



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.

May 10, 2023

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Date

Lisa C. Freeman, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Northern Illinois University

Name of Institution

DeKalb, IL

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: QIRReport[InstitutionName] [State].pdf (e.g., QIProposalNoNameUniversityMN.pdf). The file name must include the institution's name (or an identifiable portion thereof) and state.

Date: 5/12/2023

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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.

The Northern Illinois University (NIU) HLC Quality Initiative (QI), *Success in Gateway Courses for All Students*, supported NIU students to achieve their academic goals by improving student success and reducing equity gaps in gateway courses. At NIU, a gateway course is defined as one that is necessary for students to advance within a major or is required to complete general studies requirements. The courses that were targeted were those with low rates of success, high equity gaps, or both. The success rate is the percentage of students who enroll in the course and who earn a grade of A, B, or C. An equity gap exists when measurable differences in course outcomes are present in subgroups, as compared to the population.

The principal purpose of the QI project was to support all NIU students to achieve their academic goals by assessing, improving and modifying approaches in gateway courses to support higher levels of student success. Of particular importance was focusing on success for students from underrepresented populations. The QI project had the following goals:

- Identify and redesign gateway courses with low success rates or high equity gaps.
- Assess and deploy support for course transformation or other improvements in the identified courses to enhance student success.
- Monitor data from and engage in continuous quality improvement of identified courses to enhance student success in courses and beyond (e.g., retention and graduation).

In pursuit of these goals, we focused on factors that influence success rates, including (1) pedagogical practices (e.g., active learning, inclusive teaching, contextualization of learning), (2) academic supports (e.g., proactive advising, course sequencing, tutoring services, supplemental instruction) and (3) co-curricular supports (e.g., engagement, climate issues). Throughout the QI project, we identified the most relevant factors for our students and worked to scale the implementation of effective interventions. The project entailed an iterative process of identifying barriers to success, deploying interventions to overcome these barriers, assessing the interventions' outcomes, and adjusting (e.g., scaling up or eliminating) interventions as appropriate.

The initiative aligned with the [university's goals](#) and [Strategic Action Planning Framework](#), was embedded within NIU's more comprehensive [Strategic Enrollment Management \(SEM\) Plan](#) and included within the [Illinois Equity in Attainment \(ILEA\) Equity Plan](#). Tailored, comprehensive action plans for both new central academic supports as well as college-specific curricular transformation and supports were developed and implemented, grounded in research-based approaches. The QI project positioned NIU to achieve a milestone in the context of the SEM and Equity plans: improvement in course success rates, leading to student academic progress and to degree attainment.

Of the 80 courses that were identified and prioritized for student success enhancement, the collective efforts of the QI resulted in improved DFUW rates in 40 courses and reduced equity gaps in 19 courses. Even more importantly, NIU has made significant strides to intentionally monitor student success data and use these data to inform faculty supports and student success efforts. NIU implemented several new faculty development and student support initiatives. We significantly increased the number of faculty who have been trained and are now implementing active, inclusive, and equitable pedagogy in their teaching. Institutional Research has created a dataset analogous to the baseline data set to measure future progress in reducing the number of courses with low success rates or high equity gaps.

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.)

To address the goals of the QI, NIU set a three-year timeline and engaged in the following steps: (1) identified relevant courses; (2) planned and implemented strategic interventions for increasing student success in these courses based on research data and best practices; and (3) re-assessed student success in these courses and adjusted strategies as needed. The following summary of the highlights and notable accomplishments for each of these steps are provided to offer a glimpse into the comprehensive student success enhancement process that the campus engaged in.

(1) Identified Gateway Courses with Low Success Rates and High Equity Gaps

The initial identification of relevant gateway courses began in fall 2020 when the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, Chief Diversity Officer, and members of Institutional Effectiveness worked with key stakeholders, including college deans, associate deans, chairs, and members of the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee, to closely examine student success data. Utilizing the two platforms that we have for identifying courses and sharing information with stakeholders, Tableau and EAB's Academic Performance Solutions (APS), we focused on course-level student success data (course grade distributions, DFW rates, and equity gaps) for 100- and 200-level courses over the past four academic years. Data was disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, first generation status and Pell eligibility.

