



Ask the Okra: A Campus Concierge
April 15-18, 2024 SACSCOC On-site Review



WHO: Concierge (kaan-see-ehrz)
A DSU team member who connects you with campus resources.

WHAT: Our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a five-year, collaborative, campus-wide initiative that Delta State designs as part of reaffirmation of institutional accreditation. QEPs focus on student learning and/or student success. Delta State's last 2014-2019 QEP focused on Diversity.

The 2024-2029 QEP focuses on providing all students with a one-stop, virtual means of getting information they need when they need it. The name of the QEP is *Ask the Okra: A Campus Concierge*, and the goal of the QEP is to increase retention of Delta State students.

INFO: For more information, contact: Dr. Tanya McKinney, QEP Director, at qep@deltastate.edu or via phone at 662-846-4244.

QEP Executive Summary

Delta State University developed its 2024-2029 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) according to the institution's [guiding principles](#) of respect for people and ideas, promotion of a student-centric campus, and commitment to institutional effectiveness.

Ask the Okra seeks to improve retention of first-time, full-time, first-year freshmen and first-time, full-time, transfer students via the implementation and promulgation of a campus concierge. To attain the retention goals of the QEP, the university is investing in *Ask the Okra*, a one-stop virtual knowledge center for connecting students to the resources they need. The intended outcomes of the campus concierge are the seamless connection of student inquiries to answers, improved services aligned with student needs, high levels of student sense of belonging, and student self-report of thriving at the university.

The **goal** of the campus concierge called *Ask the Okra*, is to intentionally match students with the services they need to thrive at Delta State. The theoretical framework for the QEP is self-determination and student autonomy ([Deci & Ryan, 2020](#)).

The QEP **topic** was identified through a two-year, iterative process that involved a representative campus team of faculty, staff, and students, all of whom received survey data and focus-group findings from the broader campus community. The focus of the QEP is improved student success via a streamlined process for identifying students in need, connecting them via soft transfer to services specific to their individual needs, and offering students every opportunity to engage with campus resources prior to a student's graduation or withdrawal from the university.

Broad-based support for the QEP includes representatives from faculty, administration, staff, and students, each of whom contributed to the QEP development via committee work, written qualitative feedback, participation in meetings during the February 2023 visit with our SACSCOC VP, or participation in ongoing meetings with the QEP Director.

Resources for the QEP include contributions by academic, student life, finance, athletic, and advancement units to one or more of the three phases of QEP including knowledge base development, marketing, and implementation. Delta State demonstrates institutional commitment and capability to implement the QEP via a budget of \$255,000 over the course of the five-year plan. The university has allocated \$55,000 for the first year and then \$50,000 for each of years 2-5.

Assessment of each phase consists of formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment includes implementation fidelity measures such as agent efficiency and effectiveness, unit-specific data, and senior exit survey data. Summative assessment of key performance indicators includes year1-year2 retention, fall-to-spring retention, belongingness, and thriving.

The overall goal of the QEP, aligned with the university's [mission](#) statement, is the self-determined motivation of our students to ask for and receive the resources they need to succeed at Delta State via academic competency, realized autonomy, and meaningful engagement with the university's community of scholars. To attain this goal, Delta State will create, implement, and promulgate a single-source campus concierge that will connect students with the resources they need to thrive ² at Delta State University and graduate on time.

QEP Topic Identification

Topic identification of the QEP emerged via three iterative cycles of committee discussion, literature review, data gathering, topic modification, and honing. Throughout the stages of QEP development, problem identification remained consistent while proposed causes of and solutions to the problem varied.

Academic Year 2021-2022: Focus on Success

Increased Retention via First-Year Studies Redesign

The first iteration of QEP topic development focused on a redesign of First-Year Studies to a comprehensive First-Year Experience as a means of increasing retention of first-time, full-time new students and transfer students.

To launch the exploration of potential topics for the 2024-2029 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Delta State's Office of the Provost administered a campus-wide [survey](#) in September 2021. The survey elucidated the QEP's purpose and sought input from diverse campus stakeholders, including students, faculty, and staff, urging them to pinpoint specific needs where the university could enhance its effectiveness. The survey garnered 125 responses, which were categorized into four key areas of interest: student engagement activities, student services, diversity, equity, inclusion/cultural competency, and the social/physical well-being of students.

Dr. Beverly Moon, the Dean of Graduate and Continuing Studies and SACSCOC Institutional Accreditation Liaison (IAL) at the time, issued a call for volunteers to join the QEP Exploratory Committee. The [committee](#) consisted of faculty, staff, and administrators representing a spectrum of expertise across the university. In November 2021, the committee convened to deliberate on the development and implementation of the QEP, during which Dr. Moon provided a comprehensive overview of SACSCOC guidelines and expectations.

With student retention as the primary outcome of interest per the university's [strategic plan](#), the Committee identified three primary areas of campus-wide intervention, all of which related to student engagement of first-time, full-time freshmen, and transfer students. Subcommittees crafted proposals for improvements to new-student orientation/onboarding, first-year experiences, and career exploration. The committee undertook a comprehensive literature review and analyzed university data related to each topic. Consequently, the Committee concluded that each topic had a direct impact on student success at Delta State and warranted closer attention. Drawing on the subcommittees' work and the broader research of the QEP Exploratory Committee, the IAL determined that a robust First Year Experience could effectively address the three major areas of concern. This topic was deemed suitable, manageable, and appropriately focused for the QEP.

The proposed QEP topic, "Focus on Success," aimed to augment the existing university resources that target the areas of concern for students. Specifically, the plan focused on three key areas:

1. **Onboarding/orientation:** To enhance the current onboarding and orientation process, incoming students would be greeted via a redesigned and streamlined process. Prior to Spring 2022, the orientation process was a one-day event. Campus stakeholders said that, at times, the process overwhelmed students with an excessive amount of information, paperwork, and activities. Furthermore, the Student Success Center staff reported that students expressed dissatisfaction with academic advising, which was not centralized and felt rushed, with advisors

providing only a list of courses in which new students could enroll. To address these concerns, in Spring 2022, a new Vice President of Student Affairs revamped the orientation process into two events - "Taking Care of Business" Day (TCOB) and "OKRAtation." During TCOB days, occurring from early spring through the summer, students complete all necessary enrollment tasks such as academic advising, financial aid, parking, housing, and technology access. Next, the OKRAtation precedes the start of classes and focuses on acclimating students to college life and the campus.

2. First-Year Seminar (FYS)/First-Year Experience (FYE): The DSU Student Success Center (SSC), which houses the FYS, secured a three-year grant from the Robert M. Hearin Foundation to expand the First Year Seminar into a year-long First Year Experience. The expanded program targets the literacy/writing skills of struggling students, increasing mental health awareness, improving academic/life/social skills, promoting student engagement, and incorporates peer mentorships, online and in-person peer tutoring, and learning communities. The goal of the FYE and other activities is to transition students from orientation to academic and student support, culminating in a career exploration module.

3. Career Exploration was the third leg of "Focus on Success," modules and activities which were to be included in the redesign of FYS to a scaled FYE

Academic Year 2022-2023: Motivation and Self-Determination

Increased Retention via Improved Academic Advising

During the summer of 2022, the QEP proposal underwent scrutiny and was presented to the President's Executive Cabinet for approval. Following this, an open campus forum convened in early fall 2022 to comprehensively brief the campus community on the plan's overarching goals, anticipated outcomes, associated costs, and the projected implementation timeline. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, a second campus-wide survey was deployed to solicit additional input from constituents.

However, the fall of 2022 posed notable challenges. The QEP Exploratory Committee encountered disruptions due to faculty and staff turnover, compounded by the retirement of Dr. Moon, necessitating the recruitment of new [committee](#) members. Steering the QEP efforts forward, Dr. Josephine Welsh, Associate Provost, assumed a leadership role. Dr. Welsh expressed concern about the scope and level of campus buy-in for the ambitious, three-pronged QEP proposal, Focus on Success.

In the early months of 2023, the Vice President of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) visited and provided valuable feedback, indicating that the scope of the QEP was overly broad. Responding to this insight, a campus-wide open forum was organized to apprise constituents of the situation and gather further feedback. During this forum, attendees expressed specific concerns related to academic advising, student engagement, faculty mentoring, and students' perceptions of mattering. The meeting ended with a psychology faculty member noting that much of the discussion seemed to center around tenets of intrinsic motivation and basic needs of students, essentially, self-determination theory.

Provost Andrew Novobilski and Associate Provost Josie Welsh presented the issues plaguing QEP topic development to the Academic Council. Council members noted that several of the potential interventions suggested by Focus on Success had already been implemented. For example, TCOB and OKRAtation were in their second year of implementation, and formative assessments were driving improvements to those events. Likewise, the redesign of FYS into a

scaled FYE program was [funded](#) by the Hearin Foundation. The project director already had conducted instructor training on the new syllabus during the summer of 2022. Because these areas were well under construction, the Provost empaneled an ad-hoc [task force](#) to determine if perhaps a focus on advising would address campus concern over student success measures of retention and graduation.

Data garnered by the Academic Advising Ad-Hoc Committee did not support a need for the QEP to focus on academic advising. A November 2022 committee [report](#) portrayed a positive outlook among both faculty/professional academic advisors and undergraduate students. The committee's comprehensive survey revealed an overall student satisfaction rate of 8 out of 10, a sentiment corroborated by data from the graduating seniors' [exit survey](#), with over 90% expressing contentment with their academic advising experience.

Increased Retention via Increased Belongingness

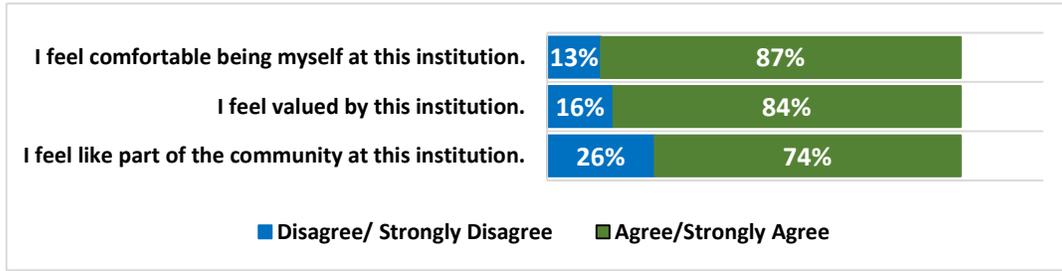
Dr. Tanya McKinney, who was hired as the QEP director in fall, 2023, reconvened the QEP team to present the findings on academic advising and discuss student needs as they relate to retention and graduation. Dr. McKinney conducted a meticulous review of previously collected QEP topic surveys, open forum notes, and other pertinent materials. She directed the group back to an earlier suggestion that the committee explore a motivational approach to student retention, specifically, self-determination theory (SDT) ([Deci & Ryan, 1985](#); [Deci & Ryan, 2020](#)).

SDT, a motivation theory, suggests that when individuals perceive their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled, they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated or "self-determined" ([Deci & Ryan, 1985](#); [Deci & Ryan, 2020](#)). Research underscores the positive impact of fostering intrinsic motivation in an educational context, leading to outcomes such as increased persistence, greater goal progress, and enhanced academic achievement ([Ratelle et al., 2007](#); [Koester et al., 2008](#); [Guay et al., 2010](#)). Conversely, the failure to meet these needs can adversely affect motivation, well-being, and performance.

Upon careful consideration of institutional resources, the Committee determined that the need for competence was addressed through academic/life/social skills activities within the expanded First-Year Experience (FYE). Autonomy needs were partially met through students' ability to choose majors, plan their degree paths, and determine completion times. However, a potential gap in fulfilling the need for relatedness emerged from feedback gathered during campus open forums and responses from Spring 2022 FYE mid-term [surveys](#), where students expressed a desire to learn "how to break out of their shell," "how to make friends," "how to get involved on campus," and "how to communicate with others."

