Cohort Challenge white papers

As part of the ReDI cohort, you'll be presenting the work from your Cohort Challenges to the Provost's Leadership Team. Prior to the presentation we ask that you provide a white paper on your Cohort Challenge. This document outlines a few best practices to help with your thinking and writing processes.

Please note: the items in this document are simply intended to be of help to you; they are **not** a firm set of rules of what should be in your white paper or how you should approach your challenge.

Purpose of your white paper

After reading the paper, your audience should know the scope of the topic you're addressing and why. And what cost/benefits there are to your proposal.

Your white paper should provide:

- Greater context about your presentation
- Information on the problem, benefits, solutions, and costs
- More detail than your slides – approximately two to five pages in length
- Relevant data and data sources

What your white paper is not

- A very long document
- An exhaustive list of all possible solutions
- Your talking points and notes for the presentation

Content options

Here are some sections that you can create in your white paper; again, this is not a list of ALL things you should include, rather a list from which to prioritize a few sections. The sections below are outlined in suggested order of sequence.

- Executive summary – be sure to include your "why" here
- Overview of the topic as you've framed
- Goals and outcomes that you seek to achieve (could be part of one of the above sections above)/Statement of purpose
- Problem and why it's relevant and important to your audience and in need of expedient action
- Current assets and stakeholders structures, state of affairs (might be covered in another section)
- Analysis of your research/data
- Proposal(s)/recommendations
- Costs/benefits – or costs/impact
- Conclusions
- Appendix of background data
- Acknowledgements

While there are separate sections for these, it's often helpful for an executive audience to hear the bottom line in one of your introductory sections: your recommended path, cost, and benefit. Please refer to the document on executive presentations for additional strategies on creating impactful content.

Structural elements

- Consider a page range of two to five pages
- Ensure data has source(s) cited
- Names of team members and their department on the first page
- Page numbers and headers or footers on subsequent pages
- Ordering of sections – see content options above

Draft white papers are due to e.taylordebarroso@northeastern.edu by Thursday, November 1. Final drafts will be due on Friday, December 7 to give the Provost's Leadership Team an opportunity to read them before your presentation.