After reviewing the data, the following criteria were established for prioritizing courses requiring transformation:

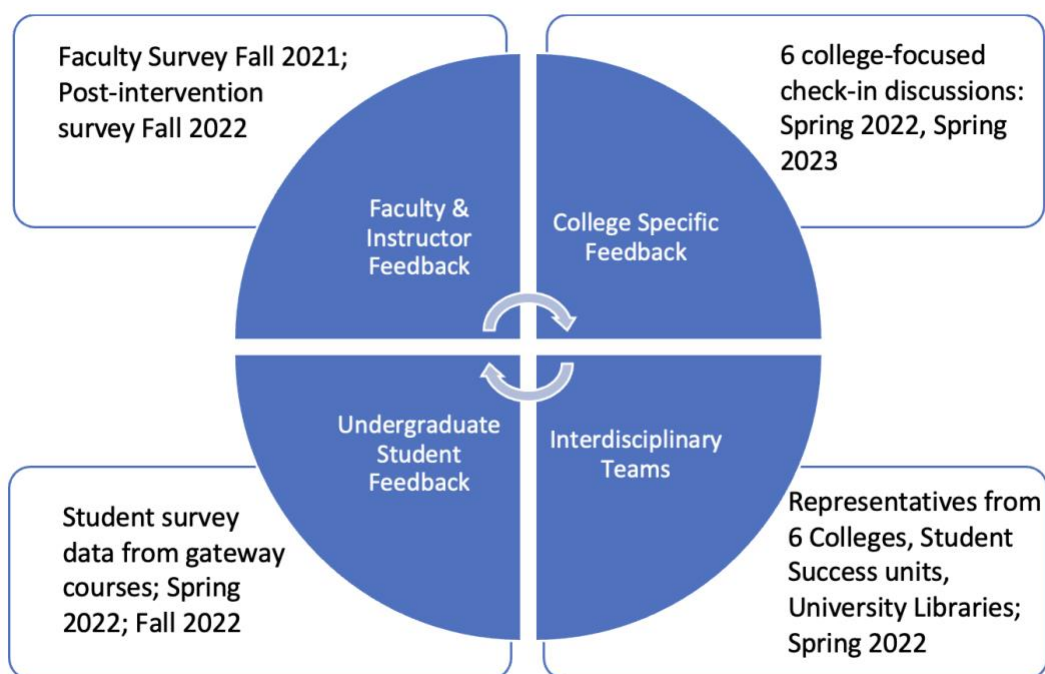
- Gateway courses (i.e., courses that students need to take to advance within a major or require to complete general studies requirements) with **DFUW rates of 20% or greater and at least 25 enrolled students** in the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 academic years, and/or
- Courses with at least a **10% equity gap** (i.e., success rates for students from under-served groups significantly less than the average success rate in the course) **that impacted at least 10 students** in the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 academic years

NOTE: 2020-2021 data was omitted due to the pandemic anomaly of that academic year.

With these criteria for course prioritization, the team identified and prioritized 80 courses for review, transformation and student support interventions. After reviewing collegiate data, associate deans for curriculum worked with their college equity teams to establish a plan for reviewing and ultimately transforming identified courses.

(2) Planned and Implemented Strategic Interventions for Increasing Student Success in These Courses Based on Data and Best Practices

In conjunction with the review of student success data, a four-pronged data collection feedback model was established and then utilized to gather additional data, insights, feedback from faculty, administrators, student services professionals, and directly from undergraduate students. Data was collected and organized into six guiding categories that emerged from the feedback quadrants; student academic skills, structural supports, student motivation, pedagogy, outreach, and other.



Based on the student success metrics analysis and rich feedback that was gathered, the team identified strategies and tactics that aligned with the core goals of the QI.

Goal 1: Identify and redesign gateway courses with low success rates or high equity gaps

This first goal established regular reporting to relevant stakeholders of gateway courses with low success rates or high equity gaps as well as implementing comprehensive course-specific plans for redesigning courses to infuse inclusive and active learning pedagogies.

Course and Department Level Strategies

Strategy 1A: Establish criteria for prioritizing courses requiring transformation.

