



FORM

Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report

Institutional Template

The enclosed Quality Initiative report represents the work that the institution has undertaken to fulfill the Improvement Process of the Open Pathway.

08-25-2016

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Date

M. Roy Wilson, M.D., President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Wayne State University

Name of Institution

Detroit, Michigan

City and State

Date: August 26, 2016

Name of Institution: Wayne State University

State: Michigan

Contact Person for Report: Monica Brockmeyer, Ph.D.

Contact Person's Email Address: mbrockmeyer@wayne.edu



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Report Categories

Overview of the Quality Initiative

1. Provide a one-page executive summary that describes the Quality Initiative, summarizes what was accomplished, and explains any changes made to the initiative over the time period.

In its HLC Quality Initiative, Wayne State University (WSU) implemented three key components of the **Undergraduate Academic Advising Initiative**:

- (1) Completion of Academic Advisor Hiring, in which WSU hired more than 45 academic advisors and other academic support personnel, dramatically improving the student-advisor ratio.
- (2) Implementation of an Academic Advising Training Academy (ATA), which supports academic advisor training for content, skills, and dispositional outcomes, and continuing professional development. The ATA is comprised of a core curriculum and a certificate program built on advisor and student learning outcomes, other professional development activities, and support for the Academic Advising Council.
- (3) Development and deployment of on-line tools to support academic advising, including an advisor scheduling system, on-line declaration of major/program, and an improved degree audit system. We also piloted an advisor alert system: the Early Warning System.

This initiative began in fall 2014, in year seven of the HLC accreditation cycle. This Quality Initiative comprises one thrust of the 2011 WSU Retention Initiative. Formally, the work on the Quality Initiative is complete with submission of this report and the work of the Undergraduate Advising and Retention Initiatives are concluded. Since 2011, WSU has boosted its six-year graduation rate from 26% to 35%, a rate of improvement that ranks among the top 20 public universities nationally; improvement to 38% is expected in 2016.

It is important to note that efforts will continue beyond conclusion of this Quality Initiative. Building on the foundation it has laid, along with the 2012 Retention Initiative, WSU has committed to continuous improvement in student learning, progress to degree, retention, and degree attainment. Initial planning for “Student Success 2.0” was a key component of the 2016-2021 WSU “Distinctively Wayne” Strategic Plan, which establishes as priority goals attainment of a 50% six-year graduation rate by 2021, and narrowing and closing of race/ethnicity achievement gaps.

WSU made one significant change to this Quality Initiative. Development of an advising alert system was originally proposed. However, following a pilot, it was determined that a commercial system could be implemented more rapidly and provide more comprehensive functionality. As a result, WSU is currently implementing the Educational Advisory Board Student Success Collaborative, which is scheduled to go live in early 2017.

Scope and Impact of the Initiative

2. Explain in more detail what was accomplished in the Quality Initiative in relation to its purposes and goals. (If applicable, explain the initiative's hypotheses and findings.)

WSU committed to hiring 45 academic advisors, starting in FY 2012; WSU has hired 45 academic advisors since the start of this initiative. A prior needs analysis of academic advising across campus showed that availability of advisors varied significantly across campus, with student-to-advisor ratios varying from 151:1 in some units to as high as 715:1 in others, with a university average of 495:1. At the time the initial Quality Initiative proposal was written (August 2014), the student advising ratio was about 240:1 across the campus as a whole.

At the invitation of the Office of the Provost, in late 2011, a team of expert consultants from NACADA conducted an on-site visit at WSU to review academic advising. Beyond problematic student:advisor ratios, the consulting team identified academic advising issues that appeared to be compromising WSU student success and retention and graduation rates:

- (1) Need for strong vision and mission statements for advising, clear program goals, and student learning outcomes.
- (2) Insufficient strategic direction and a lack of clarity about responsibility for academic advising.
- (3) Excessive complexity of the decentralized academic advising structure.
- (4) Poor connection between General Education and the major requirements.
- (5) Lack of professional development for academic advisors.
- (6) Need for a comprehensive assessment plan for academic advising.

Consultant observations and recommendations, and actions taken by WSU since that time, guided development of the full Undergraduate Academic Advising Initiative, as well as this Quality Initiative. In particular, WSU addressed the issues identified above through the following strategies and tactics; numbers correspond with the issues above.