Subsequently, the Committee sought and obtained permission to administer a four-question National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Belonging pulse survey to all FYE students. Despite faculty/staff perceptions and qualitative student data indicating a lack of belonging, the NSSE survey data contradicted these notions. Figure 1 illustrates that over 70% of student respondents felt comfortable being themselves, valued, and part of the Delta State community. It is plausible that these positive outcomes reflect the effectiveness of FYE activities such as peer mentoring, learning communities, and other best practices aimed at enhancing students' sense of belonging ([Beachboard et al., 2011](#)).

Figure 1. First-Year Students Agreement on Aspects of Belonging (NSSE, Fall 2023).



Increased Retention via Increased Autonomy

From the outset, the committee consistently prioritized student retention as the central problem guiding the exploration of potential topics. The campus community expressed the desire to do all it could to retain students by meeting their needs and encouraging on-time graduation. Members pondered the three legs of self-determination theory: belongingness, competence, and autonomy. As noted above, data from the redesigned FYE program revealed that belongingness, or relatedness among first-year students was high. Likewise, a fall 2022 to fall 2023 report of increased student retention (see Table 1) suggests that student success interventions such as 24/7 tutoring, Academic Pathways, and corequisite remediation may be giving struggling students the support they need for academic competency:

Table 1: 2018 – 2022 FRESHMEN And TRANSFER RETENTION RATES

TERM	Freshmen			Transfer		
	Enrolled	Returned	%	Enrolled	Returned	%
Fall 2018	283	191	67.5%	385	293	76.1%
Fall 2019	280	188	67.1%	387	286	73.9%
Fall 2020	184	120	65.2%	266	183	68.8%
Fall 2021	250	160	64.0%	257	196	76.3%
Fall 2022	212	156	73.6%	274	209	76.3%

Thus, the QEP Committee turned its attention to autonomy. Are students empowered to find solutions to their problems, acquire resources needed to succeed in college, and persevere through the college trajectory to on-time graduation? Why do students leave Delta State, and where do they go? The committee examined data on university withdrawals.

Despite the increased rate of retention of first-time students from fall 2022 to fall 2023, concerns over student withdrawals remained. The university has witnessed a troubling trend over the last five years, with a total of 816 students opting to withdraw. Further analysis revealed that

approximately 17.3% (n= 151) of the withdrawn students were first-time full-time freshmen and transfers (Table 3).

Data analyses revealed the following breakdown of withdrawal types:

- Administrative Cancellation 10%
- Official Cancellation 51%
- Unofficial Cancellation 39%

TABLE 2: 2018 – 2022 REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL		
REASON	Number of Students Withdrawn	% of Enrolled Students Withdrawn
Administrative - Cancellations	81	10%
Deceased/perm total disability	5	1%
Family	58	7%
Financial	30	3%
Health/Medical	85	9%
Military Service	8	1%
Other	254	30%
Unofficial withdrawal (FA use)	340	39%

TABLE 3: 2018 – 2022 Official and Unofficial Withdrawals, Classification				
	Number of Official Withdrawals Reason Cited	Number of Official Withdrawals "Other"	Number of Unofficial Withdrawals	Total Number of Withdrawals
First-Time Full Time Freshmen	23	11	29	63
Transfer	32	22	34	88

The reasons for official withdrawals varied, with 21.6% of students citing factors such as family issues, financial constraints, health concerns, and military activation. A significant portion, comprising 30%, chose the nebulous category of "other" as their reason for official withdrawal. Unofficial withdrawals encapsulate a spectrum of scenarios, including instances where students are obligated to return financial aid. This results from a combination of factors, including course withdrawals before the 60% attendance threshold, failure due to excessive absences, no-shows (students who never attended class), and/or receiving a failing grade (F).

Moreover, data from the National Clearinghouse revealed that most of the students did not return to college in the spring. Those who transferred selected either a community college or a private online for-profit institution (Table 4).

Table 4: NUMBER OF OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL WITHDRAWALS - TRANSFERRED

	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
Transferred in Spring	4	9	2	6	1
First-time Freshman	3	1	1	3	
Transfer Student	1	8	1	3	1
Did not transfer in Spring	18	36	20	26	29
First-time Freshman	9	17	3	11	15
Transfer Student	9	19	17	15	14

The QEP Committee members asked, “How are we losing these students?” The University currently relies on the Maxient early alert system for identifying and referring at-risk students to the Student Success Center (SSC). An alarming 20% of students who withdrew had been referred for support; however, none of them attended advising appointments with the SSC counselor or consulted their academic advisor. This situation raises concerns that these students may have made life-altering decisions without being fully aware of all available options.

Analysis of withdrawal and counseling data revealed an ongoing issue whereby a significant number of students are seemingly slipping through the cracks each year. Recognizing the need for improved retention rates, the committee investigated practices at institutions similar to Delta States. The study uncovered that many of these institutions have successfully implemented strategies like learning communities, summer bridge programs, and peer mentoring, which have been integrated into an expanded First Year Experience.

Notably, the Committee identified a compelling strategy employed by the University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW). One component of UNCW's retention strategy specifically targeted students at risk of stopping out or withdrawing. Their approach involved leveraging existing university support services and enhancing communication between students, faculty, and academic and non-academic support providers. Implementation included processes to connect students with the appropriate services, ensure they received necessary support, and monitor their progress as they engaged with these services ([College Completion Toolkit: Promising Practices for Improving Student Degree Attainment, 2016](#)). This strategy from UNCW provides a valuable model for enhancing the support structure at our university to prevent students from falling through the cracks and facilitate informed decision-making.

Anecdotal data from QEP Committee discussions led the team to question whether students who leave Delta State feel empowered to seek every means of attaining resources and solutions to their problems prior to choosing to withdraw from the university. For example, one committee member told a story about a student who almost left because she was unaware of university provisions for pregnant students; another mentioned an individual who left for financial reasons without fully understanding the financial aid services available.

Effective communication and collaboration are vital elements for the success of Delta State students, especially considering a significant portion of our [student body](#) comprises individuals who are low-income, first-generation, underserved, or underprepared based on GPA an/or ACT scores. These students encounter diverse challenges that hinder their persistence and completion, necessitating support beyond the confines of the classroom.

2023: Ask the Okra: A Campus Concierge

Following an in-depth analysis of institutional data, extensive discussions, and the outcomes of the Committee's research, the QEP Committee decided that Delta State's QEP will focus on encouraging students to reach out to a centralized campus concierge who will connect them to resources and services they need to thrive at Delta State, stay the course with their academic trajectories, and graduate on time. *Ask the Okra* will be the single source of information students need to connect to resources they need. The goal of the QEP is for Delta State to implement and promulgate an effective campus concierge that connects students with the resources they need to succeed at Delta State.

QEP Focus

The focus of *Ask the Okra: A Campus Concierge* is improved student success via a streamlined process for identifying students in need, connecting them via soft transfer to services specific to their individual needs, and offering students every opportunity to engage with campus resources prior to a student's graduation or withdrawal from the university.

To attain this goal, Delta State will create, implement, and promulgate a single-source campus concierge that will connect students with the resources they need to thrive at Delta State University and graduate on time.

Alignment with University Mission

Delta State University, located in Cleveland, Mississippi, has a rich history that is deeply intertwined with the Mississippi Delta region. Established in 1924, the university was originally a teacher's college, known as Delta State Teachers College. Its primary focus was to train teachers for schools in the Mississippi Delta, which was and remains a largely rural and agricultural area. The university's establishment was a significant event for the region, providing higher education and professional opportunities in a place where such options were previously limited.

Over the years, Delta State evolved beyond its initial focus on teacher education. It became Delta State College in 1955 and finally, Delta State University in 1974, reflecting its expanded academic offerings. Today, Delta State offers a diverse array of undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs leading to baccalaureate and master's degrees in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business and Aviation, Education and Human Sciences, and the School of Nursing, as well as the Educational Specialist degree and Doctorates in Education and Nursing Practice. The university is particularly known for its strong programs in education, business, and nursing, as well as unique offerings like the Delta Music Institute, which reflects the region's rich musical heritage.

Delta State University has also played a role in addressing and engaging with social and cultural issues in the Delta. The university has made efforts to foster diversity and inclusion and to be a space for dialogue and understanding about the Delta's history and future. For example, the Winning the Race conference, which has been held since 2014, has facilitated dialogue between an engaged campus and community regarding current issues related to education, civil rights, economic development, and social justice and provided opportunities for municipalities of

the Mississippi Delta to collaborate and promote racial healing.

The university also takes great pride in nurturing a vibrant and inclusive “community of scholars” consisting of students from various cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds. In fact, our student body is the most diverse among Mississippi’s eight public institutions of higher learning, with 54% identifying as Caucasian, 37% as African American, and 9% self-selecting as Other, including 83 international students from 36 countries.

The Mississippi Delta is known for its rich cultural heritage, particularly in the realms of blues music and Southern cuisine. However, it faces significant challenges such as poverty deeply rooted in a history of agricultural dependence and the legacy of racial inequality. Many Delta communities experience high poverty rates, with limited access to resources and economic opportunities. Education has historically been underfunded and under-resourced, leading to lower educational outcomes compared to other regions. Schools in many Delta towns face challenges such as inadequate funding, teacher shortages, and lower rates of high school graduation and college readiness. These educational disparities further perpetuate the cycle of poverty, as fewer individuals have the opportunity to attain higher-paying jobs or leave the region for better prospects.

However, Delta State, positioned as a regional Carnegie Master’s 1 university, continues to play a pivotal role in serving the educational needs of the region and contributing to the cultural life of the Mississippi Delta. The Bologna Performing Arts Center hosts concerts, national Broadway tours, world renowned dance companies, as well as university and local community groups. The Wiley Planetarium, the only planetarium associated with a university within the state of MS, not only enables our students to study astronomy but also provides educational programs and shows for school children and the public. The Center for Community and Economic Development houses initiatives such as the Breast Education and Early Detection Project (BEEP), the Delta Proud Fellows, a mentoring and leadership program for African-American males, the US Department of Education sponsored MS Delta Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) and Delta Educational Opportunity Center (DEOC), a TRIO program. These initiatives, along with others that focus on community engagement and development, prepare students not only for careers but also for active roles in improving their communities. Currently, 49% of the university’s 1613 students hail from the very Delta communities the university serves.

Our commitment to accessibility and opportunity is reflected in the support we provide for our students. Approximately 98% of first-time, full-time (FTFT) freshmen qualify and receive financial assistance, with 49% of those being Pell Grant recipients. Notably, 29% of our students are first-generation, underlining our dedication to empowering individuals who are forging new paths in higher education. (Fall 2023). The university qualifies as Title III, Part A, under the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEA).

Delta State University continues to be a beacon of academic achievement, where history meets innovation, diversity thrives, and students embark on transformative educational journeys.

Alignment with Strategic Plan

- Increase student learning (DSU will ensure through high-quality programs that graduates are well prepared for successful careers, meaningful work in a global society, and engaged citizenship.)
- Develop an engaged, diverse, high-quality student population (Delta State will attract, retain, and graduate an engaged and success-oriented student population)
- Assure high-quality, diverse, engaged faculty and staff (Delta State will attract, retain, and support an engaged and highly trained workforce.)
- Enhance institutional effectiveness: (DSU will improve and communicate effectively its financial, physical, and resource capacities, demonstrating efficiencies in programs and services.)
- Improve the quality of life for all constituents (Improving its image and impact, DSU will increase and enhance outreach, services, and partnership initiatives, in the region and beyond.)

