



## I. Overview of the Quality Initiative

Cowley College's Quality Initiative (QI), "Maximizing Data to Support Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success," spanned three academic years, capitalizing on knowledge management priorities during the 2018-2021 strategic plan and focusing on feedback from the 2019 Final Report. The most critical outcome accomplished was the reinventing of the College's Accountability and Institutional Measures (AIM) through the implementation of new resources. This accomplishment enhanced organizational understanding of key performance indicators as an active tool that serves as a goal-setting instrument and as a diagnostic tool to drive success planning.

Collaborative effort across the organization created change supporting all nine purposes and goals described in the original proposal, leading to project success. Significant accomplishments include updates to the indicators, creation of four robust sets of dashboards to support decision-making for over 50 metrics, expansion of data sources to incorporate more of the information collected routinely by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE), addition of charts and other dashboard functionality that supports student subgroups; and inclusion of peer cohort data to provide important comparisons.

Other accomplishments include:

- Incorporating new technology to communicate information through visualizations increased data accessibility and improved data literacy;
- Creating cross-departmental teams for data review and action planning; and
- Intentional timing of annual tasks to drive proactive action rather than reactive responses.

Thirty-eight internal stakeholders contributed feedback for project improvements, used dashboards for data analysis, and created strategies supporting student success and institutional effectiveness. Many, if not all, of these individuals, also participated in ongoing assessment activities to measure project success and will continue in active roles as the College continues to create a mature knowledge management culture.

The successful completion of the project and use of the AIM in an annual action-research cycle provides necessary evidence about how Cowley College operationalizes its mission. Its focus on student success and institutional effectiveness aligns with the College's Core Values of People, Accountability, Integrity, and Leadership with action integral to its mission and embodies its Communication Statement.

### **Mission**

Cowley College is committed to providing opportunities for learning excellence, personal achievement, and community engagement.

### **Communication Statement**

Communication is an important tool for transferring information, maintaining understanding, and achieving productivity. Effective communication advocates for collaboration by sharing timely information, establishing understanding, building consensus, and increasing our return on investment while embodying the College's core values of People, Accountability, Integrity, and Leadership.

## Scope and Impact of the Initiative

### II. Accomplishments in Relation to Project Purposes and Goals

The overarching goal of the College's initiative generally focused on the organization's use of data to support institutional effectiveness and student success, specifically, on the update of the Accountability and Institutional Measures (AIM). The AIM, a set of 58 metrics initially designed to support strategic planning, served as a key piece of evidence in Cowley College's final AQIP systems portfolio and received reviewer feedback, including:

- How the organization shares the AIM and with whom;
- Use of very general targets and benchmarks for goal-setting;
- How reviews of the information in the AIM occur on a regular basis for use in decision-making;
- Lack of external benchmarks with cohort comparison; and
- How the AIM is "serving the purposes intended, which is a necessary component of a fully-developed knowledge management process."

The College successfully achieved the purposes of its project through a reorganization of the AIM metrics, creation of cross-departmental review teams, addition of peer cohort comparison using appropriate, external data sets, introduction of diagnostic analysis to support goal achievement, and implementation of Tableau dashboards to increase data accessibility for internal stakeholders. Supplementary activities critical to project success were a continued focus on data governance standards and data literacy education for stakeholders following knowledge management initiatives housed in the 2018-2021 strategic plan.

#### Aligning with Mission, Vision, and Values

Reinforcing administrative understanding of the importance and purpose of key performance indicators during the project proposal stage was foundational to project success. The College's Administrative Council (AC) dedicated time to compile a list of 16 critical success factors and corresponding balanced scorecard categories, including financial, student satisfaction, employee satisfaction, learning and growth for students and employees, internal processes and policies, and impact of the state, federal and community level. Related action by the Council included discussions about Commission feedback on data governance, analysis and use for decision-making and about appropriate alignment between data-work and mission.

Reorganization of the AIM during the first year of the project shifted the metrics from an association with specific strategic planning priorities to four focuses aligned with the College's mission and related statements:

**Educational Access:** Cowley College, open admissions institution, committed to educational access through Core Value Accountability, "We are accountable to the community to educate students and to sustain and improve society." This commitment, reflected in the Educational Access metric set, creates a focus on groups in the College's enrollment profile and reflected in the community served.

**Retention:** Purposeful action that prioritizes student persistence and retention is vital for Cowley College to demonstrate claims that include, "We are an ethical leader in the field of education" (Core Value Leadership) and "We provide student-centered instruction"

(Core Value People). Student Retention metrics focus targets on key milestones during a college student's first year along with student satisfaction measures.

Success: Community colleges demonstrate student success through various measures, including award completion, employment, and transfer-out success. Metrics in the Student Success dashboards reflect the College's vision to "champion the relevance of two-year colleges in higher education through holistic learning and workforce development opportunities."

Institutional Effectiveness: Cowley College's participation in the AQIP Pathway led to the organizational use of indicators that assess effectiveness and result in sustainable, repeatable practices that support stakeholders. Institutional Effectiveness metrics focus on critical departmental practices, demonstrating that "All employees are responsible and committed to excellence" (Core Value Accountability).

### **Creating Cross-Departmental Review Teams**

The identification of four cross-departmental teams with members selected for their role-specific expertise was critical to create a purposeful, sustainable review cycle of the AIM. Broad team composition reflects the College's commitment to a shared governance culture where employee voice is active in strategy creation across all levels of the organizational hierarchy.

#### **Educational Access Team**

Enrollment Management: Bilingual Admissions Representative, Director of Student Enrollment and Success, High School Recruiter, and Upward Bound TRiO Program Director

Student Services: Disability Coordinator, Mental Health Counselor

#### **Student Retention Team**

Academic Affairs: Director of Distance Learning, Director of Sumner Campus, Educational Navigator (Tiger Learning Center), Faculty (English, Math), IMPACT TRIO Program English and Math Specialists, Registrar

Athletics: Assistant Athletic Director for Academics & Compliance

Enrollment Management: Bilingual Admissions Representative, Financial Aid and Scholarship Specialist, Director of Student Enrollment and Success, International Student Coordinator, Academic Outreach/Mulvane Site Coordinator

Finance and Administration: Bursar

Student Affairs: Disability Coordinator, Executive Director of Student Services

#### **Student Success Team**

Academic Affairs: Faculty Department Chairs, Perkins Coordinator, Registrar, Workforce and Career Specialist

Because Institutional Effectiveness indicators reflect the organization, an annual review is completed by the Administrative Council, comprised of the President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Associate Vice President of Academics and Secondary Partnerships, Vice President of Finance and Administration, Vice President of Information Technology, Athletic Director, Cowley Educational Association Faculty Representative, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Executive Director of Student Services,

Director of Student Enrollment and Success. Following this review, each member facilitates reviews with the appropriate departments under their purview.

All teams are responsible for providing feedback for metrics and data sources recommended by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE), target-setting, and recommended action to support success. This feedback is presented to the Administrative Council by the IE Director following task completion by each team.

