



OHSSF Virtual Clinic

# Dealing with Initiative Fatigue

April 29, 2019

# About Sova

## *Building Capacity for Large-scale Change In Higher Education*

Accelerating the pace and improving the quality of complex problem solving in higher education and workforce development;

Helping higher education leaders move from strategy to action, from solution to implementation, and from pilot to scaled intervention;

Specifically, helping higher education leaders with business planning, change leadership, process improvement, and project management.



# About Sova

## *Our Approach*

High-quality innovation that is evidence-based, sustainable, and scalable;

Attention to both the technical and human dimensions of change;

Clear-eyed attention to resource allocation;

Rigorous focus on nimble process design;

Planning for authentic engagement of critical stakeholders;

Improving collaboration between groups to build a culture of co-ownership for student-success efforts.

## The Target:

Faculty, staff, & administrators in healthy cultures...

...see a strong connection between personal and professional goals and the student success priorities of the campus

...believe that innovating for better student outcomes is of urgent importance to everyone at the institution, including themselves

...feel respected and valued by colleagues and institutional leadership

...know how proposed changes will impact them day-to-day

...understand how student success initiatives align with institutional priorities

...believe they have the support and guidance to be successful in their roles

# Basic Assumptions

1

Communication will *always* be a challenge, & change will *always* be hard

2

Culture is largely the product of processes & structures, so culture-building is also about *process improvement*

3

The burdens of leadership include taking responsibility, taking hits, letting go of easy answers, & practicing compassion

4

There will be no lasting gains in the absence of systematic, on-going attention to culture-building

# Just Busy or Truly Fatigued?

## 7 Questions to Assess Your Starting Point



Does the institution lack processes for quantifying impact and prioritizing initiatives?



Are initiatives launched without coordination across units and functions?



Are initiatives launched without success metrics?



Are initiatives launched without business cases?



Does the current number of initiatives have a negative impact on productivity and prioritization?



Are people excited to absorb new priorities without stopping past projects?



Are initiatives launched without a full analysis of ongoing support needs?

# Addressing Initiative Fatigue

## 7 Questions to Answer Before Launching or Continuing an Initiative



How does the initiative connect to the strategic priorities and what's the evidence of effectiveness?



Who is affected and what is the time commitment needed to develop the skills/capacity to implement?



In addition to the division that owns the initiative, what other areas or functions will be implicated?



What are the resources needed to sustain it, how will it be funded, what is the anticipated ROI?



How will the college determine if it has the capacity to take on the initiative?



What tradeoffs are we willing to make (in other words, if we do this what won't get done)?



How will the results be assessed, and decisions made about continuing or stopping the initiative?





# Dealing with Initiative Fatigue

## Tools for Moving Forward





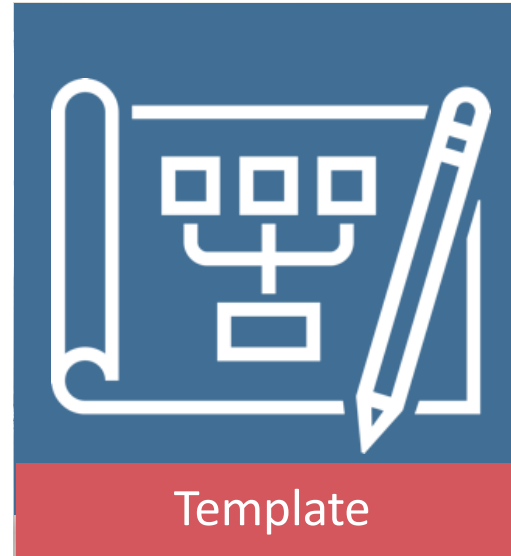
# Initiative Inventory

## *Taking stock of your student success initiatives*

Nearly every institution attempting large-scale student-success transformation is awash in discrete initiatives that, when not sufficiently coordinated, contribute to a sense of 'initiative fatigue' (the leading symptoms of which are slowed/poor implementation, low moral, declining confidence in leadership, active resistance and passive non-compliance).

The **student success initiative inventory** helps student-success leadership teams understand the current state of affairs and serves as a key input in combating initiative fatigue.

By taking a clear-eyed look at the full range of success initiatives being pursued, institutional leaders have the opportunity to uncover the true effects of change decisions across their institutions.



Template

“Plug-n-play” template aimed at capturing the critical info needed to provide a comprehensive inventory of your initiatives



Guide

Discussion guide to inform deliberation and action planning around prioritization and strategic alignment of initiatives

# Inventory Categories & Questions

## *High-Level Overview*

**Time Period:** When did each initiative begin? What is the target date for full implementation?

**Funding:** What is the funding source & anticipated duration of funding for each initiative (what's the balance of grant-funded vs base-funded)?

**Origin:** Is there a pattern around how & where initiatives originate & what does that tell you about institutional decision-making?

**Primary “Owner” & Others Impacted:** Where does each initiative “live” and who across the institution will be implicated or impacted during implementation?

**Progress:** How & how many are students impacted by each initiative? How do you assess progress on implementation & measure effectiveness?



Thank you.  
(and onward!)

**SOVA**  
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