Theoretical Framework: Self-Determination Theory

Intrinsic motivation refers to behaviors done in the absence of external impetus that are inherently interesting and enjoyable (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Simply put, intrinsically motivated students are curious, and their self-emanating interest in learning fuels lifelong exploration and goal-directed learning (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009).

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000) concerns itself not with what elicits and sustains intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The theory posits that goal-directed behaviors are driven by three innate psychological needs: competence (the need to produce desired outcomes and to experience mastery), autonomy (the need to feel ownership of one's behavior), and relatedness (the need to feel connected to others). When the three psychological needs are satisfied, intrinsic motivation will increase (Wang et al., 2019).

Decades of empirical studies applying self-determination theory to education suggest that university support for students' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness facilitates students' autonomous self-regulation for learning, academic performance, and well-being. When the university supports student need for competency, autonomy, and relatedness student engagement and academic performance increase (Freeman et al., 2007; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2020; Graham & Vaughan, 2022). According to Reeve (2009), highly motivated students engage with the university, remain enrolled at the university, and excel in academic performance by applying classroom knowledge in a coherent manner.

Competence

Competence refers to an individual's ability to interact effectively with the environment and achieve personal goals. Although many students matriculate to Delta State in a state of academic unpreparedness (see Tables 5 and 6), the university's well-resourced Student Success Center serves as the hub for first-year experience and the center for academic services needed for successful student navigation through Delta State's curriculum trajectory. Grants such as the Title III Strengthening Institutions Program fund interventions such as summer bridge, supplemental instruction, academic recovery counseling, peer tutoring, first-year experience, and the PIVOT financial needs scholarship.

TABLE 5. HIGH SCHOOL GPA – First - time, Full-time Freshmen					
	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
High School GPA					
2.0 – 2.5	2	5	4	6	
2.5 -2.74	26	24	23	20	15
2.75 – 2.99	28	37	24	20	16
3.0 – 3.24	45	45	18	37	29
3.25 – 3.49	53	44	26	46	38
3.5 - 3.74	52	38	31	48	35
3.75 +	76	86	55	71	78

TABLE 6. COMPOSITE ACT SCORES First-Time Full-Time Freshmen					
	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
Composite Act Score					
Below 16	5	6	11	43	23
16-19	100	120	80	80	60
20-23	100	81	43	70	58
24-26	39	34	20	28	35
27+	39	38	19	21	30

Relatedness

Evidence from the literature on student engagement and belongingness indicates that students who feel they are valued by and belong to a campus community are more likely to use campus resources, remain in college, perceive meaningful learning gains, understand the relevance of their coursework, and experience more positive mental health than students who do not feel like they belong at the university (NSSE 2020; EAB, 2022). Allen and Boyle (2022) maintain that sense of belonging and student engagement are best treated as complementary constructs. Survey data from the Fall 2023 cohort of first-time, full-time students and first-time, full-time transfer students indicate that Delta State first-year students feel they belong at the university (see Figure 1).

Autonomy

Autonomy-supportive learning environments increase creativity, conceptual learning, persistence, interest, self-regulation, and intrinsic motivation (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009) by shifting an individual's locus of control inward such that students perceive their behaviors as emanating from within. Autonomy also enhances competency and relatedness because the student feels personal control over learning outcomes and agency to develop relationships.

The purpose of the QEP is to increase student success via the determined autonomy of students. In other words, the QEP is designed to help students “own” their college experience and outcomes. Online learning during COVID-19 allowed students to learn how they want to when they want to in whatever order they deemed desirable. Burgess and Sievertsen (2020) found that the removal of compulsory attendance improved academic outcomes for high-performing students. Zhao and Watterston (2021) believe institutions should capitalize on the agency students were forced to acquire due to the national pandemic. At the same time, many of today’s college students were recipients of helicopter parenting, a style of parenting characterized by high levels of support and control. This intrusive style of parenting has been shown to interfere with the proper development of autonomy in emerging adults (Kouros et al., 2017). Thus, student agency to seek help with academic or mental health problems may be compromised in students entering Delta State. The QEP seeks to increase student retention by promoting student engagement with student support services.

Evidence for Student Success with the Concierge Model

Research indicates that help-seeking behavior in students positively influences their academic performance and self-efficacy, as it aligns with self-regulated learning (Fong et al., 2023; Karabenick & Gonida, 2017). Students may hesitate to seek help due to various factors like financial constraints (Fong et al., 2018), stigma (Crutchfield & Magurie, 2018), or past negative experiences (Chang et al., 2020). Virtual student support services such as the Ask the Okra concierge can address these issues by providing immediate, personalized assistance in a confidential manner. This approach fosters an environment that encourages problem-solving and makes it easier for a broader range of students, including those reluctant to seek help through traditional channels, to engage in seeking the support they need (Broadbent & Lodge, 2021; Pesonen, 2021).

The concierge service model in higher education, inspired by the concept of hotel concierges, aims to enhance student satisfaction, engagement, and retention by providing students with the resources and support they need to excel. High Point University in North Carolina was one of the first to implement such a program, providing a range of services both in-person and online, including answering student inquiries, scheduling academic tutoring, and providing transition support for new students.

Since that time, concierge services have become a part of a broader trend in higher education. Numerous institutions have adopted this approach, each tailoring the service to their specific student needs. The State of Nevada Institutions of Higher Learning, as a part of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), developed the Ready Adult Concierge program (WICHE, 2010) to help returning adult learners navigate the application, enrollment, and registration processes, as well as to overcome barriers to college success. St. John’s University in New York Campus Concierge office provides guidance on the selection of appropriate campus resources and information about campus and community events. New Mexico State University’s Crimson Concierge program aims to reduce student stress by offering various amenities with the goal of removing barriers to academic focus and enhancing the overall college experience. Pennsylvania Western University provides Student Success Concierges to address academically related issues. The State University of New York (SUNY) Online Campus Concierge is an example of the most common usage of the concierge model. Here, concierges provide a single point of contact for online students, offering academic support, technical assistance, guidance, and referral to campus resources. Moreover, other institutions such as Wichita State University, National University, Wilmington University, Lee College, Reedley College, and the University of the District of Columbia provide virtual

concierge or concierge-like services via a live chat agent or a combination of a live chat agent and online resources such as a landing page listing links to student support services and most frequently asked questions.

The concierge model in higher education aligns well with Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The approach supports student autonomy, competence, and relatedness by empowering students to make informed decisions and take control of their educational journey, providing access to necessary tools and guidance for academic success, and fostering a sense of belonging.

Implementation of Ask the Okra will enable students to make informed decisions about their academic futures. By facilitating real-time conversations, it offers immediate, personalized assistance, fostering an environment where students can actively engage in their problem-solving process. During the chat, relevant links and forms may be provided, streamlining the process of finding information but also ensuring that each conversation is both meaningful and directly helpful by addressing the student's specific needs and concerns in an efficient manner.

QEP Broad-Based Support

Ask the Okra will roll out in three phases during Year One of the QEP:

- Phase One: Campus Awareness Knowledge-Base Development, Technical Set-Up, Staff Training
- Phase Two: Alpha and Beta Testing
- Phase Three: Implementation

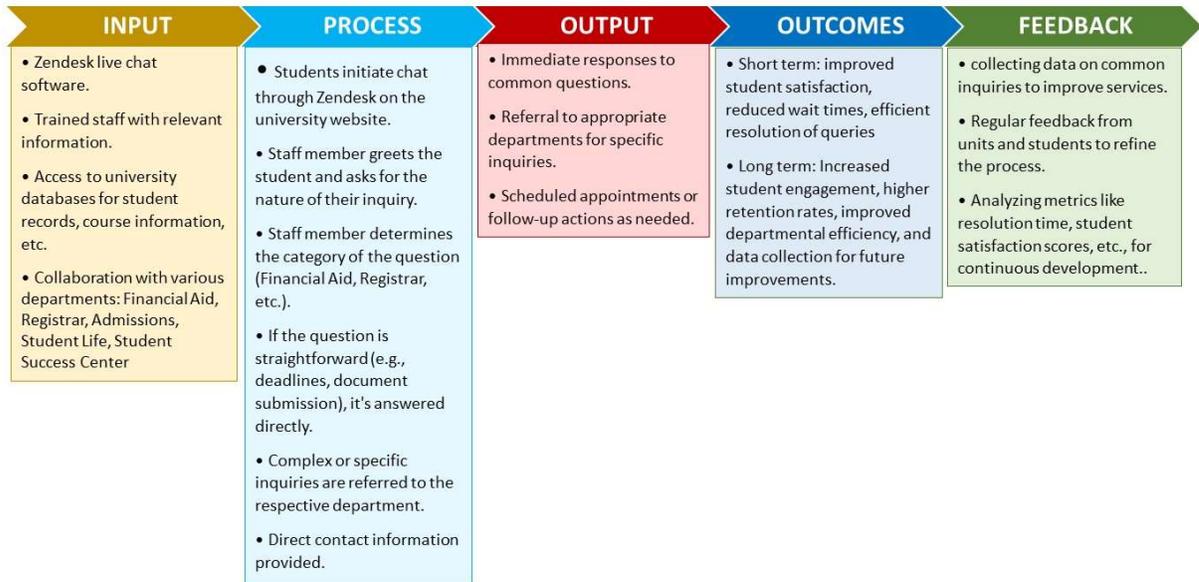
Once implemented, the Concierge will serve dual purposes:

1. The Okra (both live and virtual) will answer callers' questions.
2. The Okra (via the QEP team) will provide feedback to campus units.

Phase IV of the QEP is continuous improvement of *Ask the Okra* from Year Two through Year Five.

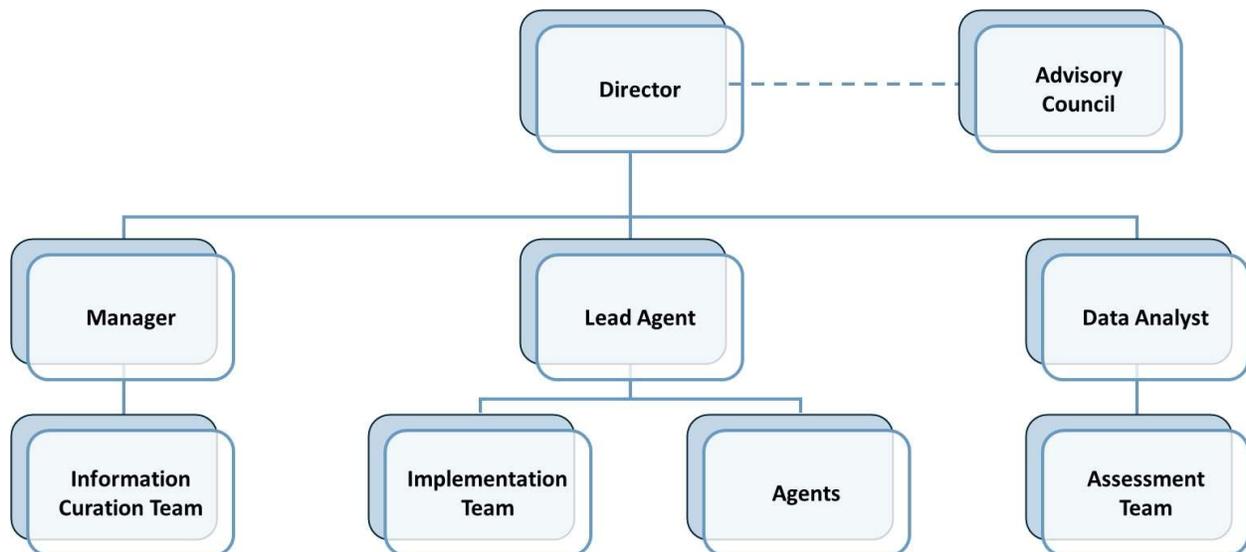
As live agents and a 24-hour BOT respond to questions from the Delta State community, *Ask the Okra: A Campus Concierge* contributes to the ongoing assessment of student needs with campus resources and improves delivery of campus services to DSU students as diagramed below:

LOGIC MODEL FOR ASK THE OKRA: A CAMPUS CONCIERGE



QEP Leadership

Every major area of campus, including Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Finance, Athletics, and Advancement is involved in each phase of the QEP. Leadership for the QEP includes an Advisory Board and multiple subcommittees of the QEP team as illustrated by the QEP Organizational Chart:



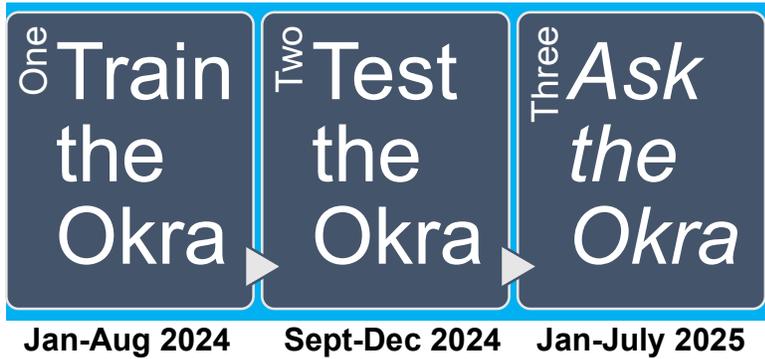
The responsibilities of different units/committees involved in the implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) are delineated below:

- **QEP Director** (Strategy & Implementation): The QEP Director will oversee the coordinated implementation of QEP, deliver all formal QEP updates, and write all formal QEP reports.
- **Advisory Council** (Guidance): The Advisory Council will offer an objective review of the QEP progress according to the project timeline.
- **Manager**: The Manager oversees information curation to meet content key performance indicators of *Ask the Okra*.
- **Information Curation**: The Information Curation Team builds the article library, develops the chatbot, and ensures that information provided by *Ask the Okra* is accurate and current.
- **Data Analyst** (Measurement): The Data Analyst will generate QEP outcome data and share findings with QEP subcommittees as follows:
 - *Summative assessment*
 - Student achievement data (to Advisory Council)
 - Thriving data (to Advisory Council)
 - Belongingness data (to Advisory Council)
 - *Formative assessment*
 - Agent efficiency and effectiveness data (to Implementation Team)
 - Unit-specific data (to Assessment Team)
 - Senior exit survey data (to Assessment Team and Advisory Council)
- **Assessment** (Feedback): The Assessment Team utilizes the data gathered to inform campus units about their processes, efficiency, complaints, and other relevant areas. IREP administers the Belongingness (first term) and the Pulse (annually after first term) surveys to FTFT cohorts.
- **Lead Agent**: The Lead Agent oversees the daily operations of the *Ask the Okra* agents to meet service key performance indicators.
- **Implementation**: The Implementation Team oversees the functioning of the Zendesk system, reviews agent efficiency and effectiveness data, and makes recommendations to the Lead Agent.
- **Agents**: Agents operate the virtual and live components of *Ask the Okra*, responding to live and virtually logged inquiries.
- **Communication & Marketing**: The Communication & Marketing committee will implement the communications plan to ensure that the campus and community at large are informed about *Ask the Okra*.

QEP Project Plan

Ask the Okra: A Campus Concierge advances through four phases from roll-out to completion. Year one rolls out *Ask the Okra* in three phases. Phase IV assumes a steady state of operation of the virtual and live assistant from year 2 through year 5 of the QEP.

Timeline Year One: Phases I, II, and III



Phase One of *Ask the Okra* began in January 2024. The QEP team initiated the process by enlisting the expertise of seasoned help-desk directors and university switchboard managers, all of whom shared their valuable insights and experiences. This was followed by President Ennis's formal announcement of the QEP during his January Town Hall. The momentum continued into February with a vibrant roll-out event that saw participation from faculty, staff, and students, celebrating the QEP initiative's launch. To further engage the community and enrich the *Ask the Okra* knowledge base, marketing materials promoting the Train the Okra survey were distributed both online and throughout the campus environment. Additionally, the QEP team has been actively collecting Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from various service and academic departments across the university. FAQs for the Registrar's Office, Financial Aid, Student Business Services, Residential Life, and the School of Nursing have been completed. The remaining service and academic departments are in progress. This phase demonstrates a strong start and a collaborative effort for the success of *Ask the Okra: A Campus Concierge*.

Phase One *Train the Okra* Poster with QR code to Survey



Project Plan Year One: Phases I, II, and III

Phase I – SpSu24	Train the Okra	Responsible Party	Deliverable
Jan-May	Content Development	Information Curation Team	FAQs from campus units, Reference articles with keywords
February	Assessment	IREP	Fall-Spring Retention FTFT students and FTFT transfer students - Baseline
February	Campus Communication – Rollout Phase I	Communications Team	Campus Event February 14, 2024
August	Technical Set-Up	Implementation Team	Shovel-ready Zendesk
August- September	Staff Training	Lead Agent using Zendesk Modules; Campus Police; Student Affairs; Title IX Coordinator	Draft training manual; copies of agent certificates of completion uploaded to QEP Teams site
July	Phase I QEP Progress Report	Director	Meeting with lead team to share updates.
September- October	Alpha Testing	Manager, Lead Agent, Information Curation Team	Meeting minutes covering results of white box and black box testing, lessons learned, and improvements made
May 2024	Assessment	Data Analyst and Assessment Team	Baseline Results Senior Exit Survey
August 2024	Phase I Assessment	Data Analyst and Assessment Team	Belongingness (NSSE findings)
End Year One, Phase I			

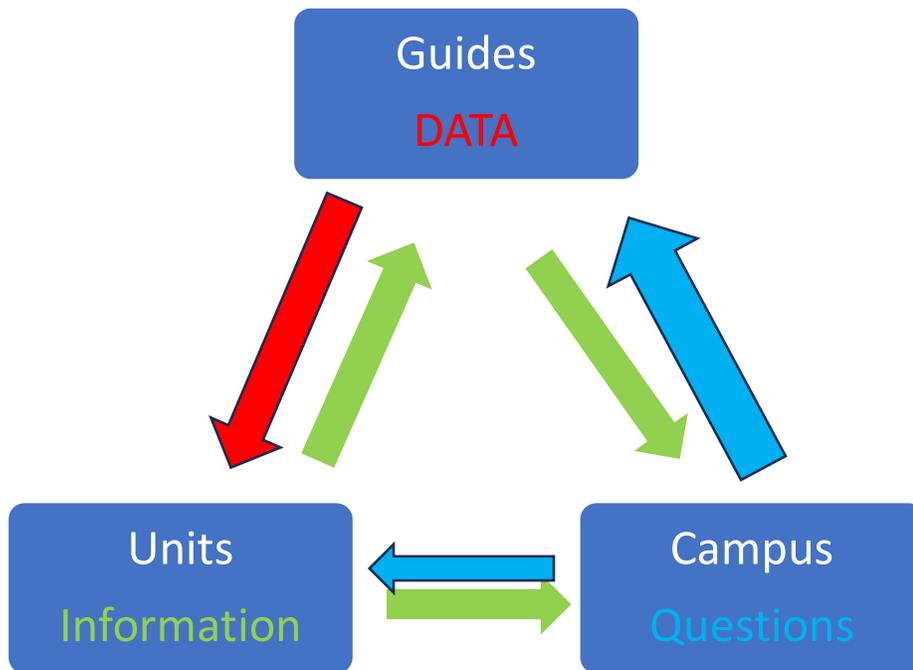
Phase II Fall24	Test the Okra	Responsible Party	Deliverable
Nov - Dec	Beta Testing/Soft Launch using live agents and volunteer faculty, staff, and students	Lead Agent, Manager, Implementation Team	Meeting minutes covering results of system verification and validation
Sept – Oct	Assessment	Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning (IREP)	Administer 4- Item Belongingness survey to Cohort I
Oct-Nov	KPI-setting for Information Curation	Manager, Information Curation Team	KPIs for Spring 25 official launch
Oct-Nov	KPI-setting for Zendesk implementation fidelity reports	Lead Agent, Agents, Implementation Team	KPIs for Spring 25 official launch
Nov-Dec	Assessment	Data Analyst and Assessment Team	Briefing to Advisory Council - Belongingness Survey Findings (Cohort I)
Nov-Dec	Assessment	Data Analyst and Assessment Team	Briefing to Advisory Council – Fall-Fall Retention (Baseline),
Nov-Dec	KPI-setting continuous-improvement communications with units	Assessment Team	KPIs for Spring 25 official launch
Phase III SpSu25	Ask the Okra	Responsible Party	Deliverable
January	Advertise official launch of <i>Ask the Okra</i>	Communication and Marketing Team	Advertisements on social media, tv screens, email
February	<i>Ask the Okra</i> live	Lead Agent, Agents, Implementation Team	<i>Ask the Okra</i> fully operational
February	Assessment	IREP	Fall to Spring Retention of Cohort I to Advisory Council

			and uploaded to QEP Teams site
February-May	Data Collection – Implementation Fidelity	Data Analyst	Summary data on KPIs for Zendesk Implementation Fidelity to Lead Agent and the Implementation Team; uploaded to QEP Teams site
February-May	BOT training and Information updated	Manager and Information Curation Team	Checklist, by unit, verifying information was updated and linked to BOT where possible
February-May	Data Collection – Unit Effectiveness	Data Analyst	Summary unit-specific data to Assessment Team and uploaded to QEP Teams site
June	Evaluate and Improve Agent efficiency and effectiveness	Lead Agent and Agents, with Implementation Team and Data Analyst	Year One KPI Report - Zendesk Implementation Fidelity
June	Evaluate and Improve Information Curation	Manager and Information Curation Team	Year One KPI Report - Information Curation
June	Evaluate and Improve continuous-improvement communications with units	Assessment Team with Data Analyst	Year One KPI Report – Continuous-Improvement Communications with Units
June	Compare student satisfaction data from Dec 23 and April 24 senior exit surveys with unit-specific Zendesk data	Data Analyst	One-page brief comparing unit-specific data and senior exit survey satisfaction data to Assessment Team and Advisory Council and uploaded to QEP Teams site

July	Update campus on QEP progress	Director	Power Point Presentation to President for Cabinet Advance retreat
July	Renewals of all paid QEP staff	Office of Academic Affairs	Signed MOUs for all paid QEP staff

Years 2-5 = Phase IV

After the Year-One initial planning and launch of *Ask the Okra: A Campus Concierge*, a steady state of operations is assumed. Monitoring of the live and virtual assistant system continues via a cycle of ongoing improvement. Thus, the Phase IV cycle, detailed below, serves as the QEP project plan from Year 2 through the close of the QEP in Year 5.