### **Integrating Sources of Information**

Best practice in data analysis includes integrating multiple sources and types of data to create a comprehensive understanding of information presented for decision-making. Historically, Cowley College’s IE Office created reports from a robust set of instruments, including those from the Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS), the National Community College Benchmarking Project (NCCBP), and other compliance reporting. However, these reporting efforts were unique to the data set or submission. As a stand-alone report, the AIM’s metrics relied heavily on information from the College’s Jenzabar Student Information System (SIS) and satisfaction surveys including, Noel Levitz’s Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and College Employee Satisfaction Survey (CESS). Expanding the types of data sources also increased the capacity for decision-making through analysis that can be used for diagnosis, identifying specific student subgroup needs and benchmarking against peer cohorts. Data sources that work in partnership with information from the SIS and satisfaction surveying include:

**Table 1. Sources of Data**

	<b>Educational Access</b>	<b>Student Retention</b>	<b>Student Success</b>	<b>Institutional Effectiveness</b>
Accudemia (Academic Center Management System)		Y		Y
Anthology’s CoursEval (CrsEval)		Y		
“Get Inclusive” (Vector Solutions)				Y
IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey (Fall)	Y	Y		
IPEDS Financial Aid Survey (FAid)		Y		Y
IPEDS Graduation Rates Survey (GRS)			Y	
Kansas Higher Education Statistics (KHEStats)	Y		Y	
Kansas Training Information Portal (K-TIP)			Y	
National Community College Benchmarking Project	Y	Y		

Teams are encouraged to recommend new data sources and/or additional “drill down” data from sources where available to increase understanding for goal-setting.

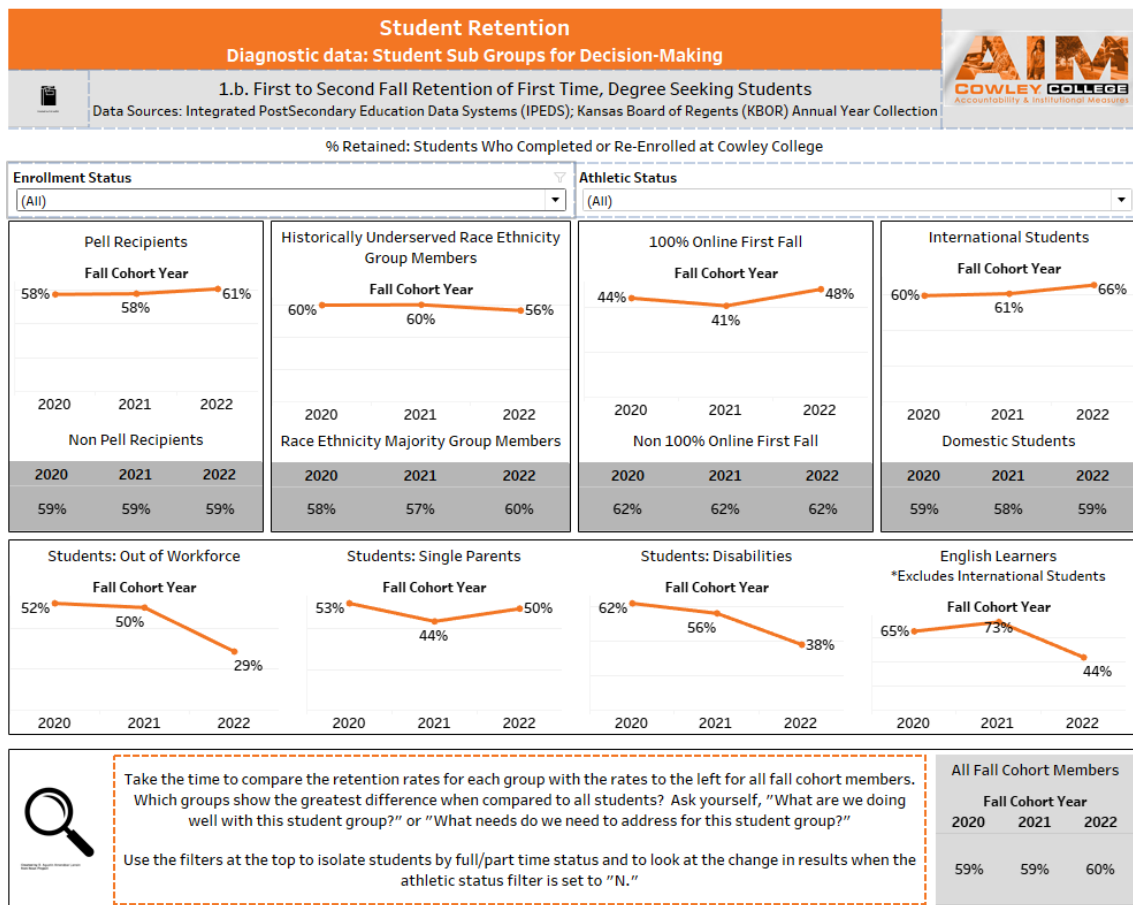
### **Reviewing the Metrics**

In response to Commission feedback, each team spent time in key conversations centered on the appropriate methodology for setting targets. Rolling three-year averages were retained for some indicators, while others were updated to reflect a static target or to diminish a performance gap.

## Introducing Diagnostic Analysis

Looking at data through the lens of specific student groups is critical to identifying gaps in success that have become “masked” or hidden within the larger student population. Appendix One includes information for each of the four dashboard sets, including how the data can be used for goal setting, diagnostics, and/or peer cohort comparison. The view below from the Student Retention dashboard set shows how its review team can filter to look at eight student subgroups identified because of student membership in Perkins V Special Population groups or in a subgroup identified by the College because of potential for drop out because of another barrier, and compare each student groups’ success with information in the All Fall Cohort Members chart.

