



Almy Education

The Higher Education Leader's Blueprint for **Successful** **Gateway Course Redesign**

**Proven Strategies and Practical Tactics for Driving
Institutional Change and Student Success**

Why Gateway Course Redesign?

Gateway courses are the fulcrum of student progression and institutional momentum. Yet for many colleges, attempts to redesign stall due to partial buy-in, under-resourced pilots, or lack of leadership clarity. Across the nation:

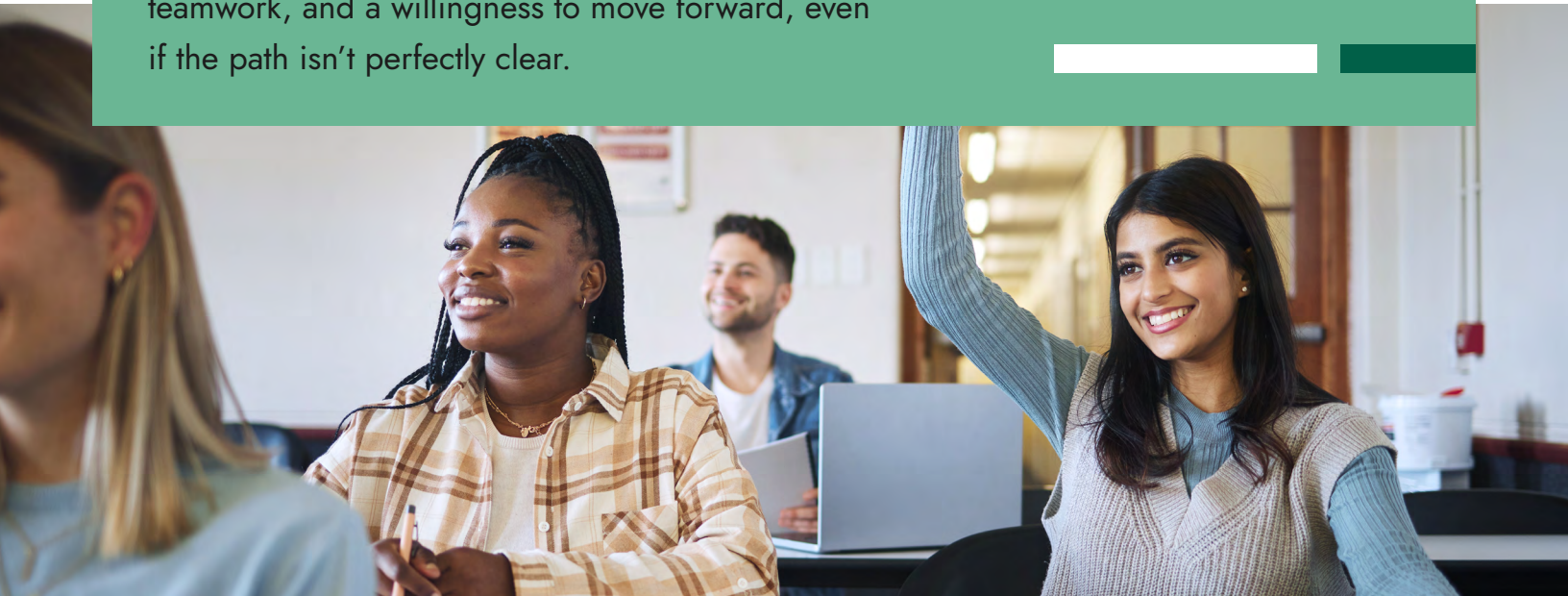
- Nearly half of students fail, withdraw, or stall in foundational courses, impeding completion and creating achievement gaps.
- Siloed or “surface-level” reforms struggle to scale or measurably change outcomes.
- The greatest transformations come when course redesign becomes an institutional, not just departmental, priority.

The Takeaway

Waiting for perfect conditions only delays success.

“Ready” is not a feeling; it’s a decision.

Sustainable change starts with leadership, decisive teamwork, and a willingness to move forward, even if the path isn’t perfectly clear.



