

## What is ACE Pathway?

ACE Pathway is a comprehensive methodology to help colleges increase retention and completion rates of students who leave before, during or after their first semester. These vulnerable students are tentatively connected to college - academically, socially or culturally. ACE Pathway guides colleges through a structured process of both data-based inquiry and tangible evidence-based actions to determine how to address the needs of their vulnerable students by:

- Understanding vulnerable students' needs
- Exploring available interventions that meet those needs
- Planning and implementing a way forward



## How is ACE Pathway different than other approaches?

- **Student-centered design.** ACE employs a student-centered design based on a thorough, accurate understanding of these students' needs, instead of making assumptions about the students based solely on demographics and external risk factors. We work to help you understand what's going on inside your students.
- **Matching solutions to needs.** ACE Pathway helps colleges to gauge the size of their vulnerable population, determine appropriate interventions, and individually measure student vulnerability to guide each student to the right intervention. This matching can reduce your costs and increase effectiveness.
- **Beyond a program.** ACE approaches can create a *paradigm shift* in the ways your college and faculty work with vulnerable students by exposing college faculty and staff to new pedagogy, professional development, curriculum and classroom climates.
- **Proven solutions.** Goes beyond study and planning to provide proven solutions you can actually implement (e.g., curriculum, implementation tools, services).
- **Implementation support.** Some colleges try to disseminate some interesting ideas or float a draft plan, then "hope" change will happen on its own... but this approach rarely works. With concrete implementation support your college can develop appropriate interventions and foster instructional excellence.

## Why is ACE qualified to offer Pathway?

ACE is entirely focused on meeting the needs of vulnerable students, with ten years' experience developing methodologies and diagnostic approaches grounded in analysis and independent evaluation, including pioneering investigation of the impact of the affective domain on student performance. As of fall 2011, ACE evidence-based solutions have been used with 8 colleges in 4 states, over 2,500 students, and provided professional development for over 400 faculty. For more information about research measuring ACE effectiveness see [my-ace.org/why-ace](http://my-ace.org/why-ace).

## What are some of the outcomes of using ACE Pathway?

Through the ACE Pathway process, college faculty and staff have learning experiences and create tangible work products addressing these key questions:

- Who are these vulnerable students?
- How many of our incoming students are vulnerable?
- How can we reach these students?
- What can we do to increase retention & completion for these students?

Through answering these questions we expect colleges to:

- Build stronger stakeholder support to address vulnerable student challenges
- Design programs to increase retention & completion for your vulnerable students
- Create a viable, broadly-supported plan to implement the program designs



## How does ACE Pathway work?

ACE Pathway is a year-long process to collect data and apply theory to help a college understand what their vulnerable students really need – based on data as opposed to anecdotal information or personal preferences. This approach can satisfy stakeholders who demand analytic rigor – the ones who ask “how do we KNOW?” The main elements are:

1. *ACE Pathway Transformational Elements* are ACE’s distilled understanding of what works with vulnerable students into a set of principles. These elements point to the desired state and can be used to measure how far a college is from that goal.
2. *ACE Pathway Analytic Tools* are a suite of data collection and analysis instruments, including
  - a. *Transformational Element Surveys*: Determines current faculty, staff, and student perceptions in terms of the ACE Pathway Transformational Elements.
  - b. *ACE CSSAS instrument*: Identifies vulnerable students and measures their vulnerability. For more information see [my-ace.org/ACE-CSSAS-DataSheet.pdf](http://my-ace.org/ACE-CSSAS-DataSheet.pdf)
  - c. *Student Focus Groups*: Supports a college to get direct and personal input from vulnerable students.
3. *Core Concept webinars* provide important ACE theory and well as practical wisdom from ACE Master Mentors (senior ACE Faculty who train faculty) and follow-up lab session promote faculty-to-faculty conversation.
4. *Face-to-Face Events* include a launch meeting to kick off the first phase and an implementation planning meeting to begin the final phase.
5. *Structured Methodology* comprised of three phases of analysis and self-reflection activity to build a solid foundation of understanding.
6. The *ACE Pathway Collaboration Platform* brings it all together in an online environment that promotes sharing, discussion, and consensus building.
7. Professional development institutes and conferences provide additional information and collaboration opportunities. For more information see [my-ace.org/ACE-FELI-DataSheet.pdf](http://my-ace.org/ACE-FELI-DataSheet.pdf)

## Does ACE Pathway work for colleges with existing learning communities?

Yes. In cases where a learning community is not meeting expectations, the college can protect its significant investment by “turbo-charging” the learning community with proven solutions from ACE:

- ACE Foundation Course provides a strong launch of the cohort and begins to build students’ intrinsic strengths
- ACE Team Self Management Course supports a healthy cohort throughout the semester by further developing the peer support network
- ACE Behavior System and Faculty cohort model help faculty facilitate a student cohort successfully



## How can I learn more about ACE Pathway?

Read more online at [www.my-ace.org/pathway](http://www.my-ace.org/pathway) or contact the ACE Pathway Manager, Dr. Jim Knickerbocker at [pathway@my-ace.org](mailto:pathway@my-ace.org).

