Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report

Institutional Template

The enclosed Quality Initiative Report represents the work that the institution has undertaken to fulfill the quality improvement requirements of the Open Pathway.

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor   10/11/21
                                                             Date

Dr. Janet Cunningham / President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Northwestern Oklahoma State University

Name of Institution

Alva, Oklahoma

City and State

The institution uses the template below to complete its Quality Initiative Report. The institution may include a report it has prepared for other purposes if it addresses many of the questions below and replaces portions of the narrative in the template. This template may be used both for reports on initiatives that have been completed and for initiatives that will continue and for which this report serves as a milestone of accomplishments thus far. The complete report should be no more than 6,000 words.

The report must be submitted by June 1 of Year 9.

Submit the report as a PDF file at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Pathways/Quality Initiatives" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member. The file name of the report should follow this format: QIReport[InstitutionName] [State].pdf (e.g., QIProposalNoNameUniversityMN.pdf). The file name must include the institution's name (or an identifiable portion thereof) and state.

Date: 10-8-2021

Contact Person for Report: Kaylyn Hansen

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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.

Northwestern Oklahoma State University's project, "Implementing the Ellucian Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERPS) to Enhance Efficiency and Improve the Student Experience," was intended to focus efforts toward, and track progress of, improvement of the student experience resulting from the implementation of a more efficient and robust information system for the university. More specifically, the project analyzed the impact of new tools and ready access to information about financial processes, financial aid, and academic planning and progress, provided electronically to advisors and students through the new system, on student and faculty experiences with these functions. The expectation was that the tools would increase student satisfaction and, ultimately, retention.

The project was relevant and significant for the institution because it addressed a concern identified during the 2016 strategic planning process: the need for more efficient institutional processes. Strategic Direction 3, Goal 1 of the plan states that "the university will review and update, where necessary, processes across campus that impact students, faculty, and staff to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency." The ERPS has implications for systems and processes identified within the strategic plan:

- Upgrade and fully utilize the degree audit software available through the Registry Office.
- Upgrade software and improve staff knowledge concerning automatic packaging of student financial aid and scholarship awards.
- Review and improve where necessary the processes for (…) purchasing and other administrative operations.
- Upgrade administrative management software.

The implementation allowed Northwestern Oklahoma State University to accomplish the goals of improving the quality of services for students, who are now able to conduct virtually all aspects of their university business online, including enrollment, financial aid application, book purchase, and bill payment. Additionally, faculty, financial aid personnel, and students have access to resources for processing applications, obtaining information about financial aid eligibility, and verifying current aid award status. Other university constituencies benefited as well:

- **Human Resources:** Employees have easy access to current information on benefits, compensation, leave, and payroll.
- **Finance:** University personnel benefit from automated financial functions related to information processing, dissemination, and analysis. Outdated purchasing processes have been replaced by an automated purchasing and procurement system.
- **Reporting and Data Analysis:** Faculty and staff across all areas of university services have access to shared and consistent data on students, institutional initiatives, finances, and other areas of mutual concern.
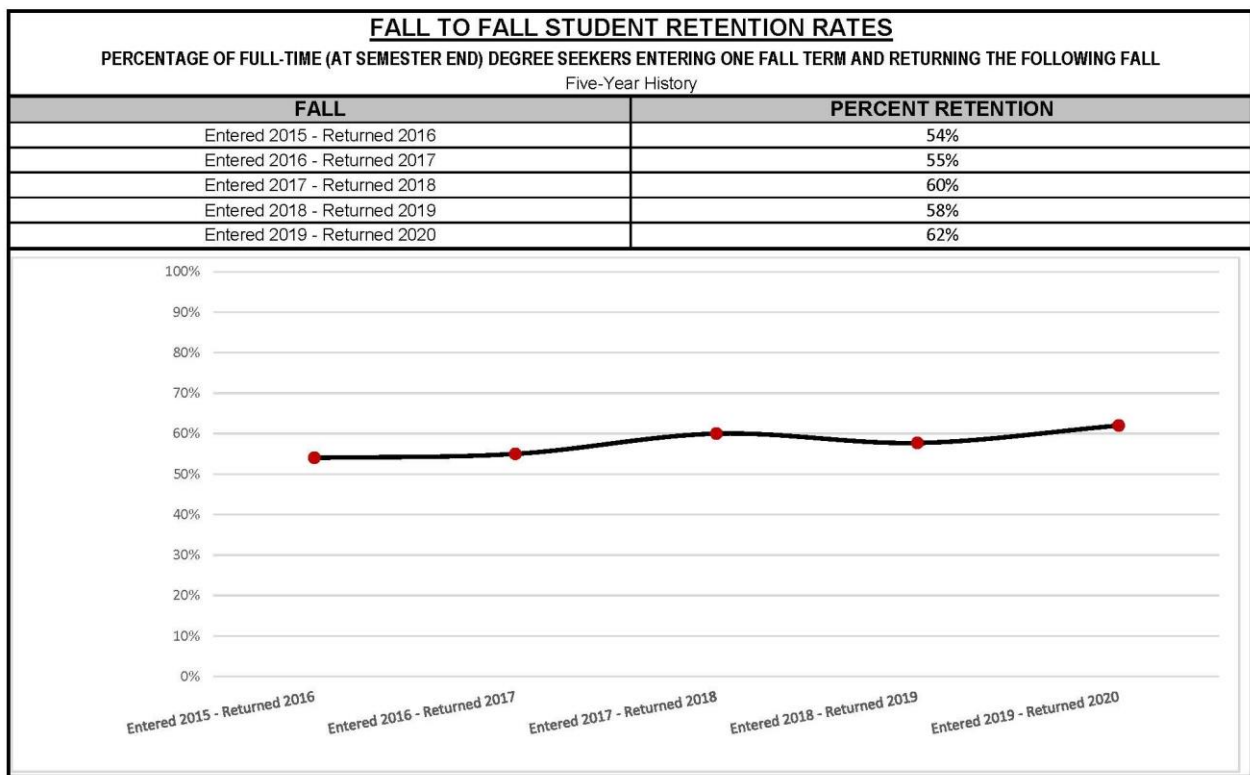
One change to the timeline of the initiative is the completion date of the integration of the degree audit software. The process to integrate and utilize the degree audit software has begun but is not completed at this time. There are a limited number of students who have been migrated into the new degree audit

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software as a pilot group to determine changes or inefficiencies within the process and system. The goal is to complete the full integration of the degree audit software within the 2021-2022 academic year.

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.)

Northwestern serves a broad spectrum of students at approved additional locations and through multiple modalities (online, hybrid, face-to-face). Therefore, the goal of the initiative was to improve the academic experience for all of these students as it relates to the targeted functions and thereby increase student satisfaction and, ultimately, persistence and retention. The fall-to-fall retention rate of first-time freshmen who entered in 2019 and returned in 2020 increased to 62% compared to the 58% of students who entered in 2018 and returned in 2019. The data shows a positive increase in the number of students retained after the implementation of the Ellucian Enterprise Resource Planning System. There is also an increase in the persistence rate of first-time freshmen. The persistence rate increased to 61.7% in 2019 from 57.7% in 2018. The data shows a positive increase in retention and persistence. However, it is understood that tracking must continue to determine if the software implementation is effective since there are data for only a few years at this point.

FALL TO FALL STUDENT RETENTION RATES
PERCENTAGE OF FULL-TIME (AT SEMESTER END) DEGREE SEEKERS ENTERING ONE FALL TERM AND RETURNING THE FOLLOWING FALL
Five-Year History

FALL	PERCENT RETENTION
Entered 2015 - Returned 2016	54%
Entered 2016 - Returned 2017	55%
Entered 2017 - Returned 2018	60%
Entered 2018 - Returned 2019	58%
Entered 2019 - Returned 2020	62%

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College Persistence Rates
Profile of First-time, Full-time*, Degree Seeking Freshmen
Entered NWOSU as a First-time Student and Continued at NWOSU