Project Plan Years 2-5: Phase IV

Phase IV Fall	Task	Responsible Party	Deliverable
August	Faculty, Staff, and SGA Brief on QEP progress	Director	Meeting minutes for each constituency
August	New Agent Training	Lead Agent	Completion Certificates uploaded to QEP Teams site

August - Dec	Campus Communication	Communication and Marketing	Three "From the Okra" updates on Concierge FAQs to Campus
Sept – Oct	Assessment	IREP	Administer 4- Item Belongingness survey to QEP Cohort (FTFT students and FTFT transfer students) II, III, IV, and V (years 2-5)
Oct - Nov	Assessment	IREP	Administer 2-item Thriving survey to QEP Cohorts I, II, III, and IV (years 2-5)
Sept-May	Data Collection – Implementation Fidelity	Data Analyst	Summary data on KPIs for Zendesk Implementation Fidelity to the Lead Agent and uploaded to QEP Teams site
Sept-May	BOT training and Information updated	Manager and Information Curation Team	Checklist, by unit, verifying information was updated and linked to BOT where possible
Sept-May	Data Collection – Unit Effectiveness	Data Analyst	Summary unit-specific data to Assessment Team and uploaded to QEP Teams site
Nov-Dec	Assessment	Data Analyst and Assessment Team	Briefing to Advisory Council – Thriving Survey findings (Cohorts I, II, III, and IV)
Nov-Dec	Assessment	Data Analyst and Assessment Team	Briefing to Advisory Council - Belongingness Survey Findings (Cohorts II, III, IV, and V)
Nov-Dec	Assessment	Data Analyst and Assessment Team	Briefing to Advisory Council – Fall-Fall Retention (Cohorts I, II, III, and IV)
Nov-Dec	Assessment	Data Analyst and Assessment Team	Briefing to Advisory Council – Thriving

			Survey Findings (Cohorts I, II, III, and IV)
February	Assessment	IREP	Fall-Spring Retention Report uploaded to Advisory Council and uploaded to QEP Teams site (Cohorts II, III, IV, and V, years 2-5)
June	Assessment	Manager	Year (Two-Five) KPI Report Information Curation
June	Assessment	Data Analyst	Summary data on KPIs for Zendesk Implementation Fidelity (agent efficiency and effectiveness) to the Lead Agent and Advisory Council; uploaded to QEP Teams site
June	Assessment – Continuous improvement communications with units	Assessment Team with Data Analyst	Year (Two – Five) KPI Report – Continuous-Improvement Communications with Units
June	Compare student satisfaction data from fall and spring senior exit surveys with unit-specific Zendesk data	Data Analyst	One-page brief to Advisory Council and uploaded to QEP Teams site. Senior exit survey satisfaction data compared to unit-specific Zendesk data
July	Update campus on QEP progress	Director	Power Point Presentation to President for Cabinet Advance retreat
July	Renewals of all paid QEP staff	Office of Academic Affairs	Signed MOUs for all paid QEP staff

QEP Assessment

Summative Assessments

Student Achievement – Retention, YR1->YR2 and Fall to Spring

The goal of the QEP is to increase retention of first-time, full-time students and first-time, full-time transfer students.

First-time, Full-time Students

As noted on Delta State's Student Achievement [webpage](#), until fall, 2022, the university's year1 to year2 retention needle had hovered around 65% for nearly a decade (See Table 7). Delta State's published goal for year1 to year2 retention for first-time new students is to maintain or exceed 70% through the fall, 2027. Although recent retention rates have jumped above 70%, changes to admissions standards per the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) have increased the admission of underprepared students to Delta State. Thus, entering cohorts include a higher percentage of at-risk students.

Likewise, the QEP team will track fall to spring retention. Based on data from the past five years, the QEP team has set 90% as a target for fall to spring retention of FTFT students (See Table 9).

First-time, Full-time Transfer Students

Delta State has retained first-time, full-time (FTFT) transfer students at a median rate 4% higher than FTFT students (See Table 8). Therefore, the QEP team has set a goal for FTFT transfer student retention at 80% or higher through 2027.

Likewise, the QEP team will track fall to spring retention. Based on data from the past five years, the QEP team has set 93% as a target for fall to spring retention of FTFT transfer students (See Table 9).

TABLE 7. Year One and Year Two Retention Rate First Time, Full Time Freshmen				TABLE 8. Year One and Year Two Retention and Graduation Rates First Time, Full Time Transfers					
Year	Original Cohort	1 Year Retained	2 Year Retained	Cohort Year	Original Cohort	1 Year Retained	1 Year Graduated	2 Year Retained	2 Year Graduated
2008	392	246 62.8%	181 46.2%	2008	459	306 66.7%	2 0.4%	189 41.2%	60 13.1%
2009	367	215 58.6%	165 45.0%	2009	419	247 58.9%	3 0.7%	159 37.9%	45 10.7%
2010	372	227 61.0%	174 46.8%	2010	404	249 61.6%	1 0.2%	137 33.9%	58 14.4%
2011	325	219 67.4%	162 49.8%	2011	482	299 62.0%	0 0.0%	162 33.6%	68 14.1%
2012	382	253 66.2%	192 50.3%	2012	396	245 61.9%	6 1.5%	149 37.6%	56 14.1%
2013	374	252 67.4%	189 50.5%	2013	412	273 66.3%	1 0.2%	176 42.7%	58 14.1%
2014	405	252 62.2%	203 50.1%	2014	458	285 62.2%	14 3.1%	178 38.9%	82 17.9%
2015	322	217 67.4%	169 52.5%	2015	453	312 68.9%	21 4.6%	176 38.9%	107 23.6%
2016	343	245 71.4%	193 56.3%	2016	423	278 65.7%	22 5.2%	176 41.6%	91 21.5%
2017	318	213 67.0%	178 56.0%	2017	441	286 64.9%	29 6.6%	162 36.7%	130 29.5%
2018	283	191 67.5%	155 54.8%	2018	385	290 75.3%	3 0.8%	160 41.6%	111 28.8%
2019	280	188 67.1%	154 55.0%	2019	387	283 73.1%	3 0.8%	161 41.6%	85 22.0%
2020	184	120 65.2%	100 54.3%	2020	266	181 68.0%	2 0.8%	100 37.6%	61 22.9%
2021	250	160 64.0%	131 52.4%	2021	257	193 75.1%	3 0.8%		
2022	212	156 73.6%							

Source: Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning, April 12, 2023

TABLE 9. Fall to Spring Retention Rates				
	Fall 2019 to Spring 2020	Fall 2020 to Spring 2021	Fall 2021 to Spring 2022	Fall 2022 to Spring 2023
First-time, Full-time Freshmen	89.0%	85.9%	87.6%	86.8%
Full-time Transfers	88.3%	86.8%	89.9%	92.3%

Exploratory Dependent Variables: Belongingness, Thriving

Retention and on-time graduation reflect competencies attained by Delta State students. Within the self-determination framework, other factors that could affect the internal motivation of students to remain enrolled include relationships and autonomy. Although these areas will not be formally reported on, Delta State University does plan to look at the following:

Belongingness

The institution will administer the four-item belongingness survey to each FTFT student and FTFT transfer student during the student's first term at Delta State.

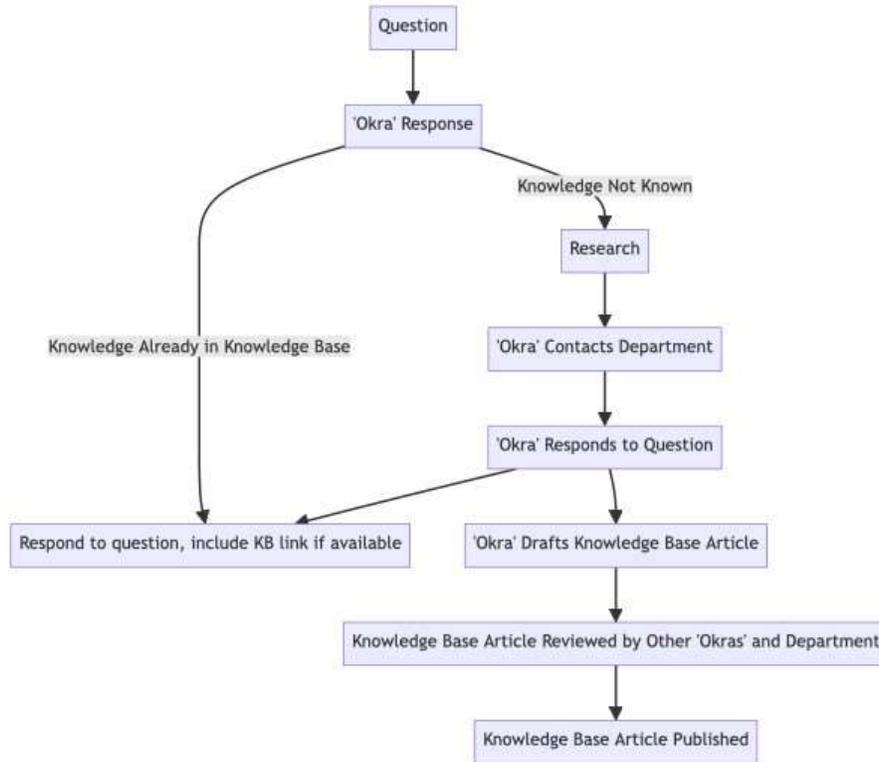
Institutional data used to develop the QEP included a measure of belongingness. As explained earlier in this narrative, first-year students reported high levels of belongingness. Each cohort of

Formative Assessments

In addition to the QEP's dependent variable, retention, the QEP team is conducting formative assessments designed to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of *Ask the Okra* and to improve the student's college experience via a continuous feedback loop from the QEP team to services and resource units across the university. To that end, formative assessments include the following:

Implementation Fidelity: Agent Efficiency and Effectiveness

As described in the project plan, the QEP Data Analyst reviews Zendesk logs of factors such as the number of cases/tickets generated during specific hours, number of cases resolved, average response time, average time from ticket to resolution, average number of open tickets at a given time; and user satisfaction. The Data Analyst then shares findings with the Agents and the Implementation Team. As noted in the project plan, key performance indicators (KPIs) for this metric will be developed by Agents and the Implementation Team under the leadership of the Lead Agent during Phase II of Year One of the QEP, and the Lead Agent will report on these KPIs annually. Efficiency and effectiveness are verified per the following workflow:



Unit-specific data

The Data Analyst will evaluate qualitative data concerning the types of questions asked of *The Okra*. The Data Analyst will share unit-specific data with the Assessment Team, members of which will then report findings back to the units for strategic planning and continuous improvement,

Senior Exit Survey data

The Data Analyst will compare unit-specific data with findings from the semi-annual Senior Exit Survey. The survey typically garners a response rate of 70% or higher and includes student satisfaction data about advising, library services, faculty interaction, student success services, residence halls, campus life, food services, career services, counseling services, computer labs, health services, campus police, the bookstore, the post office, student business services, financial aid, the writing center, registration, drop/add procedures, registration, intramural activities, intercollegiate athletics, family housing, classroom conditions, and university grounds. The Data Analyst will share findings with the Assessment Team and the Advisory Council. Frequently cited areas of concern will be shared by the Assessment Team with the relevant units. KPIs for the frequency of these communications will be set by the Assessment Team during Phase II of Year One of the QEP.

Information Curation

The Manager and the Information Curation Team will set KPIs for the volume and currency of articles and information files during Phase II, Year One. The Manager reports on these KPIs annually per Phase IV of the QEP.

Communications with Units

As noted in the project plan, key performance indicators (KPIs) for this metric will be developed by the Assessment Team under the leadership of the Data Analyst during Phase II of Year One of the QEP. The Assessment Team reports on the KPIs annually per Phase IV of the QEP.

