college and how it aligns with electoral priorities.
- **Invite to campus** for a 30-60 minute meeting focused primarily on funding.
- **Include contact information**

Signature

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Cultivate Development Prospects

Presidents must increasingly spend time on advancement activities. Fortunately, new presidents should not focus on generating philanthropic revenue at the beginning of their tenure. Instead, and especially for presidents new to a community, they should prioritize outreach with prominent business and local leaders.

New presidents should use existing donor lists as a starting point. Specifically prioritize donors with a history of giving. In addition, new presidents should speak with their foundation director to identify large potential donors (i.e., local business leaders). Presidents should initiate their relationship with potential donors by illustrating the strengths of the college and its tangible contributions to local workforce development. Presidents should not feel pressured to make explicit fundraising asks at the beginning of their tenure, unless the start date coincides with an ongoing capital campaign.

Community engagements, including chamber of commerce meetings or rotary club sessions, offer presidents an opportunity to initiate relationships with local leaders. Presidents should never decline an invitation outright, even if it conflicts with a busy schedule. Instead, presidents should find a later date that works for both parties.

Build Relationships Before Making the Ask

Strong Relationships Yield Consistent Gifts

Identify Top Donors

- Compile a list of largest donors to the institution; segment by source (e.g., large employer, alumni)

Communicate Value

- Invite business leaders to tour the campus and speak with faculty; explain graduates' employment success

Nurture Relationship

- Continue to meet with potential donors through meals and conversations during community events

Provide Access

- Make yourself available to high priority donors
- Communicate opportunities to make donations

Find a Way to Say Yes to Community Invitations

Make Public Appearances Regardless of Volume

From Nobody Calling…

"Even in a large city like Seattle, a new president might have to outreach to local groups to schedule more public engagements. Therefore, **if a new president receives a request to speak at an event, then they should always say yes**. It makes the president and college seem more connected to the community. At a minimum, offer an alternative at their earliest convenience."

Dr. Gary Oertli, President
South Seattle College

…to Ringing Off the Hook

"There will be a lot of organizations during the first 100 days that would love for the president to speak. They'll invite you to the rotary, the chamber of commerce or whatever. But don't be so quick to say yes I'm coming! **You must be strategic about whom you say 'yes' to. In fact, there is a very polite way of saying 'not now.'** Usually, it means suggesting a later date when the time is appropriate."

Dr. Liang Chee Wee, President
Northeast Iowa Community College

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Recruit Major Gift Officers

Launch Social Media Campaigns

Cultivate Alumni

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Clarify Performance

Understanding the State of the College

SECTION 3

Key Tasks:

- Evaluate enrollment landscape
- Diagnose college's financial status
- Benchmark performance against peers
- Map time commitments to mission priorities

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Determine Financial Standing

State funding cuts make community colleges more tuition dependent. Meanwhile, in the last five years, the community college sector experienced five straight years of enrollment declines—a 16% total contraction. These two factors place community college budgets under considerable strain.

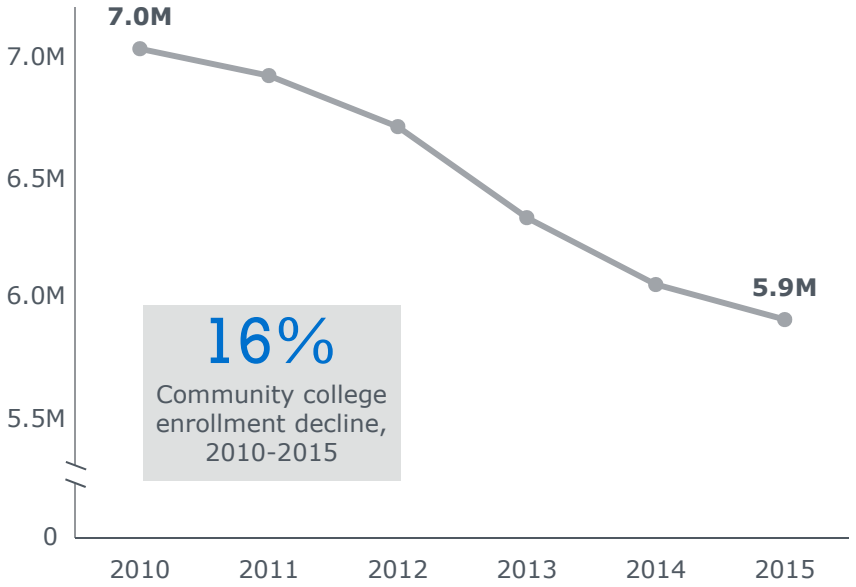
In response, system leadership expects new presidents to exercise impeccable fiscal stewardship. Fortunately, new presidents do not necessarily need an extensive background in finance to place the institution on a path to long-term sustainability. Rather, contacts recommended new leaders prioritize two important actions. First, develop a strong relationship with the chief financial officer (CFO). Presidents conduct college business on the scale of millions. Therefore, they should feel comfortable letting a vice president manage the balance sheets.

