Virginia Student Success Leadership Institute

Final Action Plan

Mountain Empire Community College

	Description of Proposed Action	Framework Area (Connection, Entry, Progress, Completion)	Timeframe	Potential Costs	Impacted Stakeholder Group(s)	Anticipated Impact
Initiative 1	Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals (SAP) Description: Develop a process for intensive advising of students required to complete a SAP appeal based on low GPA and/or lack of success in 67% of credits attempted. (SAP advising currently only required for students flagged for 150% rule per federal guidelines.)	Progress	Fall 2016	Unknown	All students, advisees, Success Coaches, faculty members, and Financial Aid, Enrollment Services employees	More informed students; reduction of loss of financial aid benefits and/or monies owed; increased retention rates; reduction in the number of SAPs
Initiative 2	"One-Stop Entry" Description: Devise a plan to build a central area for potential and committed students to start their college career on MECC's campus.	Connection & Entry	Spring 2017-Spring 2018	$300-400,000	All students and employees	Streamlined entry for new students; improve efficiency; reduced barriers to entry; increased retention of students and ultimately completion rates

	Consolidate enrollment services, financial aid, and student services into one building, area or location so students can easily navigate the required processes. Improve ease of processes leading to enrollment.					
Initiative 3	Improved Class Scheduling Description: Develop and implement a streamlined schedule of course offerings. Ensure ease of maintaining student pathways and goals - both in terms of completion rates and timelines that accommodate students' personal, work and family needs.	Entry, Progress & Completion	Fall 2016	Unknown	All students and faculty members	Increased number of accelerated courses and evening/weekend options, speed of meeting program requirements and the rate of both course completion and graduation rates
Initiative 4	Midterm Grade Reporting Description: Develop and implement a midterm grading support system for students, faculty and success coaches.	Progress	Spring 2017	Unknown	All students, faculty members, and Success Coaches	Increased communication; removal of barriers to student success prior to withdrawal dates or end of term failures
Initiative 5	Advising Matters Description: Develop and foster a culture where it	Entry, Progress and Completion	Fall 2016	Promotional materials	All students, faculty and staff members	Improved success rates with increased retention and completion rates

	becomes obvious to all students that advising is important to their success through increased attention to scheduled advising sessions by program area, Advising Matters! promotional campaign, and improved connections between faculty advisors and advisees.				

Step 2: For each of the initiative, use Kotter's change framework to identify the process of change.

MECC INITIATIVE ONE: SAP Appeals

✓ **Create a Sense of Urgency**
How will you create urgency regarding the initiative on campus?

According to Kotter's change framework, step one requires an organization to craft and use a significant opportunity as a means for exciting people to sign up to change their organization. MECC has dedicated instructors and support staff for students already set in place to ensure student success. For example, we have committed faculty and staff members who have redesigned our College Success (SDV) course so that incoming and first-gen students have a well-defined understanding of what college requires of them. However, we all realize that we need to make the *process* of those expectations clearer. Everyone at MECC, as expressed in recent in-service meetings and organizational gatherings, believes that we can always change and improve our institution, both for students and the ones who service them on a daily basis.

✓ **Build a Guiding Coalition**
Who at your college needs to be at the table for guiding these changes? Why?

According to Kotter's change framework, step two requires assembling a group with the power and energy to lead and support a collaborative change effort. MECC will build a committee to address and monitor the SAP improvement initiative from the Financial Aid department, faculty members guided by Dean selection, Success Coaches and administrators. This committee will

identify ideas to help students understand the grading and academic progress processes, financial aid requirements for successful class completion, and the means with which to educate students better about all of these vital components.

✓ **Form a Strategic Vision & Initiatives**
 After you have made these changes and they are successful, what will be different at your college? Why? What short term actions will help you to achieve this strategic vision? What long term action will help you to achieve this strategic vision? What change do you anticipate will result from the initiative?