Key Steps For Effective, Outcome-Driven Redesign

Accelerate your progress and achieve measurement results as a leader in higher education:

☐ **Build a Cross-Functional Team:**

Redesign isn't just for faculty or one department. Form a task force representing academic affairs, advising, student affairs, institutional research, enrollment, and the relevant gateway faculty. This creates ownership and clears the way for institutional alignment.

☐ **Frame Redesign as a Strategic Imperative:**

Tie your efforts directly to retention, completion, funding, and achievement goals. Positioning gateway course work as a campus-wide solution, not just an academic hobby, amplifies momentum and makes it easier to focus resources.

☐ **Leverage Institutional Data:**

Engage institutional research at the outset. Use current DFW (drop/fail/withdraw) rates, student progression data, and achievement gap analysis to pinpoint true "pain points." Let baseline metrics focus your team on measurable, meaningful targets.

☐ **Fuel Faculty Partnership Through Real Listening:**

Faculty buy-in starts when leaders create space for concerns, validate expertise, and commit to sustained, transparent dialogue. Consider incentives (release time, stipends), proactive listening, and making faculty full partners in mapping and refining changes.

☐ **Plan for Rollout at Scale, Not Endless Pilots:**

Avoid the common trap of staying in pilot mode indefinitely. Prepare for an at-scale semester rollout soon after initial planning, using a transition semester to fine-tune while committing to broad implementation

☐ **Create Clear Structures and Meeting Norms:**

Set expectations and build a culture with repeatable structures: regular updates, standing listening sessions, and shared decision timelines. Cultural buy-in is shaped through consistent, inclusive action.

☐ **Communicate Progress and Celebrate Early Signs of Change:**

Rapidly share early “wins”, even partial ones, with campus stakeholders. This validates the effort, builds morale, and motivates engagement.

☐ **Anticipate and Accept Imperfect Consensus:**

Don’t wait for every voice to be on board. Instead, assemble a “coalition of the willing” and create momentum by showing results, then use peer influence and data to broaden buy-in.

☐ **Prioritize for Sustainability and Scale:**

Aim for changes that outlast individuals: system-level placement policy shifts, corequisite implementation, improved advising flows, and classroom norms. Quick fixes and one-off pilots are easy, but it’s the campus-wide, systematized changes that move the needle on student outcomes.

☐ **Expect and Embrace Iteration:**

Success in gateway redesign is iterative, not linear. Create feedback loops and adaptive plans; let new data refine your approach.

Avoid These Common Redesign Pitfalls

- Don't wait for total agreement or ideal funding. Move forward with those who are ready.
- Don't focus narrowly on symptoms (like extra tutoring) when systems-level changes (placement, policies, instructional practices) are what move results.
- Avoid "initiative fatigue:" be selective, prioritize this effort, and protect participants' investment of time and energy.
- Beware of one-off pilots that can't scale. Seek changes that become part of institutional practice.



Why Almy Education Delivers Results That Last

- Only Almy Education pairs campus-proven "done with you" redesign—guided by credentialed faculty and higher ed leaders—with actionable project management, cross-functional facilitation, and real client results.
- Our framework blends the Big Three: 1) institutional culture, 2) data-driven systemic change, and 3) classroom practice. Each client receives their own blueprint attuned to their unique student population, resources, and state policy context.
- We specialize in building faculty trust, buy-in, and capacity for ongoing improvement, addressing both the People as well as the Process side of change.
- Our support is hands-on, not "drive-by": project plans, check-ins, and rapid course-correction.
- Results are tangible. Most institutions see measurable improvements within a year: double-digit increases in gateway success, retention, and graduation, plus enduring culture change.



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Need Support With Your Redesign?

Every college is unique. Almy Education meets your institution where it is to build on your previous or ongoing efforts. We help you refine your focus, avoid common pitfalls, and develop a practical roadmap, supporting you step-by-step to implement changes that deliver visible, measurable outcomes on your campus.

 almyeducation.com/getstarted