Second, contacts recommended new presidents base their budgetary planning around the relationship between full time enrollment (FTE) revenue and college expenditures. Ideally, CFOs should provide presidents with data regarding how many additional students the college needs to recruit to either maintain or even grow services and programs.

Make Tuition Revenue Your Starting Point

Enrollment Declines Weaken Budget Stability

Fall Enrollment at Two-Year Public Colleges



Balance Full-Time Enrollment Revenue with Expenditures

"Any new president coming in, especially in this environment, **must look at what how many FTE does it take to support a faculty member instructionally and how do you allocate your overhead**. And this is not something you would normally look at if you are coming out of the chief academic officer role."

Dr. Stanley Sidor, President
Lake-Sumter Community College

Starting Questions for Chief Financial Officer

- How many additional students are needed to maintain services?
- How does the cost per FTE compare with neighboring institutions?
- What courses or programs can be expanded?
- What services can be reduced or shared to lower costs?

Source: National Student Clearinghouse, "Current Term Enrollment Estimates," 2015; National Student Clearinghouse, "Current Term Enrollment Estimates," 2012; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Assess Institutional Performance

New presidents must also quickly evaluate the academic performance of the institution. Longitudinal and internal data can be useful; however, new presidents should contextualize their college's performance data with external benchmarks.

Years of data-driven initiatives have made many community colleges "DRIP campuses" (i.e., data-rich, information poor). New presidents can select the most valuable benchmarks by looking at past accreditation reports on strategic plans. These reports indicate where the accreditation agency "grades" colleges on their performance.

In most cases, college performance is classified into three key areas: enrollment, student success, and college value. New presidents should first compare their performance in these areas against neighboring institutions before examining their national peers.

Guiding Presidential Strategic Priorities

Examine Internal Performance in Three Major Categories

1	2	3
Enrollment	Student Success	College Value
Applicant Yield Provides a snapshot of intake quality	**Fall-to-Fall Retention** Illustrates persistence of students	**Cohort Transfer Rate** Shows success of transfer students
Year-Over-Year Enrollment Suggests aggregate trends in student population	**Overall Completion Rate** Indicates institution's overall performance in graduating degree seeking students	**One-Year Employment Rate** Signals institution's ability to find jobs for graduates and credential market value

Triangulate Focus Areas with External Benchmarks

Sample External Benchmarks

Success Indicator	Current Year	Prior Year	Benchmark	Trend
Overall Course Success Rates (Grade A-C)	74%	74%	71%	↔
Percentage of Employed Graduates	88%	92%	90.5%	↓
Application Yield Percentage	62%	59%	55%	↑

Common Sources for Benchmark Data

- State system websites
- National association websites
- Accreditation agency websites

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Set Presidential Workflows

A new president must oversee all facets of the college operation. This includes dozens of individual departments, projects, and initiatives. A new president cannot feasibly understand granular details of every ongoing project, but should schedule time on their calendar to learn how certain projects contribute to the missions of the college.

Presidents should not hesitate to sunset or terminate projects even in the early stages of their tenure. These decisions require transparent thought-processes and should be grounded in the overarching mission of the college. While difficult, it also communicates the decisive and bottom-line driven nature of the new president.

Unsurprisingly, presidents must respond to more meeting requests than their calendar can physically accommodate. Contacts recommend new presidents set firm priorities at the beginning of every week (or other regular time interval). Determine how much time should be proportionally allocated to each priority. For example, during peak recruitment, presidents may want to spend a greater percentage of their time on enrollment activities. Ultimately, this process allows presidents to balance their calendar while also maintaining progress towards mission critical goals.

