

## Project Details

Title	Enhancing Student Experiences by Applying Lean Principles	Status	IN REVIEW
Category	6-Supporting Institutional Operations	Updated	11-06-2013
Timeline		Reviewed	
Planned Project Kickoff	07-26-2013	Created	09-25-2013
Target Completion	08-15-2014	Last Modified	11-06-2013

**1:** Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

**A:** VU will promote Lean models and value stream mapping to help departments sort and establish priorities which can eventually lead to more efficient, standardized work processes that will enhance the student experience. The initial activity will focus on the VUJC Student Services and Admissions offices, which will become models for other offices. The offices will examine daily processes to identify needed improvements, and then, by applying Lean principles that have been proven in industrial and commercial settings, the VUJC Student Services and Admissions departments will eliminate waste and redundancy. The assumption is the effort will refocus staff, time, and other resources to support retention goals and student success.

**2:** Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities:

**A:** One reason why this is an important project for VU at this time is because it focuses on non-instructional improvements. VU's Action Projects have focused on learning and retention, and it is time to expand the culture of improvement to other departments.

This project will help institutional efforts to enhance a culture of data-driven improvements. Using the mapping processes and eliminating non-value added activities is an objective process intended to increase efficiency, and thereby, student satisfaction and persistence. On the Jasper campus, the lead time from a student's date of application to date of admission for the fall 2012 semester was 28 days. This lead time for the spring semester 2013 was 35 days. For the fall 2012 semester, 59% of students who applied had complete files and were admitted. For the spring 2013 semester, 65% of students who applied were admitted.

The hope is that the lead time can be reduced and the percentage of students admitted can be increased using lean models and principles. Staff can make more informed decisions about work flow and responsibilities by identifying processes and methods that are incomplete, backlogged, redundant and unnecessary. This project will also support Strategic Planning Goal II to promote student recruitment as it aims to increase yields of students who apply and to enhance respective recruitment efforts. Increased processing speed, reduced complexity of processes, and improved quality of outreach to students will promote continuous improvement.

If the data and project experiences are positive, VU assumes that other offices will participate in the evaluation and improvement project. Jasper Campus staff will present results to the staff of other offices in January, explaining the impact and added value of the process (assuming there is benefit found).

**3:** List the organizational areas -- institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

**A:** Initially, VUJC Student Services Department and VUJC Admissions Department, but potentially, many administrative and student services offices on campus could be affected by the activity. The initial workshop has been offered to all interested VU offices, followed by a presentation describing the impact of the mapping and value stream activity on the Jasper campus offices. A survey will be used to determine additional interest in other programs completing the office analysis and value stream mapping.

**4:** Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:

**A:** Initially, this project will affect two offices on the VUJC campus:

- Student Services: This includes the oversight and implementation of registration and graduation processes, new and transfer student orientation, student wellness initiatives, disability accommodations, financial aid customer service, and career services, to name a few.
- Admissions: This includes processing applications and documents to establish student admission and college readiness to the campus. This office also functions as the key marketing entity to the community and potential students.

Long term, the hope is the project will affect the same and other processes throughout the institution.

**5:** Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):

**A:** Initially, the Jasper Campus is taking the lead role in the improvement project, which is expected to take 6 months to implement and improve. With the project beginning in July, 2013, the bulk of the analysis and process improvements will occur during the summer months, and new processes would be implemented by the beginning of the 2013-14 academic year. The initial value stream mapping workshop took one day, but application of the new process plan will be ongoing through the Fall 2013, and assessment would occur at intervals of 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, and six months following the initial workshop.

Following collection of survey data and the study of the impact on the VUJC offices, VUJC staff will make presentations to other programs that might be interested. By July, 2014, VU should have a good sense of what other offices will be participating in Lean improvement processes.

**6:** Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

**A:** On the VUJC campus, re-prioritization would be an ongoing process as outcomes are measured at integral stages, such as enrollment census dates, and October, 2013, which marks the beginning of advisement and registration for Spring 2014. Assessment of the timeframe from application to admission and the percentage of complete student files will be measured at intervals of 30 days, 60 days, 90 days and six months after project implementation. Plans to measure results after the project is finished include a comparison of processing times and student satisfaction at the beginning and end of the process.

A workshop survey will also provide feedback on the interest level of other programs on campus. One survey question asks other VU staff members to rate their interest in bringing in someone to do analysis of their office processes.

Assuming positive results, a professional development session in January and a second might be offered later in the Spring. The purpose of the presentations will be to describe the benefits (assuming they are found) and encourage others to participate in the process.

**7:** Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:

**A:** Outcomes to measure the progress of this work will include both improved efficiency measures and feedback from students and staff:

1. Processing times from application submission to communication with students will be monitored by comparing the date of application to the date of admittance. Attention to this timeframe will focus on the improvement of outreach and communications to students in the pre-admitted stage to reduce lead time.
2. The completeness of student and applicant files will be assessed; in theory, more complete student files will yield larger admittance rates. Instance of duplicate student files, processing errors and miscommunication to students will also be monitored to assess improvements in standardized processing by staff.
3. Feedback from campus stakeholders (students, staff, and faculty) will be gathered via a survey instrument or qualitative measures to standardize and sustain effective processes.

Also, staff time related to each function will be assessed qualitatively to assess personal accountability in increasing efficiency and ownership of processes. The project's success will be also be measured by the desire of personnel in other VU offices to participate in Lean analysis and implement Lean principles.