

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION SIGNALS

ARE YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY?

Digital transformation (Dx) is a series of deep and coordinated culture, workforce, and technology shifts that enable new educational and operating models and transform an institution's business model, strategic directions, and value proposition. Dx can make institutions more resilient, flexible, and relevant as they face an array of increasingly difficult challenges.

But what does that look like in practice? How do you know where your institution stands? This list is intended as a way for you to get a sense of your institution's progress on that journey and to learn about how you can move forward.

Are you working toward transformation related to...

- One of your institution's major challenges, such as student success, financial health, reputation and relevant, or external competition
- Institutional value proposition
- Change in business model
- Institutional or departmental strategic direction

Will the outcome...

- Be substantial
- Have a profound impact
- Result in tangible and fundamental change

Are you working toward deep and coordinated change?

These elements might not be necessary for initial Dx efforts, but should be present as Dx initiatives expand. Is there evidence of...

- Visible commitment from senior leadership such as presidents, provosts, and boards
- Broad C-suite involvement and collaboration in defining Dx objectives and coordinating Dx efforts
- Explicit Dx plans or roadmaps
- Dedicated leadership for Dx
- Funding for Dx viewed as an investment toward a strategic outcome

Dx requires institutional change in culture, workforce, and technology. Is your institution working toward these changes?

Culture Shifts

Is there evidence of these shifts in culture?

- Focus toward institutional goals and away from siloed goals
- Focus on institutional differentiation
- Innovation is strategic, sustainable, and driven by institutional ambitions
- Leaders are willing to adopt new strategic directions
- Reliance on data and analytics and other forms of evidence to inform and adjust institutional course
- Shift from risk aversion to risk management
- Leadership rapidly makes decisions and adjusts strategy in response to changing circumstances and new opportunities
- IT investments and initiatives fully align with institutional priorities through governance
- Adept at change management
- Institutional flexibility and agility regarding business processes
- Emergence of new levels of cross-organizational alignment and collaboration
- Culture of trust, supported by accountability and data
- Procurement coordinated at the institutional level and responsive to marketplace changes
- Active institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)
- An IT organization charged with identifying new digital strategies in direct support of the institution's transformational goals
- Academic curriculum redefined to better serve student needs
- New incubators for exploring and piloting innovative approaches and new sources of revenue
- Investments and technology implementations specific to Dx projects are informed by user experience
- Increased use of data and analytics to inform and guide the Dx process

Workforce Shifts

Is there evidence of these shifts in workforce?

- New jobs and roles, e.g., chief data officer, chief innovation officer, student success officer, enterprise architect, and roles related to vendor management, user experience, and business relationship management
- IT staff have deep familiarity with the “business” of higher education
- Increased pace of change and scope in IT liaison roles to align with expanding role of data and digital technologies in research, administration, and teaching and learning
- Increased blurring and reforming of academic disciplines
- Ongoing focus on new and shifting professional competencies that require continuous role agility
- Increasing importance of skills such as teamwork, collaboration, and communication
- Greater institutional accountability for career growth and talent management to supplement and support department and individual efforts
- Increased emphasis on work/life balance, flexible schedules and work locations, and new benefits to increase bring and retention success
- Focus on literacy around DEI across the institution
- Data fluency is a core competency across the workforce
- Expectation of continuous improvement and service management competencies for the workforce
- Institutional agility and flexibility in restructuring the workforce to adapt to rapid, ongoing changes

Technology Shifts

Is there evidence of these shifts in technology?

- Shift toward sourcing and managing technology infrastructure centrally or outside the institution
- Technology, business, and enterprise architecture with agility and flexibility as key priorities
- IT initiatives and services directly tied to institutional outcomes
- Growing sophistication of cybersecurity strategy to respond to new risks and solutions stemming from digital transformation
- Applications of emerging technologies to education, research, and other priorities viewed as potential institutional differentiators
- Defined data and analytics strategy that guides institutional decision making
- Increased focus on data privacy and ethics
- Support for DEI in the development, selection, and deployment of new technologies
- Business and funding models that acknowledge the continually evolving nature of technology