As outlined in Kotter's change framework, step three requires shaping a vision to help steer the change effort and develop strategic initiatives to achieve that vision. Once MECC builds a committee, the team can then devise distinct areas that students could become more aware of their academic requirements in relationship to financial aid benefits. For example, the initial discussion related to SAP will begin as early as students' enrollment in our revised SDV course, where the information is highlighted. Aligning this goal with MECC's Initiative #4 and #5 will make it a long term measurable success. The changes that will result will include more informed students, increase retention rates and individual course completions, and reduce the number of SAPs.

✓ **Enlist a Volunteer Army**
 For each initiative, who at your campus will lead the charge? Are they on the guiding committee? How will you get others to participate? For each initiative, who at your college will you need to be in the volunteer ranks? Why are they the best ones to support the change? Will they have a continuing role or will they be needed at key moments?

According to Kotter's change framework, step four requires raising a large force of people who are ready, willing and urgent to drive change. MECC's SSLI Committee already has discussed this issue with members of our Financial Aid department and will conduct future meetings and ask for volunteer staff support and faculty input to address this initiative. These volunteers can have a continual role in developing this process and we will devise future commitments as they are needed.

✓ **Enable Action by Removing Barriers**
 For each initiative, what barriers do you currently foresee in enabling action to change? What actions need to be taken to address these barriers? Which actions should be addressed by the college? Which actions might be addressed by the System?

Step five requires removing obstacles to change, change systems or structures that pose threats to the achievement of the vision. The only foreseeable barrier is finding time to ensuring sufficient advising personnel are available to meet with students for an intensive advising session. The SSLI committee has already suggested the administration that additional advising staff may be needed during peak times when SAP appeals are addressed. This recommendation was met favorably and additional advising staff were put into place beginning August 1, 2016.

✓ **Generate Short-term Wins**
 In considering your actions, which ones do you think will provide your college with positive results in the next year? Why?

According to Kotter's change framework, step six requires to consistently produce, track, evaluate and celebrate volumes of small and large accomplishments – and correlate them to results. MECC believes that by focusing on educating our students in more depth about both the academic and financial aid requirements of our institution and the federal government, we will inevitably see less SAP appeals from students, a better overall student retention rate, and higher completion numbers.

✓ **Sustain Acceleration**
What is your plan for building momentum toward your strategic vision? How will you budget for the initiative? What potential changes in revenue do you foresee as a result of the changes? How will you address any negative implications? If your college had a change in leadership, how would your guiding committee continue to move toward your strategic vision?

According to Kotter's change framework, step seven requires the use of increasing credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't align with the vision; hire, promote and develop employees who can implement the vision; reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes and volunteers. This initiative requires relatively little increase in budgeting because we will be utilizing the services of current employees; however, while faculty are not on contract in the summer, additional funds may be required to ensure their availability just prior to the beginning of the fall semester. The changes in revenue will be increased FTE's. By utilizing the proposed method of increasing student awareness of the correlation of financial aid with completion rates, it will reduce financial burdens and loss of credits.

MECC INITIATIVE TWO: "ONE STOP ENTRY"

✓ **Create a Sense of Urgency**
How will you create urgency regarding the initiative on campus?

According to Kotter's change framework, step one requires an organization to craft and use a significant opportunity as a means for exciting people to sign up to change their organization. MECC has already undertaken the initial steps of forming conversations around this initiative and sustaining those ideas in our Student Success Committee. We plan to further develop this initiative and being breaking construction ideas and the movement of offices and working spaces within the Spring 2017 semester and plan on finalizing this move by Spring, 2018.

✓ **Build a Guiding Coalition**
Who at your college needs to be at the table for guiding these changes? Why?

According to Kotter's change framework, step two requires assembling a group with the power and energy to lead and support a collaborative change effort. Our Student Success Committee has assembled a working group of people to spearhead this transition. Members are consolidating efforts from faculty, Enrollment Services, Financial Aid, Division Deans, the Student Success offices,

Business Office, and Administrative officials. With this incredibly large effort, leaders from every department will need to volunteer both time and effort to creating this necessary change.