**Image 1. Use of Charts for Diagnostic Analysis**

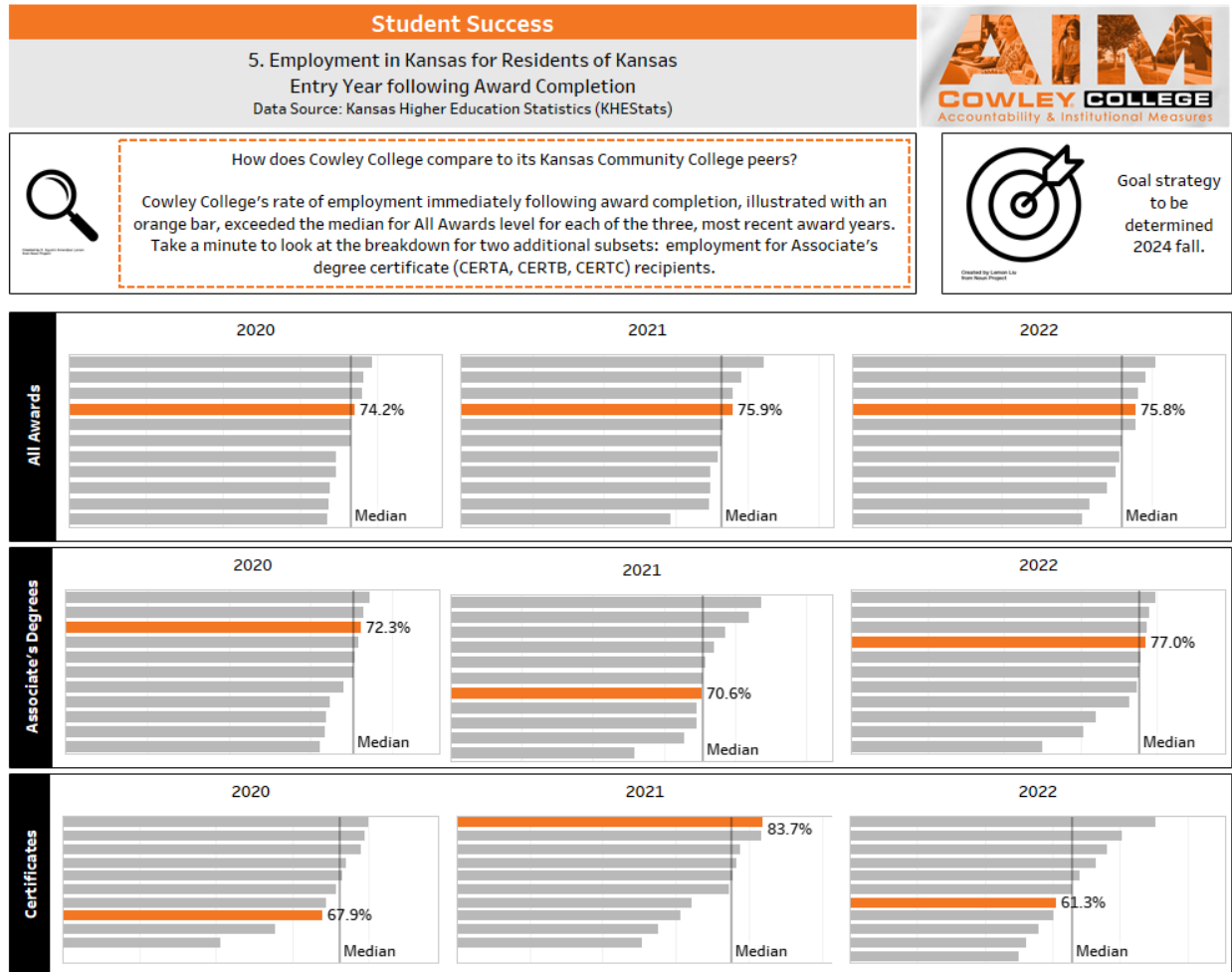


## Supplementing with Cohort Comparison

Benchmarking against peer institutions provides teams with important perspectives for supporting conclusions about organizational success. National, state, and regional cohort comparison is embedded throughout the updated AIM using multiple data resources, including the Integrated PostSecondary Data System Data Feedback Report (DFR), NCCBP, KHEStats, K-TIP, Noel Levitz CESS, and SSI. Methodology based on IPEDS institutional characteristics led selecting of state, regional, and national, publicly-funded two-year colleges with open admissions status, similar student headcounts, and distance to town to create peer cohorts.

The charts below from the Student Success dashboard set, are one example of how the College’s information is presented in comparison to that of its Kansas community college peer group.

**Image 2. Benchmarking with Kansas Community College Peers**



**Increasing Data Capacity, Literacy, Governance, and Access**

Maturity in data analysis requires the intentional development of three crucial components: capacity, literacy, and governance. The College worked with a Tableau® partner to create a cloud-based data lake to increase capacity through:

- Daily transfers of information from the SIS to facilitate day-to-day time comparison analysis; and,
- Storage of external data sources that work in partnership with information from the SIS.

Work to increase data literacy throughout the organization happened during the initiative’s time of action through efforts by the IE Office and Knowledge Management Team. Data literacy activities supporting the initiative included expanding “By the Numbers,” originally a once a regular term publication, as a monthly newsletter for internal stakeholders and a set of fact sheets and newsletters published to the College’s [website](#). The Knowledge Management Team completed an annual assessment of data literacy and governance maturity each spring using the Association for Institutional Research’s (AIR) Data Governance Self-Study Guide. The self-study provides an opportunity to score four dimensions: Data Integrity, Data Management, Access to Data, and Use of Data. In addition, team members offered


qualitative feedback for the IE Office to create action for improvement during the next academic year. Overall, the average rating for all items during the first assessment year (2022 Spring) was 3.0; the average rating for all items for the 2024 Spring assessment was 3.75 (+0.75).

**Table 2. Results from the AIR Data Governance Self-Study**

Scale of 4	Year 1 2021-22	Year 2 2022-23	Year 3 2023-24	Year 1-3 Change
<b>% of Team, N=10</b>	78%	82%	64%	--
<b>Data Integrity:</b> <i>The quality, cleanliness and clarity of data at Cowley College.</i>	2.83	3.33	3.42	+0.59
<b>Data Management:</b> <i>How data is managed in ways that emphasize centralized storage and support access and use.</i>	2.67	3.44	3.75	+1.08
<b>Access to Data:</b> <i>The process for who and/or which application(s) can access data for what purposes, from what sources, by which means, for what duration, and for what purpose at Cowley College.</i>	3.00	3.31	3.92	+0.92
<b>Use of Data:</b> <i>The process for consistency in reporting formats and representations of institutional data, if data are used correctly and consistently, and there is a single source of data truth at Cowley College.</i>	3.50	3.44	3.92	+0.42

Data literacy information specific to the AIM includes the strategic use of icons to draw the viewer’s eye to important information, the use of the Tableau “tooltip,” which reveals additional context when the viewer hovers the mouse over charts, and introductory views that help each team identify the appropriate research question to be asked for each view.

**Image 3. Strategic Use of Icons from 4.b. Diagnostic Information: 150% Completion for Student Subgroups (Student Success)**
















*An in-group analysis method was used to create the success rates in the table set to the right. In-group analysis is non-competitive: each group’s success is determined by dividing the number of the cohort’s subgroup members who completed or transferred by the total number of subgroup members.*

Take a look at the table set to the right to see which student subgroups achieved the overall cohort goal for completion or transfer at the 150% rate.

Ask yourself what change(s) could be implemented to support a greater rate of success for this subgroup(s)? And are these the right subgroups?

**Image 4. Research Questions from Introduction 3. Understanding the Data (Student Retention)**

Accountability and Institutional Measures (AIM)		
Student Retention (Select a mortarboard to navigate to each dashboard)		
	1.a. First to Second Fall Retention	This set of charts answers the research questions, "Overall, how many degree-seeking, first time college students who did not earn an award during their first year return for their second fall?"
	1.b. First to Second Fall Retention Student Subgroups	This set of charts uses demographic and Perkins V Special Populations information to answer the research question, "How many degree-seeking, first time college student members of subgroups, who did not earn an award during their first year, return for their second fall?"
	2.a. Early Momentum: Remedial Course Completion	This set of charts answers the research questions, "What proportion of the student body is underprepared for college?" and "What are the remedial courses success rate for underprepared students?" Demographic and socioeconomic information is used to give insight about success for specific student subgroups.
	2.b. Early Momentum: Remedial Course Retention & Success Peer Comparison	This set of charts answers the research question, "How does remedial course retention and success for students at Cowley College compare to a national cohort and regional peer cohort?"
	2.c. Early Momentum: Gateway Course Success Following Remediation	This set of charts answers the research questions, "What is the success rate for Cowley College's underprepared students when they enroll in their first, gateway course after completing remediation?" and "How successful is Cowley College when preparing students for college coursework after remediation when compared to peers?"
	2.d. Early Momentum: First Year Career GPA: Underprepared Students	This set of charts use both local and career GPA information answers the research question, "Are underprepared students successful in all of their classes during their first year at Cowley College?"
	3.a. Early Momentum: Gateway Course Completion	This set of charts answers the research question, "Are college-ready students successfully completing gateway courses?"
	4.a., b. Online Course Completion	This set of charts asks the research question, "Are students overall successful in online courses and, are there student subgroups who are not experiencing success in online coursework?"
	5.a. Financial Support to Students	This set of charts asks the research question, "Do Cowley College's students have access to aid to support retention and to minimize the negative effects of student debt?"
	6.a. Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory Strategic Challenges, 1-9	
Information about Peer Cohort Composition		
KS Peers by Location and Size Integrated Postsecondary Data System Peers selected by size & location to town.	Kansas and Border State Peer Cohort National Community College Benchmarking Project Peers selected by size, state, & location to town.	HLC Regional Peers by Location and Size Integrated Postsecondary Data System HLC members selected by size & location to town.
		