First Fall	Entering Class Size*	Percent Enrolled Each Subsequent Fall							
		2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
2010	383	228 / 59.5%	154 / 40.2%	132 / 34.5%	73 / 19.1%	30 / 7.8%	17 / 4.4%	12 / 3.1%	4 / 1.0%
2011	414	268 / 64.7%	187 / 45.2%	147 / 35.5%	81 / 19.6%	41 / 9.9%	20 / 5.2%	9 / 2.2%	0 / 0.0%
2012	381	232 / 60.9%	156 / 40.9%	133 / 34.9%	78 / 20.5%	27 / 7.0%	11 / 2.9%	4 / 1.0%	3 / 0.8%
2013	386	234 / 60.6%	161 / 41.7%	140 / 36.3%	72 / 18.7%	24 / 6.2%	10 / 2.6%	3 / 0.8%	
2014	372	202 / 54.3%	147 / 39.5%	117 / 31.5%	67 / 18.0%	27 / 7.3%	15 / 4.0%		
2015	346	190 / 55.1%	147 / 42.6%	121 / 35.0%	47 / 13.6%	15 / 4.3%			
2016	391	215 / 55.0%	153 / 39.1%	113 / 28.9%	47 / 12.0%				
2017	319	192 / 60.2%	148 / 46.4%	118 / 37.0%					
2018	369	213 / 57.7%	144 / 39.0%						
2019	342	211 / 61.7%							
2020	321								

*First-time, full-time (freshman) cohort: A group of students enrolled full-time in a fall semester at any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. Includes students enrolled full-time in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term (part- or full-time). Also includes students who entered with advanced standing (college credits earned before graduation from high school).

The implementation of the ERPS has impacted students primarily through the availability of more useful information for advising, more timely and complete information about financial aid, and more ready access to tools for managing their academic and financial processes.   The following are goals related directly to the student experience that have been met through the initiative project:
- Financial Aid Office
    - Auto packaging of student aid
    - More timely completion of student aid calculation and reporting
    - Acceptance of financial aid awards electronically
- Registry
    - Self-registration to ease enrollment process/load in office
    - Efficiency in schedule building
- Faculty
    - Advising with user-friendly and precise degree audits, as well as the capability to run alternate degree audits based on potential academic major change (in progress)
    - Building and review of departmental/divisional schedules, course rotations, and prerequisites
    - Access to student information
- Student Services
    - Electronic assignment and management of student housing
    - Access to shared and consistent student information
    - Efficient collection, storage, and utilization of recruitment data

Data from various assessments and surveys revealed that the implementation of the ERPS has helped to improve the academic experience for students in a multitude of areas including but not limited to financial aid and registry. Pre-implementation student responses to relevant items on the Noel-Levitz

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survey were compared to post-implementation responses to gauge the degree to which the new ERPS tools had an impact on the student experience. The Noel-Levitz survey results identified that students are more satisfied that their financial aid awards were announced in time to be helpful in college planning with a satisfaction rate of 5.02 per the 2019 survey compared to a satisfaction rate of 4.86 per the 2016 survey. The Noel-Levitz survey results also indicated that students are more satisfied with the institution's ability to help them identify resources to finance their education with a satisfaction rate of 5.30 per the 2019 survey compared to a satisfaction rate of 4.79 per the 2016 survey. Similarly, the Noel-Levitz survey findings indicated a satisfaction increase in the convenience of the registration processes and procedures with a satisfaction rate of 5.57 per the 2019 survey compared to a satisfaction rate of 5.22 per the 2016 survey. There was also a significant satisfaction increase for students being able to register for classes with few conflicts with a satisfaction rate of 5.90 per the 2019 survey compared to a satisfaction rate of 5.38 per the 2016 survey.

The following information shows additional results of the surveys performed. The performance gap in the areas listed below in the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory has reduced from the spring of 2016 to the spring of 2019. The goal is to continue reducing the performance gap by improving in the utilization of the new system. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) survey data also indicates that students are more satisfied due to the increase of the percentage of students who rated the quality of advising and interactions from the 2017 and 2020 surveys.

Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory		
Question	**Spring 2016**	**Spring 2019**
Registration processes and procedures are convenient.	**Importance** 6.31 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.22/1.59 **Performance Gap** 1.09	**Importance** 6.29 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.57/1.37 **Performance Gap** 0.72
Billing processes are reasonable.	**Importance** 6.31 **Satisfaction/SD** 4.98/1.69 **Performance Gap** 1.33	**Importance** 6.11 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.23/1.62 **Performance Gap** 0.88
I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.	**Importance** 6.57 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.38/1.77 **Performance Gap** 1.19	**Importance** 6.53 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.90/1.39 **Performance Gap** 0.63
I am able to take care of college-related business at times that are convenient for me.	**Importance** 6.43 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.51/1.56 **Performance Gap** 0.91	**Importance** 6.42 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.76/1.39 **Performance Gap** 0.66
I receive ongoing feedback about progress toward my academic goals.	**Importance** 6.36 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.13/1.78	**Importance** 6.34 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.50/1.53

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	Performance Gap 1.23	**Performance Gap** 0.84
My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward.	**Importance** 6.51 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.61/1.78 **Performance Gap** 0.90	**Importance** 6.50 **Satisfaction/SD** 6.01/1.43 **Performance Gap** 0.49
Financial aid awards are announced in time to be helpful in college.	**Importance** 6.43 **Satisfaction/SD** 4.86/1.80 **Performance Gap** 1.57	**Importance** 6.29 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.02/1.79 **Performance Gap** 1.27
This institution helps me identify resources to finance my education.	**Importance** 6.32 **Satisfaction/SD** 4.79/1.92 **Performance Gap** 1.53	**Importance** 6.36 **Satisfaction/SD** 5.30/1.74 **Performance Gap** 1.06

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)		
Question	**Spring 2017** **Percentage rating their interactions a 6 or 7 (on a scale from 1 = "Poor" to 7 = "Excellent")**	**Spring 2020** **Percentage rating their interactions a 6 or 7 (on a scale from 1 = "Poor" to 7 = "Excellent")**
Quality of Interactions with Academic Advisors	**First-year students** 37% **Seniors** 54%	**First-year students** 52% **Seniors** 65%
Quality of Interactions with Student Services Staff	**First-year students** 31% **Seniors** 38%	**First-year students** 50% **Seniors** 57%
Quality of Interactions with other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)	**First-year students** 39% **Seniors** 33%	**First-year students** 48% **Seniors** 58%

An additional accomplishment brought about by the implementation of the ERPS is the increase in efficiency and effectiveness of student advisement. The Noel-Levitz results showed that students were more satisfied with their academic advisors helping them set goals with a satisfaction rate of 6.01 per the 2019 survey compared to a satisfaction rate of 5.61 per the 2016 survey. Faculty also reported an increase in the efficiency and effectiveness of student advisement with the implementation of the ERPS. A survey was conducted in 2016 to determine the effectiveness of using the previous administrative system (Jenzabar), and another survey was conducted in 2019 to determine the effectiveness of using the updated administrative system (Ellucian). Survey findings reported that 85.51% of faculty using the Ellucian system rated the effectiveness of the university academic advising process used to enroll students as extremely effective or effective, whereas only 38.98% of faculty using the Jenzabar system rated it as

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extremely effective or effective. Faculty also reported that the Ellucian system provides more adequate academic information to assist in advising students. The survey results indicated that 75.36% of faculty using the Ellucian system marked strongly agree or agree compared to 49.15% of faculty using the Jenzabar system who marked strongly agree or agree. Therefore, the data from the various surveys indicated there was an increase in student satisfaction in the areas of financial aid, registry, and advising from both the student and faculty perspectives.

> 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.

A primary focus of the project was to enhance the student experience with advisement and thereby improve retention. A positive change which resulted from the project was the development of an Enrollment Champions committee in the fall 2020 semester. The Associate Vice President for Academics is the chair of the committee, and other members include a representative from each academic department/division as well as regular attendance from the Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and the Executive Vice President / Academic Affairs. The focus of the committee is to provide essential insight to improving student retention and enrollment efforts on campus. The following are goals of the forum:

- to allow academic areas the opportunity to share retention and enrollment strategies and challenges with one another,
- to support forum representatives as they work within their areas to establish short-range and long-range recruitment and retention goals, and ultimately
- to increase student retention and improve enrollment practices.