- (1) A second round of strategic planning led to development of vision and mission statements, program goals, and learning outcomes.
- (2) A new, more inclusive and highly positioned administrative structure clarified the administration of academic advising.
- (3) Better documentation, website improvements, and improved student communications have begun to address the complexity of decentralized advising, although this challenge will also be addressed by the advisor training academy and mitigated by technology enhancements within in the scope of this Quality Initiative.
- (4) Placement of academic advisors within academic departments enables integration of general education and major advising, addressing the bifurcated advising experience previously experienced by students.
- (5) An Advising Summit and Advisor Training Academy address professional development needs.
- (6) Assessment of academic advising has been improved by development of vision and mission statements, program goals and learning outcomes, and assessment mechanisms.

Advisor Training Academy. In 2015, WSU launched the Advisor Training Academy (ATA) (<http://advisortraining.wayne.edu/>) to provide initial and on-going training, professional development, and recognition for all academic advisors at Wayne State University. In addition, the ATA serves as a means of communication, networking, and community building for professional advisors across the WSU campus.

The academy is built upon a core curriculum "Introduction to Academic Advising at Wayne State University," a six-module training program designed to advance ATA key goals and deliver advisor learning outcomes:

<http://advisortraining.wayne.edu/curriculum/index.php>

<http://advisortraining.wayne.edu/outcomes.php>

In fall 2015, 35 advisors were certified as Level 1 Academic Advisors through the ATA Advisor Certification Program:

<http://advisortraining.wayne.edu/certification/index.php>

ATA support resources also include individual training sessions, an advisor newsletter and an advising email list-serve, focused webinars, a "lunch and learn" series and a book club, and funding for advisor professional development, such as travel to conferences. Finally, as part of the ATA, the Academic Advising Council was launched to identify and support continuing professional development needs of academic advisors.

<http://advisortraining.wayne.edu/aac/index.php>

Change of Major/Program. In August, 2014, WSU deployed an online declaration of major tool, the Change of Major/Program Tool (CHOMP):

<https://cardinal.wayne.edu/wsuchqmjr>

Before CHOMP existed, changes of major or program were accomplished via paper forms, requiring a student to collect multiple approvals and signatures across campus to declare or change major.

Wayne Advising Management System. Between 2012 and 2016, the WSU Computing and Information Technology Division (C&IT) fully implemented and deployed the Wayne Advising Management System (WAMS) which provides online scheduling for academic advising:

<https://wams.wayne.edu/>

WAMS is a custom application developed in-house and therefore integrates with other WSU systems, including student and advisor calendar and email systems. WAMS has a mobile interface, permitting students to schedule appointments night or day from their phones, tablets, or other mobile devices. WAMS automatically sends reminder emails to students and makes it easy for students to cancel or reschedule appointments, reducing the no-show rate (from 40% to 14%) and increasing advisor availability for other students. WAMS permits students to schedule various types of advising appointments and to view advisor availability for the type of appointment desired. WAMS is integrated with the main university student records system (BANNER) to direct students to advisors appropriate for their program or major, although students retain the option to view and schedule appointments with advisors outside their program and major.

Implementation of a robust degree audit system (Degree Works). In fall 2015, WSU launched the Degree Works Degree Audit system for undergraduate students and their academic advisors.

<https://wayne.edu/degreeworks>

We are currently implementing Degree Works for graduate students. Ellucian Degree Works™ is a comprehensive academic advising, transfer articulation, and degree audit solution that aligns students, advisors, and institutions to a common goal: helping students graduate on time. Degree Works brings many advantages, including degree audits and tracking which helps students and advisors monitor progress toward degree completion. Clear visual indicators show whether a course requirement has been met or is in progress; outstanding requirements are automatically displayed for courses not yet completed and degree progress bars show where a student is on his or her academic path. Student planning tools map out students' academic path to keep them on track for on-time graduation. Model degree plans can be assigned to individual students or a group, and clear on- and off-track indicators help advisors know when to intervene to help a student succeed.

Early Warning System Prototype. A key goal of the original Quality Initiative proposal was development of an Early Warning System (EWS) to enable aggregation of student risk signals into an academic advisor alert that would trigger intervention to assist the student and mitigate the risk. Student risk signals include poor grades, faculty concern, evidence of emotional distress or disengagement, request for a transcript, or potential loss of financial aid.

