

**TOOL #3**

# SCENARIO-BASED WRITING EXERCISE

## SCENARIO 1

You are starting as president of a college that has (1) completion rates below both the national average and the rates of similar community colleges and (2) sizable completion gaps by race, ethnicity, and income level. Recently, your state legislature has stepped up pressure for public colleges to produce more graduates. It is becoming increasingly likely that the college will lose funding in future years if it cannot significantly improve completion rates—which will put critical college operations at risk. How would you lead the college in addressing this critical challenge? What steps would you take, and whom would you involve? How do you ensure that efforts to increase attainment do not result in decreased access for and success among the student populations who traditionally have performed at the lowest levels?

## SCENARIO 2

You discover soon after assuming your presidency that surveys of the college's recent graduates and data from the state about post-graduation earning and employment rates reveal that (1) 20% of graduates are unemployed and (2) graduates' average salaries are significantly lower than salaries of others with associate's degrees in the college's service area. How would you as president respond? With whom would you share the data and how? What steps would you consider to improve these outcomes? How quickly can things be turned around so outcomes for graduates improve?

## SCENARIO 3

Documents at the community college where you have recently become president show that, consistently, three-quarters of incoming students name attaining a bachelor's degree as their goal, and most are enrolled in liberal arts associate's programs. Yet the college's combined three-year graduation rate for associate's degrees plus four-year transfer rates has remained at 36% for many years. And, based on reports from a few four-year partners, it appears that most of the college's transfers never actually finish their bachelor's degrees. The board agrees that this needs to change, and sets as a target 50% of entering students attaining an associate's degree and transferring to a four-year institution within four years of entering the community college. And, the board would also like to improve bachelor's degree attainment rates. As president, how do you go about making these improvements happen? How would you do so in a way that ensures full participation and strong levels of completion among historically underserved populations?