The Enrollment Champions committee implemented several initiatives to strengthen the student experience with advisement. Enrollment benchmark dates were developed to sustain strong advisement momentum. The benchmark dates served as goals to enroll a percentage of students in each department by a deadline date. Faculty were motivated to contact their advisees early in the enrollment period to review their academic plans and enroll in courses. Another initiative included focusing on the cohort of students who were close to graduating but not currently enrolled. The new ERPS allowed the committee to identify this cohort of students and provided contact information. A committee member was tasked to contact the students and discuss options that would lead to the completion of their degree. The meetings have also allowed faculty from various academic areas to share retention and enrollment strategies and challenges with one another. The sharing of information began to eliminate barriers of departmental silos in hopes of making a positive impact on the student experience.

The ERPS also led to the implementation of course rotations and plans of study in all academic departments. Each academic department built a plan of study that serves as a roadmap for students to complete their degree. The plan of study specifies which courses the student should enroll in each semester in order to graduate in a four-year time frame. The intention was to make enrollment more efficient and transparent for both advisors and students. The goal for developing the plans of study was to improve advising through uniform course rotation forms, uniform plan of study documents, and uniform prerequisite listings. Furthermore, the implementation of the ERPS provided the tools to develop and implement the plan of study initiative.

The ERPS has allowed the student services department to share and provide consistent data on students to department chairs and faculty advisors. The student services department developed a new process that entails providing important student information and enrollment status to faculty advisors

during the enrollment period. The student services employees developed enrollment lists for each academic department and provided updates to those departments on a weekly basis during the enrollment period. The lists allow department chairs and faculty advisors to view the enrollment status of their advisees along with information that may be important in retaining the students. The ability to easily access and share information has allowed faculty advisors to contact more students in an efficient and effective manner.

An additional positive change brought about by the new administrative system is the implementation of a more functional and integrated Early Alert Reporting (EAR) system. The EAR system allows faculty to identify students who are struggling in their courses with academic or other problems so support can be provided. Faculty are able to complete a report in the EAR system and a referral is sent to the student services department. A staff member of the student services department then connects the student to different resources on campus to provide them help in the needed areas. Although the EAR system was not implemented by the fall 2020 desired deadline, the system became available for faculty to utilize in the spring 2021 semester.

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

The implementation of the ERPS has provided all constituents, including students, faculty, and staff, with enhanced access to information. The ERPS allows student, faculty, and operational data to be housed in a single database management system, from which varied reports may be generated; centralized and consistent data is easily accessible through all offices. Within pre-FY19 procedures, multiple sources of data and multiple modes of data collection undermined consistent reporting and analysis. The new system facilitates more efficient and integrated information collection and reporting. Examples of enhanced efficiency include automatic packaging within the financial aid office, a greater degree of transparency in relation to the budgetary cycle, and eventually automated degree audit generation within the registry office. As an added benefit, processes and reporting are largely paperless within the new system.

The services available on the ERPS have removed many barriers and empowered students to generate and review their own educational path through convenient access to tools for managing their academic and financial processes. Within pre-FY19 enrollment procedures, students would select their courses from a paper or online list of classes, fill out a paper enrollment form, meet with their advisor for a signature of approval, and then turn their form into the registry office. The new system allows students to conveniently filter and search for desired courses online, build and have access to a plan of study, and enroll online as long as the student does not have any holds on their account. The ERPS provides students with a convenient and effective avenue to take ownership of their academic progress, which will positively impact student retention and completion.

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

The implementation of the ERPS consisted of a collaboration between various departments on campus that include, but are not limited to, the financial aid office, bursar's office, registry office, and human resources office. Each of these departments encountered both challenges and opportunities during implementation of the ERPS in order to provide improvements that would enhance the student experience in these areas.

