



DENMARK TECHNICAL COLLEGE
PANTHER PATHWAYS

GUIDED. CAREER. PERPETUAL.



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I. Executive Summary

The Panther Pathways Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Denmark Technical College (DTC) aims to significantly enhance student learning and success through a comprehensive, structured framework that integrates guided pathways, career readiness, and perpetual engagement. This initiative provides students with clear educational trajectories, robust career preparation, and continuous support throughout their academic and professional journeys. The QEP will focus on implementing the Panther Pathways framework from student enrollment. The final topic was identified from an Affinity Mapping Protocol exercise and survey data involving stakeholders among the college's campus, advisory council, and industry partners. The results align with DTC's mission to serve its rural communities with a strategic focus on student success and life-long learning.

Through its institutional analysis of data and deliberations among stakeholders, the College identified challenges with onboarding new students. In consideration of the root cause, the College identified four (4) key issues: (1) students were not provided with identity formation information to assist them with choosing a major that was aligned with their interests and skills, (2) students were not provided consistent and accurate information through the advisement process, and (3) students did not have support from any one employee at the college when challenges arose which impacted retention, persistence, and graduation rates, and (4) students did not have any experiential learning experience during matriculation which yielded little to no job experience or exposure in their field of study.

DTC created the Panther Pathways framework to address these challenges and provide a holistic approach to student success. The framework empowers all college employees to assist students, fosters a culture of respect and inclusion, increases communication across faculty and staff lines, and identifies student needs and challenges within their first semester and beyond. In addition, the framework provides a focus on student learning, faculty and staff development, assessment, data analysis, and technology integration.

Building on the principles of the Guideway Pathway movement and the Complete College America initiative, Denmark Technical College is well-positioned to continue extending its mission to engage, educate, and empower students by allowing them to become active participants in their educational and career development.

Alignment to Standard 7.2 – Quality Enhancement Plan

Denmark Technical College is submitting its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) – Panther Pathways – in compliance with the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on College’s Standard 7.2 – “The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes; (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (d) commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and (e) includes a plan to assess achievement.” (*Quality Enhancement Plan*)

Table 1 aligns the standard with the evidence provided in the QEP.

| Comprehensive Standard | Criterion | Evidence |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| S7.2.a | (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes | Pages 15-19 |
| S7.2.b | (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies | Pages 28-34 |
| S7.2.c | (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success | Pages 35-38 |
| S7.2.d | (d) commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP | Pages 39-42 |
| S7.2.e | (e) includes a plan to assess achievement. | Pages 43-46 |

Table 1: Standard Alignment with Narrative

II. College's Overview and Mission

Denmark Technical College is a public, comprehensive, historically black, two-year technical college in rural Bamberg County. The College serves over one thousand credit and continuing education students annually - a mix of traditional, nontraditional, full-time, and part-time students. Denmark Technical College is the only technical college in the State of South Carolina that has on-campus housing. Denmark Technical College is a member of the South Carolina Technical College System. As such, its mission is related to the educational mission of the Technical College System and the State of South Carolina. The College's primary service area is comprised of Bamberg, Barnwell, and Allendale counties, with a legislated mandate to serve students throughout the state. As an open-door institution, the college provides affordable postsecondary education to citizens from diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, culminating in associate degrees, diplomas, or certificates. It also conducts outreach to area high schools with opportunities for those students. The College provides workforce training needed by business and industry through collaborative partnerships and resource allocations.

Mission

Denmark Technical College engages, educates, and empowers students to impact the industry by identifying transformative solutions to complex issues in South Carolina, the nation, and the world.

Vision

To be an exemplary historically black college, providing premier technical education that exceeds industry standards.

Core Values

Denmark Technical College will embark upon its mission towards realizing its vision by adhering to the following values:

EXCELLENCE We are dedicated to fostering a culture of excellence in all facets of the College through the highest educational standards for student achievement, excellent and transformative faculty teaching, dedicated service, and co-curricular activities.

LEADERSHIP We will act as role models, inspiring others, encouraging ambition, drive, grit, and perseverance as we working together toward a common goal and vision.

STUDENT-CENTERED Students are our top priority, and we are committed to helping them become globally competitive in an enriching, stimulating, and supportive environment.

