

Project Scope: P171004 Planning for Student Completion

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE:

Eastern Oregon University's (EOU) strategy, "The Ascent," calls for dramatic improvements in degree attainment efficiency with a 4-year completion rate target of 50% for first-year freshman cohorts and a 70% target for entering transfer students. Achieving these rates represent a breakthrough in performance relative to the 16% first-year freshman completion rate experienced in 2016.

In the recent past, EOU did not provide the schedule clarity or consistency to allow students (and advisors) to effectively plan a 4-year degree completion path. Information necessary for longer-term planning is now in place. Today, EOU registers students on a single term basis (10 weeks). Currently, student academic planning tends to be focused on the short-term versus being intentional about plotting a course to 4-year degree attainment. And, in the cases where longer-term planning is being done, the information is not captured to assist with institutional operational effectiveness (i.e., projecting and responding to class demand trends, identifying systemic completion barriers, etc.).

President Insko asked if there are better and more intentional processes for working with students to facilitate improved planning that will help us accomplish student retention and completion at EOU. Specifically, should we be scheduling, and possibly registering, students on a rolling, annual basis versus a single term? Or, should there be a four-year plan and associated schedule that is updated on a term-by-term basis? (Note, what is meant by "rolling" is that planning, scheduling, and registering is done on a term-by-term basis while always integrating a full-year into the process.)

Some of the additional potential benefits of planning and capturing the associated data on a longer-term (annual) basis include the following:

- Forces information and systems rigor given necessity of schedule clarity for student planning
- Students have a plan; less "leaving it to chance"
- Potential to earlier identify intervention needs/opportunities as process instigates planning and discussion about the year
- Further embeds the student's commitment
- Increases the student's probability of persistence
- Improves the student's understanding of financial obligation
- Provides important class demand data for more responsive class offerings
- Provides information to assist with identifying systemic barriers to efficient program completion
- Provides information for more effective scheduling of classes and classrooms
- Information can facilitate improved effectiveness and efficiency in scheduling faculty load
- Facilitates budgeting and planning due to improved clarity of enrollment
- Improved enrollment forecasting
- Facilitate a more constructive process with advisers
- Helps stabilize department(s) with more stable schedule
- Helps interrupt the pattern that occurs each May when there is panic concerning the enrollment reports.

The purpose of this project is to identify the optimal degree completion planning approach that reinforces the student behaviors to succeed in degree attainment while providing data that facilitates improved institutional planning and service delivery.

OBJECTIVES:

Develop a process which facilitates creation of a rolling full-year schedule for each student by April 2018. Completion of this work shall occur at no additional cost, recognizing that current systems and processes will need to change.

WORK DEFINITION:

- 1) Project administration
 - a. Determine the name of team
 - b. Confirm team makeup

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- c. Enroll the team members
- d. Refine the project scope
- e. Create solid and well understood "Case for Change"
- f. Commitment to the project scope
- 2) Provide students and advisers the information they need to do effective long-term academic planning
- 3) Provide recommendations for leveraging technology
- 4) Evaluate the use of "College Scheduler"
 - a. May need approval to do one year
 - b. May be available and just not used by advisers or students
- 5) Obtain perspective from students
 - a. From classroom?
 - b. From survey?
 - c. From focus group?
- 6) Team Members:
 - a. Adams, Angie - Team Leader
 - b. Carman, Jeff or designee
 - c. Case, LeeAnn
 - d. Henry, Sandy
 - e. McCumber, Cynthia (Sam)
 - f. Amen, Brenna
 - g. Evans, Kylie
 - h. Johnson, Mandy
 - i. Counsell, Megan
 - j. Sharratt, Emily
 - k. Vande Pol, David
 - l. Brown, Kathleen
 - m. Faculty - As needed
- 7) Team Support:
 - a. Witte, Sarah - Sponsor
 - b. Aldrich, Luke- Facilitator

DELIVERABLES/END PRODUCTS:

- 1) A final project scope by end of November 2017.
- 2) A process that provides students with a one-year academic plan by April 2018.

KEY MILESTONES:

- 1) Kick off of the team by mid-November
- 2) Student perspectives summarized by the end of January 2018.
- 3) Rolling one-year academic plan for FY2019 by April 2018.
- 4) Adjournment of the team by the end of April 2018.

CONSTRAINTS:

- 1) No (new) budget is allocated to this effort.
- 2) If funds are required, an appropriate justification must be developed.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS:

- 1) That the "Case for Change" is compelling information that inspires the team to do this and do it now.
- 2) That team members will commit to the project scope