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Financial Aid Office: The financial aid office identified an ongoing challenge in developing processes and rules within the new system. The Director of Financial Aid continually works to modify these processes and rules to fit the needs of the students and institution, consulting with a representative from Ellucian to resolve the issues at hand. The following are financial aid opportunities that have occurred due to the implementation of the ERPS:

- Auto packaging of student aid
- More timely completion of student aid calculation and reporting
- Electronic acceptance of financial aid awards
- Access to a universal, web-based program

Registry Office: The greatest challenge for the registry office was the migration of the students' academic records (transcript data). The data in the previous Jenzabar system was not fully updated and contained invalid information, which made the migration of the information challenging. In order to work toward overcoming this challenge, transcript holds are placed on every student migrated over. Beginning in the fall 2019 semester, all students enrolled had a hold placed on their account so the transcript could be reviewed for accuracy. Another challenge the registry office has encountered is implementing the degree audit software that will allow automatic generation of degree audits. The implementation is tedious and time consuming, and the office consists of the Director of Registry and three full time employees who work on implementing the new system as well as attend to their daily tasks. However, the registry office employees are continually working toward implementing the degree audit software that will benefit the students by producing precise degree audits and generating alternate degree audits based on a potential academic major change. The following are registry opportunities that have occurred due to the implementation of the ERPS:

- Self-registration to ease enrollment process/load in office
- Efficiency in schedule building
- Ability to establish rules in the new system that allow more students the opportunity to enroll online

Bursar's Office: The greatest challenge for the bursar's office has been in obtaining reports to pull information from the Ellucian system. With the previous system, all of the needed reports were already built and ran with accuracy. The bursar's office could rely on the previous system's reporting tools to complete tasks. Due to the conversion from the previous system to the Ellucian system, the bursar's office had to develop all needed reports within the new system. The bursar's office is continuing to work with Ellucian consultants to resolve the issues they encounter. The following are the opportunities that the Bursar has identified due to the implementation of the ERPS:

- Students are able to manage their accounts through the Ellucian Self-Service portal
- Information is displayed in the Self-Service portal in a user-friendly manner and clearly provides information that clarifies student charges

Human Resource Office: The greatest challenge for the human resource office was a lack of understanding of how all the modules work together. The Human Resources Director was able to work with Ellucian consultants to determine the best avenues in setting up modules and assigning values to produce an effective process. The following are the human resource opportunities identified due to the implementation of the ERPS:

- Students are able to electronically enter their time sheets online and submit for approval and payroll

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- Students and employees are able to access their payroll information such as paystubs and W-2 forms online

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.

The Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness had the primary responsibility for data collection. The Executive Vice President / Academic Affairs and the Dean of Faculty provided leadership and support and will participate in the data analysis process. The Ellucian implementation process, detailed below, provides the framework within which the project was undertaken.

A steering committee comprised of key leaders at the institution met and addressed project issues related to scope and other challenges that arise during implementation. In addition, personnel formed core teams of decision makers and primary users representing each functional area on campus. These core teams included personnel in offices related to given ERPS functions, information technology personnel, and key university administrators. A senior ranking administrator served as the executive sponsor who, though not involved with day-to-day decisions and activities, was aware of progress and milestones.

The tables below, extracted from the Project Contacts overview document within the Ellucian implementation plan, show the groups and individuals who were directly involved in the initiative. The following individuals will continue to meet as necessary.

Project Leadership Team	
Role or Area of Representation	**Member Name**
Steering Committee	
Executive Sponsor	Dr. David Pecha
Director of Information Technology	Craig Ricke
Executive Vice President / Academic Affairs	Dr. Bo Hannaford
Vice President for Administration	Dr. David Pecha
Project Management Team	
Project Manager	Tara Miller
Project Technical Lead	Dalton Moser
Implementation Team	
Project Manager	Tara Miller
Admissions – Graduate	Sheri Lahr
Admissions – Undergraduate	Sheri Lahr
Controller	Sadie Bier
Director for HR	Cheryl Ellis
Director of Financial Aid	Tara Hannaford
Housing/Accounts	Paige Fischer
Project Technical Lead	Dalton Moser
Residence Life Assistant Director	Matt Adair
IT Support	Craig Ricke
IT Support	Tara Miller