Managing an Overextended Schedule

Assign Tasks Based on Relevancy to Institution's Mission

President	Executive Team	Middle Management
Mission Related	**Administrative**	**Communal or Peripheral**
"You are going to be bombarded by thousands of things. **New presidents must focus on the few items most integral to advancing the college mission**."	"Some things will seem critical to you, like budget, but **it's perfectly OK to delegate them to your vice president**."	"Ask yourself, **does this directly advance the lot of my students**? Could I push this appointment back to a later date?"
Dr. Meghan Hughes *President* *Community College of Rhode Island*	*Dr. Jerome Parker* *President* *Delaware County Community College*	*Dr. Susan Huard* *President* *Manchester Community College*

Base Weekly Schedule Time on Mission Priorities

Sample Calendar Creation Process

Determine Priorities	Set Percentages	Allocate Time
1. Student Success 2. External Relations 3. Enrollment	50% - Student Success 25% - External Relations 25% - Enrollment	• **Monday, Tuesday**: Guided pathways workshop • **Wednesday**: Course completion data review • **Thursday**: Legislative meetings • **Friday**: Student recruitment strategy

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Shape the Future

Accelerating Your Impact After the First 100 Days

SECTION 4

Key Tasks:

- Elevate messaging with story telling
- Learn about and avoid common mistakes
- Release problematic administrators
- Achieve self-sustaining presidential practice

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Harness Storytelling

Before presidents make their first address to campus or speak with a key constituency, they should think about how their communication style impacts leadership ability. Long-serving presidents often cite effective story telling as a fundamental factor in their success. Unlike other collegiate leadership positions, a president's words carry institutional-wide implications. They set the tone and direction for the college.

A few key techniques can improve even the most experienced story teller. Executive leaders should craft their messages to follow a traditional narrative arc. Start with a main character that faces a seemingly insurmountable obstacle. This challenge builds empathy from the audience. Next, explain how the character overcomes the adversity. Finally, conclude with a teaching point that links back to a message about the college.

Effective story telling not only enhances a president's message, but it can also support a positive work environment and eliminate the potential for gossip.

