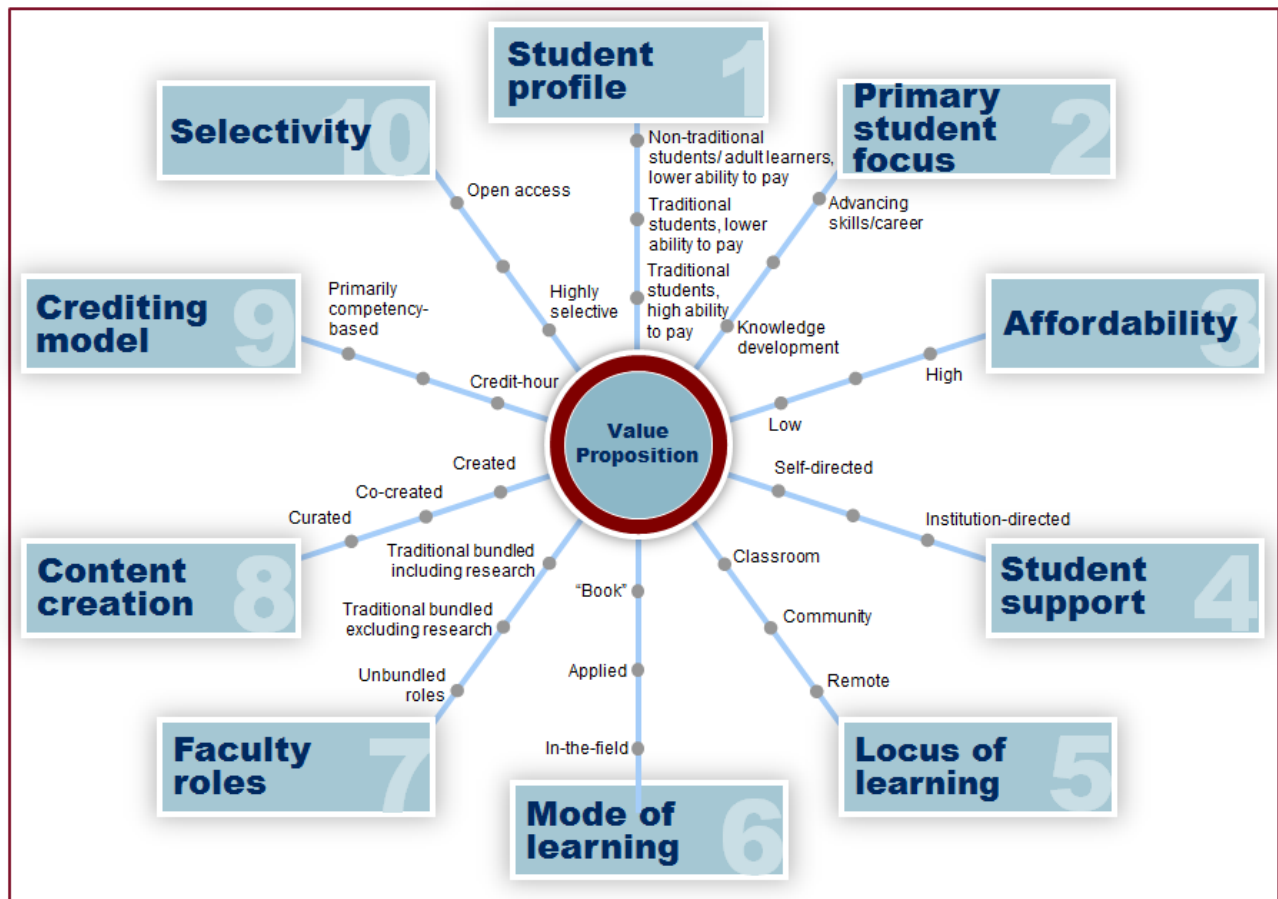


HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

Part 4: Perspectives from the Field



Through in-depth interviews with more than 100 higher education leaders and experts to identify key themes for [successful changes in higher education](#), 10 models of transformational change surfaced that are leading to noticeable results for institutions and students.

The graphic above illustrates a framework of issue areas for institutional leaders to consider explicitly and in relationship with each other to ensure they make decisions that best align with their institution's goals, and help each institution organize and operationalize its value proposition.

Institutional Snap Shot | Lipscomb University

When Randy Lowry assumed the presidency of Lipscomb University—a small, faith-based private liberal arts school in Nashville, Tennessee—the school had faced falling enrollment and a shrinking budget for the past two decades. Under Lowry’s leadership, Lipscomb created a competency-based education (CBE) program for adult learners in order to address these issues and appeal to a broader set of prospective students.

Unlike most CBE programs, which use their own proprietary software, Lipscomb acquired an off-the-shelf CBE platform. Lipscomb selected a platform that was designed by Organization Systems International (OSI) and used in the private sector to develop employees’ competencies. Lipscomb convened groups of employers to determine which competencies were most relevant and then selected corresponding proficiency standards for students utilizing existing OSI research.

Upon enrollment, students in the CBE program participate in a behavioral assessment at Lipscomb’s [CORE Competency Assessment Center](#). Trained behavioral assessors evaluate the students across 15 different competencies. While many CBE programs also use exams to evaluate students, the in-person method that Lipscomb employs allows for a more complete evaluation of a student’s skills and learning style. Through the initial evaluation, students can demonstrate skills that earn credit hours toward a degree.

Following the assessment, students work one-on-one with trained coaches to define the goals of the student’s program and develop a custom pathway that will meet his or her specific needs.

Once students make progress within a competency, they revisit the assessment center, where they are again evaluated. Lipscomb offers coaches substantial incentive payments for each competency level its students advance.

Lipscomb’s CBE program is helping more students meet their college and career goals. Flexible class schedules allow adult learners to balance their education with competing priorities, such as work and family. Cost savings, when compared to a traditional degree at Lipscomb, also remove barriers for students facing other pressing financial obligations. Degree cost for the CBE program is approximately 60 percent of the cost of a traditional degree at Lipscomb, and the time to degree is approximately three semesters shorter.

In the first year, 63 students participated in evaluations at the assessment center, receiving 441 badges, roughly equivalent to 1,323 undergraduate credit hours. Lipscomb has already established partnerships with four companies and is working to expand the number of company partners.

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Sue Desmond-Hellmann and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.

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