



Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report

Institutional Template

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


Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

8.27.19
Date

Dr. Ronald Ramming, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Connors State College

Name of Institution

Warner, OK 74469

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.

Effective September 1, 2019, the report must be submitted by June 1 of Year 9. Prior to September 1, 2019, the report is due by August 31 of Year 9.

Submit the report as a PDF file to pathways@hlcommission.org with a file name that follows 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: August 27, 2019

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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 intent of our Quality Initiative is to provide a sustained structure for the retention-related initiatives that will be conceived and implemented through the continued work started with the HLC Persistence and Completion Academy. We began our work in the Persistence and Completion Academy with the purpose of learning to better utilize data for decisions that would increase student persistence and completion rates. We gathered data we felt would allow us to target the biggest barriers our institution faced: 1) remedial/developmental courses, 2) faculty/staff engagement, 3) front-line staff development/intervention, and 4) online/hybrid course development and delivery. We established a Persistence to Completion Committee that includes representatives from academic and non-academic departments. Our work focused on becoming more intentional in utilizing data to determine the variables that matter most in encouraging or discouraging student persistence to graduation.

After a review of data concerning the success rates of our students completing developmental courses on their first attempt and their success in subsequent courses, we noticed an extremely high number of students making multiple attempts in developmental courses before moving forward to credit bearing courses. As a result, we developed a corequisite model in both or English and math divisions. Data from this corequisite redesign has shown success. We believe that success rates and retention rates will increase as students have decreased their number of semesters in developmental courses.

In this process of redesigning our developmental courses, another challenge identified was our placement policy. We determined through analyzing our institutional data and researching national data that multiple measures using high school GPA in addition to or in place of National Exam results (ACT/SAT) was a better predictor of success for students. Division Chairs and our VPAA updated and implemented our Assessment Plan to include a new placement policy that includes high school GPA as a placement tool with institutional test scores as an optional placement tool. We are seeing student success with our new placement policy as we review the data each semester. For example, In the fall of 2016, our success for Composition I was 83.21%. After implementation of the new placement policy, the fall of 2018 success was 86.30%. All remedial and gateway courses show similar success data as shown in Question #4 below.

Enrollment trend data has shown an increasing number of part-time students versus full-time students. As a result, we have implemented combinations of eight week courses within a semester that allow our students to have a full-time schedule in a shorter day-time span. Our goal is to increase our full-time student numbers by allowing our working students to complete their degree within four semesters. Data for this initiative will be available in 2020.

Through our retention efforts, we determined the need for an Academic Success Coach. The Coach is responsible for collecting student data and working on student retention with our advisement team. In fall 2018, she began a Mid-Term Outreach project in order to reach students before they were in a situation that would result in low persistence. Mid-Term grades are posted during the 6th week of the semester rather than the true Mid-Term of the 8th week hoping to catch students before grade recovery is less likely to occur. This project has shown enough success to continue and look into other possible changes to increase success.

Barriers to student retention led us to begin examining our faculty and staff engagement. Each fall and spring, updated data on student persistence and success rates are provided to faculty and staff. The

data/feedback we receive from faculty and staff indicates their appreciation for the knowledge gained by the sharing of institutional data.

Our goal to improve front-line services was a result of our student surveys and our CCSSE surveys. Students were frustrated by inconsistent information provided and the wait-time for each department. We provide professional development opportunities where all departments meet to discuss their processes. These opportunities allow everyone to understand the inner workings and necessary student information required across the institution as well as analyze our processes in an effort to be more efficient. Student satisfaction surveys are showing improvement in this area.

Through an analysis of our data, we have determined our online course registration and offering is growing. The retention and success of students who completed an online or hybrid course was lower than a comparable face-to-face course. After the second semester of implementation of course design focused on the Quality Matters rubric, satisfaction ratings have improved. Faculty have the opportunity to work with the Title III team and have begun to utilize their institutional Connors Quality Course Online/Hybrid rubric in developing their courses. Data has shown an improved success rate in our online/hybrid course offerings.