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Finance Team	
Role or Area of Representation	**Member Name**
Team Lead	Tara Miller
Accounts Payable	Lisa Vermillion
Budget	Dr. David Pecha
Endowment	N/A
Fixed Assets	Sadie Bier
General Ledger	Sadie Bier
Non-Student Accounts Receivables	Paige Fischer
Purchasing	Eric Reames

Human Resource Team	
Role or Area of Representation	**Member Name**
Team Lead	Cheryl Ellis
Benefits/Deductions	Vanessa Scoggins
Biographic/Demographic	Cheryl Ellis
Compensation	Judy Dollar
Payroll	Jackie Kephart

Student Team	
Role or Area of Representation	**Member Name**
Team Lead	Tara Miller
Executive Vice President / Academic Affairs	Dr. Bo Hannaford
Admissions/Advisement	Sheri Lahr
Bursar	Paige Fischer
Degree Audit	Sheri Lahr
Finance	Sadie Bier
Financial Aid	Tara Hannaford
Housing/ Residence Life Assistant Director	Matt Adair
Human Resources	Cheryl Ellis
Records/Registrar	Sheri Lahr

Financial Aid Team	
Role or Area of Representation	**Member Name**
Team Lead	Tara Hannaford
Director of Financial Aid	Tara Hannaford
Disbursement Officer	Sue Burks
Financial Aid Staff	Staff
Technical Support for Financial Aid	Tara Miller

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Reporting Strategy	
Role or Area of Representation	**Member Name**
Team Lead	Dalton Moser
Institutional Research	Ashley Fischer
Technical Support for Student Records	Tara Miller

Data Standards Strategy	
Role or Area of Representation	**Member Name**
Team Lead	Tara Miller
Financial Aid	Tara Hannaford
HR Director	Cheryl Ellis
Technical Support for Student Records	Tara Miller

Security Strategy	
Role or Area of Representation	**Member Name**
Team Lead	Dalton Moser
Controller	Sadie Bier
Director of Financial Aid	Tara Hannaford
Human Resources and Payroll	Cheryl Ellis
Information Technology Security Officer	Tara Miller
Records	Sheri Lahr

Technical Team	
Role or Area of Representation	**Member Name**
Team Lead	Craig Ricke
Database Administrator	Dalton Moser
Network Specialist	Tara Miller

As stated in question 5, each team within the implementation project faced various challenges in the conversion from the Jenzabar system to the Ellucian system. However, the teams have reported that they are able to navigate and overcome the challenges they encounter with help from the Ellucian staff, input from consultants from Brown, Hendrix and Associates, and support from the Northwestern Oklahoma State University administration. The Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness performed surveys to determine the effectiveness of the new ERPS in improving the student experience. Faculty and staff completed separate surveys. Based on the results of the survey, both faculty and staff have positive perceptions of the new ERPS. The following information shows the results of the surveys performed.

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Ellucian – Self Service Administrative System (Staff Survey)	
There were 45% of the NWOSU staff who completed the survey.	
Question	**Spring 2021** **Selected Strongly Agree or Agree**
Please base the answers off your experience using the new administrative system (Ellucian – Self Service). Employees have easy access to current information on benefits, compensation, leave, and payroll.	89.83%
The Ellucian system has made purchasing processes more convenient.	57.50%
Employees have access to shared and consistent data on students and areas of mutual concern within the university.	52.94%

Academic Advising Survey (Faculty)		
There were 64% of the NWOSU faculty who completed the survey in 2019 and 79% in 2021.		
	JENZABAR SYSTEM **(old system)**	**ELLUCIAN COLLEAGUE** **(new system)**
Question	**Spring 2019** **Answered Strongly Agree or Agree**	**Spring 2021** **Answered Strongly Agree or Agree**
The university academic advising process used to enroll students is effective.	38.98%	82.51%
The administrative system provides adequate information to assist me in advising a student.	49.15%	75.36%
The process in the administrative system for requesting a degree audit to assist students with advisement is efficient, with requests fulfilled in a timely manner.	15.25%	30.88%
In the administrative system, I have access to financial information needed to advise students effectively (i.e. scholarship, Pell Grant, loan).	8.62%	14.70%
In the administrative system, I can easily identify and find financial resources needed to help advise students.	5.08%	11.59%