INTEGRITY As an institution, we must ensure that we are consistent in providing professional, reliable, and fair services for our students as well as the community stakeholders.

TRANSPARENCY Ensuring that all are aware of the successes and challenges of the college.
SERVICE: A commitment between faculty, staff, and students to serving and helping one another.

INNOVATION We will be forward-thinking, creative, and proactive in our endeavors to advance Denmark Technical College.

Panther Pathways Alignment to the Mission

The Panther Pathways QEP aligns closely with Denmark Technical College’s mission to “engage, educate, and empower students to impact the industry by identifying transformative solutions to complex issues in South Carolina, the nation, and the world,” as follows:

1. Engage

- **Student Engagement:** Panther Pathways fosters deep engagement by providing students with a structured framework for their academic and career journeys. This engagement begins with clear educational pathways and proactive advising, ensuring that students are actively involved in planning and pursuing their goals.
- **Career Engagement:** By integrating career services and creating opportunities for internships and industry partnerships, the initiative connects students with real-world experiences and professionals, enhancing their engagement with their chosen fields.

2. Educate

- **Structured Education:** The initiative’s focus on guided pathways ensures that students receive a well-organized educational experience with defined academic maps and milestones. This structure supports effective learning and helps students stay on track toward achieving their degrees, diplomas, and certificates.
- **Career Preparation:** The robust career readiness component includes skill development workshops, experiential learning opportunities, and industry partnerships, providing students with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in their careers.

3. Empower

- **Personal and Professional Empowerment:** Panther Pathways empowers students to take charge of their academic and professional development through holistic advising, continuous support, and mentorship programs. This empowerment is crucial for overcoming challenges and achieving success.
- **Impact on Industry:** The initiative’s alignment with career readiness and industry engagement equips students to impact their industries effectively. Panther Pathways helps students address complex issues and contribute meaningfully to the workforce by preparing them with practical skills and connecting them with professionals.

4. Transformative Solutions

- **Addressing Local and Global Issues:** The structured, comprehensive support provided by Panther Pathways allows students to tackle complex issues locally and globally. The initiative supports DTC’s mission to find transformative solutions to pressing challenges by preparing students to think critically and act effectively.

The Panther Pathways framework embodies Denmark Technical College’s mission by engaging students through structured support, educating them with clear pathways and career preparation, and empowering them to make an impact in their industries and beyond. This alignment ensures that the initiative supports individual student success and contributes to broader societal and global solutions.

2020-2025 Strategic Plan

Denmark Technical College’s Strategic Plan identifies five (5) strategic priorities – (1) Increasing Enrollment, Persistence, and Retention; (2) Enhancing Academics and Inspiring Technological Advancements; (3) Renewing Commitment to Community and Social Justice; (4) Rebranding and Strengthening Communication Infrastructure; and (5) Establishing a Sustainable Model for Financial Future – to guide its work. Several initiatives aligned with these priorities have been implemented in recent years with the aim of creating the ultimate student experience. These initiatives include an enhanced focus on student services, enhanced student support, improved advising, and improved educational pathways leading to a job or transfer to a four-year institution. While DTC is focused on all five (5) priorities, strategic priorities one (1) and two (2) are of paramount importance to the institution to increase student success.

With an expansive view of strategic priorities one (1) and two (2), DTC has moved towards a culture where support services, instructional contexts, intentional advising, and professional development opportunities are available to meet the students where they are and provide the educational experiences they will need now and in the future.

III. Rationale for the Panther Pathways Framework

The Panther Pathways QEP is a strategic response to Denmark Technical College's challenges. By integrating guided pathways, career readiness, and perpetual engagement, the model provides a comprehensive solution that supports student success, aligns with institutional goals, and meets the needs of the workforce and community.

The framework focuses on three (3) tenets.

Key Tenets

1. Guided Pathways

- **Clear Educational Paths:** Students are provided with detailed academic maps that outline required courses and milestones, helping them stay on track toward graduation.
- **Proactive Advising:** An intrusive advising model ensures that advisors actively engage with students at critical points, offering personalized guidance and support.
- **Integrated Support Services:** Academic and non-academic support, including tutoring, financial literacy, and career services, are embedded within the pathways to address students' holistic needs.