To address the EWS goal, WSU developed a prototype to monitor changes in GPA, Early Academic Assessment (mid-term grades), and Blackboard usage. While the prototype was successful in monitoring limited foci, a cost-benefit analysis determined that options of the EAB Student Success Collaborative (EAB/SSC) outweighed the institutional investment required to develop and maintain a full, predictive analytic risk model in-house. In March 2016, WSU joined the EAB/SSC.

Advisor-Student Pairing Engine. While prototyping the Early Warning System, the project team observed that no master list of student advisor assignments existed -- a required component for an alert system and for proactive or intrusive advising. To address this, the C&IT staff developed the Advisor-Student Pairing Engine, a sophisticated rule-based system that maintains up-to-date information matching students to advisors. If a student changes program or major, the change is detected overnight, and the next day, the student's name will be added to the caseload of his or her new advisor. This system greatly enhances our EAB/SSC installation.

3. Evaluate the impact of the initiative, including any changes in processes, policies, technology, curricula, programs, student learning and success that are now in place in consequence of the initiative.

Since the beginning of this Quality Initiative, WSU graduation rates have improved from 26% to 35% and are expected to surpass 38% this year. We investigated whether this increase was attributable to student success initiatives, or to shifts in the WSU enrollment profile (which has risen slightly over the past decade). When controlling for the slight increase, we learned that two-thirds of the incremental improvement in the graduation rate can be attributed to better student performance and student success initiatives, rather than to shifts in the WSU enrollment profile.

As a component of the 2016 Strategic Plan, WSU reaffirmed its commitment to invest in student success, and set as a goal a 50% graduation rate for FTIAC students by the year 2021.

Because this initiative targeted the entire FTIAC undergraduate population (with an expectation that investments would also benefit transfer students), no comparison group existed within Wayne State University. Through the IPEDS Data Center, we identified 559 national, public colleges and universities that grant four-year degrees and analyzed changes in six-year graduation rates between August, 2011 and August, 2014. Results were ranked by the highest incremental improvement in graduation rate relative to the base graduation rate. **WSU ranked 20th -- within the top 5th percentile of graduation rate improvements nationally.**

We also observed an increase in the average GPA: the percentage of freshmen having a GPA of 3.0 or greater at the end of the first year increased from 51% to 57%. In addition, the number of credit hours attained in the first semester increased from 10.3 to 11.3).

Changes in use of technology are described in Section 2.

This Quality Initiative affected many process changes. Students now schedule advising appointments online using WAMS; previously advisors used different mechanisms to schedule appointments, primarily by email or phone. Students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) now declare or change their major online; previously declaration of a major required an advising appointment, signatures on a paper form, and a workflow with as many as 32 steps. The assignment of academic advisors to students is now maintained automatically in the Banner system; previously, entry of advisor assignments into Banner was sporadic and dependent upon transfer of data from manual records, spreadsheets, or other legacy systems.

Changes in policy include a new requirement that CLAS students declare their major within 45 credits, and implementation in three colleges of mandatory academic advising for first year students.

4. Explain any tools, data, or other information that resulted from the work of the initiative.

Tools resulting from this initiative are described in Section 2.

Deployment of the Degree Works degree audit tool has begun to generate new student progress data. Over time, Degree Works will make available more sophisticated data about student trajectories through various milestones, adding depth and breadth to our analyses to better inform continuous improvement of educational achievement.

Our previous degree audit system was not only inaccurate on occasion, it also required a manual degree audit to ascertain which degree requirements a student had satisfied. Prior to this Quality Initiative, we could not query our system to determine – for example – which students had earned 60 credits, but had not yet satisfied the Math Competency requirement. This was a serious impediment to our ability to launch proactive and systematic advising campaigns.

Although our Degree Works reporting interface is not yet polished, we are now able to use ad hoc queries to answer questions such as the example cited above.

5. Describe the biggest challenges and opportunities encountered in implementing the initiative.

Technology changes have occurred parallel to a cultural change from reactive to proactive advising. Before the initiative, most programs were critically under-staffed and advisors did not have time to do outreach to their student populations. In most units, advisors did not monitor individual cohorts, but responded to student needs as they arose. Most advisor time was spent assisting in course selection, explaining university policy, and tending to crises. As the number of advisors increased and the student-to-advisor ratio improved, advisors became increasingly proactive. Student outreach and performance monitoring increased parallel to the increase in advisor capacity. Advisors began identifying students at particular risk and inviting them in for appointments and subsequent performance monitoring.