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.)

The Quality Initiative project was started on the hypotheses that a focused effort on student persistence and completion data collection and analysis across multiple areas of campus would result in increased student success. The multiple parts of our project have shown that this approach is proving successful and a focus on data analysis from multiple areas needs to continue.

We began our work in the Persistence and Completion Academy with the purpose of learning to better utilize data for decisions that would increase student persistence and completion rates. Data driven decisions allow us to increase student persistence and completion rates more effectively and efficiently. We have moved beyond using the Academy to support a specific project increase persistence to a broader, nuanced understanding that persistence falls within the larger cultural context of supporting our students' success. As we work on our goals, we have begun to rely on data as our strongest indicator for decisions. The Initiative has promoted a more cohesive culture across campus. Our Initiative to provide a sustained structure for the retention-related efforts to increase student persistence to graduation changed our institutional paradigm. We are now focused on developing and sustaining a culture of continuous improvement and creating a sustainable, focused plan that allows us to keep moving forward by utilizing data to support our decisions and actions.

Our use of data to review processes that impact student success and measuring progress for retention and completion initiatives have indicated a need for a designated Academic Success Coach. In fall 2018 we hired our Success Coach who is responsible for coordinating efforts in our Enrollment and Management departments to improve our advisement practices, coordinating early alert efforts of faculty and advisors, and working with the Academic Council (Academic Division Chairs and VPAA) to develop pathways to degrees and to monitor student progress toward that degree.

Our Academic Council collect and analyze data that allows us to develop our Assessment and Placement Plans that will best fit our student demographic, allows us to assess the revision of our remedial/developmental course redesigns, allows us to review courses yielding higher than expected D, F, and W grades, and allows us to better evaluate and develop online/hybrid courses that yield higher completion and success rates. Utilizing data will assist us in determining a more effective schedule for courses by semester which we believe will allow us to improve our full-time student numbers. Faculty engagement in the Persistence efforts is vital to the success of this initiative. We returned from our initial

Academy meeting and immediately planned and implemented professional development targeted toward sharing and discussing data information for our faculty. Each fall and spring, we provide faculty updated data on student persistence and success rates in developmental courses. The President provides all faculty and staff our Campus Profile which provides institutional data for state and federal funding, budget, student demographics, and enrollment which includes data per campus, full-time vs. part-time, etc. Our VPAA provides data of student success rates in remedial and gateway courses comparing success before our new placement policy to success after. Faculty are also provided data from our General Education Assessment from the previous semester. Discussions follow. As a result of sharing this information in an open meeting seems to have greatly influenced our faculty to become more engaged in the process and have a feeling and attitude of ownership.

Our front line leaders have changed the dynamic of our admissions and enrollment processes in efforts to improve services provided to students and hopefully removing barriers to student retention. We have implemented an electronic sign-in process utilizing Google docs that allows us to collect data on the department students are visiting, the reason for the student's visit, and how much wait time and time spent with the department. The collection of this data has given us a more accurate understanding of student needs and therefore has allowed us to be more intentional and efficient in services offered. We are able to know what cross-training is needed in our areas and can offer students improved services.

Our work on the Initiative has shown us to look more deeply into the data to determine barriers to student retention and persistence. We are utilizing surveys in areas of student services to determine concerns from students. As a result of the information we receive, we have been able to address specific issues during our professional developments. Our surveys have shown a need for front-line professional development, improved communication within all departments, and more concrete departmental processes shared across the institution.

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.