Strategy 1B: Redesign gateway courses with low success rates or high equity gaps.

Goal 2: Assess and deploy support for course transformation or other improvements in the identified courses to enhance student success

While we initially planned to focus solely on course transformation and infusion of research-based pedagogical practices (e.g., active learning, inclusive teaching, contextualization of learning, etc.), it became clear through our data gathering and feedback that broader academic success supports were needed for incoming first-year students to support their success. To achieve this second goal, we recognized that we must embrace a holistic approach to enhancing student success.

University-wide Level Strategies

Strategy 2A: Assess current instructional support for student success in gateway courses

Strategy 2B: Deploy additional course transformation supports

Strategy 2C: Deploy additional academic success supports

Strategy 2D: Address systemic barriers for first-year student success

Goal 3: Monitor data from and engage in continuous quality improvement of identified courses to enhance student success

Following the implementation of strategic interventions, institutional research gathered, analyzed and shared data. The team organized conversations held with key stakeholders about the success of the interventions and how to best adjust strategies. This iterative process was repeated enabling formative assessments to guide the direction of the interventions for student success and engage in continuous improvement.

Course, Department, College, and University-wide Level Strategies

Strategy 3A: Monitor student success data

Strategy 3B: Re-assess student success in target courses and adjust strategies as needed

Initiative Overview and Timeline

Year 1 (Academic Year 2020-2021)

The HLC approved NIU's QI in spring 2021. Initial work had already begun in fall 2020 through the convening of the initial Steering Group and introductory meetings with Academic Affairs leadership to introduce the QI. The team highlighted currently available student success data and existing course transformation support resources. Through these initial conversations and analysis, the team established criteria and identified 80 target courses, using data from 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. Colleges were asked to initiate conversations within their academic programs on suggested interventions and collect feedback on support needed for potential course redesign.

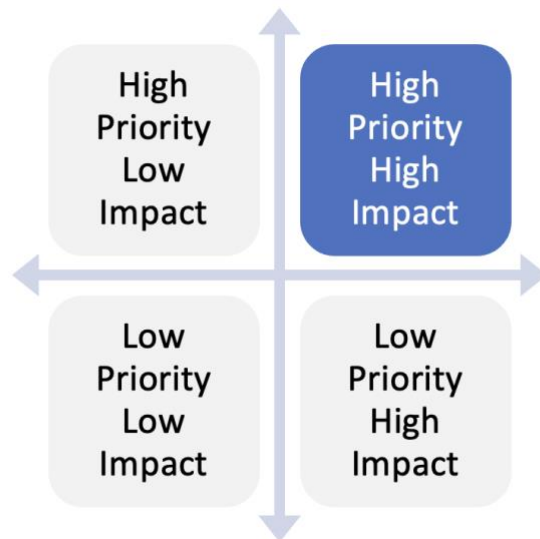
The project was guided by a [shared leadership framework](#) and a [Core Team](#) was empowered to directly oversee and coordinate project activities moving forward. We began at this time to outline broader interventions aligned to the QI.

Year 2 (Academic Year 2021-2022)

At the start of the fall 2021 semester, an introductory meeting was held with those who had either taught the targeted courses in the past or who were scheduled to teach them in the current semester. The team introduced the QI and sought input on supports that would be most impactful. In addition, all faculty who had previously taught the identified courses were asked to complete a survey to understand why students might struggle in such courses and to seek recommendations from those faculty. The team analyzed the results, and shared them with the Steering Group. Those who were teaching identified courses received prioritized invitations to new professional development opportunities, including the ACUE *Effective Teaching Practices* certification course and ACUE *Inclusive Teaching for Equitable Learning* microcredential.

In spring 2022, CITL developed plans for interventions as well as course transformation ideas. These efforts began with sharing analysis and takeaways from fall 2021 surveys of faculty teaching gateway courses as well as analysis of equity and student success outcomes from Fall 2021 compared with prior years. Each college provided status on initial course transformation and student success support efforts already underway and any additional institutional support needed.

