Charged with the task to DEFINE & TRANSFORM the Huskie Shuffle, we interviewed eight NIU students to gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities our campus presents to students on a regular basis.

The majority of students that we interviewed were well aware of the Huskie Shuffle. They defined it as “getting the run around,” and “being sent from office to office to office without getting help.” All but two of the interviewees had personally experienced the Huskie Shuffle and indicated that it is a phenomenon that is common on campus. The students also indicated that they have developed coping mechanisms to avoid getting stuck in the Shuffle.

Common tactics include finding one “go-to” person on campus and relying upon that singular person for everything. Another prevalent method is utilizing the NIU website and peers to gain an understanding of policies and procedures. Unfortunately, out-of-date web pages and links, slow internet connections in the residence halls, and the possibility of receiving incomplete and/or inaccurate information make these means for seeking assistance less than optimal.

In order to address the Huskie Shuffle, we must first determine the factors that contribute to it. We identify the following as causes:

- Uninformed faculty & staff
- Poor morale among faculty & staff
- Inadequate customer service training
- Lack of cross-training within offices and departments

To address these factors we recommend the following:

- The updating of the NIU website with centralized monitoring to identify individual webpages that do not work and/or do not follow NIU standards in content, design and accessibility
- The creation of a 24-hour web chat manned by trained students who are compensated well.
- The development of a series of online webinars or videos that provide answers to common questions.
- The expansion of the NIU app to include FAQs pertaining to common deadlines and policies and information including the operational hours of buildings on campus
- The development of a central resource guide (electronic & in print) for faculty & staff
- The designation of a central “411” office. Assign the number 753-HELP to the designated office. Possible offices to oversee this important responsibility include the Office of Student Academic Success or the NIUtel which oversees 753-1000.
- The creation of a customer service and campus information certification workshop. Offices that undergo this training will be designated as a FIVE 🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾 Quality Certified Office (along the lines of Ally training on campus).
- The creation of an annual award for offices, departments, colleges, divisions, organizations, or individuals on campus who are dedicated to making the NIU student experience the best that it can be. Cross-market the award process with the quality certification program.
- The regular availability of lunch time programs for faculty and staff such as yoga, meditation, fitness courses, etc.

Thank you for your time and attention. Should you have any questions regarding our findings and suggestions, please contact Dana Gautcher (dana@niu.edu / 753-5701) who will serve as the central contact person for the work group.