Developmental course work redesign has remained a clear focus for Connors. Our initiative to incorporate co-requisites into our institution shows success. As a result of the successes shown in these co-requisites, we have removed three developmental courses completely and have combined the upper level developmental into a support/lab class tied to a credit bearing class. This redesign has kept a large number of students from spending two extra semesters in developmental courses and allowed them to graduate on time. Our data indicates positive results from this redesign. In addition to the implementation of co-requisite courses, using multiple measures to determine placement has been very positive. As a result of these initiatives, our students are able to move more quickly through the developmental and gateway courses and therefore graduate on time. For example, in the fall of 2016, our success for Composition I was 83.21%. After implementation of the new placement policy, the fall of 2018 success was 86.30%. All remedial and gateway courses show similar success data. Using the co-requisite design and multiple measures initiatives has reduced the frustration for our students and increased student success.

Through our Title III grant we have been able to have an outside research firm look at various sets of data. One area of research for this outside firm, Hanover Research, was focused on student persistence. This research had several positive findings and showed an increase in both retention rates and graduation rates from 2013 to 2018. The first year retention rate has increased to 41.7% from 35.49% during that time while the three-year graduation rates have increased to 38.85% from 13.75%. While these rates are not where we would like them to be, they do show a trend in the right direction.

Our online course offerings have shown success with our newly developed quality course rubric and faculty training. Through this initiative, we developed a Connors Quality Course rubric that faculty teaching through the online or hybrid modality utilize for their course development. We have developed a Top 10 Expectations that all classes taught in this modality are required to have. We have a team who reviews each of these classes before the semester begins to ensure that our students will have the most effective and efficient online/hybrid course experience.

Our Front-line leaders have implemented an electronic sign-in process utilizing Google docs that allows us to collect data on the department students are visiting, the reason for the student's visit, and how much wait time and time spent with the department. The collection of this data has given us a more accurate understanding of student needs and therefore has allowed us to be more intentional and efficient in services offered. We are able to know what cross-training is needed in our areas and can offer students improved services. Utilizing Google docs has been a tremendous asset to this process and at no cost to the institution which is especially important in the current budget climate. Constant data analysis across the institution has increased our efficiency in the enrollment process for our students.

Faculty engagement in the dissemination and discussion of data resulted in our faculty looking for ways to be an active part of the process. While reviewing national data, they found that Undergraduate Research projects could increase student engagement and retention. The faculty created an Undergraduate Research program and will be implementing it in the spring of 2020.

Student Affairs has become more involved in the persistence initiative by initiating student surveys in order to determine activities and services better scheduled for student engagement. In reviewing national studies concerning student success related to student engagement advocate students' participation in community activities increased student persistence, Student Affairs staff have begun to create more opportunities for students to participate in community activities. After each activity, students submit surveys for assessment and data collection.

Our Housing department has also begun to see the value in their participation in student persistence. They have requested faculty notification when students have stopped attending classes and Mid-Term Outreach notification from our Academic Success Coach. Once they receive notifications, they perform what they term a "Knock and Talk" with those students to provide some encouragement and resources.

Research from Hanover Research indicated several factors that affect our one-year retention and three-year graduation rates. Analysis reveals that additional 0.1 point in first-year GPA increases the probability of retention by up to 1.4 percentage points and the probability of three-year and five-year graduation by 1.2 and 1.3 percentage points, respectively. Achieving a letter grade above a D in required classes such as ENGL 1113, POLS 1113, and HIST 1483 during the first year also corresponds to a respective increase in likelihood of retention by 13-18 percentage points and in the likelihood of 3/5 year graduation by 7-13 percentage points. After reviewing this data, we believe the implementation of our Mid-Term Outreach program should increase these persistence rates. Once Mid-Term grades are posted, lists of students with grades of C or lower are disseminated to various faculty and staff across campus. Academic Division Chairs receive a list of students with declared majors in that area. A list of students living in housing is sent to the Director of Housing. All other students who have declared a major of General Studies are divided among the advisors. Each of these students then receives an email with resources, encouragement to visit with their faculty, and a request to visit with the Division Chair or advisor. The VPAA receives a list of students who have all A's and B's. She then sends them an email acknowledging their success. This project has indicated enough success to continue and look into other possible changes to increase success.