✓ **Form a Strategic Vision & Initiatives**
After you have made these changes and they are successful, what will be different at your college? Why? What short term actions will help you to achieve this strategic vision? What long term action will help you to achieve this strategic vision? What change do you anticipate will result from the initiative?

According to Kotter's change framework, step three requires shaping a vision to help steer the change effort and develop strategic initiatives to achieve that vision. With this initiative complete and in place for our potential students, as well as those already enrolled at MECC, we will see a tangible improvement in our enrollment numbers and retention. The short term goals for this bold move is to design a physical structure for consolidating these departments and services so our students will not have to travel to different and unfamiliar locations on campus (as incoming applicants or first semester enrolled) in order to secure/complete requirements for enrollment, financial aid, and/or advising. Long term actions will be budget concerns and the actual movement of entire departments to a new physical location.

✓ **Enlist a Volunteer Army**
For each initiative, who at your campus will lead the charge? Are they on the guiding committee? How will you get others to participate? For each initiative, who at your college will you need to be in the volunteer ranks? Why are they the best ones to support the change? Will they have a continuing role or will they be needed at key moments?

According to Kotter's change framework, step four requires raising a large force of people who are ready, willing and urgent to drive change. MECC realizes its potential for improving student access to services and departments. This initiative has been in planning stages before SSLI was formed. Our Student Services Committee members are the best representatives of all of the departments that are involved in the formation of this new "one-step entry" system and will continue to be the ones who serve in roles of moving this initiative forward and seeing it to completion. Once construction has begun and departments will move offices, everyone within its ranks will be a part of the volunteer force to create this new working space. MECC is a great team effort and we consider each other family; we all anticipate helping each other make this gigantic move.

✓ **Enable Action by Removing Barriers**
For each initiative, what barriers do you currently foresee in enabling action to change? What actions need to be taken to address these barriers? Which actions should be addressed by the college? Which actions might be addressed by the System?

As outlined in step five, removing obstacles to change, change systems or structures that pose threats to the achievement of the vision is required. The biggest barrier to this initiative is acquiring the funding to move this mass amount of both space and personnel. There are strategic plans in place and continued discussions around how to develop and secure the financial means necessary to complete this project. While MECC accepts its role in this initiative and is looking at overall budget proposals,

Foundation funds, and continuing community and alumni fund raising efforts, the VCCS System might address any shortfalls, as this is a vital student need and an important part of our meeting our 2021 completion rates goal.

✓ **Generate Short-term Wins**
    In considering your actions, which ones do you think will provide your college with positive results in the next year? Why?

According to Kotter's change framework, step six requires to consistently produce, track, evaluate and celebrate volumes of small and large accomplishments – and correlate them to results. MECC plans to stage out this important move in actualized segments: financial appropriation, maintenance and building proposals, integration of office updates, personnel actions, and committee meetings. Each of these staged intervals is vital to the success of this initiative and is equally important and valuable. Our positive results will hinge on every phase's accomplishment.

✓ **Sustain Acceleration**
    What is your plan for building momentum toward your strategic vision? How will you budget for the initiative? What potential changes in revenue do you foresee as a result of the changes? How will you address any negative implications? If your college had a change in leadership, how would your guiding committee continue to move toward your strategic vision?

According to Kotter's change framework, step seven requires the use of increasing credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't align with the vision; hire, promote and develop employees who can implement the vision; reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes and volunteers. MECC is in the process of designing a budget for this initiative and is already working on it with our administrative members and building employees to determine financial needs. Although local funds have been set aside for the major cost of this initiative, additional funds may be required for completion. The resultant revenue will be increased student enrollment, FTE's and subsequent federal monies, and the ultimate goal of tripling completion rates. If certain team members had to be changed or lost in process, there are many remaining leaders within the team of professionals at MECC that could step up to that challenge and ensure our plan's success.

MECC INITIATIVE THREE: Improved Class Scheduling

✓ **Create a Sense of Urgency**
    How will you create urgency regarding the initiative on campus?

According to Kotter's change framework, step one requires an organization to craft and use a significant opportunity as a means for exciting people to sign up to change their organization. MECC has already created a streamlined and improved course schedule for students and faculty. This initiative begins in Fall Semester 2016.