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In the administrative system, the registration processes and procedures are convenient.	42.37%	73.92%
I am available when my students need help.	93.11%	100%

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

Northwestern Oklahoma State University faculty, staff, and administrators have learned valuable information during the initiative project. The most important points learned from the initiative project include:
- Enhancing tools and technology improves student perceptions of institutional process.
- Enhancing tools and technology has a positive impact on student experiences.
- Removing barriers to functions and empowering students improves educational experience.
- Allowing students to have greater ownership of their educational path positively impacts student retention and persistence.
- Enhancing technology allows faculty to assist students in a more efficient and effective manner with academic and nonacademic matters, such as advising.

Resource Provision

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

During FY18, Northwestern collaborated with sister institutions Southwestern Oklahoma State University and Southeastern Oklahoma State University to investigate options for updating the ERPS for all three universities. Stakeholders spent many hours researching possibilities, attending demonstrations, and analyzing proposals submitted for review. The universities selected Ellucian as the vendor, and a two-year implementation process began in spring 2018. By working together and selecting a common vendor, all three institutions received significant cost savings. Collaboration on negotiation, training, and implementation saved an estimated $2,724,000 over unilateral implementation.

In an effort to avoid borrowing funds to implement this nearly $1.8 million endeavor, the university started saving funds for this project during FY16. Funds are being utilized from University capital funds, technology services fees, and other cash savings.

To assist with the implementation process, Northwestern Oklahoma State University, along with the two sister institutions, engaged the services of Brown, Hendrix and Associates. Initially, this firm provided two key services. First, they helped with preparing the RFP process paperwork. Once all bids had been received, consultants worked with the institutions to secure the software and services needed for each university. They also worked to leverage optimal price discounts for the institutions.

Dedicated staff was critical to the success of the implementation process. In spring 2018, the university added one new FTE in the information technology department to work directly with this implementation process. The university also assigned a project manager outside of the IT department to be the liaison between the Brown, Hendrix and Associates consultant, Ellucian, and the university. As

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training continues, each department is allocating time and support staff to complete the necessary steps to design, test, and implement the software, which will improve the university's overall efficiency.

The university allocated physical and technological resources to furnish a dedicated training room for this project. Equipment included a Smart Board, 13 computer work stations, and desks and chairs to support staff needs. This room also allowed personnel involved in training, implementation, and eventual production to leave their respective offices and transition to a quiet work environment. A second room was also identified in the library to serve as an overflow training room.

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

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

The migration to the new ERPS is an ongoing project that will allow Northwestern Oklahoma State University to develop processes that will enhance the student experience, and ultimately student retention. As previously mentioned, the registrar's office will continue to work toward the implementation of the degree audit software. The process is taking longer than anticipated, but the staff are continually working toward implementing the software that will benefit the students by producing degree audits. The financial aid office will also continue to modify processes and rules within the ERPS to fit the needs of the students and institution. The bursar's office will continue efforts to create needed reports that aid in efficient and effective task completion. We will also continue to utilize the Enrollment Champions committee to share retention and enrollment strategies among academic areas in efforts to increase student retention and improve enrollment practices.

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.

The development of the Enrollment Champions committee with the goal of focusing on retention and enrollment efforts across all academic areas is an initiative that could be utilized and effective at many institutions. The committee allows an avenue for retention and enrollment strategies to be developed and shared across multiple areas of the institution. The committee also encourages faculty to pursue new ideas and take risks in initiating various enrollment and retention strategies that would help students succeed in their academic endeavors. The committee also develops realistic short-range and long-range recruitment and retention goals that help to provide clear enrollment and retention expectations for faculty in their academic areas. The implementation of the new ERPS has allowed this committee access to an abundance of data that informs relevant decisions when planning various strategies. The Executive Vice President has shared information about the Enrollment Champions committee with the Chief Academic Officer group in order to provide insight on impactful practices and strategies. Northwestern Oklahoma State University would be willing to share information that would allow other institutions to develop and utilize a group similar to the Enrollment Champions committee on their campuses.

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