**Project Details**

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| Title | Driving Action Through Analytics (DATA) | Status | DRAFT |
| Category | 5 - Knowledge Management and Resource Stewardship | Updated |  |
| Timeline |  | Reviewed |  |
| Planned Project Kickoff  01-15-2016 | | Created | 11-08-2013 |
| Target Completion  12-15-2016 | | Last Modified | 05-25-2016 |

* 1: Briefly describe the project in less than 100 words. Be sure to identify the key organizational areas (departments, programs, divisions, units, etc.) and key organizational processes that this action project will affect, change, and/or improve. :

A: The larger goal of the DATA Action Project is to grow a culture of consistent and coordinated data and enhanced access to the data via the development of a variety of data tools in order to enhance data-informed decision making. The specific focus of the project is to measure student success and enhance retention via the implementation of a student-risk profile, a State retention/funding metrics dashboard, and another dashboard measuring real-time progress towards KPI's for State retention/funding metrics.

* 2: Describe your institution’s reasons for initiating this action project now and for how long it should take to complete it. Why are this project and its goals high among your institution’s current priorities? Also, explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution’s recent or soon-to-be submitted systems portfolio:

A: VU has a number of reasons for taking on this project:

* + The Systems Appraisal Feedback Report and the Portfolio Category 5 team champions identified VU as having a need for better access to and use of data to evaluate processes and justify improvement plans.
  + The Data Warehouse Committee, which originated out of the “Learn in Order to Serve” Action Project, developed a report supporting the need for enhanced data management and use--in essence, a maturing of the institutions use of data.
  + Current data services are too dependent on a few data management personnel, and the effectiveness of these offices is reduced because they focus too much energy on meeting the demands of ad hoc data requests.  The data tools being developed can help reduce the load on data management personnel.
  + VU wants to develop tools that will predict, track, and measure student retention in order to understand its progress toward the State's retention and funding metrics.

VU plans to complete this modification of its earlier DATA Action Project by December, 2016.  VU's current and developing strategic plans identify retention as strategic goals, and the HLC is expecting retention plans and data. This project should help to bring retention goals and successes into focus, as well as provide faculty and staff with "big data" that can be used to identify students at risk so they can act to help retain the students.

* 3: List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress for each goal. Be sure to include formal evaluations when the project progress will be reviewed:

A: This is an institutional project.  The Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students will be impacted.  First, the key metrics will be grounded in the University’s values (which will have been reevaluated and approved for this project) and on the state’s new funding metrics. Colleges and programs will be asked to identify corresponding KPI’s.  In addition, student data will be funneled into the profiles and used to inform assessments, state reports, AQIP Reports, program reviews, strategic planning and other decision making processes.  The project should have a heavy impact on processes and production of the offices of Management Information, Institutional Research, and Institutional Effectiveness.  It should improve the quality of and access to data originating in and used by these offices, and the project should ultimately save time and energy in these offices as data is more widely available to users outside these offices, which should reduce a significant number of data requests.

* 4: Describe how various members of the learning community will participate in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project’s duration:

A: The project involves a large part of the institution.  The institution must continue to address retention for a number of reasons, including state funding metrics.  The Offices of the President, Provost, and Finance are responsible for reporting retention numbers to the state.  Academic programs and funding for programs and faculty depend on student success.  The Offices of Institutional Research and Management Information are responsible for providing necessary data.  The project dashboards should keep everyone informed about retention progress at the University, College, and Program levels, and the Risk Profile should help faculty better advise and help students address retention issues before "risk" issues get out of hand.

Two teams will be central to completion of the project: The Data Governance Committee and the Student Profile Team; they will be responsible for developing the tools and guidance on use.  The Student Success Center will also play a primary role in giving the Student Risk Profile a heavy trial run before full delivery to faculty and staff.

* 5: Describe how the institution will monitor project progress/success during, and at the completion of this project. Be sure to specifically state the measures that will be evaluated and when:

A: VU is building surveys into the project's strategic plan in order to determine perceived value of using these data tools.  VU will use informal feedback from small group presentations to help improve project development, and it will use a formal survey to gauge the benefit the tools provide once they are fully implemented and have been used for a few months.  The final survey will be a key to confirming VU's readiness to close the project or to extend the project for significant improvements, should they be needed.

* 6: Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project’s goals.:

A: As a modified version of the earlier DATA project, VU believes it is on the way to completing this project by the end of the year.  The only real challenges to completing the tools will be unexpected competition for time in the Management Information Center, where the tools are being built.  VU is comfortable in knowing that the projects tools are within the institution's capacity to complete, barring unexpected challenges to the time needed to complete and implement the tools.

For what it's worth, VU has already presented early drafts of the Student Risk Profile and even tested some of the data for predictability.  VU has reason to believe that the "risk" indicators are reasonably predictive, and based on professional development sessions, faculty are asking for access to the Profile

* 7: Provide any additional information that the institution wishes for reviewers to understand regarding this action project.:

A: VU is following the advice found in the project review--modify the project to a simpler, more time-manageable project.  The original project was, in hindsight, a significantly large project that assumed many pieces were in place; only after initiating the project did it become obvious what was needed to complete the project.  VU assumes it might use other action projects to complete the larger goals of the project, or VU might just continue with the current momentum and continue to build on the goals without identifying additional action projects to address this issue.