

Open Pathway

Quality Initiative Institutional Proposal

The enclosed Quality Initiative proposal represents the work that the institution will undertake to fulfill the Improvement Process of the Open Pathway.


6-30-16
 Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor Date

Terry Gaalswyk

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Minnesota West Community and Technical College

Name of Institution

Worthington, Minnesota

City and State

Enrollment

Overview of the Quality Initiative

Minnesota West Community and Technical College (Minnesota West) is focused on serving the higher education needs of southwest Minnesota. It is our mission to serve the varied educational needs of our diverse populations in affordable, accessible, and supportive settings. Minnesota West has made concerted efforts since the merger of the technical colleges and the community college in 1997 to identify the factors that contribute to attrition, retention, and student matriculation to graduation.

As shown in the table below, in 2012, the college admitted 2,081 students. Unfortunately, only 1,676 students registered for classes, 80 percent of those that were admitted. The Fall 2013 data indicates an even greater loss of admitted students with only 66 percent registering. The number of admitted students who registered in 2014 and 2015 reached the 80 percent mark. Over the last four years, this percentage has remained fairly static, as the number of applicants decline, the number of students who actually register becomes even more important.

	Fall 12 (20133)	Fall 13 (20143)	Fall 14 (20153)	Fall 15 (20163)
Applications	2745	2860	2565	1822
Admissions	2081	2426	1793	1858
Registrations	1676	1605	1457	1492

The goal of this quality initiative is to improve communication between the college and its admitted students in order to increase the number of registrations of students who have been admitted to the college. Our Quality Initiative will result in a more successful approach to enrollment management by creating a communications process through which advisors establish pro-active and positive connections with admitted advisees.

Phase 1 will include but not be limited to the following:

- Outline current practices used to communicate with admitted students
- Create a Pilot Project
 - Pinpoint programs that have a high percentage of admitted students who do not register
 - Identify advisors who will fully participate in the pilot project
 - Determine a start and end date to collect the pilot project data
 - Formulate an enrollment communication plan that would include:
 - Admissions staff alerting advisors of new admitted advisees
 - Advisors contacting admitted students
 - Advisors obtaining permission from admitted students to contact them via text message
 - Advisors scheduling placement testing dates with admitted students
 - Advisors scheduling advising appointments with admitted students
 - Advisors scheduling registration appointments with admitted students
 - Advisors determining if admitted students do not plan to register
 - Advisors recording reasons admitted students do not register
- Gather data over two semesters
- Review outcomes

Phase 2 will include but not be limited to:

- Create a survey to measure student satisfaction from registration to degree completion
- If the pilot project results show an increase in the number of admitted students who registered:
 - Create an advisor training session for the new enrollment management plan
- If the pilot project results do not show an increase in the number of admitted students who registered:
 - Review the data
 - Revise the plan
- Implement plan, with revisions if necessary, with all college advisors
- Continue to collect data over the next two semesters

Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance

1. Explain why the proposed initiative is relevant and significant for the institution.

Mission: Minnesota West Community & Technical College is dedicated to serving the varied educational needs of our diverse populations in affordable, accessible and supportive settings.

Southwest Minnesota is currently experiencing an upward economic trend. The unemployment rate is low, which adversely affects enrollment in our institution.

The initiative supports our mission as it would create better relationships between advisors and students, resulting in additional support for students and improved communication to ensure students have access to resources that they need.

This quality initiative would improve college fiscal viability by increasing credits sold.

Vision: Minnesota West Community & Technical College provides dynamic, responsive, creative, and quality education to a diverse population in an ever-changing educational, business and cultural environment.

- *Access: To provide students with access to learning and information through electronic education and technology in addition to traditional methods of instruction.*
- *Position Students: To provide students with transferable credit, employment skills, and the ability to access lifelong learning.*
- *Regional Needs: To be a partner with agencies, other educational institutions, businesses and industries in regional economic development.*

- *Continuing Evaluation: To continue evaluating all College activities, programs, and functions with regard to service to students, performance outcomes, fiscal accountability, and cost effectiveness to insure future College growth and success.*
- *MnSCU Goals: To support goals of Academic Accountability, Skill-based Transfer, Career Education, Electronic Education, Program Alignment, and MnSCU/K-12 Partnership.*

This initiative complements Minnesota West's vision as it creates relationships earlier between advisors and students and maintains that connection throughout their educational journey. These relationships will enable students to gain access to information and assistance to overcome the hurdles they may experience while attempting to navigate the registration process. The relationships will equip students to take further steps toward academic success.

Perhaps the main connection we will realize in relation to our vision is continuing to assess the current practices involved in evaluating college activities, programs, and functions with regard to service to students, performance outcomes, fiscal accountability, and cost effectiveness to ensure future College growth and success.

Specifically, this enrollment management communication plan aligns with other initiatives within the college and MnSCU system such as the following:

President Gaalswyk's FY16 Work Plan

Goal 1: Develop a college strategic plan.

Key tenets: Enrollment, Teaching and Learning, Workforce Development, Resource Development and Financial Stability

Opportunities and risks addressed:

Enrollment, completion, student voice, college growth, financial stability, and accountability dashboard.

Minnesota West Community and Technical College Marketing Plan

Strategic Direction Six: Develop and implement a coordinated integrated communications methodology that ensures student success from prospect to admissions to graduation.

