Who participated in planning the Quality Initiative?

Students, faculty and staff were invited to participate in planning for the Quality Initiative as well as submit complete proposals at the appropriate stage of the QI planning and execution process. Group work and submission by teams organized thematically and focused on a similar plan or idea were highly encouraged. To solicit responses from various University stakeholders, the Associate Provost visited Staff Senate, Faculty Senate and the Undergraduate Student Government to encourage member each university constituencies to participate in the process.

Quality Initiative Timeline

SIUE was expected to submit one quality initiative proposal to HLC, via SIUE's accreditation liaison officer (ALO), Dr. Elza Ibroscheva in 2021. Below was the initial planning timeline:

February

Public discussions to formalize ideas under select themes drawn from the SIUE QI university survey

March

Call for proposals submitted to the UQC

April

UQC reviews, discusses and organizes proposals

May

QI announcement made to the University community

Updates and current reports

In the month of February, public discussions were held to guide further crystallizing concrete project ideas and formation of teams of faculty, staff and students who are interested in working on similar thematic projects. Sessions were organized to help stakeholders identify common interest and potentially organize a team who will work on submitting a formal proposal for consideration to the UQC.

Improving graduation and retention rates
2/3 – 1:00 to 3:00 – Oak/Redbud Room

Engaging in enrollment as a campus wide priority
2/4 – 1:00 to 3:00 – Mississippi/Illinois Room

Focusing on mentoring students
2/10 – 1:00 to 3:00 – Mississippi/Illinois Room

Mental health and diversity and inclusion
2/11 – 1:00 to 3:00 – Mississippi/Illinois Room

Summary notes from the Quality Initiative public discussions

IMPROVING GRADUATION AND RETENTION RATES (February 3, 2020)

What data might we need?

In an effort to understand why we are losing students, we first need to find out who is leaving and at what point of their academic career. How are those students being supported? Can we use the student athletes as a model of the kind of support all students can rely on during their studies?

What ideas can help us get there?

A very large number of our students appear to **change their major** at least once. Our Lincoln program does not offer enough flexibility in transferring general education credits from one major to the next, something that was also echoed in comments from student group leaders as well. Is there a better way to align general education requirements among majors?

Graduate students also need more support and **life coaching**, especially in financial matters.

A Life Coach model can be a good example of how student can get a sense of support and belonging inside and outside the classroom. Life coaches for group of 15-20 students, supported by staff, integrated through student employment and student housing.

Life coaching and mentoring are essential to engage students. These should also be available to online and international students. Part of this coaching model can include also important information from the Bursar, such as "what does it mean to be financially cleared." It will be very helpful to make this information available to students in different modalities.

Make a freshman transition inventory and engage student leaders from Springboard to become **peer-champions**. These peer-champions will help build a sense of community for the group they lead during Springboard and will be the nucleus of the cohort of students as they progress through their studies.

ENROLLMENT AS A UNIVERSITY-WIDE PRIORITY (February 4, 2020)

What data might we need?

Reports on students who were admitted by decided to go somewhere else to determine why? What is our intelligent marketing plan? What is our unique identity?

What ideas can help us get there?

Faculty members CAN get involve in enrollment and recruitment. What could the best practice to recruitment students look like? When faculty get involved in recruitment, do they speak on behalf of the university or only on behalf of their departments?

Certain faculty can be trained as "**admission champions.**"

Can the Meridian scholarship experience to offered for the students who is not going to be a Meridian scholar? When we recruit, do we pay attention to the students who are not here to pursue a professional program? We can build **engagement through summer research** experiences, experiences for high school students, peer mentoring that build long-lasting relationships.

The idea of **many connections**—the university is not just affordable, but also personable. We should also think about the students who are here not for a major, but because they are exploring.

We should also recognize and **eliminate admission practices bias**, especially for graduate students, who often get rejected because their letters of recommendations were not from places with perceived academic prestige.

We need to determine whether we are capitalizing on our **2+2 agreements**. Conversations between community colleges and universities must happen to increase our dual agreements and ease of transitions for the students who will come through these programs.

Students can also be identified as **enrollment champions**. Can we invest in a recruitment campaign where students speak in their voice to their peers and our potential students?

MENTORING STUDENTS (February 10, 2020)
What data might we need?
Can **Athletics** be a model for where mentorship really work? FST should be the place where mentoring students should naturally be happening. Advisors can also be included as mentoring check-ins as part of education progression.

