Aligning Policy and Practice for Completion and Quality Learning Outcomes

1. SET GOALS FOR COMPLETION, QUALITY, AND EQUITY BASED ON
   - Policy makers’ and employers’ expectations of a graduate’s knowledge/skills
   - Faculty/administrators’ expectations of what a student should know and be able to do upon completion
   - 21st-century economic and social needs

2. ALIGN FACULTY/STAFF CAPACITY AND SUPPORTS WITH 21ST-CENTURY GOALS
   - Curricular design and assessment
   - Co-curricular programming
   - Assessments to improve educational practice

3. ALIGN STATE, SYSTEM, AND INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES WITH GOALS
   - Accreditation processes and policies
   - System-level or legislative committees, mandates, etc.
   - Data for accountability, funding, or incentives
   - Assessment policy and mechanisms for data collection
   - Campus transfer policy

4. DESIGN AN EQUITABLE STUDENT EXPERIENCE THAT ENCOMPASSES
   - The transfer experience
   - Student pathways and preparedness
   - Actual learning and progress in knowledge/skill acquisition

“Public policy cannot simply assume that program completion and high-level student achievement on key learning outcomes are one and the same. Access and completion are necessary but far from sufficient….the United States now must work both to increase degree attainment and to improve significantly the breadth, level, and quality of students’ actual learning….It should not be liberal education for some and narrow or illiberal education for others…Access to educational excellence is the equity challenge of our time.”

—The Quality Imperative (AAC&U Board of Directors, 2009)