To identify additional ideas as well as aid in prioritizing university-wide support interventions, an [interdisciplinary team](#) was formed with over 30 faculty and staff from across the institution, further described under question 6 below. Recommendations provided by the interdisciplinary team along with data from the previously discussed feedback model were analyzed using 2x2 prioritization matrix of targeted initiatives. Initiatives were selected by level of perceived impact in reaching the overarching goal of reducing DFWU rates in gateway courses and by level of departmental, college, or institutional priority.



Once priority areas were identified, corresponding strategies, resources and timelines for implementation were created. All interventions were reviewed to ensure they were well aligned to NIU's vision, mission, and core values and relied on data-informed decisions and used best practices to support continuous quality improvement. Action plans were established and

planning commenced for course transformation efforts and comprehensive student support enhancements to be implemented in the coming academic year. New course transformation assistance, including a [faculty toolkit](#) to support student success in gateway courses, along with new diversity/equity/inclusion training opportunities were launched. Prioritized tactics were included in the updated [Strategic Enrollment Management Plan](#).

Year 3 (Academic Year 2022-2023)

During summer 2022, CITL assisted faculty in course transformation efforts in preparation for the fall 2022 semester, while other student-facing offices (such as the Huskie Academic Support center, the Center for Student Assistance, and others) developed new student support interventions. Both central and localized strategies and tactics were pursued in alignment with QI goals. The team continued to share student success data each semester and to check-in with each college to capture updates on various local initiatives and progress being made toward stated goals.

Examples of Key Central Interventions

Several new faculty and student support interventions were implemented during the QI, examples of four keystone initiatives are described below.

Faculty Academy for Cultural Competence and Equity. A consortium of faculty developed (FACCE) to provide professional development for faculty, instructors, and graduate teaching assistants on a range of issues related to cultural competence and their connections to curriculum, pedagogy, and classroom engagement. Administrative and support staff are free to attend as well, but the sessions are designed to focus on classroom instruction. To achieve strategic, intentional, and meaningful conversations around cultural competence, professional development sessions were launched in fall 2022 to support educators across campus with exercising cultural competence into their educational spaces. A series of 10 professional development sessions were offered across the 2022-2023 academic year and a weeklong summer institute will take place during summer 2023. Participants were encouraged to attend at least 4 workshops and upcoming completion of 7 or more, will receive a Certification of Completion for Cultural Competence.

Participation in sessions during fall 2022 ranged from 18-33 people, with almost half of all participants attending two sessions, and 15 participants attending three or more sessions. Thus far in spring 2023, participation has spanned from 15-23 participants. Participants have overwhelmingly found the sessions helpful to their teaching, with 68% stating that they have increased their knowledge base regarding inclusive teaching strategies, 74% learning at least one strategy that they plan to use in their classroom, and 84% finding the sessions to be a supportive space to discuss equitable learning practices.

Scaffolded Support for Teaching Gateway Courses. CITL designed Scaffolded Support to address the QI purpose and goals by promoting course transformation and evidence-based teaching practices that can reduce DFUW rates and eliminate equity gaps. CITL created and distributed timely newsletters that provided specific and actionable strategies that could be incorporated immediately; the newsletters were also collected and [published publicly as a toolkit](#) on the

Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning website using a Creative Commons license. All faculty teaching gateway courses for the fall 2022 semester were enrolled automatically in the program. Participating faculty were asked to implement at least one of the strategies from each newsletter. Results were reported via three check-in reports collected via an online survey. Feedback was also collected on the quality and usefulness of the newsletters. For fall 2022, 36 faculty completed the program.

The program was implemented again in spring 2023 with all faculty teaching gateway courses who were not part of the program in the fall 2022 semester. At the time of this report, that cohort is still underway and it is too early to report data on the outcomes.

Another key faculty support initiative was a new institutional **partnership with the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) to implement the ACUE course on Effective Teaching Practices (ETP)**. The ETP supports the QI purpose and goals by offering faculty teaching gateway courses with a high-quality, rigorous curriculum on teaching practices that promote student success and equitable outcomes. While participation was not limited to faculty teaching gateway courses, they were targeted and prioritized as a key audience for the program. Throughout the course, faculty learn about evidence-based teaching practices from leading experts, watch video-demonstrations of the teaching practices, and discuss the strategies with their peers. In each module, participants must implement at least one of the strategies in their own teaching and submit a detailed reflection on how they implemented it, what impact it had, and what changes they would make in the future. Since fall 2020, [three cohorts have completed the course](#), a [fourth one is currently underway](#), and a fifth cohort is planned for the 2023-2024 academic year. In the first three cohorts, 61 faculty successfully completed the course.

