Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality—and so are the standards faculty members set for their students. Higher education scholar Vincent Tinto has said, “High expectations are a condition for student success, low expectations a receipt for failure. Simply put, no one rises to low expectations.”

The purpose of this tool is to support your conversations about setting high expectations that students will want to meet.

**VIDEO CONTENT:**
High Expectations Matter

Through the following video clips, several students describe the value of their instructors having high expectations of them.

» Which video clip stood out to you the most? Why?

» What actions can your college take to ensure that instructors set high expectations of their students?

“My biology teacher’s classes were really tough. It was a lot of work. But it was five credits, and it’s what you signed up for. And the base of knowledge I have after making it through her class … it’s indispensable.”

— STUDENT

**TOOLS FOR SHARING CCCSE DATA**

The SENSE and CCSSE Faculty Predictions Exercises can be used to jump start discussions with faculty on whether and why faculty predictions about data related to such topics as setting high expectations differ from actual student responses.
DATA ABOUT HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Students’ descriptions of high expectations emphasize the value of being pushed to excel. Their comments make it clear that they want to get good grades because they do strong work—and that teachers who give passing grades for substandard work are not doing them favors:

“When teachers fail me sometimes, I actually learn more in their classes because of the way they teach than I would learn from teachers that are friendly and pass you just to be cool.”

— STUDENT

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

› What does it mean to go to our college? Do our students see college merely as registering for and attending classes? Or do they see it as a coherent academic and personal development experience that prepares them for successful outcomes, including meaningful lives and productive careers?

› Do faculty members encourage students to put in their best effort rather than do the minimum work needed?

› Do faculty members set clear expectations for their coursework? Do they tell students that the work may be challenging but they are confident that the students can learn it?

› What kind of professional development can we provide for faculty members so they can help students around their fears of failure with new and intimidating content?

› What kinds of support services can be integrated within a student’s first year of college (and beyond) to ensure they have the tools and resources needed to meet the high expectations set by their instructors and by the college in general?