Access to data increased substantially with the purchasing of Tableau® licensing for all full-time employees during 2018-2019 and training for IE personnel in dashboard creation. The IE Office solicited team feedback with each iteration of the dashboards, incorporating feedback including concerns about the number of charts on each view and the need for additional information on each dashboard to assist teams in understanding terminology and asking the right questions. AIM team members received an invitation to complete a short survey using a scale of 5 to assess basic dashboard design at the conclusion of the initiative.



**Table 3. AIM Dashboard Design Feedback Survey Results (N=10)**

	<b>Mean</b>
The information shared on the introductory dashboard(s) clearly define purpose, metrics and types of peer groups used.	4.80
The charts used in the dashboards are easy to understand.	4.50
The dashboards with peer cohort data provide me with easily understood information about how Cowley College compares to other community colleges.	4.50
The icons (magnifying glass, arrows, mortarboard, target) help to direct my eye to important information.	4.60
The colors selected for the dashboards support the Cowley College brand.	5.00
Overall, the dashboards are visually pleasing.	4.90

**III. Evaluating Impact to Produce Change**

**Becoming a Data-Informed Campus**

The project’s critical outcome centers on the ability of the organization to integrate a data review and action procedure, creating the “fully-developed knowledge management process” referenced in the 2019 Final Report. Embedded activities to develop a sustainable process include two schedules: one for review team activity and a second for data updates.

Table 4. Schedules Supporting Sustainable Work

<b>Team Review</b>	
<b>Educational Access</b>	Purpose: Identify metrics for improvement and create strategies to be implemented during the preceding spring and summer to impact the new academic year’s fall term
	Review: January with action creation by end of February
<b>Student Retention</b>	Purpose: Identify metrics for improvement and create strategies to be implemented during the fall and spring terms to impact next fall retention
	Review: August with action creation by end of September
<b>Student Success</b>	Purpose: Identify gaps in success for student subgroups and create strategies to be implemented during the fall and spring terms to impact next fall retention
	Review: August with action creation by end of September
<b>Institutional Effectiveness</b>	Purpose: Identify metrics for improvement and create strategies for implementation during the new academic year
	Review: August with action creation by end of September

**Data Updates: Education Access, Student Retention, Student Success**

<b>AY Collection</b>	Following Presidential certification in early September
<b>CoursEval</b>	Close of the spring term surveys in June
<b>IPEDS Fall</b>	Institutional: Following coordinator close date in April
	Peer: Following publication of DFR in early spring
<b>IPEDS FAid</b>	Institutional: Following coordinator close date in March
	Peer: Following publication of DFR in early spring
<b>IPEDS GRS</b>	Institutional: Following coordinator close date in March
	Peer: Following publication of DFR in early spring
<b>KHEStats</b>	Following publication of system-wide data from the AY Collection in fall

**Table 4. Schedules Supporting Sustainable Work, continued**

<b>K-TIP</b>	Following publication of system-wide data from the AY Collection and labor department in spring
<b>NCCBP</b>	Following publication of reports in April
<b>Noel Levitz</b>	CESS: Following receipt of reports in April/May every three years SSI: Following receipt of reports in April/May every three years













**Institutional Effectiveness:** All metrics will be updated as departmental information is available. Closing the feedback loop regularly with clear documentation currently resides in the dashboard sets.

**Image 5. 2023-2024 Response by Departments & Teams**

Student Retention: 2023-2024 Response by Departments & Teams			
<b>Academic Affairs</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Target Student Group(s)</b>	<b>Action</b>
	English Faculty	Students enrolled in remedial English courses.	Improvements to remedial English education are embedded in the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. Target for successful EBE completion is 36%. Faculty will use information provided for the 2023-2024 Academic Program Review to see how classes are serving different student populations. Faculty seek to find the balance between lowering DFW rates while also ensuring students are successful in first, college-level classes (ENG2211, ENG2212) after remediation.  EBE2208 updated to two courses, one for ELL students.
	Math Faculty	Students enrolled in remedial math courses.	Improvements to remedial math education are embedded in the 2022-2025 strategic plan. Faculty are currently assessing EBM courses in preparation for course type change from prerequisite to corequisite to meet new state performance goals.
<b>Enrollment Management</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Target Student Group(s)</b>	<b>Action</b>
	Assistant Athletic Director for Academics & Compliance	Student Athletes	Increase the use of the Study Hall Tracking system to more than two teams. Increased data will allow for better comparison of student retention.
	Academic Outreach/Mulvane Site Coordinator	Students attending Mulvane SEA and Mulvane Tech campuses	Use of a new dashboard containing information provided by students at the Mulvane campuses for the 2022 Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory. This increased data access will help the Coordinator identify specific services with significant performance gaps.
	Financial Aid & Scholarship Specialist	All Students	Offer increased Cowley College Foundation scholarship aid amounts to reduce the percentage of students on hold with the Business Office. Baseline data: <i>Fall 2023: 747 recipients of Foundation aid / 33.6% of enrollment / total aid from Foundation: \$890,272</i> <i>Fall 2022: 485 recipients of Foundation aid / 20.4% of enrollment / total aid from Foundation: \$570,351</i>
<b>Institutional Effectiveness</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Target Student Group(s)</b>	<b>Action</b>
	Director	All Students	Support Financial Aid action through creation of Scholarship Matching dashboard.