✓ **Build a Guiding Coalition**
    Who at your college needs to be at the table for guiding these changes? Why?

According to Kotter's change framework, step two requires assembling a group with the power and energy to lead and support a collaborative change effort. MECC's President (Scott Hamilton) and Vice President of Academic & Student Services (Vickie Ratliff) have already consulted with our Division Deans and consolidated the efforts of our Student Success Committee members to make this institutional change.

✓ **Form a Strategic Vision & Initiatives**
After you have made these changes and they are successful, what will be different at your college? Why? What short term actions will help you to achieve this strategic vision? What long term action will help you to achieve this strategic vision? What change do you anticipate will result from the initiative?

According to Kotter's change framework, step three requires shaping a vision to help steer the change effort and develop strategic initiatives to achieve that vision. MECC has completed the short term actions of building a new semester course offering schedule. Department chairs have designed and implemented new faculty schedules for their members. Faculty has developed office hours according to this new schedule of operation and we (collectively within Divisions) have agreed upon specific dates for committee work obligations and other necessary hours. Anticipated changes are a more concise list of course offerings in which students can create schedules that will offer them higher/faster completion rates, as well as leave them a day for study outside of the classroom.

✓ **Enlist a Volunteer Army**
For each initiative, who at your campus will lead the charge? Are they on the guiding committee? How will you get others to participate? For each initiative, who at your college will you need to be in the volunteer ranks? Why are they the best ones to support the change? Will they have a continuing role or will they be needed at key moments?

According to Kotter's change framework, step four requires raising a large force of people who are ready, willing and urgent to drive change. MECC has developed an across the board initiative; one that requires all departments, administration, student services, and faculty members to come together and agree on an entirely new system of operation. Our course calendars, working hours for faculty, consideration of service areas (i.e.: food services for students), as well as bookstore and library operation hours – all have been considered and adopted collectively as a Mountain Empire family. Every person working at MECC has jumped on board to support this initiative and believe in the ultimate student outcomes that we have as a collective institution goal. It will take every employee's efforts to continually support this new system of operation.

✓ **Enable Action by Removing Barriers**
For each initiative, what barriers do you currently foresee in enabling action to change? What actions need to be taken to address these barriers? Which actions should be addressed by the college? Which actions might be addressed by the System?

According to Kotter's change framework, step five requires removing obstacles to change, change systems or structures that pose threats to the achievement of the vision. MECC has considered all the potential barriers to this change and addressed them. We have studied the data from other institutions who have adopted a similar course schedule and are pleased at their results – increased student

enrollment and retention. Any future actions (both addressed by MECC and the System) will be evaluated as this new scheduled is implemented in Fall Semester 2016.

✓ **Generate Short-term Wins**
    In considering your actions, which ones do you think will provide your college with positive results in the next year? Why?

According to Kotter's change framework, step six requires to consistently produce, track, evaluate and celebrate volumes of small and large accomplishments – and correlate them to results. MECC is anticipating larger enrollment numbers as a result of this initiative. We will track our figures and compare them to last year's enrollment to see any detriment or increase in numbers. We are expecting to see a positive result with the change, especially in light of other institution's success with this schedule change.

✓ **Sustain Acceleration**
    What is your plan for building momentum toward your strategic vision? How will you budget for the initiative? What potential changes in revenue do you foresee as a result of the changes? How will you address any negative implications? If your college had a change in leadership, how would your guiding committee continue to move toward your strategic vision?

According to Kotter's change framework, step seven requires the use of increasing credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't align with the vision; hire, promote and develop employees who can implement the vision; reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes and volunteers. MECC has not undergone any budgeting changes as a result of this initiative. Faculty and other support services will not have a pay change or incur longer work hours as a result of the new schedule/work week. Changes in leadership (if any) will not affect the initiative because it is already in place and depends on the entire system of workers to make it a success. This is a team effort and will build upon each employee's best efforts.

MECC INITIATIVE FOUR: Midterm Grading Report System

✓ **Create a Sense of Urgency**
    How will you create urgency regarding the initiative on campus?