- Bring together a team with Admissions, Call Center, Prospect Coordinator, Financial Aid, One-Stop representation, and Registrar to collaborate on ONE shared calendar of communications, improving time management and student success.
- Convene campus-based advising work group and supporting subcommittee within Student Affairs Council (11/15/15)

Charting the Future Work Plan

1.1.2 Research advising best practices and develop specific recommendations for strengthening advising (which may include pre-college and current students)

- Identify and distribute campus-based best practices
- Identify training and professional development needs and programming for faculty and staff advisors
- Compile campus-level descriptions of advising process, staffing, and early alert process and report to Leadership Council (6/1/16)

Minnesota West's "Leading with Purpose" Alignment Workplan for FY15

Coordinate academic planning that results in enrollment growth and retention.

2010 – 2015 Strategic Plan

Strategic Direction One:

Minnesota West Community and Technical College will increase access, learning opportunities and success for the citizens of southwest Minnesota.

2. Explain the intended impact of the initiative on the institution and its academic quality.

Students will have the opportunity to form connections and relationships that will support them throughout their time at Minnesota West. The initiative will improve the college's ability to help students learn in a supportive

environment. Success will benefit the student, the college, and the communities we serve by providing qualified graduates for the workforce. It will also identify opportunities to improve college activities by collecting and examining reasons students decide not to attend and providing further information regarding student motivation.

Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose

3. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.
 - Identify reasons applicants do not register
 - Increase the percentage of admitted students that register by 5%
 - Pilot a new communication procedure for advisors to contact advisees
 - Create procedures that will support student success and foster ongoing relationships between advisors and advisees throughout the advisees' academic career.
4. Describe how the institution will evaluate progress, make adjustments, and determine what has been accomplished.

Bimonthly for two years: Compare percentage of registered students with previous year's data

Quarterly for two years: Gather and compile data collected by advisors and report to leadership

Quarterly first year (pilot project): Gather suggestions from advisors regarding modifications

Semiannually first year (pilot project): Adjust communication process based on advisor feedback

May 2017: Report enrollment data for pilot project programs to college community

May 2017: Report compiled feedback from pilot project advisors to college community

Annually for three years: Report enrollment data to college community

Annually for two years after the pilot project: Report reasons for not registering to college community

Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

5. Describe the level of support for the initiative by internal or external stakeholders.

Minnesota West faculty, staff, and administrators have been involved in selecting and refining this project from the beginning. The college sent six faculty and two administrators to the 2014 HLC Annual Meeting in Chicago, primarily to learn about the Quality Initiative aspect of Open Pathways. When the group returned to their campuses, they met with other interested faculty and administrators to discuss how to select a project. At the next all-campus administration day in August 2014, all college employees were asked to offer ideas for the initiative, and several ideas were offered. The QI committee met and reviewed the ideas and combined those that were closely related. Four faculty and one administrator attended the 2015 HLC Annual meeting to determine whether these ideas fit the criteria. At the next all-campus meeting in August 2015, a second survey was taken to narrow the list of about 20 ideas to five. The ideas selected were:

A. Integrate the marketing strategy to increase enrollment into the college strategic plan – measured by resource allocation, strategic plan, and measurement tools – measured by resource allocation, strategic plan and measurement tools.

B. Restructure the developmental course offerings to improve outcomes for underprepared students – measured by graduation rate.

C. Produce a contract and follow-up pattern for advisors to follow using Grades First through a pilot project group – measured by retention and graduation.

D. Refresh the website to enhance usability for both internal and external customers – measured by faculty, staff and student survey.

E. Study current partnerships with industry to measure success and use current models to create new partnerships – measured by industry surveys, graduate employment statistics and enrollment.

A Survey Monkey poll of all college faculty, staff, and administrators in the fall of 2015 asked college personnel to rank these five ideas. All of the ideas received significant popular support, so the committee applied the QI criteria to each project. That exercise led them to combine some aspects of the other ideas with idea C to produce and adopt the current initiative.

6. Identify the groups and individuals that will lead or be directly involved in implementing the initiative.

A subset of the college's HLC steering committee called the QI committee has taken the lead on this initiative. The QI committee members have participated in webinars and HLC pre-conference workshops to prepare for the initiative. The QI committee is made up of two administrators and six faculty members.

7. List the human, financial, technological and other resources that the institution has committed to this initiative.

Release time will be provided to a member of the committee to lead the committee and initiative. In addition, the college's enrollment management director has been a part of the development and will work collaboratively with the QI committee to advance the initiative.

Appropriateness of the Timeline for the Initiative (The institution may include a brief implementation or action plan.)

8. Describe the primary activities of the initiative and timeline for implementing them.

Summer 2016: Outline current practices used to communicate with admitted students

Create a work group comprised of marketing staff, admissions staff, and advisors to determine current practices. This work group will inventory processes and procedures and identify what works well as well as areas needing improvement. A report will be submitted to the Quality Initiative Committee.

Fall 2016: Create the Pilot Project

September 2016:

- o Identify programs that have a high percentage of admitted students who do not register.
- o Identify advisors who will fully participate in the pilot project.
- o Determine a start and end date to collect the pilot project data

October 2016: Formulate an enrollment communication plan

- Admissions staff begins to alert advisors of new advisees admitted biweekly
- Advisors begin contacting admitted students
 - See script example attached
- Advisors determine if admitted students plan to register
- Advisors record reasons admitted students do not register

May 2017: Quality Initiative committee will collect and compile data collected by advisors

June 2017: Quality Initiative committee will review outcomes

September 2017: Based on results of pilot project

- o If the pilot project results showed an increase in the number of admitted students who registered:
 - Create an advisor training session for the new enrollment management plan
- o If the pilot project results did not show an increase in the number of admitted students who registered:
 - Review the data
 - Revise the plan

April 2018: Create a student survey to measure student satisfaction from registration to degree completion

May 2018: Collect student satisfaction survey, review enrollment data, revise plan for implementation

Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

Include the name(s) of the primary contact(s) for the Quality Initiative.

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