



EXCEL Workshop E9: Nurturing a College-Going Culture that Ignites Engagement, Involvement, and Buy-In

Exercise A: Nurturing a College-Going Culture **Self-Assessment**

Review each of the activities and on a scale of 1-4, rate how well you are addressing the activity.

- 4: I do this well and as a matter of routine
- 3: I am doing this, but I can improve
- 2: I have plans to do this
- 1: I haven't started this

Activity	Self-Assessment Score
1. I know what the GEAR UP acronym stands for and the GEAR UP mission and vision statements .	
2. I am familiar with the data and metrics that my GEAR UP program uses to measure the success of our program.	
3. I work collaboratively with team members and community partners to advance the GEAR UP agenda.	
4. I attend in-person and online training opportunities to enhance my college and career readiness expertise.	
5. I am aware of college and career readiness campaigns aimed at inspiring and empowering students and families.	
7. I utilize technology resources to access free online tools and college readiness platforms from trusted sources.	
8. I am familiar with the key events, opportunities, and deadlines implemented by my GEAR UP program.	
9. I ensure that GEAR UP and college readiness are addressed regularly at group, team, staff, faculty, and department meetings .	
10. I celebrate the progress towards our GEAR UP program goals and student achievements.	
Self-Assessment – Total Score = _____	

Exercise B: Nurturing a College-Going Culture *Program-Assessment

**(i.e., GEAR UP Program, School, District, Organization, Institution, State/Partnership)*

Review each of the activities and on a scale of 1-4, rate how well your program (i.e., GEAR UP program, school, district, organization, institution, state/partnership) is addressing the activity.

- 4: We do this well and as a matter of routine
- 3: We are doing this, but we can improve
- 2: We have plans to do this
- 1: We haven't started this

Activity	Program-Assessment Score
Expect: What We Work Toward	
1. Establish a vision statement for your community that articulates the aspirations of your school as it relates to increasing college enrollment over time.	
2. Develop, display, and align your goals with a memorable school mission statement that is inclusive and defines college enrollment as the expectation for all graduates.	
3. Establish a comprehensive definition of “college” that includes high-quality certificate, two-year, and four-year programs of study.	
4. Articulate and incorporate key college-going metrics into your school practices and action planning, including course-taking patterns, FAFSA completion, college enrollment, and other measures.	
5. Set specific annual goals for each of the college-going metrics, collect data, and report outcomes to school and community stakeholders.	
6. Facilitate a continual improvement process to engage school and community stakeholders in annual action planning to improve college-going outcomes.	
7. Provide professional development, continuing education, and training experiences related to college-going processes to all school counselors, teachers, administrators, and staff.	
8. Identify areas for alignment between schools in a given feeder pattern to create a seamless expectation of college going among students and educators.	

9. Develop collaborative partnerships among the education, business, and community sectors to leverage their distinctive expertise to create unique initiatives and programs.	
10. Implement systemic and systematic interventions program-wide, working with students, parents, families, schools, districts, institutions of higher education, and strategic partners, to reach all program students.	
Expect: What We Work Toward – Total Score = _____	

Activity	Program-Assessment Score
Signal: What We Say and Show	
11. Communicate regularly about the benefits of college to students, families, and communities through all your communications channels (i.e., school announcements, social media, email/newsletters, sporting events, etc.)	
12. Develop memorable slogans/tag-lines to emphasize your college-going focus and reinforce that message regularly.	
13. Post college posters, pennants, and other materials in school entrances, halls, in classrooms, and student common areas. Encourage teachers to wear attire from the college they attended.	
14. Empower students to play a role in decorating and refreshing the college artifacts, organize competitive door decoration contests, and other activities that make college visible.	
15. Focus on communicating events, opportunities, and key deadlines related to the college-going and financial aid processes to students and families.	
16. Participate in high-visibility campaigns , such as National GEAR UP Week, College Awareness Month, FAFSA Completion Initiative, College Application Week, and College Signing Day.	
17. Celebrate the progress towards your college going metrics, success stories, and campaigns.	
18. Showcase successful school alumni as they progress through and complete college.	
19. Inspire students and families through school-based events, community events, and convenings with engaging speakers.	
20. Lead social media engagement (<i>Twitter, Facebook, Instagram</i>) and collaborate with media organizations to develop and circulate information, resources, and tools to assist students and families, as well as showcase your program efforts.	
Signal: What We Say and Show – Total Score = _____	