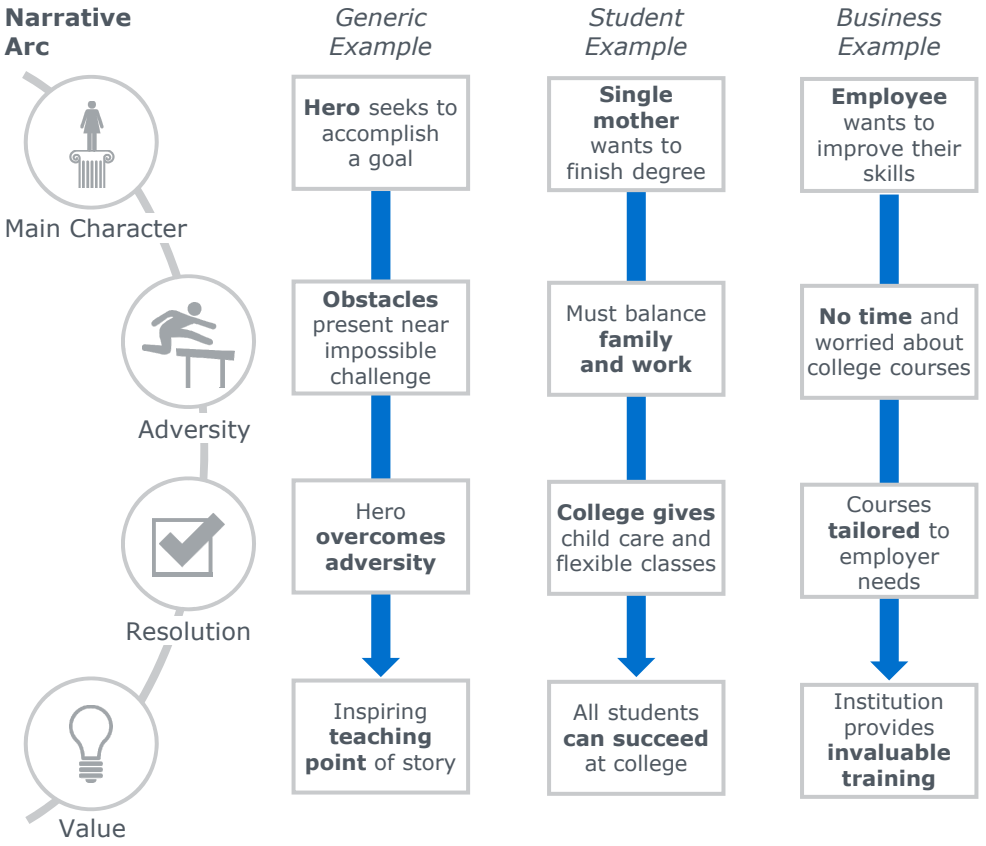
Presidential Messaging Template

- Outlines how to create compelling stories
- Page 45

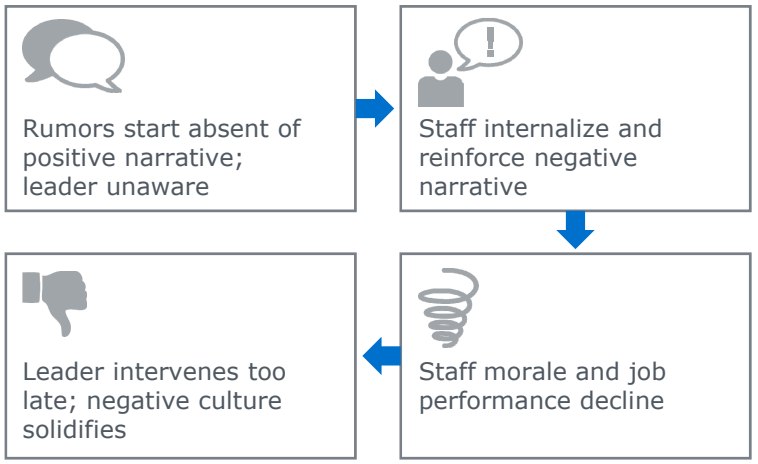
Compelling Narratives Empower Your Message

Modifying Storytelling for Presidential Audience

Examples of Narrative-Driven Anecdotes



Good Storytelling Fills Gossip Void



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Distill Lessons from Peers and Predecessors

New presidents will enter their role with numerous valuable ideas and critical experiences to relate to faculty and staff. Nonetheless, contacts cautioned presidents from entering the institution with a pre-conceived agenda. Instead, new presidents should take the first 100 days to observe the operations of the college and avoid any major institutional change, unless a specific situation demands it.

Surprisingly, smaller changes have the potential for upsetting faculty and staff more than large ones. Therefore, presidents should test any proposed changes with trusted advisors, including their executive assistant or tenured administrators.

Avoid Major Changes at First

Integrating Your Leadership

> "The first 100 days are not the time to implement system change, unless there are emergencies. Don't make sweeping actions in your first 100 days, unless you have to act. Even if you have sufficient information. **That paradox is the basis of the initial new college experience.**"
>
> *President, Community College (Southwest)*

1 Prioritize Staff Improvements

	Example	***Lesson***
Small changes may offend staff members more than large ones	Renovating the presidential office before the faculty lounge	"Don't spend on yourself first—it sends the wrong message. Replace the faculty's old coffee maker before renovating your carpets." *President of Community College*

2 Be Mindful of Presidential Speech

	Example	***Lesson***
Presidents face 24-hour scrutiny of words and actions	A staff member takes a president's musings literally during a meeting	"Know your own leadership style. Clearly explain any personal quirks or work expectations to your staff." *President of Community College*

3 Wait to Introduce Large Changes

	Example	***Lesson***
Big, early disruptions to institutional processes may engender resentment	Changing performance evaluation metrics too quickly	"I wanted to quickly improve to success rates, but I made the mistake of not getting enough faculty on board first." *President of Community College*

Two Channels to Solidify Presidential Vision

Policy Writing

- Provides operational procedures without presidential oversight
- Update polices each year
- Seek board approval for each policy

Strategic Plans

- Indicates long-term plan and concrete direction to the board
- Invite campus groups to join pending application
- Submit to faculty and staff leaders for review

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Maintain High Performance

The college presidency demands more energy than any other position in higher education. In fact, contacts commonly described work weeks exceeding 100 hours. Therefore, an effective and long-serving tenure depends on a reflective and self-sustaining practice.

Given the pressure for immediate results, contacts advised that new presidents look for quick ways to demonstrate impact at the beginning of their tenure. Incremental progress helps alleviate scrutiny from the board and community groups, while also providing concrete evidence of effectiveness in the role.

Finally, new presidents should set limits on their work schedule to prevent burn-out. Presidents will never be able to complete every outstanding task. Therefore, making a commitment to set aside personal time constitutes an energy investment for the future. Contacts recommended a range of personal activities from the introspective (e.g., journaling, performance self-evaluations) to the recharging (e.g., reading, hiking).

Recharging and Sustaining Yourself Beyond 100 Days

Look for Quick Wins to Build Momentum

Some may not be readily apparent during the interview process

"It seemed like the college **was committed to a new student-centric learning initiative, but it was stuck in committee**. I read the minutes and helped get it up and running quickly."

President, Community College (Southeast)

Some may require uncomfortable and decisive action

"There was someone frequently causing trouble on the executive team. **It was difficult to fire someone within the first few months but it hugely benefited the working environment.**"

President, Community College (Mid-Atlantic)

Some may need an outside perspective to justify

"When I joined our college , it did not have a grant office. **Creating one was one of my first actions as president and it became a huge asset to resource development**."