Advisors shared with us that they welcomed this change, but have also expressed concerns about the rate of new tool introduction and adoption and a lack of integration among tools, applications, and reporting systems they use. Deployment of WAMS and online advising meant a big change in the way advisors organized their time. Some advisors reported concern about committing blocks of time several weeks in advance for students to schedule advising appointments. Policies and practices requiring adjustment included planning time, meetings, other advisor activities, and vacations and out of office time. These changes were further complicated by the fact that newly-hired advisors were decentralized and reported across many university units. One advising director told us, "Getting advisors to properly use the system and plan out their work week in advance was a challenge. Also, getting students to learn to use the system instead of stopping at our desk to schedule appointments was another challenge. But once the users were properly trained, it has been working well."

A challenge we will be facing in the near future is upcoming deployment of the EAB Student Success Collaborative ([SSC] see Section 9). The SSC will provide many attractive features for advisors including support for communication campaigns, predictive risk assessments, a robust referral mechanism, case management support, and more. It will replace both WAMS and many aspects of STARS, the aging advisory notes system we built in-house. Despite the fact that the SSC has a superior interface and advanced feature set, STARS is extremely well liked by academic advisors, many of whom have expressed reservations about the transition.

Another challenge arose from administrative silos that inhibited sharing and coordination of data. The approaches to data, analysis, and reporting that existed in our Office of Institutional Research, the division of Computing and Information and Technology, and the Office of the Registrar have been fairly distinct and uncoordinated for some time. As a result, progress on the development of the Early Warning System was slowed. Ultimately, we decided that purchasing an external system, the EAB Student Success Collaborative, would provide effective reporting, predictive analytics, and advisor tools more efficiently than we could develop in-house.

This experience prompted WSU to create the Data Governance Committee (DGC) in fall 2015, which is charged with creating a culture of data quality by monitoring and resolving data issues throughout the university community. The committee is a decision-making body that will implement standardized reporting, data definitions, policies and quality control. The DGC reports to the IT Steering Committee on a bi-monthly basis. The work of this committee is expected to result in improved data quality; coordinated and improved access to/protection of student and other sensitive data; and improvements in operations supporting data collection, access, utilization, and analyses. The goals of the Data Governance Committee are: (1) to provide data definitions and policies that are consistent, uniform, and accurate for reporting and analyses; and (2) to provide a framework that ensures data are captured accurately and consistently to maximize clarity of common usage allowing management to make informed, shared, and timely decisions.

Beyond these challenges, we observed and leveraged multiple opportunities. First, the campaign feature in the EAB Student Success Collaborative, together with its case management and notes system, may allow us to reduce our dependence on the Salesforce CRM with a commensurate reduction in costs, as well as reduce the number of tools used on campus. Other opportunities come from integration of EAB SSC data with new data being generated from Degree Works to create a more robust student success dashboard.

The biggest opportunities, however, lie in anticipated future gains in Wayne State University student success. Embedded in the 2016-2021 “Distinctively Wayne” Strategic Plan is the goal of achieving a six-year graduation rate of 50% by 2021, as well as continuous improvement of first-to-second year retention rates.

A focused opportunity exists in closing the achievement gap between students of different races. Improvement in WSU graduation rates by race are uneven. In particular, while our overall six-year graduation rate has improved to 35%, only 12% of African-American students graduate within six years. Although the six-year graduation rate for African-American students has increased by five percentage points since 2011 (from 7% to 12%), the achievement gap between Black and White students is growing wider. Narrowing and closing achievement gaps will be a primary focus for WSU Student Success initiatives under our current Strategic Plan.

Commitment to and Engagement in the Quality Initiative

6. Describe the individuals and groups involved at stages throughout the initiative and their perceptions of its worth and impact.

Many individuals contributed to success of the WSU Quality Initiative. The Academic Advising Initiative and the 2011 Student Retention Initiative were initiated by Acting Provost Phyllis Vroom and flourished under leaders who followed. The Quality Initiative was proposed during the tenure of immediate past Provost Margaret E. Winters; a commitment to all that is embodied in the WSU Quality Initiative continues under the leadership of our new provost, Keith E. Whitfield, as well as our president, M. Roy Wilson.

Monica Brockmeyer, who has served as associate provost for student success since 2011, provided strategic leadership and oversight to the WSU Quality Initiative and to the 2011 Retention Initiative. A diverse leadership team has supported Dr. Brockmeyer, and continues to do so.