2. Career Pathways

- **Career Services Integration:** Embedding career services within academic departments to ensure alignment with industry needs and enhance job placement rates.
- **Industry Partnerships:** Developing partnerships with employers to provide students with internships, apprenticeships, co-ops, and job opportunities.
- **Skill Development Workshops:** Offering workshops on resume writing, interviewing, networking, and job search strategies to prepare students for the workforce.
- **Experiential Learning Opportunities:** Incorporating internships, apprenticeships, co-ops, service learning, and research projects into the curriculum to provide real-world experience.

3. Perpetual Engagement

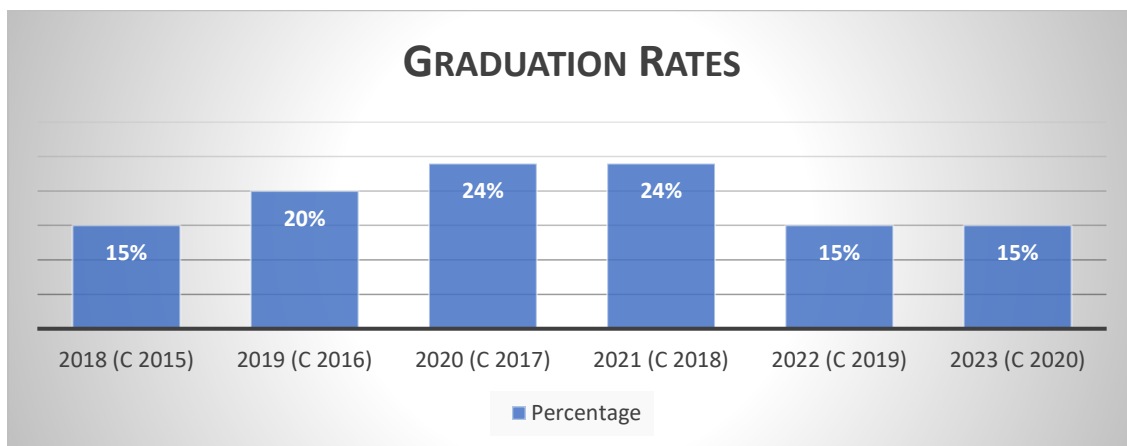
- **Alumni Mentorship Programs:** Establishing mentorship programs where alumni support and guide current students.
- **Continuing Education Opportunities:** Providing alumni access to professional development, certifications, and continuing education courses.
- **Alumni Events and Reunions:** Hosting regular events and reunions to keep alumni connected to the institution and each other.
- **Online Engagement Platforms:** Creating platforms for alumni to network, share resources, and stay informed about institutional news and events.