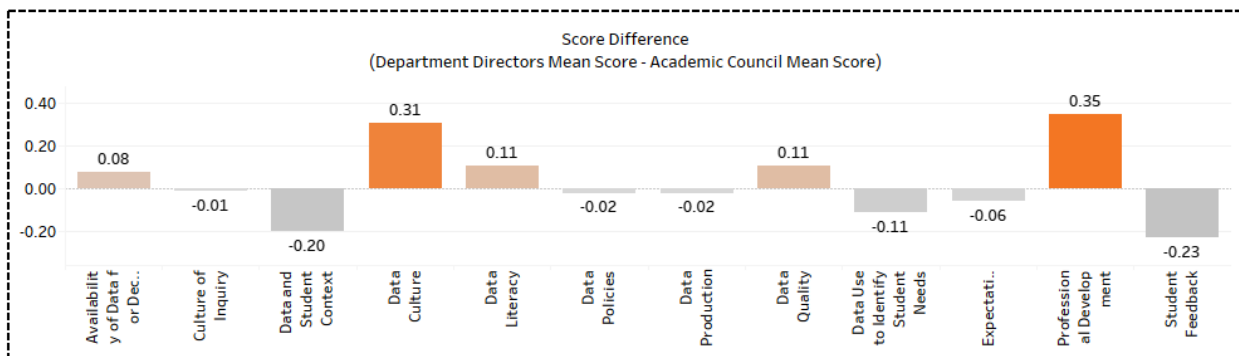
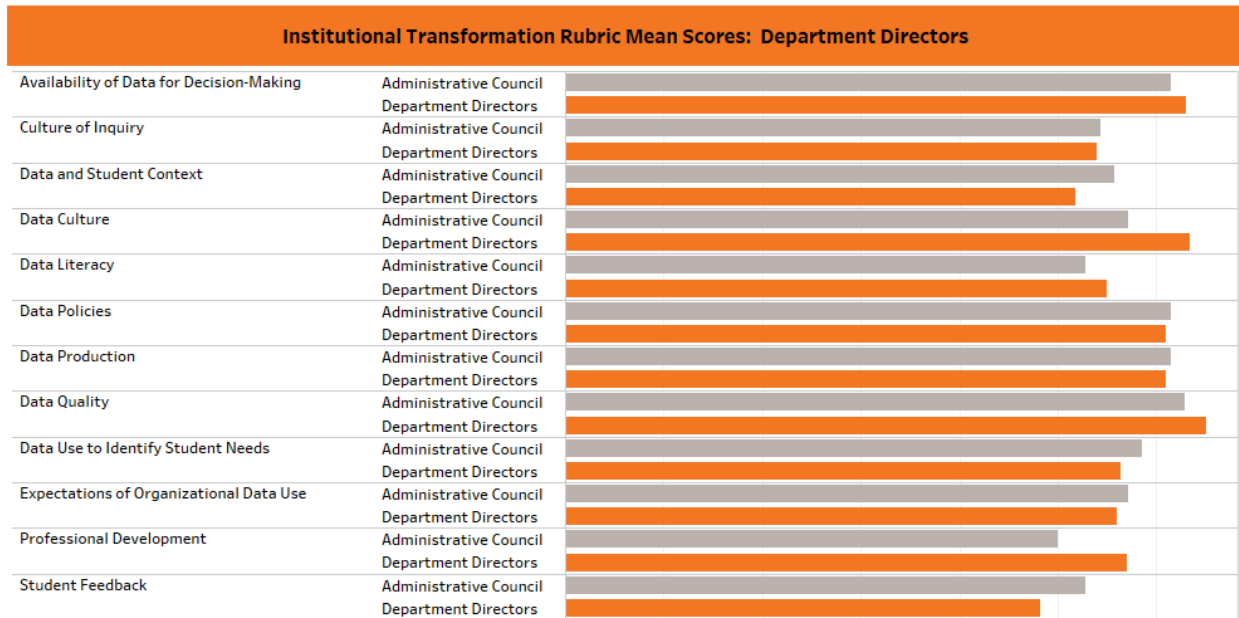
Information collected using the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Institutional Transformation Assessment (ITA) indicates movement toward this critical accomplishment. Annual scoring by the College’s administration shows the three categories with the most significant growth from Year 1 to Year 3 were Expectations of Organizational Data (+0.80), Data Use to Identify Student Needs, and Data and Student Context. Conversely, the categories with the smallest change were Student Feedback, Culture of Inquiry, and Professional Development.

**Image 6. ITA Mean Scores: Administrative Council (N=10)**

Institutional Transformation Rubric Mean Scores Administrative Council				Prior to Current Year Change
Availability of Data for Decision-Making	To what extent are data available for decision-making across the institution?	2021 2022 2023		Availability of Data for Decision-Making 0.17
Culture of Inquiry	To what degree does the institution use data for self-examination to address a range of internal and external lines of inquiry?	2021 2022 2023		Culture of Inquiry -0.02
Data and Student Context	To what extent does the institution value understanding students' life contexts and experiences in its institutional research priorities and activities?	2021 2022 2023		Data and Student Context 0.52
Data Culture	To what degree does the institution use data to meet requirements, address stakeholders' expectations, and for continuous improvement?	2021 2022 2023		Data Culture 0.26
Data Literacy	To what extent are data literacy expectations established across the institution?	2021 2022 2023		Data Literacy 0.17
Data Policies	To what extent are data policies established with input from stakeholders and continuously monitored to ensure alignment with institutional goals?	2021 2022 2023		Data Policies 0.44
Data Production	To what extent is data production coordinated across the institution?	2021 2022 2023		Data Production 0.40
Data Quality	To what extent does the institution facilitate use of reliable data?	2021 2022 2023		Data Quality 0.17
Data Use to Identify Student Needs	To what degree does the institution use data to identify, inform, address, and evaluate student performance gaps across populations?	2021 2022 2023		Data Use to Identify Student Needs 0.50
Expectations of Organizational Data Use	To what extent are expectations for the use of data in decision-making established across the institution?	2021 2022 2023		Expectations of Organizational Data Use 0.46
Professional Development	To what extent does professional development align with expectations for data literacy across the institution?	2021 2022 2023		Professional Development 0.13
Student Feedback	To what extent does the institution use feedback from students to inform its lines of inquiry?	2021 2022 2023		Student Feedback 0.04

Recent information using the ITA gives key insights between administrators and department leads. The charts below show significantly lower ratings by department leads for two categories: Student Feedback and Data and Student Context. These rating differences may be due to daily work engagement with students and their direct reports.

**Image 7. ITA Mean Scores: Department Directors (N=13 or 76%)**



A final assessment tool used to identify gaps in organizational data maturity was the State University of New York (SUNY) SCOA Institutional Effectiveness Rubric. The SCOA includes three aspects, each with multiple elements, and is scored using 0 (Not Evident), 1 (Emerging), 2 (Proficient), and 3 (Excelling). Scored at the onset of the project and again at its conclusion solely by the IE Director, the results show while change has happened in key areas, the ability to select a score of 3 was limited because adoption of change has not been embedded across the campus.

**Table 5. SCOA Assessment Results (N=1)**

Aspect	Element	July 2021	May 2024	3 Year Change
Design	Plan	1	2.5	+1.50
	Outcomes	1	1	0.00
	Alignment	0	1	+1.00
Implementation	Resources	1	2.5	+1.50
	Culture	1	1	0.00
	Data Focus	1	1.5	+0.05
	Sustainability	1.5	2	+0.05
	Monitoring	1.5	2	+0.05
Impact	Communication	2	3	+1.00
	Strategic Planning and Budgeting	1	2	+1.00
	Closing the Loop	1	1	0.000

**Project Support through Technology**

The primary change in technology support during the project’s timeframe was purchasing cloud space to create a data lake. The data lake is a secure repository for data from the SIS along with multiple external data sources including Department of Labor, Census Bureau, and other survey results. This implementation allows for the blending of data and relieves the burden of manual dashboard updates by the IE Office.

**Project Support for Learning and Student Success**

Changes to indicators and metrics in the Student Retention and Success dashboards support increased understanding for faculty with the addition of student subgroup information. This additional information can support curriculum change and, when coordinated with student survey information, increases understanding about the relationship between success in the classroom with other supports such as the work of specialized personnel, i.e., Mental Health Counselor, Disability and International Student Coordinators.