According to Kotter's change framework, step one requires an organization to craft and use a significant opportunity as a means for exciting people to sign up to change their organization. MECC's Student Success Committee and SSLI Committee members have addressed this need in committee meetings/discussions. The need has already been recognized and will move forward.

✓ **Build a Guiding Coalition**
    Who at your college needs to be at the table for guiding these changes? Why?

According to Kotter's change framework, step two requires assembling a group with the power and energy to lead and support a collaborative change effort. This initiative will require the efforts of faculty members to calculate and submit midterm grading data to our existing SIS/SAILS system. It requires monitoring by our Student Success Coaches and those working in the Student Support

offices. These employees already are in place. They have been aiding in our students success by giving initial and midterm reports on student progress and/or raising flags on individual students who are not performing well or to their potential.

- ✓ **Form a Strategic Vision & Initiatives**
  After you have made these changes and they are successful, what will be different at your college? Why? What short term actions will help you to achieve this strategic vision? What long term action will help you to achieve this strategic vision? What change do you anticipate will result from the initiative?

According to Kotter's change framework, step three requires shaping a vision to help steer the change effort and develop strategic initiatives to achieve that vision. MECC believes that this initiative will strengthen communication between students and their teachers, give our Success Coaches an alert to individual problems in classes, and counter the number of withdrawals near the end of a term. It should reduce the number of both course withdrawals and failures, as well as curb the number of Student Grade Appeals. Short term action is implementing the additional software requirements into our SIS/SAILS reporting system. Long term action is calculating the correlation between those student populations of withdrawals/failures in comparison to previous semester outcomes. The change should be a decrease in those numbers.

- ✓ **Enlist a Volunteer Army**
  For each initiative, who at your campus will lead the charge? Are they on the guiding committee? How will you get others to participate? For each initiative, who at your college will you need to be in the volunteer ranks? Why are they the best ones to support the change? Will they have a continuing role or will they be needed at key moments?

According to Kotter's change framework, step four requires raising a large force of people who are ready, willing and urgent to drive change. MECC has employees in place that will update our SIS/SAILS system. Faculty needs to be trained in order to ensure these reports are not only completed, but understand the value in them as well. This will be a concerted effort between faculty ranks and other student success departments. It will be a continual task that requires due diligence from everyone involved.

- ✓ **Enable Action by Removing Barriers**
  For each initiative, what barriers do you currently foresee in enabling action to change? What actions need to be taken to address these barriers? Which actions should be addressed by the college? Which actions might be addressed by the System?

According to Kotter's change framework, step five requires removing obstacles to change, change systems or structures that pose threats to the achievement of the vision. Since SIS and SAILS are already operating within our institution and other employees who monitor that data are presently using this system to aid in student retention/success, there are no barriers to implanting a midterm grade report on individual students. The college only needs to enact the change.

- ✓ **Generate Short-term Wins**
  In considering your actions, which ones do you think will provide your college with positive results in the next year? Why?

According to Kotter's change framework, step six requires to consistently produce, track, evaluate and celebrate volumes of small and large accomplishments – and correlate them to results. Each semester utilizing a midterm grading system will easily track student success and retention rates. We already use SAILS to help ensure that we flag a problem with student performance; this would easily create another layer of continued monitoring and guidance to help our student population.

- ✓ **Sustain Acceleration**
  What is your plan for building momentum toward your strategic vision? How will you budget for the initiative? What potential changes in revenue do you foresee as a result of the changes? How will you address any negative implications? If your college had a change in leadership, how would your guiding committee continue to move toward your strategic vision?

According to Kotter's change framework, step seven requires the use of increasing credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't align with the vision; hire, promote and develop employees who can implement the vision; reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes and volunteers. MECC is proud of this initiative because it does not require extra budget considerations or financial burden. We simply use an existing software system through a program that the VCCS offers and recognizes/promotes. Every faculty and student support member uses SAILS to ensure student success and any change in leadership would only require a continuation of those efforts already in place.

