

Sustained inquiry (asking key questions) is a board's most useful tool as it fulfills its fiduciary duties. Boards will need to ask intentional questions of themselves and institutional stakeholders.

Much of our research has demonstrated that an institution can be doing intentional work regarding equitable student success without board engagement and vice versa, so it is helpful to ask questions at two levels.

Where are you?

Where is the institution?

- How does differentiation across institution type and mission create an opportunity to advance student success in equity-informed ways?
- What do your student, staff, and faculty demographics look like?
- What are your goals for student success?

Where is the board?

- Has the board determined what student success means at its institution?
- Has the board assessed its own commitment to equitable student success and to continuous board engagement to work toward these goals?
- Has the board started discussing what its role is in terms of student success?
- Has the board worked with the chief executive and other leaders to review student and campus data related to equitable student success?

Where do you need to be?

Where does the institution need to be?

- How do the unique demographics of an institution create opportunities to advance student success in equity-informed ways?
- Where are the equity gaps related to student success?
- What are the goals the institution has across these metrics?
- Where are our peer institutions related to these goals?

Where does the board need to be?

- Has the board worked with the president to establish equitable student success as a priority?
- Has the board worked with the president to set clear expectations for equitable student success?

How do you get to where you want/need to be?

How does the institution get there?

- How can facilitating and leveraging the expertise of other campus stakeholders produce opportunities to advance student success in equity-informed ways?
 - What is the explicit role board members have to play in achieving these goals?
 - What are those policies, practices, procedures, and people that the board needs to oversee?

How does the board get there?

- Does the board have a system in place where it can regularly receive updates regarding progress on equitable student success?

How do you remain agile to continue progressing?

How does the institution progress?

- Equity and student success are not items to check off a list. Achievement does not look like a destination, but rather a journey.

How does the board progress?

- Is the board intentionally and consistently evaluating and assessing metrics and attainment related to student success?
- Is the assessment both internal (centered on the board) and external (centered on the institution)? As your knowledge base, goals, and stakeholders change, (re)assessment is key. Continuous reassessment is necessary.
- Has the institution or the board become predisposed to changing approaches as it learns?