Dr. Stelfanie Williams, President
Vance-Granville Community College

Remember to Make Time for Yourself

"A colleague of mine recently left our institution to become president of another college. We spoke regularly about the demands of the position. Although, after a month into the job he said I never warned him about the issue of stamina."

"**Presidents are pulled in so many different directions that they need to be able to find time for themselves.** This could be meditation, exercise, reading a good book, or even watching TV. Presidents need to look after themselves or they risk burn out."

Dr. Susan Huard, President
Manchester Community College

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Leadership Transition Toolkit

SECTION 5

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Transition Toolkit Table of Contents

New to the Sector

Provides resources to brief presidents unfamiliar with the community college landscape

Tool 1: Industry Primers for New Leaders. 37

Contains essential books, briefs, and newsletters to become quickly informed of major trends and events

Tool 2: Glossary of Terms for New Leaders. 38

Lists the most common terms and sector-specific definitions

New to the Role

Includes ready-made templates to facilitate the transition whether you are new to campus or the role

Tool 3: Listening Tour Checklist 41

Organizes the listening tour process by providing a sample checklist of key constituency groups

Tool 4: Presidential Fundraising Online Launch Guide 42

Assists new presidents through a six step process in launching an online advancement initiative

Tool 5: Presidential Messaging Template 45

Helps presidents quickly structure and adapt their stories to multiple audiences

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Industry Primer for New Leaders

Purpose of the Tool

Presidents new to the community college sector will need to quickly familiarize themselves with its unique characteristics and diverse student population. This tool provides essential information for any community college executive.

Books:

- *What Excellent Community Colleges Do: Preparing all Students for Success;* Joshua Wyner
- *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success;* Thomas R. Bailey, Shanna Smith Jaggars, Davis Jenkins
- *Fundraising Strategies for Community College: The Definitive Guide for Advancement; Steve Klingman*

Briefs:

- Community College FAQs, CCRC
- AACC Research and Project Briefs
- The Aspen Institute
- EAB Executive Policy Briefing: Future Trends in Pell Grant Funding
- EAB Expert Perspective: How the New Trump Administration Will Affect Community Colleges
- EAB Resource Hub: Title IX and Sexual Violence Prevention and Response

Daily Email Newsletters:

- EAB Daily Briefing
- Community College FAQs, CCRC
- AACC Research and Project Briefs
- CC Daily (formerly the Community College Times)
- Inside Higher Ed's Community College Page
- The Chronicle's Community College Page
- POLITICO's Morning Education
- University Business
- STEMConnector
- CCRC (Community College Research Center out of Columbia University)
- Jobs for the Future

Source: AACC, http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Pages/fastfactsfactsheet.aspx EAB interviews and analysis.

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Glossary of Terms for New Leaders

Purpose of the Tool

Community college terminology often varies from similar language used in other higher education industries. Before communicating with community college members or research contacts, familiarize yourself with the language that is more commonly used in the CC setting. This will enable you to demonstrate your expertise on the CC landscape and hopefully assist in building rapport with the member or research contact.

Student Success

Applicant Conversion Rate: The applicant conversion rate is the only conversion rate that really matters for the two-year sector. Unlike four-years, two-year community colleges aren't concerned about their yield rates, which is often defined as the % of students who are accepted to the institution and actually enroll at the college. Instead, two-year colleges are increasingly focused on applicant-to-enrollee conversion, or the % of applicants who enroll at the college.

Articulation Agreement: An articulation agreement is an agreement between a community college and a four-year college/university regarding direct transfer pathways to baccalaureate programs upon completion of predetermined criteria.

Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence: The Aspen Prize is the most prestigious award a community college can receive in recognition of their great strides made to increase student success.

Cut-Scores: Cut-scores are the base scores a student must achieve on a placement test to be placed into college level coursework. No singular policy regarding cut scores exists either nationally or by state.

Developmental Education: Developmental education refers to educational resources, courses, and opportunities to bring students who test as college unready up to college-level standards. Remedial education is the outdated term to describe developmental education.

Dual Enrollment: This term is typically used to describe programs that allow high school students to simultaneously enroll in high school and community college courses. Colleges sometimes offer the courses right on the high school campus. Others let students come to the college and take the courses. Some students earn their associate's degree while still in high school.

Noncredit Student: Noncredit students are those enrolled in programs at community colleges that are not enrolled in programs that lead to an associate's degree or another credential that awards academic credit. Most of these programs involve workforce-specific training or contract training paid for by an employer. These students are seeking specific skills to advance in their careers or find a new job.

Onboarding: Onboarding is the period of time between the point of application and the first day of the term. This period is also known as 'intake' and is also the period of time when new applicants are expected to complete all required enrollment steps before becoming fully-matriculated students on campus.