Activity	Program-Assessment Score
Immerse: What Experiences We Create	
21. Establish a resource center where students, families, and staff can access trusted resources related to colleges, the college planning process, and financial aid.	
22. Provide technology resources for students to access free online tools and student college readiness platforms from trusted sources.	
23. Ensure that college-going metrics and action steps are regularly addressed at faculty and staff meetings and take occasional deep dives on topics that require troubleshooting.	
24. Design and deliver a variety of small and large group student engagement experiences through clubs, teams, camps, peer leadership groups, and student organizations that include and incorporate components of college and career readiness.	
25. Offer in-person and virtual college visits designed to provide participating students and families with an overview and action steps for future opportunities, enhance motivation, and create a sense of belonging.	
26. Offer in-person and virtual career industry tours, excursions, and trips designed to help students and families explore career paths and connect their career aspirations to education.	
27. Utilize school alumni to participate in college and career readiness initiatives and events to highlight postsecondary success stories, academic achievements, and career options.	
28. Host college and career fairs that include a wide-range of options, to include community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, career schools and apprenticeship and certificate-granting institutions.	
29. Provide sessions and seminars that articulate the importance and use of college and career assessments , registration guidelines, and participation details, followed by individual and small group assessment score analysis meetings.	
30. Provide programming, initiatives, and engagement opportunities for students to serve in leadership and advisory roles , such as youth committee members, near-peer advisors, mentors, and youth group leaders.	
Immerse: What Experiences We Create – Total Score = _____	

Activity	Program-Assessment Score
Guide: What Support We Provide	
31. Prepare and provide consistent college and career readiness advisement, counseling, and mentorship that align with school, grade level, and individual student educational goals and aspirations.	
32. Provide students with college readiness guides, planning tools, and grade-level calendars that include quarterly and annual goals, expectations, important dates, and deadlines.	
33. Incorporate college-going topics and activities into classroom instruction and assignments .	
34. Incorporate college-going topics and activities into advisory seminars/courses .	
35. Encourage students to enroll in academically rigorous courses aligned to college and career readiness.	
36. Provide students with the necessary academic and social supports needed to succeed in challenging courses.	
37. Offer opportunities for remediation, credit recovery , and related student support services.	
38. Provide transition and summer bridge programs that prepare students and families for the transition between middle-school, high school, and college.	
39. Encourage and support students with participation and preparation for the ACT/SAT, Honors, IB, and Advanced Placement assessments.	
40. Host college admission and scholarship application workshops , including essay writing skills, resume development, and application completion strategies.	
Guide: What Support We Provide – Total Score = _____	

Exercise C: Nurturing a College-Going Culture **Action Planning**

From your **self-assessment** and your team's **program-assessment**, identify and prioritize the top four activities from the list that you and your team want to start planning for, launch, or improve. Begin this exercise with your highest priority activity. Plan to share with the group.

Activity #1:

Goals (Your Desired Outcomes)	Audience (Who You Want to Affect & Who Needs to Be Involved)	Our Capacity (Your Known Assets, Partners, Strengths)
Activities (How You'll Achieve the Goals)		Milestones & Timeline (Key Requirements & When You'll Get It Done)

Activity #2:

Goals (Your Desired Outcomes)	Audience (Who You Want to Affect & Who Needs to Be Involved)	Our Capacity (Your Known Assets, Partners, Strengths)
Activities (How You'll Achieve the Goals)	Milestones & Timeline (Key Requirements & When You'll Get It Done)	

Activity #3:

Goals (Your Desired Outcomes)	Audience (Who You Want to Affect & Who Needs to Be Involved)	Our Capacity (Your Known Assets, Partners, Strengths)
Activities (How You'll Achieve the Goals)	Milestones & Timeline (Key Requirements & When You'll Get It Done)	

Activity #4:

Goals (Your Desired Outcomes)	Audience (Who You Want to Affect & Who Needs to Be Involved)	Our Capacity (Your Known Assets, Partners, Strengths)
Activities (How You'll Achieve the Goals)		Milestones & Timeline (Key Requirements & When You'll Get It Done)