The Hanover report indicates when controlling for first term Financial Aid package, Native American and Alaskan Native students are less likely to be retained for a second year than white students. With our NASNTI Title III grant and our Title III grant, we have already worked to assist these students by adding professional development for faculty with the intent of shedding light on the need to restructure

curriculum so that it is more effective with and responsive to the learning styles of our diverse student population.

Our advisors have also begun to have students complete an online survey during the few minutes it takes the advisor to complete paperwork and print their schedule. Through these surveys we have been able to improve our advisement sessions and reduce the time students are in the office. The data is collected and reported to the Asst. VPAA monthly.

The CCSSE report for 2019 indicated several areas we will need to continue to improve including Active and Collaborative Learning, Academic Challenge, student- faculty interaction, and support for learners. Many of the initiatives in place address these areas. We will continue to collect data and monitor our progress.

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

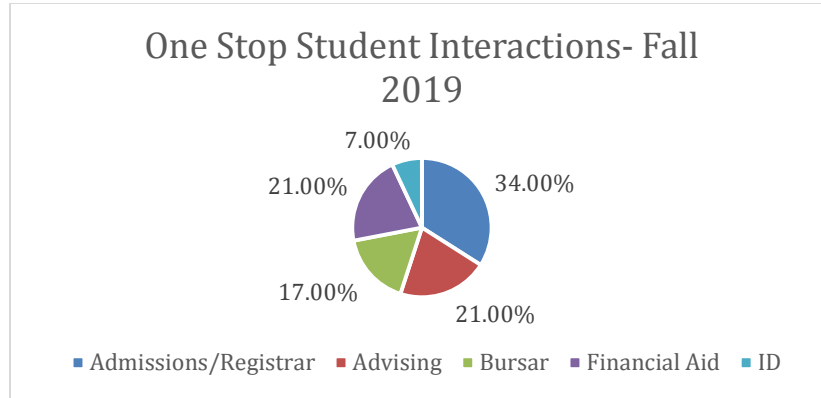
Using our IPEDS data we are able to determine that our retention rates in the fall 2016 cohort for full time students was 57% while the rate for part time students was only 40% while our fall 2014 cohort three-year graduation rates were 23% and 16% respectively. These numbers clearly indicated the need for our Quality Initiative project focused on student persistence and completion.

The redesign of our developmental courses and the implementation of our new placement policies have shown success in students' completion of both developmental and gateway courses. The number of students enrolling in gateway course has increased while the student success in the courses has remained steady or increased. See the charts below.

