

# Fostering a Data-Informed Culture

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# Presentation Overview

1. The Role of Data in Strategic Enrollment Planning
2. Building a Data-Informed Culture
3. Practical Examples & Case Studies
  - Valdosta State University
  - Youngstown State University
4. Challenges & Solutions
5. Summary & Key Takeaways
6. Q & A

**“In God we trust. All other must  
bring data.”**

**W. Edwards Deming**

# Data Informed Culture for SEP

## Unpacking the Concept

- Stories vs. data informed understandings
- The role of data in strategic enrollment planning
  - Market position: competition, market share, enrollment projections
  - Enrollment (new and continuing) by HC, SCH, FTE, level / program / demographics / geography
  - The Enrollment Funnel with melt
  - Student Data: demographics, 1<sup>st</sup> gen., OOS, International, Transfer Credits, athlete,
  - Student Success: SSI, NSSE, CIRP, CSI, Cohort persistence, Retention, Completion
  - Financial: Pell eligibility, tuition discounts, loan default rate, scholarship to persistence
  - Academic: enrollment by program, by modality, demand (employer & student)

# Why a Data-Informed Culture Matters

## Traction, Momentum, Progress, Agility, Prepared

- Informed decision-making
- Improved student success and retention
- Enhanced institutional competitiveness
- Realistic identity
- Greater accountability and transparency
- Intuitive prioritization
- Collective understanding

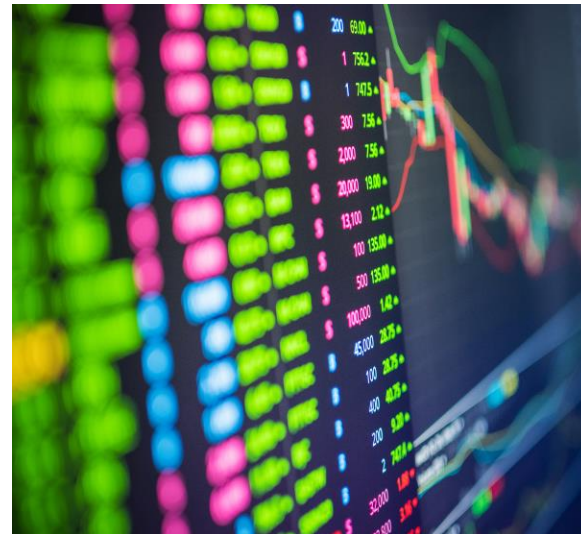
# KPIs: Critical to Strategic Planning

## The project heartbeat and EKG

- Provides direction for the strategic planning project
- Enables data-informed decision making
- Translates strategy into measurable outcomes
- Monitor progress and performance
- Supports accountability across the institution
- Fosters a culture of continuous improvement
- Helps to communicate success and build trust

## Collect, Organize, and Analyze the DATA

- Determine the right data
- Agree to official sources
- Adopt nomenclature and definitions
- Ensure accessibility and integration
- Identify trends, disaggregate, and benchmark
- Connect to decision-making
- Build data capacity and data-informed culture



# The Valdosta SEP Data Story

## Data-informed, Student-driven

- Unified structure for student success to align with the student journey
  - Institutional Research + SLATE Administration + University Advising + Student Success and Retention
- Turning data into an institutional muscle
- Clarifying the signal in the noise
- Governance that enables, not restricts
- Alignment, not addition
- A culture that sees, learns, and responds



# The Youngstown SEP Data Story

## Student Success is Everyone's Responsibility

- Reorganization
  - Strategically aligned areas for more cohesive data reporting and data analytics
- Creation of data governance committee
  - Re-defined roles and responsibilities
  - Identified and created policies around single source of truth
- Data analytics vs data reporting
- Optimization of existing products and implementation of strategic software
- Collaboration
  - A good team is a greater action

# Building a data-informed culture

## Challenges & Solutions

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION
Siloed data & systems	Implement integrated data platforms and cross-functional data teams
Lack of data literacy across campus	Offer training, workshops, and ongoing support tailored to various audiences
Resistance to change or Transparency	Use change management strategies; highlight data success stories
Inconsistent data definitions & governance	Establish clear data standards, definitions, and a data governance framework
Limited time or capacity to analyze & act on data	Automate reporting, embed insights into planning processes, and prioritize high-impact KPIs
Distrust in data accuracy	Improve data quality, validate regularly, and foster transparency in reporting

# Fostering a Data-Informed Culture

- Data is a **strategic asset**, not just a reporting function: *Elevating data to decision-making **fuels transformation***
- Culture change is intentional and collective: A data-informed culture thrives when leaders model **transparency, curiosity, and cross-departmental collaboration**
- Start with **purpose and people**: *Ensure that data practices align with institutional mission and include **stakeholder voices** early and often*
- Build the **infrastructure** then build the **trust**: *Tools training and governance must be paired with **clear communication and iterative wins***
- Make data **visible, actionable, and shared**: *create a collective story to achieve collective goals*



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