Student success indicators at Cowley College have shown positive change for the broader student body since the start of the project, and the dashboards provide a lens through which to focus on groups within the student body who are not achieving the same success. Examples of understanding gained for the current year are:

- First to second fall retention increased by 2% for full-time students (63%), but the target was not met for part-time students;
- Overall award completion increased 16.6% for number of awards and a change of +12.4% for number of award recipients, with the smallest increase for the traditional, transfer award levels (AA, AS); and
- 150% completion rate remained steady at 47% overall, but international students and Pell Recipients did not see the same success.

#### IV. Adoption of Tools, Data and Other Information

Using Tableau to communicate data supporting the AIM increased campus use of the tool, resulting in greater comfort with data use. While supporting students has been the project's primary focus, it must also be acknowledged that the democratization of data paired with increased voice for employees can be a powerful force for changing morale. Feedback from over 60% of the full-time employees in a 2024 spring administration of the CESS showed improvements for survey items with a linkage to the use of information and decision making including:

- This institution plans carefully;
- Employee suggestions are used to improve our institution;
- This institution treats students as its top priority;
- This institution's leadership demonstrates support for shared planning and decision-making; and
- The goals and objectives of this institution are consistent with its mission and values

Cowley College has collected the right types of data for many years, but the coordinated use of information lapsed temporarily due to personnel changes. This project restores a more systematic use of data across the campus, and continuing the focus on data as an integral asset rather than an add-on will increase institutional effectiveness and support student success.

#### V. Challenges and Opportunities

##### Challenges

Time, leadership changes, and lagging data were the most significant challenges to project success.

**Time as a Diminishing Resource:** The College experienced several years of significant cuts to revenue from its state revenue stream, and while this did not cause a loss to fiscal investment in the tools that supported the project, it did slow the replacement of exiting employees and the placement of additional duties on retained employees. Time as a diminishing resource causes increased focus by employees on daily business tasks, taking away the time needed for strategic thinking and research. As the organization moves forward, leadership will need to demonstrate support by prioritizing the time needed for employees to meet to have focused conversations about student success.

**Time to Support Maturity:** The College submitted its project proposal one year earlier in the Open Pathway schedule due to an awareness that the level of data maturity required to create a sustainable assessment process would take for both the IE Director as dashboard creator and for end users with little to no data analytics experience.

**Leadership Change:** Three changes in the presidential role arose during the project's timeline. Like time, this change did not inhibit project completion nor employee buy-in, but changing priorities did temporarily impact project momentum.

**Lagging Data:** Data sources with lagging reporting periods can be a challenge causing confusion for end users. This is especially true for cohort comparison data sets from IPEDS and NCCBP when used with more recent institutional data.

##### Opportunities

Two important opportunities became apparent during implementation, both of which focused on information-sharing. The first was the opportunity to meet employees desire to understand data better through a technology platform. Regular team meetings focused on reviewing uncomplicated

visualizations paired with chart verbiage and team conversations offered the opportunity to have more frequent discussions focused on data. The second was the opportunity to create an enhanced meaning about data variables, specifically student demographics. Conversations about creating a sense of belonging on campus and becoming a student-ready institution place the onus on the organization to build a culture that purposely endeavors to learn more about the unique challenges faced by students.

### **Commitment to and Engagement in the Quality Initiative**

#### **VI. Involvement and Perceptions of Individuals and Groups**

Broad involvement of campus stakeholders was required to successfully complete the project. Each of the roles listed below participated during the project's time of action, with some continuing as standing team members.

**Academic Affairs:** Associate Vice President of Academics and Secondary Partnerships, Cowley Education Association Representative, Director of Distance Learning, Director of Sumner Campus, Educational Navigator (Tiger Learning Center), Faculty (English, Math), Faculty Department Chairs, IMPACT TRIO Program English and Math Specialists, Registrar, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Workforce and Career Specialist

**Athletics:** Assistant Athletic Director for Academics & Compliance, Athletic Director

**Cowley College Foundation:** CEO

**Enrollment Management:** Academic Outreach/Mulvane Site Coordinator, Application Processor, Bilingual Admissions Representative, Director of Financial Aid, Director of Student Enrollment and Success, Financial Aid and Scholarship Specialist, High School Recruiter, International Student Coordinator, and Upward Bound TRiO Program Director

**Finance and Administration:** Bursar, Director of Accounting, Director of Campus Security and Public Safety, Human Resources Coordinator, and Vice President of Finance and Administration

**Institutional Effectiveness:** Director of Institutional Effectiveness

**Information Technology:** SQL Database Administrator, Systems Administrator, and Vice President of Information Technology

**Executive Office:** Administrative Assistant to the President and President (Current and former)

**Student Services:** Director of Student Housing, Disability Coordinator, Executive Director of Student Services (Current and former), Mental Health Counselor

Campus stakeholders recognize the AIM's value for data maturity and integral to supporting student success. Feedback about the worth and impact of the project include:

"The project is very important to our college. The number of new employees and the use of new software technology made this quality initiative a priority as we continue to be a data-informed institution."

"The AIM document has allowed us to take a deep dive in areas within the institution that have room for growth and sustainability. The indicators have had many touch points from all areas within the college in reference to faculty, staff, students and stake holders. The strategic approach within the institution has been all hands-on deck. The AIM document has warranted great change in many areas. We have fined tuned the indicators, putting a strong emphasis on areas of opportunities. When this action has occurred, it brought to light other areas within the institution that needed polished up as well. I see the bulk of these challenges as opportunities for growth within our institution. I think the biggest hindrance has been the

accountability of people taking ownership in the indicators due to personnel job changes (no longer employed here, or are in working in another job role). The tenacity from start to finish has been a challenge as well. I think the data driven decisions from the AIM document are going to breathe life in areas within our institution! I am excited to watch it come to action and flourish!”

“As Lead Instructor for our ALP and Comp I courses, I would have been lost without these numbers at two crucial times this spring. First of all, we moved our concurrent academic support course that accompanies Comp I from a three-credit to a two-credit course. This was a bit of a risk, and we are closely monitoring to see what impact this had on our students. This spring's data showed a decrease in student success; if that continues, we will have to revisit the decision or find ways to try to increase our impact in the two-credit version. Secondly, in spring we completed our Program Review, and without the data, we would have been basing our reporting and recommendations on anecdotes and speculation. We are so grateful for easy access to relevant data!”

“I value the purpose of the AIM, but a lot of work and time is put into it, which makes it hard to balance with other job duties. Students are the number one reason we are here, and our employees have worked hard to provide the best institution for our students.”

## **VII. Lessons Learned**

While end users of the technology and analysis used for the project gained significantly in data maturity and leadership skills, large points of learning also occurred in the IE Office. Important points for the IE Director included technical skills in dashboard creation and design along with leadership development to incorporate better listening when colleagues did not grasp concepts presented visually; discarding perceptions of how charts “should look” and replacing with more accessible information; and improved messaging to increase campus understanding of student variables as environmental factors rather than demographic identifiers.

An organizational lesson learned was that good data work must have balance, in that it takes time for end users to become comfortable using new technology and for stakeholders in non-IE roles to gain the confidence to begin formulating research questions, still the investment can also result in employee burn out when the work occurs in isolation and not systematic with other strategic activities.