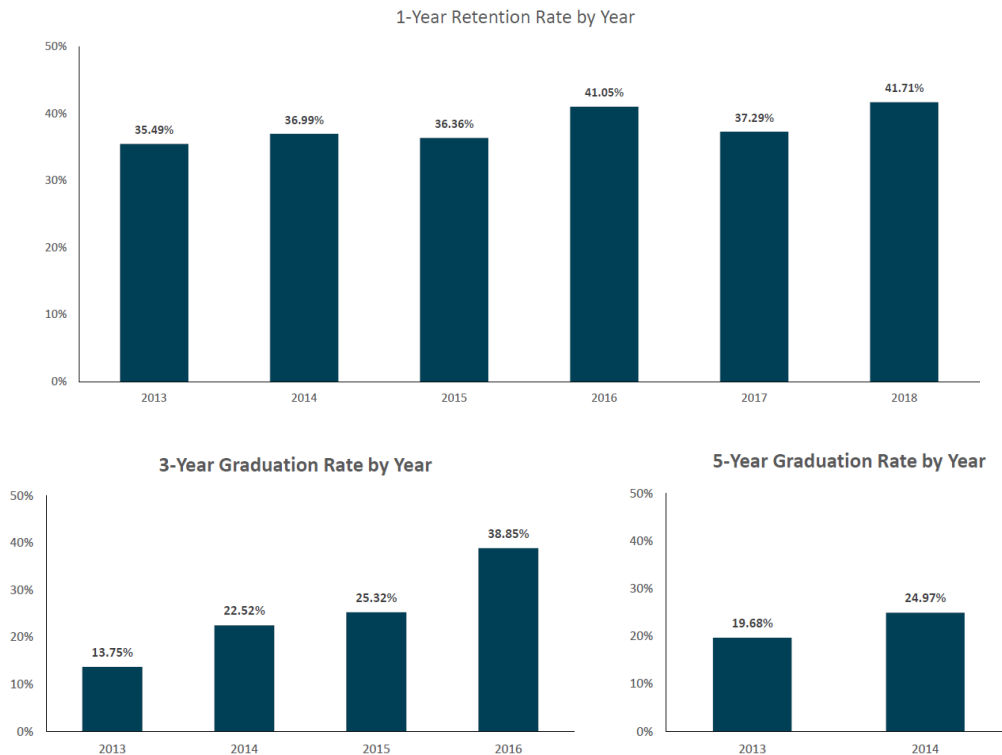
| Course | FA2016 Success Rate | | FA2017 Success Rate | | FA2018 Success Rate | |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Academic Literacy | n=166 | 42.77% | n=355 | 70.42% | n=437 | 56.75% |
| Strategies for Success | n=896 | 88.06% | n=789 | 95.31% | n=838 | 92.72% |
| FOE Lab | n=392 | 76.28% | n=332 | 75.00% | n=190 | 74.21% |
| Comp I | n=1447 | 83.21% | n=1636 | 80.56% | n=1547 | 86.30% |
| Math Readiness | | | n=1141 | 49.43% | n=644 | 47.20% |
| Elementary Algebra | n=1559 | 47.27% | | | | |
| Intermediate Algebra | n=770 | 41.17% | | | | |
| Applied Math | n=86 | 65.12% | n=97 | 63.92% | n=667 | 74.06% |
| Applied Math Lab | | | n=40 | 90.00% | n=315 | 78.73% |
| College Algebra | n=1004 | 80.58% | n=1635 | 70.34% | n=664 | 79.67% |
| College Algebra Lab | | | n=626 | 51.44% | n=110 | 67.27% |
| Elementary Statistics | n=110 | 77.27% | n=96 | 68.75% | n=105 | 87.62% |

| Course | SP2017 Success Rate | | SP2018 Success Rate | | SP2019 Success Rate | |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------|---------------------|---------|---------------------|--------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Academic Literacy | n=275 | 77.82% | n=395 | 63.54% | n = 187 | 70.05% |
| Strategies for Success | n=546 | 82.23% | n=506 | 94.66% | n=436 | 93.35% |
| FOE Lab | n=165 | 44.85% | n=134 | 67.91% | n=73 | 73.97% |
| Comp I | n=749 | 79.44% | n=714 | 82.91% | n=688 | 81.40% |
| Math Readiness | | | n=600 | 52.50% | n=353 | 58.64% |
| Elementary Algebra | n=897 | 41.36% | | | | |
| Intermediate Algebra | n=784 | 55.87% | | | | |
| Applied Math | n=41 | 63.41% | n=61 | 83.61% | n=434 | 73.04% |
| Applied Math Lab | | | n=27 | 100.00% | n=176 | 80.68% |
| College Algebra | n=825 | 75.03% | n=1051 | 76.78% | n=498 | 85.54% |
| College Algebra Lab | | | n=426 | 84.98% | n=115 | 83.48% |
| Elementary Statistics | n=96 | 85.42% | n=123 | 72.36% | n=122 | 95.08% |