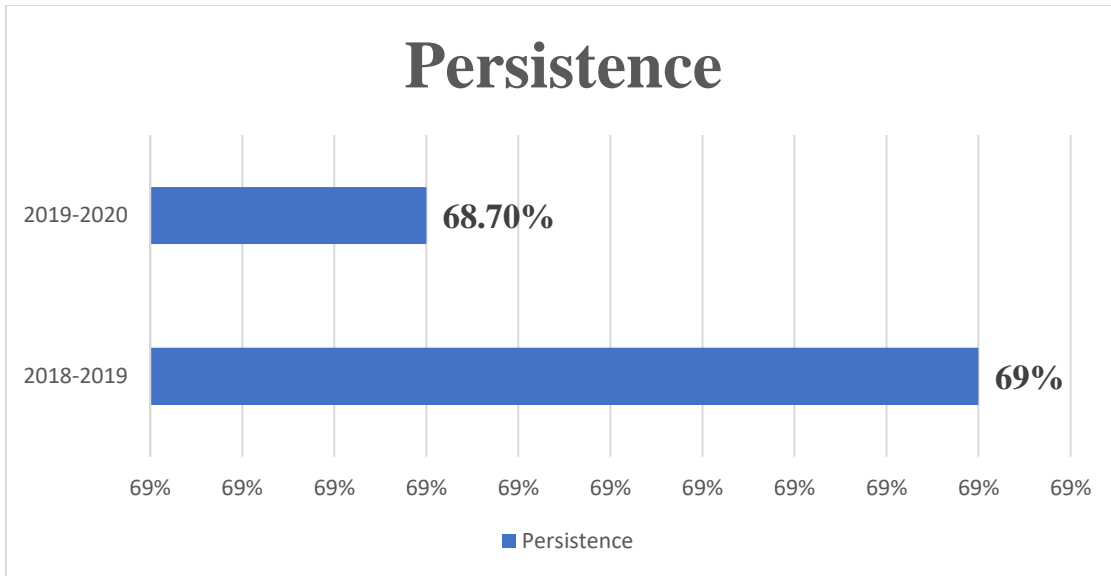
Addressing Challenges

Denmark Technical College (DTC) has identified key challenges that the Panther Pathways model is designed to address:

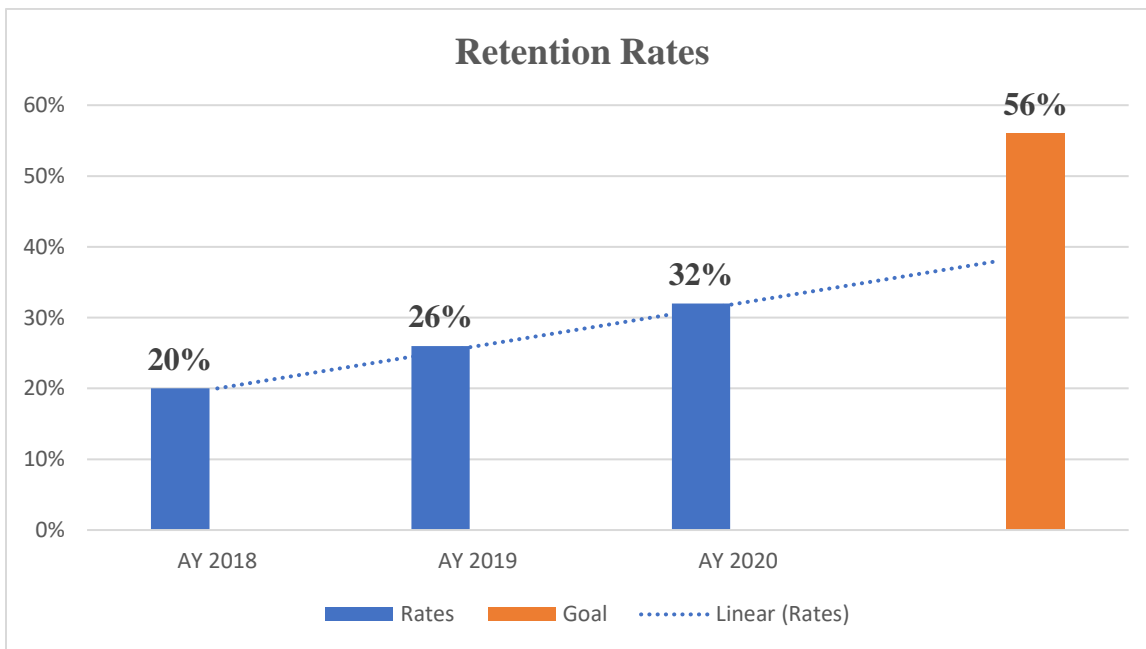
- Graduation, Persistence, and Retention Rates:** Data indicates that students struggle to complete their programs and persist through their studies. The lack of structured guidance and support contributes to these issues. The chart below shows a three-year graduation rate increase from 2018 (cohort 2015) to 2021 (cohort 2018). However, the rate has decreased and remained the same since 2022 (cohort 2019).