The final university-level initiative that was launched in alignment with the QI was to **further leverage features in EAB's student success platform, Navigate**. This initiative included a two-pronged emphasis: (1) Increase faculty communication regarding importance of early alerts for gradable activities and class participation, and (2) Expand coordinated care model via Navigate alerts. A series of new faculty information sessions were offered and corresponding on-demand tutorials and user guides were developed to raise awareness and provide practical step-by-step assistance in utilizing Navigate to issue alerts about specific students needing support so that advisors and other student support staff could then follow up. Additionally, the Huskie First Survey of new first-year students was revised to include success items, including self-reported class attendance, in which students who identified early attendance challenges were identified and additional follow-up was made within 24 hours after responding to the questionnaire.

Examples of Key Localized Interventions

While numerous course transformation and student success efforts were already underway prior to the QI, many others were identified and piloted during the QI and are showing great promise for continuing to promote student success. A few such localized examples include:

8-week Courses. Some first-year students who experience challenges during their first few weeks of classes that can jeopardize their performance and lead them to dropping the course. However, the reduction in credit hours can lead students to lose access to financial aid, potentially leading

to dropping out entirely. To address this need, in fall 2022, 8-week courses were piloted in 20 general education courses in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences that opened in the second 8-weeks of the semester. These courses were carefully selected as those courses that we felt were appropriate for concentrated study. Advisors worked to enroll students who were dropping other courses into these courses. The pilot of this program was a great success, with 67% of the 80 students who enrolled in these courses after the fourth week of the fall semester successfully completing the courses with a grade of C or better. This effort helped students stay on track to graduate on time and kept them eligible for financial aid. We are convinced 8-week classes are an option that can be more widely adopted and conversations are already underway to further expand this pilot in the future.

Credit Recovery Modules for Failed Courses. One high-enrollment gateway course, *PSYC 102 - Introduction to Psychology*, was selected to pilot the development and offering of online modules that students who fail the course can take to demonstrate competence in key area(s) of the course so that they could pass. The pilot was launched in spring 2023 and currently 70 students are taking the credit recovery modules for free—saving them time and money and keeping them on track to earn their degree.

Expanded Student Support. Recognizing increased student demand for support in evenings, particularly for adult learners, programs in the College of Education are piloting alternate evening office hours for advisors and lab technicians. Students now have expanded options for getting the help they need when they need it most.

Alumni Mentoring Program. The College of Business has launched new alumni mentoring programs, pairing Black, Hispanic, and Asian alumni with students for ongoing engagement and mentorship.

Faculty Showcases. Colleges are providing varied opportunities for faculty to share their ideas and practices for altering their course design and delivery in support of student success. For example, the College of Health and Human Sciences has launched a series of informal sessions for faculty on topics ranging from supporting students to student mental health as well as developed additional discussion and virtual collaboration opportunities for faculty to share their course delivery strategies with each other.

Curriculum Audits. Faculty curriculum committees are looking holistically at program curriculum for opportunities for student success and diversity, equity, and inclusion enhancements. For example, the Diversity and Belonging Committee of the School of Theatre and Dance in the College of Visual and Performing Arts is reviewing the entire curriculum of the school to identify areas where the curriculum can be more inclusive. They will present their findings to the faculty in the upcoming semester.

(3) Re-assess Student Success in These Courses and Adjust Strategies as Needed

Following the implementation of strategic interventions, data was once again gathered, analyzed and posted in Tableau, and conversations held with key stakeholders about the success of the

interventions and how best to adjust the strategies. In some cases, the interventions have proven successful and we're examining how best to scale up for larger deployment as feasible. Still others need more time to fully realize results and are being monitored longer. Throughout the QI timeframe, this iterative process has been repeated, enabling formative assessments and multiple levels to guide the direction of the interventions for student success and engagement in continuous improvement. Institutional Effectiveness has created a dataset analogous to the baseline data set to measure future progress in reducing the number of courses with low success rates or high equity gaps.