In summary, assessments for the QEP, noted here and in the Project Plan include:

Assessment	Type	Tool	Timing
YR1->YR2 Retention FTFT students	Summative	IPEDS reports	Phase II – Baseline Phase IV - Nov-Dec
YR1->YR2 Retention FTFT transfer students	Summative	IPEDS reports	Phase II – Baseline Phase IV - Nov-Dec
Fall – Spring Retention FTFT students	Summative	IPEDS reports	Phase I – Baseline Phase IV - Feb
Fall – Spring Retention FTFT transfer students	Summative	IPEDS reports	Phase I – Baseline Phase IV - Feb
Implementation Fidelity	Formative	Zendesk KPIs set by Agents and Implementation Team	Phase III – June Phase IV – June (annual report)
Unit-Specific data and Senior Exit Survey Data	Formative	Qualitative data shared by Data Analyst with Assessment Team	Phase III – June Phase IV – June (annual report)
Information Curation	Formative	KPIs set by Information Curation Team	Phase III – June Phase IV – June (annual report)
Communications with Units	Formative	KPIs set by Assessment Team	Phase III – June Phase IV – June (annual report)

QEP Resources

Resources for *Ask the Okra* include human and financial support as follows:

Phase	Task	Unit	Budget/Source
One	Content Development	QEP Team, All units	In-Kind
One	Technical Set-Up	OIT	In-Kind once
One	Staff Training	Zendesk Modules	\$5K
One	Technical Set-Up	Zendesk Licenses	\$18K (12 licenses)
All	Staff – 3/year	Agents - Library	In-Kind
All	Staff – 2/year	Agents – GradStud	Graduate Office
All	Faculty or Staff- 2/year	Agents - Faculty	\$10K (2 agents)
All	Agent Oversight	Lead Agent	\$5K
All	QEP Director	Dr. Tanya McKinney	\$7K
All	QEP Data Analyst	Jon Westfall	\$5K
All	Marketing	Marketing	In-Kind
All	Content Creation and Modification	Manager	\$5K annually
Total Year One			\$55K
Total Years 2-5			\$50K/year

Delta State University believes that a one-stop, virtual, and live assistant called *Ask the Okra* will unite students, faculty, and staff in elevating the student experience both online and on campus. To promote an ongoing campus-wide conversation on *Ask the Okra*, the QEP committee will meet annually to provide updates to the DSU campus community. Updates will also be posted regularly on the [QEP website](#). Dr. Tanya McKinney, QEP Director, will report on the QEP success, lessons learned, and future plans of *Ask the Okra: A Campus Concierge* via the SACSCOC Fifth-Year Report.

References

- Allen, KA., Boyle, C. (2022). School Belonging and Student Engagement: The Critical Overlaps, Similarities, and Implications for Student Outcomes. In: Reschly, A.L., Christenson, S.L. (eds) *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-07853-8_7
- Beachboard, M., Beachboard, J., Li, W., & Adkison, S. (2011). Cohorts and relatedness: Self-determination theory as an explanation of how learning communities affect educational outcomes. *Research in Higher Education*, 52(8), 853-874. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-011-9221-8>.
- Broadbent J, Lodge J. (2021). Use of live chat in higher education to support self-regulated help-seeking behaviors: A comparison of online and blended learner perspectives. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 18 (1):17. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00253-2>. Epub 2021 Apr 6. PMID: 34778522; PMCID: PMC8021438.
- Burgess, S., & Sievertsen, H. H. (2020, April 1). The impact of COVID-19 on education. VOX, CEPR Policy Portal. <https://voxeu.org/article/impact-covid-19-education>
- Chang, J., Wang, S.-w., Mancini, C., McGrath-Mahrer, B., & Orama de Jesus, S. (2020). The complexity of cultural mismatch in higher education: Norms affecting first-generation college students' coping and help-seeking behaviors. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 26(3), 280–294. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000311>
- Crutchfield, R. M., & Maguire, J. (2018). California State University Office of the Chancellor Study of Student Basic Needs. Retrieved from <http://www.calstate.edu/basicneeds>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Fong, C. J., Acee, T. W., & Weinstein, C. E. (2018). A person-centered investigation of achievement motivation goals and correlates of community college student achievement and persistence. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice*, 20(3), 369-387. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025116673374>
- Fong C. J., Gonzales C., Hill-Troglin Cox C., Shinn H. B. (2023). Academic help-seeking and achievement of postsecondary students: A meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 115(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000725>
- Freeman, T.M., Anderman, L.H. and Jensen, J.M. (2007). Sense of Belonging in College Freshmen at the Classroom and Campus Levels. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 75(3), 203-220
- Graham, M., & Vaughan, A. (2022). An Adapted Self-Determination Measure and College Student First-Year Achievement. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 33, 135-142. <https://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe>

- Guay, F., Ratelle, C. F., Roy, A., & Litalien, D. (2010). Academic self-concept, autonomous academic motivation, and academic achievement: Mediating and additive effects. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 20(6), 644–653. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2010.08.001>
- Karabenick, Stuart. A. and E. N. Gonida. 2017. *Academic Help Seeking as a Self-Regulated Learning Strategy*. 2nd Edition. New York: Current Issues, Future Directions. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315697048>.
- Koestner, R., & Holding, A. (2021). A generative legacy: SDT's refined understanding of the central role of autonomy in human lives. *Motivation Science*, 7(2), 111–112. <https://doi.org/10.1037/mot0000221>
- Kouros CD, Pruitt MM, Ekas NV, Kiriaki R, Sunderland M. (2017). Helicopter Parenting, Autonomy Support, and College Students' Mental Health and Well-being: The Moderating Role of Sex and Ethnicity. *J Child Fam Stud*. Mar; 26:939-949. doi: 10.1007/s10826-016-0614-3. Epub 2016 Nov 16. PMID: 31832009; PMCID: PMC6907082.
- Niemiec, C., & Ryan, R.M. (2009). Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the classroom Applying self-determination theory to educational practice. *Theory and Research in Education* www.sagepublications.com vol 7(2) 133–144 ISSN 1477-8785 DOI: 10.1177/147787850910431
- Pesonen, J.A. (2021). 'Are You OK?' Students' Trust in a Chatbot Providing Support Opportunities. In: Zaphiris, P., Ioannou, A. (eds) *Learning and Collaboration Technologies: Games and Virtual Environments for Learning*. HCII 2021. *Lecture Notes in Computer Science()*, vol 12785. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77943-6_13
- Ryan, R.M. & Deci, E.L. (2000) Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25(1), 54–67.
- Ryan, R.M., & Deci, E.L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, (61): 101860. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860>
- Ratelle, C. F., Guay, F., Vallerand, R. J., Larose, S., & Senécal, C. (2007). Autonomous, controlled, and amotivated types of academic motivation: A person-oriented analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(4), 734-746.
- Reeve, J. (2009) Why teachers adopt a controlling motivating style toward students and how they can become more autonomy supportive. *Educational Psychologist*, 44 (3), 159-178.
- Wang, C.K.J., Liu, W.C., Kee, Y.H., & Chian, L.K. (2019) Competence, autonomy, and relatedness in the classroom: understanding students' motivational processes using the self-determination theory. *Heliyon* 5(7), e01983. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e01983>. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S240584401935604X>)

Western Interstate Collaborative for Higher Education. (2010). Bringing adults back to college: Designing and implementing a statewide concierge model. Retrieved from <http://www.wiche.edu/info/publications/ntnmConciergeBrief.pdf>

Williams, K. C., & Williams, C. C. (2011). Five key ingredients for improving student motivation. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 12, 121–123.

Zhao Y, & Watterston J. (2021). The changes we need: Education post COVID-19. *Journal of Educational Change* 22(1):3–12. [https://doi: 10.1007/s10833-021-09417-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-021-09417-3). Epub 2021 Feb 18. PMID: PMC7890782

Appendix A

Guiding Principles

<https://www.deltastate.edu/about-dsu/>

Strong Values
Our Vision
Our Mission
Statement of Ethics
Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles

COMMITMENT TO QUALITY IN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Acknowledging its beginnings as a teacher's college, the University sustains excellence in teacher education while also continuing to expand offerings in traditional as well as new areas of study. From the core disciplines such as arts, humanities, and sciences to unique programs such as commercial aviation and community development, the University is committed to meeting the ever-changing and evolving needs of the students it serves. It sustains quality in those programs by maintaining accreditation of all programs for which an accrediting agency exists.

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING, SCHOLARSHIP, & STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Delta State provides programs that cultivate intellectual curiosity and promote scholarship among its students. Through a state-of-the-art library supplemented by a campus network of computer labs, students have access to a full range of information resources in support of learning. The University also acknowledges the importance of student engagement as central to successful learning. Toward that end the University has dedicated its quality enhancement plan as required for regional accreditation to increased student engagement. In support of community engagement and service learning experiences for students, the University has created an office and a faculty role to sustain those efforts.

SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS

Delta State recognizes the need for a vibrant creative and performing arts program for its students and the region. The renovation of Jobe Hall provides a state-of-the-art theatre facility for student productions. Through the Bologna Performing Arts Center, the Delta Music Institute, the Janice Wyatt Summer Arts Institute, and a partnership with the Delta Arts Alliance, the University ensures the preservation and enhancement of the arts throughout the region.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF INNOVATION & EXPERIMENTATION

Delta State endorses the principles of innovation and experimentation, and makes them a part of its institutional culture. The University acknowledges the importance of an environment where students and faculty can undertake risks and experiment with new ideas.

RESPECT FOR PEOPLE & IDEAS

Delta State promotes mutual respect, teamwork, fairness, and integrity. The University is diligent in working to create a climate where students, employees, and constituents are valued and nurtured. Through an ongoing re-engineering project the University converts these principles into action.

COMMITMENT TO A STUDENT-CENTERED CAMPUS

Delta State promotes a campus culture that fosters student development. From an array of student services to a nationally recognized athletic program, the University is dedicated to ensuring that the full range of student needs and interests are met.

COMMITMENT TO INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Delta State acknowledges its role as a public institution funded largely by the citizens of Mississippi. In recognition of

that public trust, the University is committed to high standards of excellence with appropriate emphasis on effectiveness and productivity.

COMMITMENT TO REGIONAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Delta State, in partnership with various organizations, will advance community and economic development in the Delta region to improve the quality of life and raise the educational level of its citizens. Special attention is given to collaboration with our educational partners: Mississippi Valley State University, Coahoma Community College, Mississippi Delta Community College, the Mississippi Department of Education, and the K-12 schools of the Delta. Moreover, the Delta Center for Culture and Learning, the Capps Archives, the Center for Business Research, and the Center for Community and Economic Development provide a structure to ensure University participation in promoting and celebrating the unique heritage of the Delta while also addressing the longstanding social, economic, and cultural challenges that inhibit advancement.

COMMITMENT TO HEALTH

Delta State acknowledges the importance of physical health for its students and the region and extends its resources in support of that goal. Through undergraduate and graduate programs in nursing and preprofessional programs in the sciences, the University provides health care practitioners to serve the State. The University works as the leading partner in the Delta Health Alliance, a collaborative effort with other Delta stakeholders that conducts research and provides education on the health care needs of the region.

COMMITMENT TO TEACHING & FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

The quality of Delta State's academic programs is central to its educational mission. That quality is affirmed through a dedicated faculty with credentials appropriate to their discipline. The University supports high standards of quality among its faculty and maintains those standards through the Technology Learning Center, a modern faculty development office dedicated to the application of technology to teaching, and through the Kent and Janice Wyatt Faculty

Development Program, a University Foundation initiative that provides resources for faculty growth.

COMMITMENT TO LEADERSHIP

Delta State is actively involved in providing programs that train leaders for the twenty-first century. Through partnerships with the Kellogg Foundation, Delta Council, the Delta Regional Authority, and other Delta organizations committed to advancement in the region, the University is confident it can make a difference in the quality and training of the leaders who will serve on behalf of future generations.