Assisting in the technology scope: Daren Hubbard, associate vice president, Computing & Information Technology (C&IT) and chief information officer and his predecessor Joseph Sawasky. Many C&IT team members participated, including Dave Brisbois, Minh Ha, Bhavani Koneru, James Lee, and Rob Thompson.

Assisting in the academic scope: R. Darin Ellis, associate provost/associate vice president for Undergraduate Affairs and his predecessor Joseph Rankin. To facilitate this Quality Initiative, the WSU academic deans opened their schools and colleges to radical change; key contributors include Wayne Raskind (Liberal Arts and Sciences), Farshad Fotouhi (Engineering), Robert Forsythe (Business), Douglas Whitman (Education), Matt Seeger, (Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts), and Jerry Herron (Irvin D. Reid Honors College).

We are also grateful for contributions of associate deans and advising directors from across the campus, particularly Robert Aguirre, Daren Ellis, Janice Green, Lezlie Hart, Julie Alter-Kay, and Linda Zadditch, as well as other campus leaders from the Academic Success Center, APEX Scholars Program, the Bursar's Office, Office of Student Financial Aid, the Office of Multicultural Student Engagement, and others.

We thank Kurt Kruschinska, registrar and his predecessor Linda Falkiewicz, and Associate Registrar Chris Wolfs; among their many contributions are management of the Graduation Action Committee and leadership for implementation of Degree Works.

University Advising Center Director Cheryl Kollin was the formal lead and informal hub of the Advising Initiative; she has been an unflagging champion for both the academic advisors and for the students. Kate Bernas, associate director of the Academic Advising Center, oversees the Advisor Training Academy and fulfills a critical role in fostering advisor excellence.

Finally, of course, are the 45 academic advisors who joined WSU as a result of this Quality Initiative, and the 45 more seasoned academic advisors and academic services officers who served WSU before this cultural change, and brought their knowledge and passion to a new paradigm.

We conducted a survey of campus stakeholders. Feedback includes the following:

"The creation of department-based advisors has been a revolution at WSU. We trained all our advisors in Gen Ed so they could become the "one stop" resource for students."

"High quality advising is like air-conditioning on a new car. It's no longer an option or a luxury, but is widely considered a standard feature. This university didn't have it before, and now we do. It will take time for its full effects to be felt, but the change is certainly positive."

"Advisors have initiated curricular changes and changes in policies including the change in CFPCA foreign language requirements, advocating for changes in the math requirement, and in general streamlining processes where possible. We have also involved advisors closely in learning communities and in identification of specific roadblocks to success."

"The initiative allows (sic) me more time to help students with learn about the opportunities at WSU and spend time with helping them develop their skill set, versus helping them pick classes. More individualized personal development occurs since we have information at our finger tips and do not have to spend time finding information."

"Most of the initiatives were implemented after I started at WSU, but the processes mentioned are assets to the way I advise students. Sharing a Degree Works experience with students is valuable in the students' understanding, sharing availability with students for WAMS is valuable in the relationship-building with students, and the professional development from the Training Academy builds my skills and my rapport with other advising professionals."

"Absolutely, it has made it much easier by making degree certifications, exceptions to policies and plans of work much easier to implement."

"The Quality Initiative has made my responsibilities easier and the process takes less time. I am able to focus on other forms of student outreach and take on other projects in my department to promote student success. Initial advising appointments focus on reading and understanding Degree Works and how degree requirements fit into it."

“Yes. As part of the Graduation Action Committee, we've struggled with having a clear picture of where a student is on the path to graduation. With Degree Works, that's not an issue any more.”

“Honestly, the initiative has resulted in more direct involvement of the dean's office in the details of managing the undergraduate programs. This includes close coordination and problem identification and problem solving.”

While nearly all (25 out of 28) respondents had positive perspectives about the Quality Initiative, three people offered different opinions.

“I am not aware of this initiative.” (Perspective shared by two people

“Unfortunately it has made things more difficult in most cases.”

We also learned of opportunities for improvement:

“WAMS and CHOMP are unfortunate pseudo-violent acronyms and should be changed.”

“I have always believed in high-quality advising, even before I came into the administration as associate dean. Faculty remain, however, an untapped resource, and there appears to be little effort in defining a suitable role for them.”

“Advisors feel like they are often not included in important policy conversations. Advisors also feel like they are not valued as partners with faculty in their role shaping students. We have to change the culture here if we hope to have advisors who feel inspired to go that extra mile.”