### **Resource Provision**

## **VIII. Human, Financial, Physical and Technological Resource Support**

- **Human**
  - Participation by 38 employees representing all organizational functions.
- **Technological**
  - Collaborative work in dashboard creation **and** feedback on dashboard design from five personnel employed by the College’s Tableau partner (Datatelligent)
  - Implementation of Microsoft Azure and Talend Stitch (data pipelines)
- **Financial**
  - General fund investment in Snowflake® cloud storage
  - General fund investment in Tableau licensing for ~200 full- and permanent, part-time employees
  - General fund investment in data subscription services with Datatelligent



## Plans for the Future

### IX. Plans for Ongoing Work

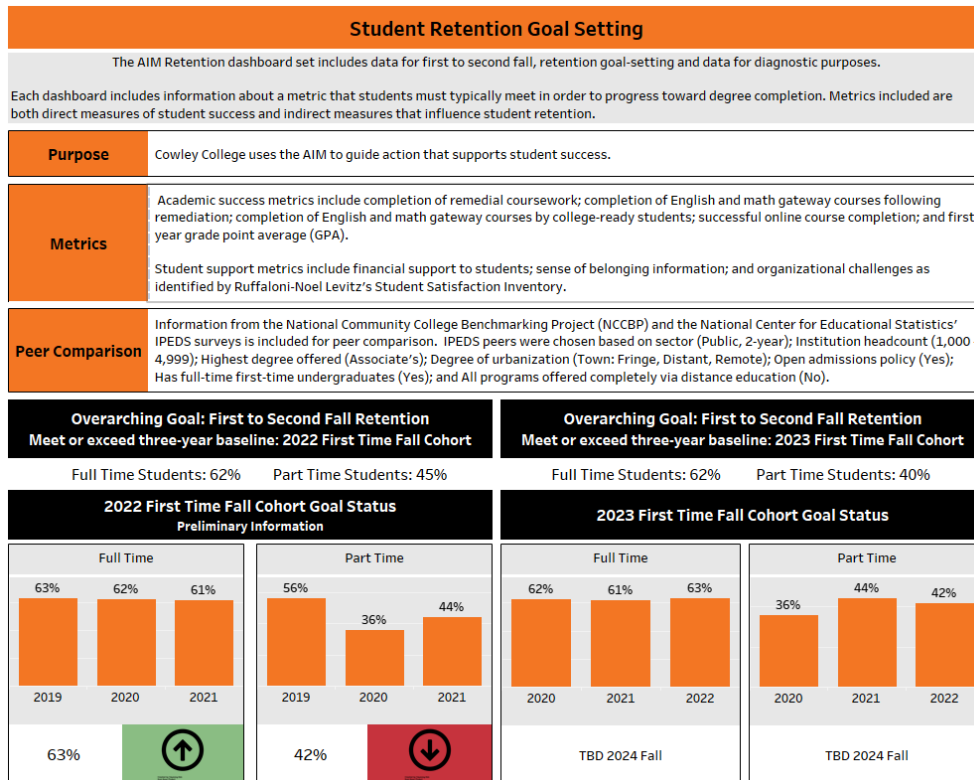
Refinement of the AIM as the College’s primary assessment tool to support its mission will continue as a primary task for the IE Office with broad campus participation in the future. The results from the ITA assessment operationalized during the project clearly show the gaps the College will address:

- Continued development of a culture of inquiry or the degree to which the College uses data for self-examination to address lines of inquiry;
- Increased sources of student feedback to include collaboration with the College’s Student Government Association;
- Continual investment in data literacy to support professional development, including the creation of a data literacy landing page on the College’s Tableau site;
- Increased transparency to include publications of reports focusing on the AIM and the improvement strategies created to support student success

### X. Meaningful Practices or Artifacts

Cowley College is willing to share information about meaningful practices including, capitalizing on required reporting to create metric sets without overburdening the data office, establishing a data lake, using communication to increase data literacy, assessing institutional transformation for data use, and identifying performance indicators with clear alignment with mission and other, related statements. Finally, permission is granted to share any of the images and content of tables; this report will be published on the College’s website following the final report from the Commission.

**Image 8. Student Retention Goal Setting**



## Appendix One

**Guide to Understanding:** This set of tables educates the reader about the changes made to the AIM. Key Performance Indicators are identified as new using (N) or retained using (R).

**Table 1. Educational Access**

Key Performance Indicator (N) = New; (R) = Retained	Target	Data		Use for Decision-making		
	New or Updated	New	Source	Diagnostic	Goal Setting	Peer Comparison
Service Area Dual Credit High School Students: First Fall Enrollment after High School Completion (N)	Y	Y	SIS	Y	Y	
High School Graduate Enrolling Rate for Service Area, Public High Schools (N)	Y	Y	NCCBP			Y
Market Penetration: Credit Enrollment (N)	Y	Y	NCCBP		Y	Y
Access for Student Subgroups (N)	Y	Y	DFR	Y	Y	Y
Enrollment by Historically Underserved Student Subgroups (N)	Y	Y	KHEStats			Y
Student Satisfaction with Accessibility and Support (N)	Y	Y	SSI	Y	Y	Y

**Table 2. Student Retention**

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Data		Use for Decision-making		
	New or Updated	New	Source	Diagnostic	Goal Setting	Peer Comparison
First to Second Fall Retention of First Time, Degree Seeking Students (R)			Fall		Y	Y
Retention of Student Subgroups (N)	Y	Y	Fall SIS	Y	Y	Y
Early Momentum: Remedial Course Completion (N)	Y	Y	SIS	Y	Y	
Early Momentum: Remedial Course Success (N)	Y	Y	NCCBP			Y
Early Momentum: Gateway Course Success Following Remediation (R)			NCCBP			Y
Early Momentum: First Year Career GPA for First Time, Full Time, Degree-seeking Underprepared Students (R)			SIS	Y	Y	
Early Momentum: Gateway Course Completion (R)		Y	NCCBP			Y
Online Course Completion (N)	Y	Y	SIS NCCBP	Y	Y	Y
Financial Support to Students (N)	Y	Y	FAid SSI		Y	Y
Sense of Belonging (R)			SSI	Y	Y	
Cowley College Challenges (N)	Y	Y	SSI	Y	Y	

**Table 3. Student Success**

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Data		Use for Decision-making		
	New or Updated	New	Source	Diagnostic	Goal Setting	Peer Comparison
Overall Completion: Number of Awards Conferred (N)	Y	Y	SIS	Y	Y	
Completion Rates Summary (R)			GRS	Y	Y	Y
100% (On Time) Completion and Transfer Out to Four Year Institutions (N)	Y	Y	NCCBP			Y
150% Completion for Student Subgroups	Y	Y	GRS	Y		
Employment in Kansas for Residents of Kansas (N)	Y	Y	KHEStats		Y	Y
Graduates Employed after Exiting (N)	Y	Y	K-TIP		Y	Y
Transfer Out to State Universities in Kansas: Average Credit Hours, Average Transferred GPA (N)	Y	Y	KHEStats			Y