Pathways: "Pathways" are also known as Guided Pathways or Structured Pathways. This is a national movement promoted by several big organizations (AACC, CCRC, Achieving the Dream, CCA, Gates Foundation, etc.) that is focused on streamlining the student experience by moving away from a 'cafeteria-style' experience (choose-your-own-adventure, selecting from many options of programs, courses, section, etc.) to a much more structured experience with limited options and required support activities.

Placement Tests: Placement tests use software to evaluate college readiness in reading, writing, and math. Common placement test vendors include COMPASS (recently discontinued by ACT), ACCUPLACER, TSI Assessment (Texas specific). Some states have created their own placement testing.

Success Coaches: Success coaches (also referred to as student mentors, faculty mentors, and academic coaches) are students' main point of contact throughout a program. Success coaches meet with students on a regular basis, in-person, over the phone, by email, or by Skype. Success coach conversations typically cover academic challenges, preparing for tests, and balancing school with work and life demands. At some schools, success coaches also help students navigate administrative issues, including financial aid and registration.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Glossary of Terms for New Leaders (cont.)

Recruitment

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Software: A CRM is a product that helps institutions automate, organize, and streamline interactions with customers (or students). Salesforce is a preeminent example.

Enrollment Funnel: The enrollment funnel is a visual schematic of the admissions process at colleges. It illustrates how college recruitment teams narrow a large prospect pool into a smaller, defined enrollment class.

Request for Information (RFI) Form: RFI is a marketing term to describe how customers (or students) can submit their contact details in exchange for more information about an institution.

Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM): SEM is a broad term to describe the overarching and institutional-wide approach to boosting enrollment and retention.

Traditional vs. Nontraditional Student: These terms differentiate between high school age "traditional" students (age 18-24) and adult "nontraditional" students (age 25+).

Workforce Development & Industry

Contract Training (corporate training, customized training): As an alternative revenue source, many community colleges partner with employers to design and deliver contract training for cohorts of their workers. These trainings are typically short-term and noncredit, and they are sometimes offered onsite at the employer's workplace.

Stackable Certificate: A certificate is considered stackable if students can apply the credits toward a degree. At many community colleges, students in selected programs may earn 1-3 stackable certificates (typically 12-30 credits each) as they work toward a full associate's degree; this practice raises completion rates and allows students to leave college with a credential even if they do not complete a full degree program.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant Program: From 2011-2014, the federal government offered four rounds of TAACCCT grants worth a combined total of $2 billion. These grants supported the development of innovative workforce training programs created by community colleges and industry partners.

Workforce Investment Board (WIB): The Workforce Investment Act (1998) set up a national network of local workforce investment boards to oversee employment and training services offered at American Job Centers (formerly called One-Stop Career Centers). Community college administrators may serve on WIBs and/or partner with WIBs to path job seekers toward college-based training programs.

Online Education

Competencies: are well-defined skills students need to possess in order to demonstrate learning, show workplace readiness, and complete credential programs. Faculty can develop competencies as part of an internal curriculum design process or draw competencies from an outside source, including industry associations, employers, and government agencies. Skills can range from hard technical competencies (e.g. manufacturing skills) to universal competencies (e.g. verbal communication).

Competency-Based Education (CBE): A delivery model that awards academic credit based on mastery of clearly defined competencies, rather than on "seat time." In traditional education, time is fixed and mastery is variable. In CBE, mastery is fixed and time is variable. With CBE, technology affords each student a distinct pathway through content based on what they know and don't know, and where they need the most support—"personalization at scale." There are two main types of personalization: personalized pacing and personalized content.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Glossary of Terms for New Leaders(cont.)

Title IX

Campus Climate Survey: Experts and policymakers recommend institutions administer an annual survey to all students about their experiences with sexual misconduct.

Office of Civil Rights (OCR): The OCR is an office within the Department of Education that investigates Title IX violations. OCR is currently investigating over 76 colleges.

Title IX (1972): Title IX prohibits sexual harassment at schools receiving federal funding. Requires schools to ensure equal access to all students, which cannot occur if a student has been victimized or is afraid of victimization.

Title IX Coordinator: The Title IX coordinator is primarily responsible for handling sexual misconduct reports and investigations at the college.

VAWA (2013): The Violence Against Women Act is included in the bill is the Campus SaVE Act that amends the Clery Act to require more training for the campus community and more transparency around sexual misconduct statistics.