“The Quality Initiative does provide a form of support to advisors, however, it's also important for that support to come from Associate Deans, Deans, Department Chairs, and Faculty.”

7. Describe the most important points learned by those involved in the initiative.

The WSU leadership has made several observations and learned many lessons as a result of this initiative. As reported herein and elsewhere, the university has a long history of engaging with student success and retention of undergraduate students, including university-wide efforts going back to the late 1980s. This latest effort, however, seems to have been more productive and has laid a foundation for future conversations more successfully than efforts in the past.

Upon reflection and consultation with campus stakeholders, we identified several themes that help explain why:

- (1) **There is no “silver bullet” for student success.** All aspects of the university, including human, financial, process, policy, governance, infrastructure, data, and more must be brought to bear.
- (2) **Student “retention” isn't enough; students must learn and make progress to degree if they are to be retained.** In previous decades, universities could assume that if students came back in subsequent years, they would eventually graduate. The 21st Century student must make consistent academic progress; without it, attrition is inevitable.

- (3) **Change takes planning and time.** One stakeholder said, “I think we all learned that if we make an investment (time, financial), plan accordingly and make a commitment, it will pay off for us. Far too often are we quick to create a new program without thinking things through. When we are thoughtful, faculty, staff and most importantly students, reap the benefits of a better quality of academic life.”
- (4) **Technology can improve human interactions, not detract from it.** We heard that advisors had more time to spend with students and spent less of their time in course selection and more in other forms of advising. Another stakeholder said, “In our society, ease of use is incredibly important and WSU is learning how to make that happen for its employees and students.”
- (5) **Effective initiatives are built on understanding data and areas of need.** Stakeholders told us, “As a first step in determining what was needed, we did a frank assessment of our processes and services, where these processes and interactions with students were strong and where they could be strengthened” and also “learned... better understanding of our student populations. Forecasting business needs based on data is always good.”
- (6) **The advising relationship is central to student success.**

Resource Provision

8. Explain the human, financial, physical, and technological resources that supported the initiative.

The commitment of Wayne State University to this Quality Initiative (QI) has been steadfast and is evident by human, financial, physical, and technological resourcing since 2011, well before designation as the HLC QI (August 2014).

Financial resources invested in this QI are significant. In addition to the significant time and effort invested by individuals referenced in Section 6, WSU has committed to incremental recurring annual funding of approximately \$3.5 million.

In addition, non-recurring investment in this QI totals approximately \$700,000. No new construction or major renovations were required; space accommodation and set-up for 45 new FTEs was achieved within existing facilities.

Technology investments are described in Sections 2 and 4.

A summary table is presented on Page 12, which follows.

WSU QUALITY INITIATIVE INCREMENTAL INVESTMENT [A]

Cost Component	Non-recurring Investment	Recurring Investment
Salaries and Benefits		
Academic Advisors: 45 FTEs		\$ 2,900,000
Professional Development		
Advisor Training Academy		\$ 25,000
Academic Advising Council		\$ 15,000
Software Licensing/Decision Support		
EAB Student Success Collaborative		\$ 200,000
Degree Works		\$ 380,000
SAS Analytics (Student Success Dashboards)	\$ 200,000	\$ 30,000
IT Systems Development		
Early Warning Systems Pilot	\$ 100,000	
Wayne Advising Management System (WAMS)	\$ 150,000	
Change of Major/Program (CHOMP)	\$ 100,000	
Advisor-Student Pairing Engine	\$ 150,000	
QUALITY INITIATIVE DIRECT INVESTMENT	\$ 700,000	\$ 3,550,000

[A] Does not include value of effort for other individuals cited in Section 6

Plans for the Future (Feature Milestones of a Continuing Initiative)

9. Describe plans for ongoing work related to or as a result of the initiative.

Because WSU has committed to a wholesale transformation of the undergraduate experience and a renewed focus on student success, investments to date have been funded primarily by recurring general funds, thus ensuring the sustainability of our progress.

A highly challenged State of Michigan economy affected reduced state funding for education at all levels in Michigan; consequently, Wayne State University sustained annual general fund budget reductions for more than five years, exactly parallel to the genesis of this Quality Initiative in 2011. Funding for this Quality Initiative was therefore achieved only by a mandate for transformation by the Board of Governors, and a highly disciplined reallocation of existing general funds led by WSU President M. Roy Wilson and supported by the Office of the Provost, presently led by Keith Whitfield, provost and vice president for academic affairs. The Board of Governors continues to acknowledge that improvements to our retention and graduation rates and the academic achievements of our students are essential not only to our mission, but also to our financial sustainability. This commitment at the very highest levels of our institutional leadership has culminated in the inclusion of Student Success as the #1 priority of the university's 2016-2021 Strategic Plan; this new awareness across campus that student success is mission critical helps us sustain our progress.