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.

The impact of the initiative can be seen not only in the improvements that we've made generally in student success outcomes across many gateway courses but also in the tangible outcomes from the pilot support initiatives that were also implemented.

Of the 80 courses that were identified and prioritized for student success enhancement, the collective efforts of the QI resulted in **improved DFUW rates in 50% of courses and reduced equity gaps in 24% of courses**. Even more importantly, NIU has made significant strides to purposefully monitor student success data and use these data to inform local and central faculty support and student success efforts.

In comparing faculty participation in the support initiatives with outcomes in the identified courses, the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL) has collected data on faculty participation and completion of offered high impact support programs to aid in the moderation of the continuous quality improvement efforts of identified courses. Fall 2022 data reflected the changes to course DFUW rates and equity gaps, and identified courses that decreased DFUW rates and narrowed the equity gaps. According to the data analysis, **courses that were taught by faculty that engaged in CITL high impact programs made great strides and decreased their DFUW and equity gaps**. In fact, 88% of improved courses that are now below the DFUW rate were taught by faculty that took advantage of CITL's traditional levels of support, with almost 39% of courses taught by some if not all faculty that took advantage of high impact faculty support programs, including the Scaffolded Support for Teaching Gateway Courses or ACUE Effective Teaching Practices program. Similarly, strides were made in narrowing equity gaps, with 70% of courses that narrowed the gap below the threshold being taught by faculty that took advantage of CITL's faculty teaching support programs and services. Conversely, courses that increased DFUW rates and/or widen equity gaps were taught by a lower percentage of faculty that took advantage of the available support. Courses with the highest decrease in DFUW rates were taught by faculty who participated in high impact professional development like ACUE and Scaffolded Support.

Faculty engagement and their perceptions of the value of the various pilot initiatives that were aligned to the QI provide important indicators as to the feasibility for expansion and future impact. For the Scaffolded Support program, in fall 2022, 68 faculty submitted at least 1 check-in

report; 36 submitted all 3 check-in reports. On the final check-in report, 82% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the program was beneficial to them, and 62% of participants felt that their students were somewhat or much more successful that semester.

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

Toolkit to Promote Student Success in Gateway Courses was created with curated resources to help faculty address the challenges that could be potential barriers to student success in gateway courses. As the common challenges student face are multi-faceted and interconnected, the intention of this [toolkit](#) was to provide a variety of potential strategies that may address each challenge.

The **Scaffolded Support for Teaching Gateway Courses** newsletters have been published publicly as a [toolkit](#) which can serve as an ongoing, just-in-time resource for faculty who are new to teaching in general or to teaching gateway courses.

The **Faculty Academy for Cultural Competence and Equity (FACCE)** [curriculum](#) of 10 professional development sessions that will be offered as a weeklong summer camp and then repeated in future academic years.

Student Success Tips and Tools were curated and share with faculty and students, offering [guides](#) with tips and practical strategies for student success.

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

The QI project provided invaluable opportunities for collaborations and discussions across the institution. This experience further strengthened NIU's commitment to student success and degree completion through the development of new initiatives and strategies while also continuing to leverage the work that was underway prior to the development of the QI project. For example, the data collected as a result of this project guided targeted conversations within each academic college. The Core Team was able to share ideas from one college to the next in a formalized manner while also working together to provide suggestions back to the college representatives. As a result of these discussions, new programs and connections were made. *Navigate* trainings were brought directly to the instructors during new instructor orientation for many of the gateway courses, funding was redirected to support a peer learning model within several math courses. In addition, significant focus was directed to programming and structural supports for first year students, specifically to address the feedback from the students and faculty members such as modifying the content provided in New Student Orientation, adjusting the curriculum in First Year Seminars, and hiring ten additional academic advisors.

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.

A shared leadership framework was adopted for managing the initiative, consisting of both an [executive team](#) providing general oversight as well as a [core team](#) to oversee and coordinate project activities directly. Furthermore, an [interdisciplinary team](#) provided further input in identifying and prioritizing interventions and the [committee of the curricular deans](#), consisting of the associate deans for curriculum for each of the colleges, were important partners in establishing and operationalizing college-specific interventions. The titles of the members of each of these shared leadership groups are provided below to exemplify the breadth of individuals from across campus who were involved in guiding the initiative and were vested in its success.