Say This	Not That
Term	Semester
College	Universities; Institutions
Placement Test	Standardized Test
Working Adults	Nontraditional Students
Credential	Degree (colleges offer more than just degrees)
Goal (e.g., job, certificate, degree, transfer)	Degree or Graduation
Comprehensive College or Technical College	Community College
Open Access	Non-selective
Developmental Education	Remedial Education
Career and Technical Education (CTE)	Vocational Training
Stop Out	Drop Out

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Listening Tour Checklist

Purpose of the Tool

Listening tours require new presidents to meet with hundreds of faculty, staff, students, college, and business leaders. This process can become quickly overwhelming without clear organization. Moreover, these numerous meetings often necessitate follow-up communication, especially with key constituency groups such as board of trustee members. This checklist allows presidents to keep track of their major meetings and ensure a broad and comprehensive introduction to all major campus constituencies.

Constituency Category	Contact Title	Major Initiatives Identified	Meeting Date	Meeting Complete	Follow-Up Items
Presidential Cabinet	Executive Assistant				
	Vice President of Academic Affairs				
	Vice President of Student Affairs				
	Vice President of Business Operations				
	Vice President of Enrollment				
System Leadership	Board Chair or Chancellor				
	Board Members				
Faculty and Staff	Dean's Council				
	Faculty Senate				
	Union Leadership				
Students	Student Leadership				
	Open Student Forum				
Community Influencers	Local Politicians				
	Business Leaders				
Other Constituents					

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Guide for Online Presidential Fundraising

Purpose of the Tool

Mid-level donors often seek enhanced access to senior leaders. A presidential blog can meet this need easily and with little time commitment from the president. Follow these steps to launch a blog that effectively stewards donors.

Step 1: Select a Blog Manager

Although the president will be the face of the blog, another staff member must take ownership of coordinating and editing posts, drafting posts when the president is busy, and managing comments on posts. Use the checklist below to identify an ideal blog manager.

Blog Manager Candidate Checklist

	Attributes of Blog Manager
	Access to president
	Point of contact with donors
	Experience with stewardship
	Strong writing skills

Potential Blog Managers

- Leadership society director
- Stewardship manager
- Director of the annual fund

Step 2: Set Minimum Gift Level for Access

Establish a minimum dollar amount that will grant donors access to the president's blog. An ideal minimum gift level will alleviate a pain point in the giving pyramid where donors upgrade slowly or not at all. Use the questions below to identify a minimum gift that will inflect giving behaviors.

What giving tiers are already established?

_____

At which giving levels are a large number of donors currently parked?

_____

Which giving levels are you trying to move donors toward?

_____

Which giving level currently lacks strong stewardship initiatives? Which level does not receive the attention it deserves due to problems of scale?

_____

Which giving level is characterized by low satisfaction scores in donor surveys?

_____

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Guide for Presidential Fundraising (cont.)

Step 3: Finalize Logistics

Set the groundwork for a sustainable initiative by working through key logistical matters ahead of time. Answer the following questions for various aspects of the blog process.

Password Log-ins

How will passwords be delivered to donors (e.g., by email, in leadership society welcome packet, etc.)?

Will donors have a single sign-on option that links with their Facebook or email account?

Editing Process

Who will edit each post?

What are the criteria this individual should use to edit each post?

Posting Calendar

How frequently will blog posts be published?

How will posts align with other donor communications or events?

Step 4: Determine Content

Blogs posts should draw in readers and give them a feeling of insider access. Determine topics using the following criteria.

Board-Level Topics

Identify topics that might be presented to a board member or trustee

Uniquely Presidential

Consider topics in which there is deep and unique value in hearing the president's point of view

High Alumni Interest

Track blog post views, review donor surveys, and consult with alumni relations to identify topics most interesting to alumni

Example Titles from Ithaca College's President's Blog

- "'I Do Not Invest in Buildings—I Invest in People"
- "Seeing the Future in a Moment of Darkness"
- "Learning from Tragedy"

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Guide for Presidential Fundraising (cont.)