Appendix B

Delta State University Mission Statement

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

As a regional Carnegie Master's I university located in Cleveland, Mississippi, Delta State University serves as an educational and cultural center for the Mississippi Delta, emphasizing service to the Delta and contiguous counties in traditional and distance education formats. The University offers undergraduate, graduate and continuing education programs of study leading to baccalaureate and master's degrees in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business and Aviation, Education and Human Sciences, and the School of Nursing, as well as the Educational Specialist degree and Doctorates in Education and Nursing Practice. Emphasis is placed on excellence in instruction, followed by service and research, in the creation of a community of scholars. With special attention to small classes, a friendly environment, and a broad liberal arts foundation, the University encourages significant student-faculty interactions. Delta State provides programs and services that promote intellectual, cultural, ethical, physical, and social development. Students from different cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds will develop the ability to respect and value others; to develop, assess, and express their own thoughts effectively; and, to use the techniques of research and performance associated with their disciplines.

Approved by IHL, October 19, 2017

Appendix C QEP Topic Survey 2021

Delta State Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Survey - Call for Proposals

As Delta State embarks on its next Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) proposal for institutional reaffirmation, we would like to solicit help from faculty, staff, and students in generating potential topics of interest and/or identifying areas in need of special attention across the University. While ideas can be academic or non-academic in content, the end goal should be to improve student learning, or the student experience as a whole, all while achieving the institution's mission.

The survey takes about 3-5 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. Please be assured that your responses will be maintained securely and confidentially. Results will be reported only as aggregate data and at the group level of analysis.

We value your input, and we look forward to reviewing your feedback.

* Required

QEP SURVEY

1. **What is your status at the University?** *Mark all that apply to your circumstance. **

- Faculty
- Staff
- Undergraduate student
- Graduate student

2. Please list 1-3 things you feel Delta State could improve on in the future.

*Topics may relate to academics, extracurricular activities, support services, environment, etc. For reference, Delta State's most recent QEP was aimed at improving cultural competency and expanding diversity initiatives. **

Enter your answer

3. Do you have any specific suggestions for how the University might improve in any of these areas?

Enter your answer

4. If you are interested in being contacted about your responses to this survey or volunteering to serve on a QEP-related committee, please provide your name and email address below.

Enter your answer

Never give out your password. [Report abuse](#)

This content is created by the owner of the form. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner. Microsoft is not responsible for the privacy or security practices of its customers, including those of this form owner. Never give out your password.

Powered by Microsoft Forms |

The owner of this form has not provided a privacy statement as to how they will use your response data. Do not provide

Appendix D

QEP Exploratory Committee

QEP EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE FALL 2021

Name	Department	Role
Vicki Bingham	School of Nursing	Dean
Talbot Brooks	Geospatial Information Technology	Faculty/Staff
Mikhail Collins	Student Business Services	Director
Merritt Dain	Undergraduate Admissions	Director
Kelvin Davis	Comptroller	Director
Brittany Davis-Green	Communication & Marketing	Director
Mike Emerson	Library	Staff
Karen Fosheim	Music	Chair
Cayce Friesenhahn	Graduate and Honor Studies	Staff
Severine Groh	Mathematics & Sciences	Faculty
Kristen Land	Student Success Center (SSC)	Staff
Joe Lane	Social Science & History	Faculty
Ouida McAfee	Office of Information Technology	Staff
Beverly Moon	Graduate and Honor Studies	Dean
Valarie Morgan	Language & Literature	Faculty
Anjanette Powers	Teacher Education, Leadership, and Research	Faculty/Staff
Christy Riddle	Student Success Center/International Admissions	Director
Britnee Smith	Health, Physical Education, and Recreation	Faculty

Megan Smith	Student Financial Assistance	Director
Lori Spencer	Foundation	Director

Appendix E

Strategic Plan 2019-2024

ENGAGE EXCELLENCE:

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-24



<u>Designation</u>	<u>Indicator Broad Category</u>	<u>Specific Measures</u>
<u>SP Goal 2 Develop an engaged, diverse, high-quality student population</u> (Delta State will attract, retain, and graduate an engaged and success-oriented student population)		
SP2.Ind01	Enrollment	FT/FT freshmen, CC transfer, Part – time, International, Graduate
SP2.Ind02	Retention	Year to year retention (available by race/gender) Graduate Student Completions in One Year or Returned for a Second Year
SP2.Ind03	Graduation Rate	(IPEDS) freshmen cohort 6 years (by race/gender/Pell) Athletes (academic success rate) 4 and 5 year grad rates
SP2.Ind04	Number of degrees	UG, GR
SP2.Ind05	Admissions yield rate	UG, GR
SP2.Ind06	Graduate Assistantships	Number of graduate assistantships
SP2.Ind07	Scholarships and Aid	Scholarship (or aid) dollars per FTE
SP2.Ind08	Recruitment Activities and Improvement	Budgets, software, processes

<u>Designation</u>	<u>Indicator Broad Category</u>	<u>Specific Measures</u>
Goal 4: Enhance institutional effectiveness: (DSU will improve and communicate effectively its financial, physical, and resource capacities, demonstrating efficiencies in programs and services.)		
SP4.Ind01	IHL reports	Timely, accurate Protocol
SP4.Ind02	Audits	Scheduled, no findings
SP4.Ind03	External resources	Capitol campaign; Alumni/Foundation reports Grants submitted/funded External funding (bonds?)
SP4.Ind04	Facilities management	Deferred maintenance, construction Construction Improvements
SP4.Ind05	Master lease	budget, number of items
SP4.Ind06	Technology infrastructure	sustainability, improvements, contracts
SP4.Ind07	Website	Regular review (cmte) Use (measured by hits) upgrades/maintenance
SP4.Ind08	Campus efficiencies	Energy savings; Recycling Use of facilities
SP4.Ind09	Institutional review process/ Accreditations/ Institutional Effectiveness	Strategic planning (indicators assessed) Accreditation status (all) Annual Reports (outcomes/goals)
SP4.Ind10	Data integrity	Goals established, beginning with APR's for 2010-11
SP4.Ind11	Process manuals	All units: Phased in over three year period, starting with APR's for 2010-11
SP4.Ind12	Publication of University Data and Information	prepared and posted on website
SP4.Ind13	Safe and Secure Campus	policies, procedures, practices
SP4.Ind14	Marketing, Publicity, Advertising	

Appendix F

QEP Committee 2023-2024

QEP COMMITTEE 2023-2024

Name	Department	Role
Nicholas Bobo	Counseling Education & Psychology	Undergraduate Student
Elizabeth Branton	Student Life	Assistant Director
Mikhail Collins	Student Business Services	Director
Kelvin Davis	University Accounting	Comptroller
Demyia Graham	Counselor Education & Psychology	Graduate Student
Severine Groh	Mathematics & Sciences	Faculty
Faderricka B. Harvey	Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning	Research Assistant
Amber Hays	Assoc. Vice Pres. of Finance & Administration	Administrative Assistant
Kentaro Johnson	Southern Opportunity Foundation	Alumnus
Christina Knight	Student Affairs	Coordinator
Kristen Land	Student Success Center	Director
Chrisa Mansell	Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning	Director
Tanya McKinney	Mathematics & Sciences	Faculty
Laurie Muffley	General Library	Faculty
Anjanette Powers	Teacher Education, Leadership, and Research	Faculty
Christy Riddle	Communications & Marketing	Chief Marketing Officer
Britnee Smith	Health, Physical Education & Recreation	Faculty
Megan Smith	Student Financial Assistance	Director
Zinaida Taran	Management, Marketing, & Business Administration	Faculty
Josephine Welsh	Academic Affairs	Associate Provost
Jon Westfall	Psychology	Faculty

Appendix G
FYE Proposal Hearin



Delta State University
First Year Experience

Proposal to The Robert M. Hearin Foundation

June 6, 2022

Delta State University *First Year Experience*

Delta State University is requesting \$623,914 over the next three years (\$221,440 for 2022-23, \$204,956 for 2023-24, and \$197,518 for 2024-25) to support the proposed Delta State University *First Year Experience*. As outlined in the accompanying budget, funding will support scholarships, cover books, and fees, provide supplemental instructors, and fund staffing for the program.

Introduction

The principal goal of the Robert M. Hearin Foundation is to contribute to the overall economic advancement of the State of Mississippi by preparing students who will directly contribute to Mississippi through capital investment, creation, and expansion of higher-paying jobs, and improvements to the general Mississippi economy. The Delta State First Year Experience (FYE) will help the Foundation achieve this goal by addressing the problems that exist in Delta State's target student population who will most likely live and work in Mississippi. The single greatest predictor of college success is success in rigorous high school courses. Many students enter Delta State underprepared for college-level work because of the lack of high school rigor. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has widened academic and socio-economic achievement gaps. Since approximately 75% percent of Delta State's students are residents of the Mississippi Delta, many graduated from one of the Mississippi Delta's 12 failing high schools. Most underserved students graduated from a high school with a C or below rating. Delta State has had, for example, incoming freshmen students who earned a 4.0 high school GPA in their high school courses, some of whom were valedictorians in their class, but had ACT subtest scores below our minimum admission standards.

Mississippi's underserved students often enter college lacking the skills or mindset required for college-level courses because they lack academic readiness skills associated with effective study techniques, note-taking strategies, time management, or organizational skills.

Underserved students who enter college from high schools without college prep courses require additional resources to earn a degree, such as tutoring, proactive academic advising, instruction in study skills, and career exploration. To compound the challenges, underserved, low socioeconomic status students also lack occupational information, role models, and knowledge of employment opportunities which contributes to their lack of persistence in college and lower rates of completion.

Additionally, career awareness and development opportunities in the FYE program will increase students' awareness and help guide them to generate career goals, increase perceived value in school, and allow them to construct their enrollment in accordance with career goals; thus impacting economic development in the State of Mississippi and support the principle goal of the Foundation.

Appendix H
AD HOC Advising Committee

**AD HOC ADVISING
COMMITTEE**

Academic Advising Consultant – Ms Brandi Lovin, Committee Chair

College of Arts & Sciences – Dr. Tanya McKinney

College of Business & Aviation – Ms Christie Sledge

Robert E. Smith School of Nursing – Ms Teresa Haynes

Academic Advising Services – Ms Darla Poole

Athletics – Ms Dana George

Diversity & Inclusion – Ms Michelle Johansen

Gertrude C. Ford Center for Teaching & Learning – Dr. Christy Riddle

Registrar's Office – Ms Rhonda Loper

Appendix I

Executive Summary Ad-Hoc Advising Committee Report

Executive Summary

Overview

Delta State University's Academic Advising Ad-Hoc Committee was created to examine the academic advising climate of the University. A campus-wide committee was appointed to conduct a comprehensive review of Delta State's current undergraduate academic advising approaches to recommend strategies to help increase retention and graduation rates.

Committee Charges

- Evaluate current state of campus academic advising efforts.
- Research effective advising practices to enhance advising experience for faculty and students.
- Identify recommendations/next steps to strengthen Delta State's academic advising.

Methods Used

The Academic Advising Ad-Hoc Committee collaborated with the Office of Institutional Research to create two surveys to gather information. The surveys were offered online and distributed via email. One survey was distributed to the academic list serve with an estimated total of 110 current faculty/professional academic advisors. The second survey was distributed to 1,692 undergraduate students enrolled for the fall 2022 semester. The committee members examined the survey responses of 72 (65% response rate) faculty/professional academic advisors and 239 (14% response rate) students, resulting in a 95% confidence interval for both surveys.

Key Findings

The committee found that students overall are satisfied with academic advising at DSU. Their average satisfaction rate on a scale of 1- 10 is an 8. However, faculty/professional academic advisors view additional room for improvement, with their average score being a 6. Per the academic advisor survey, 60% of the advisors stated their advisees do not come prepared to their advising meetings. Based upon survey results, the committee identified two compelling findings/next steps:

- Increase advisement education for faculty/professional academic advisors and students.
- Streamline the academic advising processes.

Committee Recommendations

After an engrossing review, the committee identified short-term and long-term action items.