While the activities described in this Quality Initiative are not the only efforts we have made to improve student learning, student success, student persistence, and degree attainment, the activities presented herein are among the most mature, and we believe they are foundational for many other efforts currently under way. Over the next several years, our focus will be in three key areas: (1) continuing to improve the use of data to provide individualized support at scale to students, (2) removing all institutional barriers to four-year degree completion, and (3) closing the achievement gaps between students of color and white students. Projects already underway include an overhaul of our general education program, further technology investments in early warning systems, the use of predictive analytics to pinpoint barrier courses in the curriculum, increased investments in faculty development for teaching and learning, and the use of completion scholarships to address small funding gaps experienced by students.

Another key vehicle for maturing the student success initiative and its role as a key aspect of our mission has been in the strategic planning process. In our 2016-2021 strategic plan, Student Success emerged as a key priority area and the phrase "Student Success" indicated a more lofty and ambitious approach to our work than our previous institutional focus on the notion of "student retention." The initiatives described in this application – academic advising, technology tools, and the strategic graduation action committee – had a synergistic relationship with each one supporting and boosting the impact of the other. Further, the combination of these efforts clarified the importance of moving students forward toward degree rather than in just "retaining them."

One ongoing initiative particularly relevant to this Quality Initiative is the EAB Student Success Collaborative.

EAB Student Success Collaborative. Wayne State University has contracted with the Education Advisory Board Company (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC) which combines technology, consulting, and best practice research. The SSC has been shown to help colleges and universities use data to improve retention and graduation rates. At the center of SSC is a proprietary predictive model that identifies at-risk students as well as an analytics engine that isolates systemic barriers to degree completion. To extend the reach and impact of these analytics, SSC wires the entire campus with a coordinated care network that helps institutions manage student risk from identification to resolution, thereby closing the loop on support interactions. In particular, the SSC includes membership in the Academic Affairs Forum, participation in the Student Success Coordinated Care Platform, and Dedicated Change Management Consulting. The SSC platform provides comprehensive student risk data based on predictive analytics custom developed for WSU, targeted outreach and interventions, case management tools, student success campaign tools, and executive dashboards.

A predictive analytics engine calculates the likelihood of graduation for every student on campus based on their academic history as compared to past student. Students are sorted by college to provide administrators with a snapshot overview of which academic units have the greatest pockets of risk and may benefit from the most focus and support. At-risk students are organized and prioritized for advisor follow-up in the form of customized lists. Flexible filters provide each advisor with the ability to build lists to match the specifications of the students they work with on a daily basis or to create campaigns targeting specific populations. Campaign features allow users to lead advising teams and student success specialists in organized outreach efforts directing resources to specific groups of at-risk students. Charts and graphs monitor progress to goal for each campaign. Customized “Success Markers” indicate when a student has failed to attempt or missed the grade threshold for a course determined to be critical to his or her major. Faculty, tutors, and other support staff can submit one-click alerts on student risk, including class attendance and academic performance.