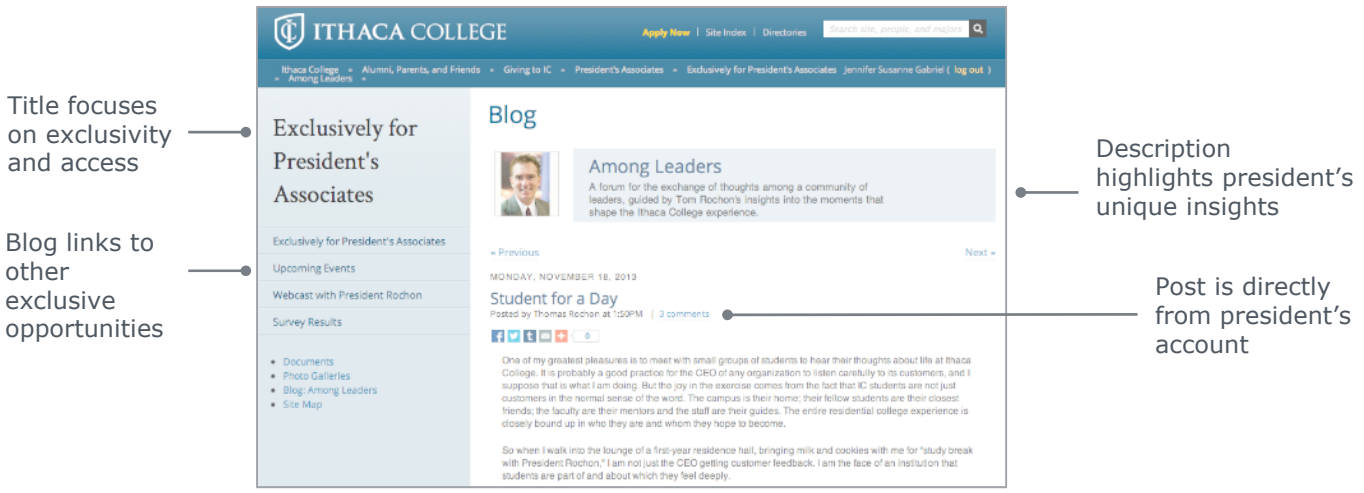
Step 5: Market and Brand the Blog

Eligible donors must know they have access to the blog—and they must know that access is exclusive. Set the groundwork for a sustainable initiative by developing strong marketing and branding initiatives.

Potential Marketing Pushes

- Email blast to all eligible donors introducing the blog
- Email blasts to all eligible donors for each blog post
- Personalized emails from MGOs to high-touch donors
- Inclusion of upcoming blog post topics in newsletters or other standard communications

Branding Techniques from Ithaca College's President's Blog



Step 6: Add Value for Donors Through Comment Thread Discussions

Continue the discussion by allowing donors to comment on blog posts. Add an additional level of stewardship by addressing donor comments. The blog manager should shift through comments and divide them into three categories.

1. Comments that do not require a response
2. Comments to be addressed by the President
3. Comments from top donors that should be addressed by their MGO

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Presidential Messaging Template

Purpose of the Tool

A compelling narrative can help any leader express their message. However, presidents cannot reasonably craft a unique story for every public engagement or speaking event. This tool structures story telling around four universal elements. It allows new presidents to quickly adjust the subject, obstacle, and resolution based on the audience.

Hero

I. Description: The main character who experiences a transformation in response to adversity.

II. Examples:

- First generation college student
- Working, single parent
- Faculty or staff member
- Successful college graduate

III. Selection advice: Align the hero of the story to prospective audience. A meeting with prospective employer partners prefer to hear success stories of graduates, whereas an address to an incoming class should articulate an example of a student overcoming adversity.

IV. Brainstorm for Common Audiences:

Students	*College Leadership*	*Faculty and Staff*	*Business Leaders*

Adversity

I. Description: Obstacles or circumstances that the hero must endure.

II. Examples:

- Single mother must balance family and work commitments
- Employee seeks new skills but worried about the time commitment

III. Selection advice: The hero's adversity should directly resonate with the supposed experience of the audience. A group of new students may want to hear about common challenges faced by first generation students, including navigating course selection or paying for college.

IV. Brainstorm for Common Audiences:

Students	*College Leadership*	*Faculty and Staff*	*Business Leaders*

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Presidential Messaging Template (cont.)

Resolution

I. Description: The way in which the hero overcomes the adversity.

II. Examples:

- College is able to provide child care and flexible courses to single parent
- College offers tailored courses to incumbent worker to achieve promotion

III. Selection advice: Find examples that highlight the strengths of the college. If you are speaking to potential employer partners, explain how the college uses experienced industry practitioners to teach courses.

IV. Brainstorm for Common Audiences:

Students	*College Leaders*	*Faculty and Staff*	*Business Leaders*

Value

I. Description: The lesson or teaching point to be imparted to the audience.

II. Examples:

- All students, even the most disadvantage can succeed
- The college provides invaluable training to regional employers

III. Selection advice: Connect the hero's resolution to the college's value proposition. This is particularly important when communicating delicate messages, including budget cuts or program changes.

IV. Brainstorm for Common Audiences:

Students	*College Leaders*	*Faculty and Staff*	*Business Leaders*

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Advisors to Our Work

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Advisors to Our Work

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The best practices are the ones that work for **you.**[SM]

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