Executive Team

- Executive Vice President and Provost
- Vice President for Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer
- Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Core Team

- Associate Vice Provost for Teaching, Learning, and Digital Education and Interim Accreditation Liaison Officer
- Associate Vice Provost for Student Success
- Director of Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation
- Executive Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Director of Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality
- Project Manager

Interdisciplinary Team

An interdisciplinary team of 34 faculty and staff from across the institution provided input in identifying and prioritizing additional university-wide support interventions to help reduce barriers and enhance success for students taking gateway courses. Subgroups coalesced around the following five themes:

1. **Promote college preparation and expectations** (e.g., summer bridge program, etc.)
2. **Increase university-wide coordinated academic support** (e.g., tutoring, etc.)
3. **Formalize opportunities for ongoing student engagement** with advisors, support staff and faculty instructors (e.g. early alerts, midterm grades, check-in plans, etc.)
4. **Enhance pedagogical support and practices** (e.g. active learning, inclusive syllabus, universal learning design, professional development/trainings, engaging instructors in professional development, etc.)
5. **Further course redesign** (e.g. revising assignments & rubrics, multiple assignment checkpoints, study guide development, requiring office hours for assignments, building assignments around support service usage, etc.)

Members of the interdisciplinary team subgroups represented diverse perspectives from across the institution. Taking an equity lens, each subgroup helped surface additional support strategies as it considered the intersectionality of student needs, barriers, and institutional resources to enhance success in gateway courses for all students.

Subgroup 1: Promote College Preparation and Expectations

Chair: Interim Vice President for Student Affairs

- Assistant Professor, Management
- Professor, Psychology
- Director, CHANCE Program
- Chief of Staff, Division of Student Affairs
- Director, Orientation and First Year Programs
- Associate Professor and Assistant Chair, World Languages and Cultures

Subgroup 2: Increase University-wide Coordinated Academic Support

Chair: Associate Vice Provost for Student Success

- Associate Dean for Undergraduate Affairs, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Professor, Mathematical Sciences
- Director, Huskie Academic Support Center
- Director, Undergraduate Advising and Student Resources, College of Business
- Director of Advising, College of Engineering and Engineering Technology
- Professor and Director, Center for the Student of Women, Gender, and Sexuality
- Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies, Chemistry and Biochemistry

Subgroup 3: Formalize Opportunities for Ongoing Student Engagement

Chair: Director, Academic Advising Center

- Director of Academic Advising, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Instructor, Marketing
- Director, Applications Development and Support, Division of Information Technology
- Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Health and Human Sciences
- Director of Navigate
- Assistant Dean of Students, Student Affairs

Subgroup 4: Enhance Pedagogical Support and Practices

Chair: Director of Teaching Excellence and Support, Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning

- Professor, Marketing
- Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies, World Languages and Cultures
- Professor, Engineering Technology
- Interim Director, Social Justice Education
- Assistant Professor and Student Success Librarian, University Libraries
- Instructor, English

Subgroup 5: Further Course Redesign

Chair: Teaching and Learning Coordinator, Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning

- Associate Professor, Electrical Engineering
- Associate Dean, College of Visual and Performing Arts
- Associate Professor, Earth, Atmosphere and Environment
- Associate Professor, Sociology

Committee of the Curricular Deans

- Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Student Success, College of Business
- Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Education
- Interim Associate Dean, College of Engineering and Engineering Technology
- Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Health and Human Sciences
- Associate Dean for Undergraduate Affairs, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Associate Dean, College of Visual and Performing Arts

Additional Faculty and Staff Involvement

Beyond the shared leadership teams listed above, many additional faculty and staff members were engaged in the various local and centrally-supported efforts contributing to the QI. As just one example, the Scaffolded Support for Teaching Gateway Courses program was developed by staff of the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, who dedicated over 200 hours of time to research, write and distribute the newsletters, construct the toolkit, and facilitate the check-in reports.