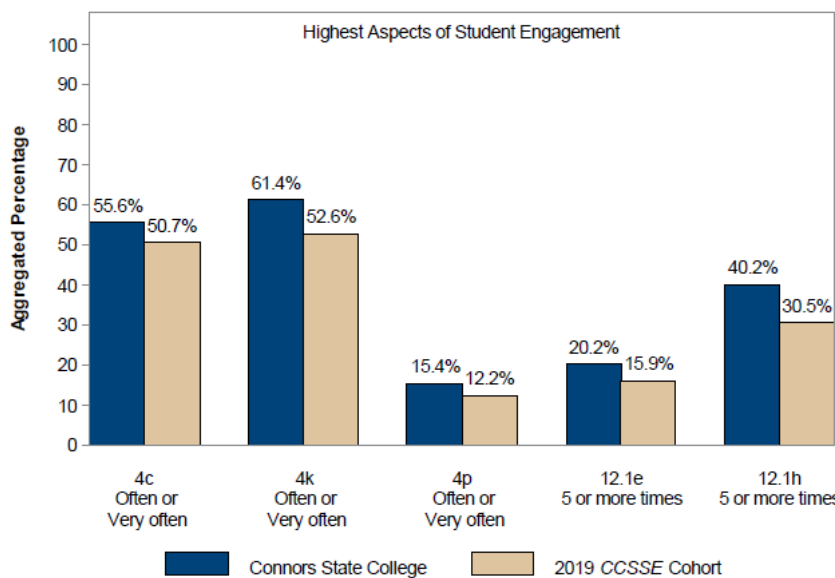
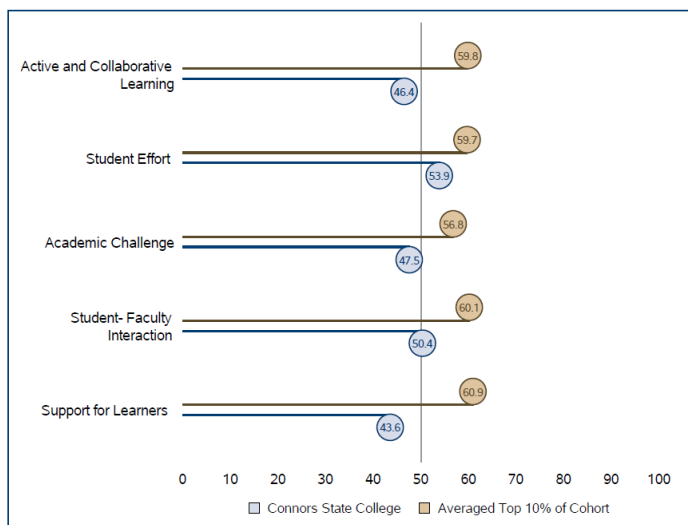
Our implementation of an electronic Sign-In for enrollment services utilizing Google docs has been extremely helpful in allowing us to determine usage and allowing us to determine areas where cross training would allow us to provide better student services. Our data from fall 2019 indicates that admissions received 34% of student interactions, Advising 21%, Financial Aid 21%, Bursar 17%, and ID 7%. With this data, we will be able to be more efficient in our services by cross training for the areas with highest student traffic. Continuing to monitor this data will allow us to continue this throughout the year and hopefully increase student satisfaction and reduce roadblocks to students.



The Hanover Research findings have allowed us to look into data we had not previously captured. While the report shows positive numbers for one-year retention and 3 and 5 year graduation rates we are still working to continue the upswing through continuous data collection and assessment of that data. Conversations among faculty and staff are trending toward solid data rather than anecdotal information.



The CCSSE shows we still have work to do in the five benchmark areas of student engagement. However, we do have some positive areas that we can focus on and expand.



| Item | Benchmark |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 4c. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in | Student Effort |
| 4k. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor | Student-Faculty Interaction |
| 4p. Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework | Student-Faculty Interaction |
| 12.1e. Frequency: Skill labs (writing, math, etc.) | Student Effort |
| 12.1h. Frequency: Computer lab | Student Effort |

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

The biggest challenge we initially encountered was determining what data to collect that would give us the best indicators for barriers to student retention and persistence. We also transitioned to a new Student Information System during our Academy project. This hindered much forward progress for several semesters. Since the beginning of our Academy work, we had Administrative turn over and a change in the Learning Management System (LMS) and this caused a delay. With these new systems in place and a new president in April 2017 and VPAA in November 2017, we have been able to move forward in a more cohesive and productive manner.