MECC INITIATIVE FIVE: ADVISING MATTERS

- ✓ **Create a Sense of Urgency**
  How will you create urgency regarding the initiative on campus?

According to Kotter's change framework, step one requires an organization to craft and use a significant opportunity as a means for exciting people to sign up to change their organization. MECC's SSLI and Student Success Committees will prepare a plan and discuss this initiative with all faculty, advisors and student support staff. Ideas exchanged in those meetings will be implemented in the course of this new initiative to ensure better success rates for our students. Changing the culture of the institution to reflect an environment where it is obvious to all students that advising is important to meeting their goals is an urgent need. The urgency lies in the number of self-advised students who fail to meet the requirements for graduation.

- ✓ **Build a Guiding Coalition**
  Who at your college needs to be at the table for guiding these changes? Why?

According to Kotter's change framework, step two requires assembling a group with the power and energy to lead and support a collaborative change effort. We need to bring our entire community on board with this proposal – faculty, staff and students. We also need to bring our marketing and communication team into the discussion in order to implement an advising matters campaign.

✓ **Form a Strategic Vision & Initiatives**
After you have made these changes and they are successful, what will be different at your college? Why? What short term actions will help you to achieve this strategic vision? What long term action will help you to achieve this strategic vision? What change do you anticipate will result from the initiative?

According to Kotter's change framework, step three requires shaping a vision to help steer the change effort and develop strategic initiatives to achieve that vision. MECC is looking for an increase in the progression of its students from one semester to another, and ultimately an increase in its completion rates. Long term actions are not only about numbers, but a rise in student sucess and overall learning improvement.

✓ **Enlist a Volunteer Army**
For each initiative, who at your campus will lead the charge? Are they on the guiding committee? How will you get others to participate? For each initiative, who at your college will you need to be in the volunteer ranks? Why are they the best ones to support the change? Will they have a continuing role or will they be needed at key moments?

According to Kotter's change framework, step four requires raising a large force of people who are ready, willing and urgent to drive change. Because this will be a large-scale effort to change the culture of the institution, all employees will have a role to play in this initiative. While changing culture requires time, beginning this initiative with the students entering through the college's redesigned SDV 100 course will be provide an opportunity to begin with the Fall 2016 incoming class.

✓ **Enable Action by Removing Barriers**
For each initiative, what barriers do you currently foresee in enabling action to change? What actions need to be taken to address these barriers? Which actions should be addressed by the college? Which actions might be addressed by the System?

According to Kotter's change framework, step five requires removing obstacles to change, change systems or structures that pose threats to the achievement of the vision. Obstacles and barriers might be convincing students that meeting with their advisor on a regular basis is a good and necessary change. Discussions will have to be student-focused and an emphasis on change. Retention rates and pass/fail numbers will have to be a part of those talks, as uncomfortable as that might be. Ensuring that all voices are heard, recognized and respected will be crucial in getting this goal met.

✓ **Generate Short-term Wins**
In considering your actions, which ones do you think will provide your college with positive results in the next year? Why?

According to Kotter's change framework, step six requires to consistently produce, track, evaluate and celebrate volumes of small and large accomplishments – and correlate them to results. MECC can easily track the differences in pass/fail rates and student retention by comparing those numbers from before and after the new advising requirements are in place and running. A full academic year measurement should produce some results, with more obvious results over a period of two to three years.

- ✓ **Sustain Acceleration**
  What is your plan for building momentum toward your strategic vision? How will you budget for the initiative? What potential changes in revenue do you foresee as a result of the changes? How will you address any negative implications? If your college had a change in leadership, how would your guiding committee continue to move toward your strategic vision?

According to Kotter's change framework, step seven requires the use of increasing credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't align with the vision; hire, promote and develop employees who can implement the vision; reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes and volunteers. Some costs may be associated with this initiative for the purposes of developing promotional materials to encourage/remind students to see their advisor on a regular basis. There should be no additional costs for personnel to support this cultural change; however, its implementation should result in an increase in overall retention and completion rates, as well as more informed and satisfied students.