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

Through the QI project we witnessed that sometimes even the smallest changes to course design, delivery, or supports can make a significant difference for students. And while faculty training and support coupled with course redesign efforts can impact student success outcomes, these efforts are amplified by support services tailored to the current student needs. We recognize that while we've made great strides we still have significant work to do to continue addressing equity gaps and student success rates and our commitment to student success is woven throughout the fabric of our institutional mission, vision, and values.

Resource Provision

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

NIU has made a strong commitment to its [Strategic Enrollment Plan](#) and [Equity Plan](#) and the QI, which was embedded within these plans, likewise received strong commitment in terms of human, financial, technological and other resources.

As noted above, the initiative was supported at the highest level of the institution and a significant investment of personnel was made. The shared leadership framework that managed

this initiative, consisting of the Executive Team (providing general oversight), Core Team (overseeing and coordinating project activities), Interdisciplinary Team (providing further input in identifying and prioritizing interventions), and Committee of the Curricular Deans (developing, implementing, and monitoring college and discipline-specific interventions at the local level) were all critical to the success of the initiative. In addition, the Executive Director of Institutional Research and Analytics who oversees Institutional Research provided data analyses for the project and added data to our Tableau platform. Finally, the Executive Vice President and Provost provided leadership to the shared leadership teams and communicated regularly about the QI with the Council of Deans and President’s Senior Leadership Roundtable.

To implement the QI, NIU had already invested heavily in and implemented the necessary software solutions including both Tableau as described above and, more recently, with Education Advisory Board (EAB) Academic Performance Solutions (APS) to promote data usage in this and other key initiatives. We also partnered with the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) to expand faculty development in active pedagogical practice and inclusive teaching, credentialing to date 60 faculty in *Effective College Instruction* and 73 faculty and 48 graduate teaching assistants in *Inclusive Teaching for Equitable Learning* microcredential. Furthermore, NIU recently established the role of Executive Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to oversee initiatives designed to support faculty in their efforts to advance their knowledge of equity and inclusion. The rollout of the new FACCE, Scaffolded Support, and Navigate initiatives required countless hours from many dedicated faculty and staff from across the institution. Furthermore, throughout the pandemic, NIU invested \$1.2M in classrooms, replacing outdated classroom equipment such as computers, cameras and streaming devices and we expect to continue to devote resources to updating our classrooms to meet student needs. Finally, personnel in Institutional Research and other experts on campus provided statistical expertise in completing course analyses.

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 focus on student success and equity in gateway courses was magnified by the QI and will remain a lasting commitment. The established culture and practice of reviewing student success metrics each semester and revising instructional practices accordingly will continue to drive new equity and student success initiatives into the future. Faculty and staff now have tools and data available through Tableau, APS, and Navigate to see student success trends and to act quickly where concerns are noted. Our resulting student support can be much more agile, actively intervening during the semester.

The QI also propelled pilots for new initiatives, such as 8-week courses and course credit recovery modules, that have shown great promise and we plan to continue moving forward. We’ve also established and will be continuing to offer and further expand professional development on active teaching and inclusive teaching. We look forward to continuing to engage with NIU faculty credentialed as ACUE Distinguished Teaching Scholars and will be looking for ways to elevate further the influence of impact of these highly trained faculty on their fellow

faculty members.

Finally, the Office of the Provost in collaboration with CITL launched a curricular innovation initiative to support development of cutting-edge pedagogies. This summer, twenty instructors will be supported to pursue techniques ranging from virtual reality to incorporation of more inclusive course materials.

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.

As previously mentioned, several new practices and artifacts resulted from the QI that have been shared widely on the NIU [QI website](#) and are available for other institutions to draw inspiration from, adopt, or modify, including:

- Student Success in Gateway Courses [toolkit](#)
- Scaffolded Support for Teaching Gateway Courses [program](#) and [toolkit](#)
- Student success [tips and tools](#)
- Faculty Academy on Cultural Competence and Equity (FACCE) [curriculum](#)
- Navigate faculty [training](#), [support resources](#), and coordinated care model
- ACUE effective teaching practices [program](#) and [distinguished teaching scholars](#)
- Curricular innovation [grants](#)