The budget climate in our state also created challenges. Our state has cut funding for higher education. Connors received a 26% cut to our budget over the last few years. We lost some key personnel, including student advisors and front line staff. As a result, student satisfaction in these areas decreased. Students were frustrated in the wait time to see advisors, admissions, registrar, and financial aid.

Personnel were over whelmed and customer service was strained. However, these challenges actually were also our opportunities for progress toward our initiative. The faculty and staff worked together through these issues and actually became more resourceful. The opportunity to work more closely together allowed us to develop better communication and procedures for operating more efficiently.

A big challenge for us as a rural community college, as indicated in our IPEDS data, is our retention rates: Fall 2015, around 50% for full time students and around 30% for part time students. Data also indicates our part time student population is growing. (Data found in #4) This data is of concern for us as we see a need to increase our retention and graduation rates while our lower retention cohort seems to be increasing. As we move to analyzing our data to drive our decisions, we are more aware of the opportunity to determine the direction our students are moving and hopefully create solutions to deter lower retention numbers.

Our co-requisite courses, multiple measure placement, and math pathways initiatives have worked to remove several roadblocks for students; however, we are still working to continuously monitor the data and improve the success for our students.

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.

Our initial Academy team had only two members still active when we completed the Academy. We currently have only one member from the original team. The committee members were comprised of various staff and faculty members. Students were eventually added to the campus committee. The committee works with the entire institution in our initiative. While the initial reaction from across the campus was to view the initiative as another project to collect paperwork and file it away, once the value of making data driven decisions was continuously shared across campus, the engagement of everyone was evident. The Academy team worked across campus with all departments to help initiate data collection in every aspect of the institution. Student Activities, Housing, Food Services, Library, and Frontline began to be more intentional in collecting data to make decisions within their areas. The impact of the work done through the initiative has encouraged a change in the culture resulting in increased engagement of all involved. Administration has been supportive throughout the project and participated in many activities and professional development opportunities.

Sharing the data and success and failures of our work has been more positive than negative in our efforts to grow the student population and increase key performance measures for students, i.e. graduation rates persistence rates, transfer rates.

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

The most important points learned by the participants was 1) to be purposeful and focused in data collection, 2) to conduct data analysis and 3) to share data widely across the campus. In order to make the biggest impact, the team understood the importance of approaching this issue from many different areas. Changing the culture of the institution to be more data driven and student success focused has been a great outcome from this initiative. While this multi-area approach was a challenge at times due to limited staff, the buy-in gained by involving everyone has been positive.

Resource Provision

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

Our initiative is supported by all personnel in the institution. We have been able to utilize Google docs at no cost to the institution for our Frontline Sign-In data. We have an institutional account with Survey Monkey for data. Through our Title III grant we have been able to utilize Hanover Research. We also utilize CCSSE. Our IPEDS data and our Institutional Research department provide data. By involving individuals from across campus, using grant dollars, and little to no cost resources the team feels this initiative will be sustainable.

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.

We will continue to collect data to drive our decisions in our efforts to increase student persistence and degree completion at Connors State College. We will focus on creating a culture of continuous improvement and creating a sustainable, focused plan to continue the initiative. We will continue to review processes that impact student success and measure progress for retention and completion rates. We will continue to monitor advising, multiple measure placement, early alerts, revision of developmental course sequences, pathways to manage student progress toward a degree. We will continue to work toward faculty and staff engagement in the process by ensuring our data is shared and discussed. We will continue to share the results of our data collection with faculty, staff, and other stakeholders.

Faculty who have begun the Undergraduate Research initiative will continue to work to increase student participation and have plans to procure financial support for this project.

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.

We would be happy to share any data we have collected or any of the methodologies we are using to collect the data. The use of Google as a dynamic sign-in for all of our front line areas is probably the best artifact that would be meaningful to other institutions.