Short Term (Spring 2023):

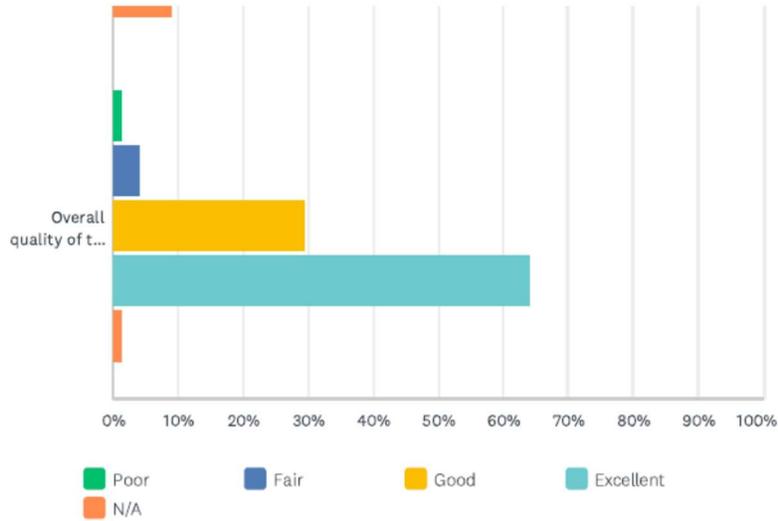
- Create Academic Advising Leadership Council
- Initiate Process to Streamline Academic Advising Processes

Long Term (Beyond Spring 2023):

- Increase Advisement Education Programs
- Update Academic Advising Policies
- Establish Academic Advisor Mentors
- Review Advisor-Advisee Caseloads to Identify Opportunities to Reduce Load
- Create Interactive/Online Maps through Implementation of Degree Works
- Investigate Creation of College-Centered Advisement Offices
- Streamline Academic Advising Processes
- Identify Options for a Student Success Management System
- Increase Student Engagement with Academic Departments

Appendix J Graduating Senior Exit Survey

Fall 2022 Graduation Exit Survey



	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT	N/A	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Availability of my advisor	0,93% 3	8,36% 27	23,22% 75	66,56% 215	0,93% 3	323	3,57
Willingness of my advisor to help me	2,17% 7	5,26% 17	18,89% 61	72,76% 235	0,93% 3	323	3,64
Challenge of academic coursework	0,31% 1	5,88% 19	34,98% 113	57,59% 186	1,24% 4	323	3,52
Courses in preparing me for employment and/or graduate school	2,17% 7	7,12% 23	29,41% 95	59,13% 191	2,17% 7	323	3,49
Opportunities for interaction with faculty in my major	1,55% 5	5,57% 18	28,17% 91	63,16% 204	1,55% 5	323	3,55
Ample number of library holdings in my major	2,48% 8	7,74% 25	27,86% 90	42,11% 136	19,81% 64	323	3,37
Laboratory facilities related to my major	0,62% 2	6,19% 20	27,55% 89	40,56% 131	25,08% 81	323	3,44
Quality of career advising in the major	2,48% 8	5,57% 18	30,34% 98	52,63% 170	8,98% 29	323	3,46
Overall quality of this department	1,24% 4	4,02% 13	29,41% 95	64,09% 207	1,24% 4	323	3,58

Appendix K

FYS Student Survey Results

28	5	5	There have been no skills I need that haven't been presented in FYS.	By possibly incorporating some interest facts or famous people who have attended DSU. This would be a very fun class lecture.	I hope to learn about every single thing DSU has to offer as students.
29	5	5	None	I like it how it is, but I think they should have class at least 2 times a week	Everything about the campus
30	5	5	none	none	more about time management
31	5	5	nothing	speakers from campus are good	more new people
32	3	4	N/A	N/A	How to manage my time more
33	5	5			
34	3	3			
35	5	5	None	A pamphlet or brochure with freshman and transfer opportunities that aren't often advertised or known about.	More about how to succeed
36	5	5			
37	3	4	The ability to obtain information virtually	Add a zoom option since the class is only one hour a week and some students attend virtually, or maybe they are sick and can make a zoom call. I understand that this is a freshman course and most freshman's do live on campus, but for the few that may be working and going to school, as well. I signed up for this course in the spring and there was no option to take the online course, nor was there an option to take an FYS 300 course, unless these were added days before class began	I wish I would have learned that all of these courses were available, because they were not available when I registered in the spring.
38	5	5	None	None	More about resources on campus
39	1	1	n/a	I am in my last semester and just now taking the FYS course (its mandatory). I think it is pointless this late in the game.	n/a
40	5	1	None	Everything is great	
41	4	3	None		
42	4	3	More information on financial hardships and aid	Allow for more small assignments, do more group projects	I hope to learn more about the Student Success Center
43	4	4	Everything was very helpful. There isn't anything I can think of.	Have a lesson that focuses on career skills.	I hope to learn about how to balance school, clubs, and work.
44	4	4	I don't really know anything else that hasn't been addressed	More interactive events	How to get more interactive with people at this school
45	2	1	ability to take timed tests	not sure	how to go about changing my major
46	4	5	I wouldn't say there isn't any info that hasn't been presented but I do want to know more to better my time management.	I'd say maybe a little bit more interactive assignments?	Just general life on campus and using what I can to help myself on campus as a student
47	4	4			
48	2	2	Time management	Don't make it mandatory	IDK
49	3	4		Be more involved in the students academic life	How to navigate through college life as smoothly as possible
50	2	2	There wasn't any	Nothing	More time management
51	3	3	we have talked about managing our time with classes but I have been struggling with it	do more work with how to manage a college schedule especially when you are involved in extracurricular activities	I would like to learn more about how to start stuff and get yourself involved
52	3	3	How to make friends, start conversation	Talk more about how to break out of your shell	How to make friends
53	4	5	N/A	N/A	How DSU can be more inclusive to older people.
54	5	5			How to be a good person
55	5	5	nothing	keep doing what ya doing	everything
56	5	5	Nothing! Every class has been helpful	I'm sad it's only 1 day, love this class	More communication skills
57	4	4	N/A	N/A	I would love to learn more about the people in my class.
58	5	5	Good information has been given in this class.	I have fully enjoyed coming to this class. It helps me start my week off strong.	I hope to learn more about how to manage my time better for classes.
59	5	5			Keep learning about life skills
60	5	5	NA	The Modules.	How to communicate with others
61	3	3	N/A	Better Communication	Skills with communications

Appendix J

FTFT Freshmen Demographics

First-time, Full-time Freshmen					
	Cohort				
	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022
Gender					
Female	150	143	116	132	114
Male	133	137	68	118	98
Ethnicity					
Black	91	81	65	88	61
White	161	186	102	137	118
Other/Unknown	31	13	17	25	33
First Generation					
Yes	70	76	48	62	58
No	193	193	122	175	139
Unknown	20	11	14	13	15
ACT Composite					
No ACT*		1	11	8	6
Below 16*	5	6	11	43	23
16-19	100	120	80	80	60
20-23	100	81	43	70	58
24-26	39	34	20	28	35
27+	39	38	19	21	30
High School GPA					
< 2.0	1	1	3	2	1
2.0 - 2.5	2	5	4	6	
2.5 - 2.74	26	24	23	20	15
2.75 - 2.99	28	37	24	20	16
3.0 - 3.24	45	45	18	37	29
3.25 - 3.49	53	44	26	46	38
3.5 - 3.74	52	38	31	48	35
3.75+	76	86	55	71	78
Paid PELL					
Yes	131	125	88	122	92
No	152	155	96	128	120
Remedial					
0 Remedial Courses	160	158	100	186	117
1 Remedial Courses	77	73	53	29	41
2+ Remedial Courses	46	49	31	35	54
Total	283	280	184	250	212

*Includes cohorts of fewer than 10 students.

Appendix K

Train the Okra – The Campus Concierge Survey

Train the Okra - The Campus Concierge

Tell us what *Ask the Okra* should be able to answer when students need information.

1. What is something you always need to know quickly, that *Ask the Okra* should be able to address?

Enter your answer

2. *Ask the Okra* wants to help students get information they need when they need it. What do you think are the top 2 or 3 things students will call or text the Okra about? What kinds of questions should the Okra be ready to answer?

Enter your answer

3. Have you benefited from particular DSU services, activities, groups, or information, either online or on campus, that you think others should know about? *Ask the Okra* can tell callers about things and people that make DSU a great place. Based on your experience, what information should the Okra have about these positive forces at Delta State?

Enter your answer

4. Would you like to be contacted to join the QEP team or to help train the *Ask the Okra* Concierge?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

You can print a copy of your answer after you submit

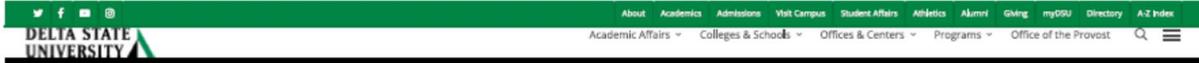
Never give out your password. [Report abuse](#)

Appendix L

University Facts – Institutional Research and Planning

2/20/24, 12:27 PM

University Facts - Institutional Research and Planning



Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning

- [IREP Home](#)
- [Assessment Assistance Request Form](#)
- [Information Request Form](#)
- [University Facts](#)
- [Organizational Charts](#)
- [Assessment & Planning Resources](#)
- [Accreditation](#)
- [Institutional Assessment](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [University Resources](#)
- [DSU Consumer Information Disclosures](#)
- [IREP Staff](#)

University Facts

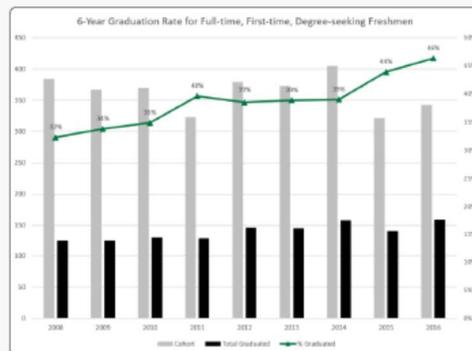
- [Factbook](#)
- [Student Achievement](#)
- [IHL Reports](#)
- [IPEDS Reports](#)

Retention and Graduation Rates of First-time, Full-time Freshmen – 2008 cohort to present

Retention and Graduation Rates of First-time, Full-time Transfers – 2008 cohort to present

Graduation Rates

Goal: Maintain a 40% or above 6-year graduation rate, given attrition during the 2020 national pandemic and adjust the goal upward annually as year 1 to year 2 retention improves post-pandemic.



Retention

Goal: Increase the first-time, full-time freshman first year retention rate to 70% by 2027 (Fall 2026 cohort).

Appendix M

Delta State QEP Website

2/21/24, 7:05 AM Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) | Academics



Academics - Colleges & Schools - Offices & Centers - Programs - Office of the Provost - Q



Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

2024-2029

Delta State University has selected "Ask the Okra: A Campus Concierge" as the new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The goal of this initiative is to improve the retention of full-time first-time freshmen and transfer students by providing a virtual campus concierge service that simplifies access to student services. It is grounded in the principles of respect, student focus, and effectiveness and has been developed over a two-year period with input from faculty, staff, and students.

Ask The Okra aims to enhance student success by providing a single-source platform that connects all students with resources relevant to their success at DSU. These resources include information on academic programs, financial aid, counseling services, academic support, registration procedures, and career services, among others. The overall goal of the QEP is to motivate students to ask for and receive the resources they need to be successful.



Ask the Okra - Coming Soon

The Okra must be trained to answer questions! We need your opinion about how to make Ask the Okra successful. Please answer three questions about the roll-out of the QEP at the link below. Thank you for your participation!

<https://www.deltastate.edu/academics/quality-enhancement-plan/>