**Table 4. Institutional Effectiveness**

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Data		Use for Decision-making		
	New Or Updated	New	Source	Diagnostic	Goal Setting	Peer Comparison
<b>Section 1. Student Goal Attainment</b>						
Academic Performance of Student Athletes: Average GPA by Sport (R)			SIS		Y	
DFW%: All Courses (R)			SIS		Y	
<b>Section 2. Satisfaction with Instruction</b>						
Satisfaction with Instruction by Modality (R)			CrseVal		Y	
Student Feedback: Instructional Effectiveness (R)			SSI		Y	
<b>Section 3a. Use &amp; Impact of Academic Support Services</b>						
Library Services (R)			Database SSI		Y	
Tutoring Services (R)		Y	Accudemia SSI		Y	
Co-Curricular Activities (N)	Y	Y	SSI		Y	
<b>Section 3b. Use &amp; Impact of Academic Support Services</b>						
Mental Health Services (R)		Y	Get Inclusive SSI In House Survey		Y	
Satisfaction with Residential Housing (R)			In House Survey		Y	

**Institutional Effectiveness, *continued***

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Data		Use for Decision-making		
	New Or Updated	New	Source	Diagnostic	Goal Setting	Peer Comparison
<b>Section 4. Satisfaction with Support Services</b>						
Advising Effectiveness (R)			SSI		Y	Y
Admissions/Financial Aid (R)			SSI		Y	Y
Campus Climate (R)			SSI		Y	Y
Campus Services (R)			SSI		Y	Y
Registration Effectiveness (R)			SSI		Y	Y
Student Centeredness (R)			SSI		Y	Y
<b>Section 5. Financial Impact and Sustainability</b>						
Cash Carryover Percentage (R)			SIS		Y	
Audit Report Exceptions (R)			Annual Audit		Y	
Mill Levy (R)	Y		Annual Budget		Y	
Dorm Utilization Percentage (R)			SIS		Y	

**Institutional Effectiveness, *continued***

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Data		Use for Decision-making		
	New Or Updated	New	Source	Diagnostic	Goal Setting	Peer Comparison
<b>Section 6. FTE and Student Recruitment</b>						
Overall Admissions Application Receipts (R)	Y		SIS		Y	
Applicant to Student Conversion Rate (N)	Y	Y	SIS		Y	
Access to Information: Website Page Ranking (N)	Y	Y	Marketing		Y	
Campus Tours (R)	Y		CRM		Y	
Annual Enrollment: Full Time Equivalency (FTE) for General and Career and Technical Education (R)			SIS		Y	
Marketing Dollars Spent per FTE (R)			SIS		Y	
<b>Section 7. Financial Accountability and Support to Students</b>						
Three Year Student Loan Default Rate (R)			NSLDS		Y	Y
Average Student Loan Debt Compared to Financial Aid Cost of Attendance (R)			FAid		Y	
Scholarship Discount Percentage (R)			SIS		Y	
Increase in Tuition and Fees for Cowley County Residents (N)	Y		Annual Budget		Y	
Excel in CTE Aid to Service Area High School Students (N)	Y		SIS		Y	
Unpaid Student Debt (N)	Y		SIS		Y	

**Institutional Effectiveness, *continued***

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Data		Use for Decision-making		
	New Or Updated	New	Source	Diagnostic	Goal Setting	Peer Comparison
<b>Section 8. Safe and Ethnical Campus Environment</b>						
Satisfaction with Safety and Security (R)			SSI		Y	
Reportable Crimes (R)			Clery Report		Y	
Academic Integrity Violations per FTE (R)			Academic Affairs SIS		Y	
Culture of Honesty (R)			SSI		Y	
Fair and Unbiased Classroom (N)			SSI		Y	Y
<b>Section 9. Community Service and Stakeholder Support</b>						
Advisory Committee Survey Overall Satisfaction Percentage (R)			Academic Affairs		Y	
Percentage of Service Area High Schools Served (N)	Y		SIS		Y	
Service Area Business & Industry Partnerships (R)			Academic Affairs		Y	
Stakeholder Satisfaction (R)			Community Stakeholder Survey		Y	
Golden Tigers' Total Enrollment/Seats Filled (R)			Academic Affairs		Y	
ACES Community Service Hours per FTE (R)			Academic Affairs		Y	
Overall Employee Satisfaction (R)			CESS		Y	Y



## Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report

### Panel Review and Recommendation Form

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#### *Review Process*

The Quality Initiative panel review process evaluates the institution's effort in undertaking the Quality Initiative Proposal approved by HLC. The Quality Initiative process encourages institutions to take risks, innovate, take on a tough challenge, or pursue a yet unproven strategy or hypothesis. Thus, failure of an initiative to achieve its goals is acceptable. An institution may learn much from such failure. What is not acceptable is failure of the institution to pursue the initiative with genuine effort. Genuineness of effort, not success of the initiative, constitutes the focus of the Quality Initiative review and serves as its sole point of evaluation.

#### *Submission Instructions*

Submit the final report as a Word document to HLC at [hlcommission.org/upload](https://hlcommission.org/upload). Select "Pathways/Quality Initiatives" from the list of submission options to ensure the report is sent to the correct HLC staff member. The file name for the report should follow this format: QI Report Review <Name of Institution>.

**Name of Institution:** Cowley College

**State:** Kansas

**Institutional ID:** 1275

**Reviewers (names, titles, institutions):** Nancy Marshall, Reference and Instruction Librarian, South Dakota State University; William Mangan, Provost, Edgewood College

**Date:** June 28, 2024

#### **I. Quality Initiative Review**

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- The institution demonstrated its seriousness of the undertaking.
- The institution demonstrated that the initiative had scope and impact.
- The institution demonstrated a commitment to and engagement in the initiative.

The institution demonstrated adequate resource provision.

## II. Recommendation

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The panel confirms genuine effort on the part of the institution.

The panel cannot confirm genuine effort on the part of the institution.

## III. Rationale (required)

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Cowley College implemented its Quality Initiative, “Maximizing Data to Support Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success,” over three academic years during the college’s 2018-2021 strategic plan. The purpose of the initiative was the restructuring of the institution’s Accountability and Institutional Measures (AIM), which is the college’s set of metrics used to assess institutional effectiveness and enhance planning. As a result of the Quality Initiative, Cowley College reorganized the AIM metrics, created cross-departmental review teams, added peer cohort comparison using external data sets, introduced diagnostic analysis to support goal achievement, and implemented Tableau dashboards to increase data accessibility for internal stakeholders. In addition to these activities, the college has reviewed its data governance standards and professional development opportunities as they relate to data literacy.

According to the Quality Initiative Report, Cowley College experienced significant collaboration among many institutional stakeholders which drove development of the initiative. Cross-professional teams operationalized the goals of the initiative and evaluated the implementation of the project plan. The Quality Initiative resulted in the redevelopment of the AIM metrics, creation of four sets of dashboards to support planning, expansion of data sources included in the dashboard metrics, addition of visual elements through Tableau, and utilization of peer cohort data to include as part of planning data sets.

As part of its Quality Initiative Report, Cowley College stated that it will continue to refine AIM in anticipation of the next iteration of strategic planning. In addition, the college plans to expand the methods used to gather student feedback to be incorporated in its data sets. Finally, Cowley College has committed to publishing reports using data within AIM and outlining quality improvement efforts especially as they relate to student success.