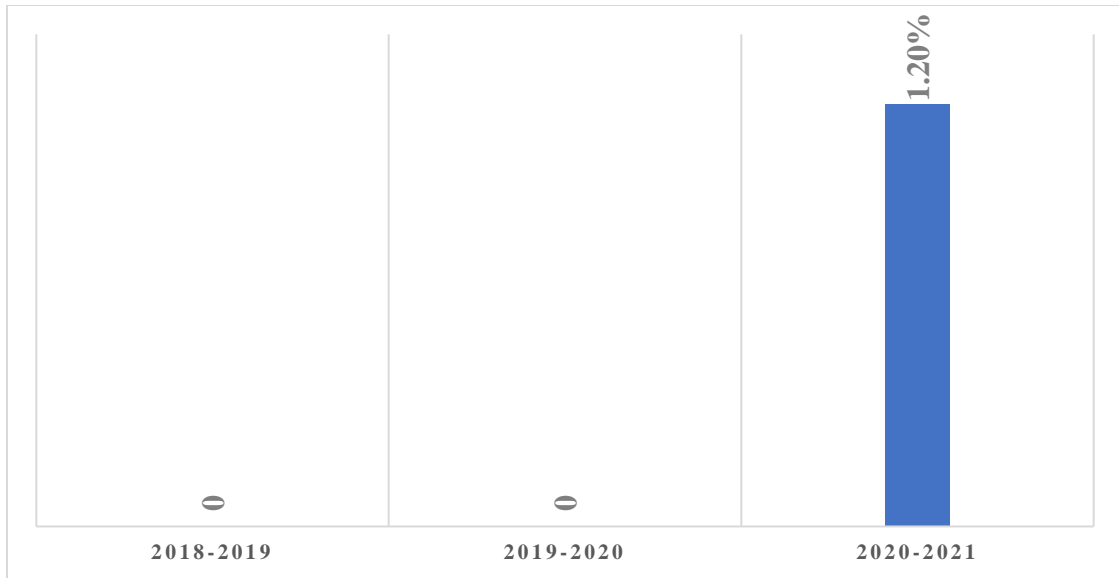
Persistence Rates from the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years were below the college’s goal of 85%.



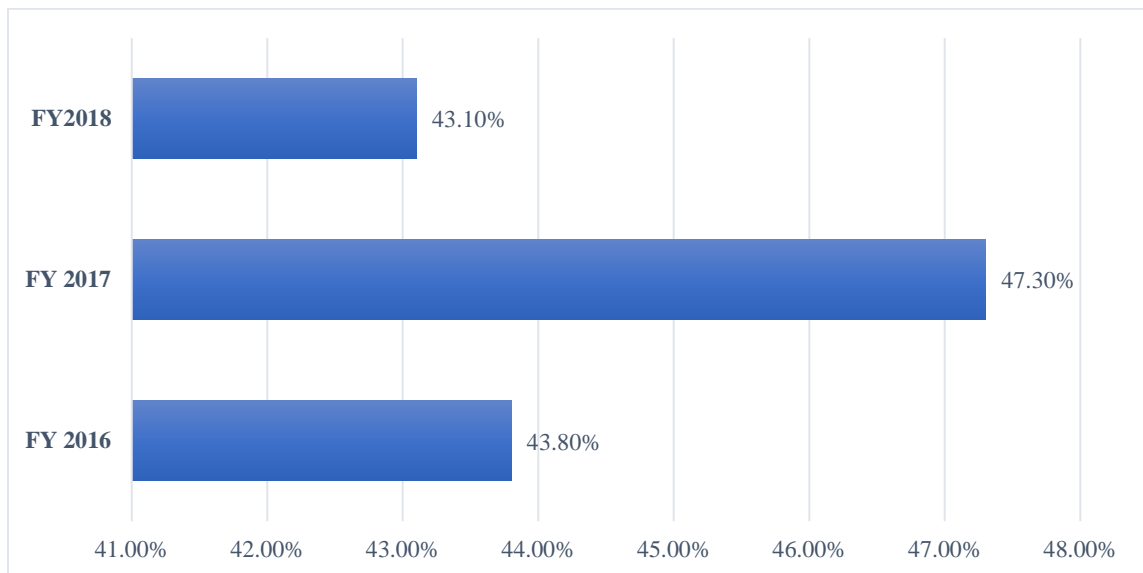
Even though the depiction below shows a slight increase in the retention rate, the college’s retention rate is well below its goal of 56%.



- Insufficient Career Preparation:** Many students graduate without the skills and experiences employers require via experiential learning. The gap between academic learning and industry requirements impacts students’ employability and career success. Before the 2020-2021 academic year, no recorded experiential learning experiences were recorded for ten (10) years. The percentage of students participating in career preparation, such as experiential learning, was 1.2% for 2020-2021. The rate decreased during the 2021-2022 academic year. The college’s goal is 75%.