What ideas can help us get there?
MAP WORKS—early indicators of students who are highly likely to have trouble making successful progress. Often, the students themselves are not cognizant of their own risks to fail because grades are not being communicated consistently (can Blackboard grades being mandated help mitigate this?).

ACCESS has a mentoring program, which is volunteer-based; based on workshops which are offered based on what skills students indicate they need. For graduate students, a similar service is offered by Mentor Collective.

One idea is to create **COHORTS**—4-year support team which also has **designated mentors**. These could be 4-5 people who will be available for students to consult when advise is needed. Some of the most common areas that students raised questions include time management, finding research resources, how to locate information that is needed on the go. Can these cohort mentors be assigned and contacted even before school starts?

Springboard is another good example of getting students prepared for success in their academic career. However, often students do not know from day one how to stay connected and wo to rely on for mentorship opportunities. Is it faculty? Is it staff? Is it peers? Or all of the above?

Another example of building this mentorship models already established at SIUE is the honors program. Teaching Assistants can also be trained as mentors, and students can be trained to build **their own "Board of Trustees".** If we can also develop an online app/service where students can ask quick questions and find easy efficient answers, that can reach them in the spaces and time when they most need advice and mentorship.

**MENTAL HEALTH AND DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (February 11, 2020)**
What data might we need?
How long is the weight for seeing counseling? How many students seek out help? What do they understand mental health to be? How about international students?

What ideas can help us get there?
An idea about mental health that aligns with our strategic goals and our diversity goals, that can encompass mental health and diversity.

We should approach mental health as one aspect of **"well-being";** the others being diversity and inclusion, housing insecurity, food insecurity, safety, and equity.
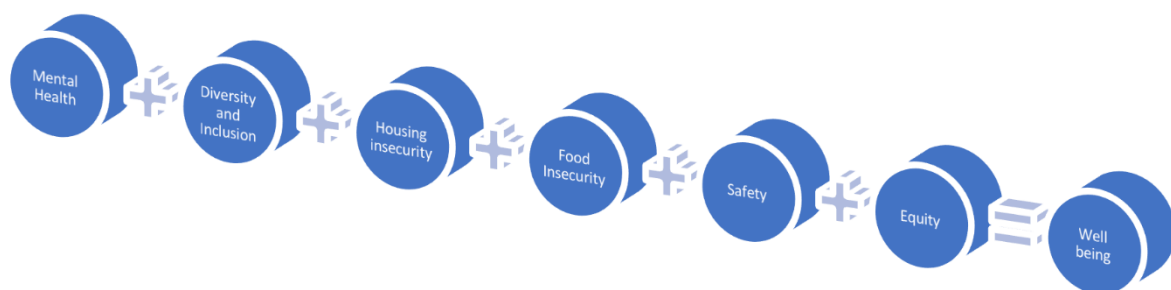
Student flourishing means students are experiencing meaningful engagement, feeling secure, mental health can also be part of well-being.

Health literacy is also critical—what do students really know about how to be well in college?

Diversity and inclusion at the graduate level can be addressed through **eliminate implicit bias** in admission processes (see enrollment section); peer-review bias can also disadvantage certain students from being admitted to graduate studies.

Additionally, diversity and inclusion should be supported by **promotion and tenure processes** in that it demonstrates integration of collegiality and commitment to diversity at every level.

Diversity and inclusion as values and competencies should also be one of the of things student master before graduation. We should develop resources for faculty that can help them find the right ingredients to **teach diversity and inclusion in the classroom** agnostic to discipline.

The Quality Initiative and Anti-Racism

Over the summer of 2020, as a group of faculty and members of the university leadership continued their work on the details of the QI proposal, Chancellor Pembrook convened the Anti-Racism Taskforce (ARTF), charged to recommend and take swift, meaningful actions to dismantle racism. With the creation of the ARTF, University leadership understands that to truly realize the institution's values of diversity, inclusion and citizenship, leaders and constituents must take on the difficult, yet necessary challenge to bring awareness to and address inequity on campus, and lead the way in the region and community to a more just society.

58 of the 78 recommendations of the ARTF were used by the Quality Initiative workgroup to conceptualize and articulate the goals and objectives of the Quality Initiative.