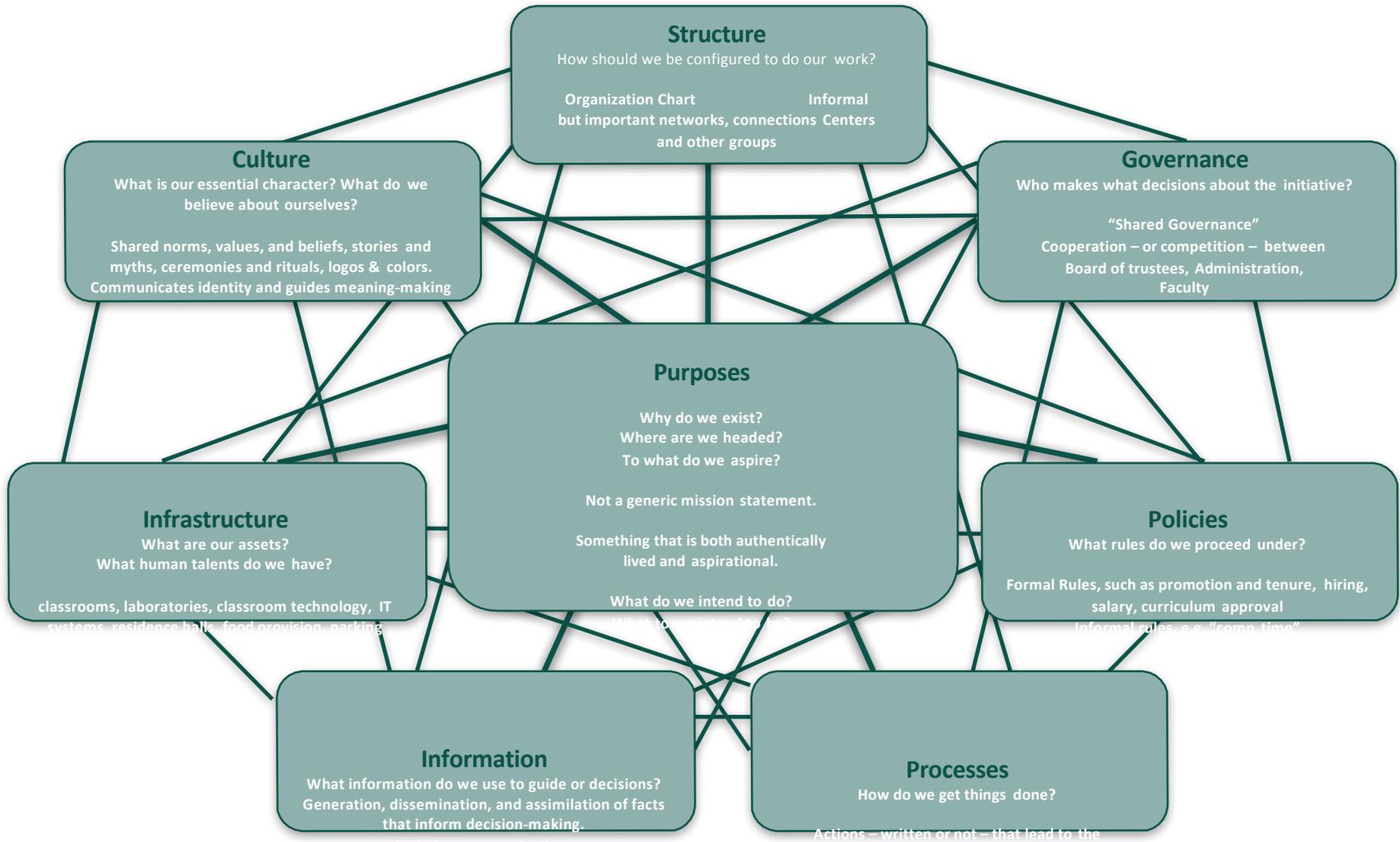
10. Describe any practices or artifacts from the initiative that other institutions might find meaningful or useful and please indicate if you would be willing to share this information.

In developing this Quality Initiative, we distilled our learning into two key frameworks: (1) a learning framework for building capacity for student success, and (2) a framework for timely degree completion.

The learning framework is one of democratic institutional change and capacity building, and is shown in the diagram that follows on Page 15. We adopted this framework to assist us in optimizing the institutional impact of the academic advising initiative and to explore how to respond to issues of policy, process, information, culture, and infrastructure that arose as a result of our investment in academic advisors. We expect this the approach of explicitly considering institutional change from multiple perspectives will continue to be useful as we continue our student success effort. The framework has proved especially helpful when conflict arises or an initiative becomes stalled in some way. It invites us to consider those challenges as potential conflicts between aspects of the institution. For example, we found that we could not use policy to require academic advisors to reach out to students proactively when we did not have the information to pair students with their advisor nor the IT infrastructure to provide advisors with up-to-date alerts on student needs.

Building Institutional Capacity for Student Success

Monica Brockmeyer, Wayne State University



The second framework that we used to plan, and that guides us as we move forward, is a needs assessment framework for timely degree completion; this framework is shown in the diagram that follows on Page 17. Each row in the table represents a key student need that must be met in order to graduate in a timely manner. We have already combined this understanding with the capacity building learning framework, to assess our institutional capacity to deliver each of these elements to students from an IT perspective, and we are continuing to assess each element from other perspectives in the capacity building framework (Page 15), e.g. culture, governance, policy, process, etc.



12 Steps to graduate on time