- **Challenged Alumni Engagement:** Limited ongoing interaction with alumni reduces opportunities for networking, mentorship, and professional development for current students and graduates.
- **High Loan Default Rate:** Because students have either not obtained or retained employment in their field of study, they are unable to make loan payments. The chart depicts the default rate trends above 30%.



Enhancing Student Success Through Structure and Support

The model provides a comprehensive framework that integrates guided pathways, career readiness, and perpetual engagement, addressing the need for a more structured approach:

- **Guided Pathways:** The model offers clear academic curriculum displays and proactive advising, helping students understand their educational requirements and stay on track. This structured approach minimizes confusion and helps students navigate their academic journeys more effectively.
- **Career Readiness:** Integrating career services within academic programs ensures students receive targeted career preparation. Industry partnerships, skill development workshops, and experiential learning opportunities prepare students for the workforce, enhancing their employability and career readiness.
- **Perpetual Engagement:** Maintaining continuous engagement with alumni through mentorship programs, ongoing professional development, and networking opportunities ensures a lifelong connection with the institution. This fosters a strong support network for students and graduates, contributing to their long-term success.

Responding to Workforce and Community Needs

The Panther Pathways model addresses the evolving needs of the workforce and the community by:

- **Meeting Industry Demands:** The focus on career readiness and industry partnerships ensures that students acquire relevant skills and experiences that align with current job market requirements.
- **Supporting Regional Development:** The model supports economic and social development in South Carolina and beyond by preparing students to contribute to local and global challenges.

Improving Institutional Effectiveness

Implementing the Panther Pathways model also aims to improve institutional effectiveness by:

- **Enhancing Student Outcomes:** The structured support and guidance provided by the model are expected to lead to higher graduation rates, improved retention and persistence, and better career placement outcomes.
- **Streamlining Services:** Unifying First-Year advising, Career Services, Student Retention, and College Skills courses into one hub improves coordination and efficiency, addressing existing gaps and improving overall service delivery.

IV. Identification of the Topic

Standard 7.2 – “The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes ..”

The Plight of Denmark Technical College

A governance change was prompted by the development of a state legislative bill introduced in February 2017. The bill proposed to temporarily dissolve DTC’s Local Area Commission and transition the college’s governing authority to the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (SBTCE) for an eighteen-month period beginning on May 1, 2017. Reasons cited for this change in governance were a decrease in enrollment and financial instability.

Acting within its constitutional authority, the State’s House and Senate extended the devolution of powers from November 1, 2018, to January 1, 2019, for a twenty-month period beginning on May 1, 2017, to comply with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) guidelines regarding the implementation of a substantive change after Board approval S*937 (Rat #0172, Act #0161 of 2018). Thus, the implementation of the change to revert powers to the Denmark Technical College Area Commission on January 1, 2019.

During this time of governance change, many headlines plagued the college.

Herder (2022) stated in her article titled, *The Persistence of Denmark Tech: How a Two-Year HBCU Survived Closure*, “Rumors about DTC closing had been swirling since 2017, when South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster transferred the oversight of DTC to the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education. In January 2018, the state board issued a recommendation to shut down the school.”

In an article published by the Post and Courier titled, “Will Denmark Tech be South Carolina’s first technical college to close,” the writer stated that the college’s enrollment had plummeted seventy-seven percent (77%) over the past decade (2010-2020). Despite the significant challenges Denmark Technical College (DTC) faced, including a sharp decline in enrollment and severe financial instability, the institution’s resilience became a testament to its enduring legacy and importance to the community. The governance change, brought about by the state legislative bill in 2017, was a drastic measure aimed at stabilizing the college. Although there were persistent rumors and recommendations to close DTC, the college’s administration, faculty, alumni, and supporters fought to keep the doors open.

The narrative of Denmark Technical College is not just one of hardship but also of determination and survival. The temporary transfer of governance to the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (SBTCE) was a critical period, but it ultimately led to necessary reforms and a renewed commitment to the institution’s mission. By January 2019, as the college’s powers were reverted to its Local Area Commission, DTC emerged from this challenging period with a renewed focus on serving its students and community, proving that even in the face of adversity, the spirit of an institution can endure and thrive.

The Establishment of Conceptual Framework Teams

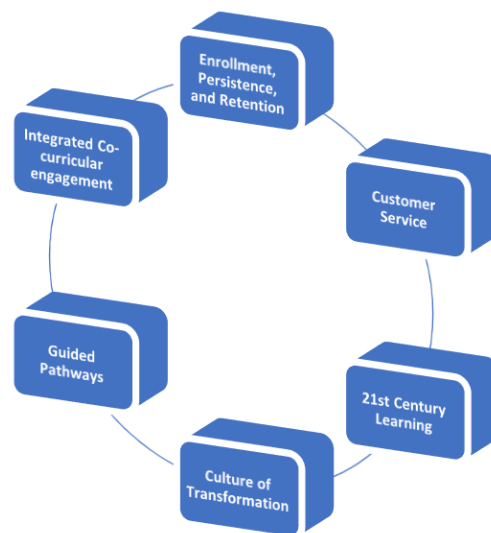
In response to the dire circumstances, Denmark Technical College chose the path of transformation rather than surrendering to closure. Under the visionary leadership of Dr. Willie L. Todd, Jr., the ninth college president, a bold decision was made to revitalize the institution. Recognizing that the first step in this transformation was to confront the issues nearly bringing the college to closure, Dr. Todd spearheaded the establishment of Conceptual Framework Teams. These teams were tasked with diagnosing the core problems, ranging from administrative inefficiencies to declining enrollment, and developing strategic solutions to address them.

This proactive approach provided a clear roadmap for the college’s recovery and a renewed sense of purpose and direction. By focusing on transformation, Denmark Technical College began to rebuild its foundation, ensuring that it could continue to fulfill its mission of providing quality education and opportunities for its students. The decision to transform rather than close marked a pivotal moment in the college's history, symbolizing resilience, innovation, and the unwavering commitment to its community.

In March 2020, Denmark Technical College took a significant step toward institutional transformation by engaging seventy-eight college employees, alumni, and community members in a continuous improvement exercise using the Affinity Mapping Protocol. The purpose of an Affinity Mapping Protocol is to allow the institution to define the elements of a larger topic or to deepen a conversation around a question or topic that has many answers or perspectives.

This exercise was crucial for identifying the core elements of the college’s challenges and opportunities, enabling participants to dive deep into various perspectives on complex issues. The outcome of this collaborative effort was the organization of ideas into six key topics, each of which formed the foundation for a Conceptual Framework Team.

At the conclusion of the exercise, many ideas were organized into six (6) main topics, which created six (6) conceptual framework teams.



Among these, the Guided Pathways Conceptual Framework emerged as a pivotal initiative aimed at enhancing student success. Through the Affinity Mapping Protocol engagement and reviewing a wealth of data, committee chairs were appointed, and the official launch of the Guided Pathways Conceptual Framework Team was established.

Year Zero (0) – Planning Year – 2020

The Guided Pathways Conceptual Framework Committee comprised eight (8) faculty members, five (5) staff members, three (3) alumni, and two (2) students. The framework focused on all freshmen students entering the college. The committee wanted to bridge the gap between Enrollment Management and Academic Advising. During this year, the committee embarked on a comprehensive process to lay the groundwork for this transformative student success model. The goal was to design a program to enhance student engagement, academic achievement, career readiness, and post-graduation success. Recognizing the importance of a thorough understanding of existing challenges and opportunities, the committee adopted a methodical approach to assess the current state of student experiences and outcomes at the college.

Assessment of Issues and Challenges

1. Data Collection and Analysis: The committee began by gathering and analyzing a wide range of institutional data. This included student retention and graduation rates, student engagement metrics, academic performance, and faculty, staff, students, and alumni feedback. Additionally, the committee reviewed data related to student demographics, including socio-economic status, first-generation college attendance, and academic preparedness. This comprehensive data collection allowed the committee to identify key areas where students faced obstacles.

2. Stakeholder Engagement: Engaging stakeholders was critical to the assessment process. The committee held a series of interviews and conversations with students, faculty, alumni, staff, and administrators. These sessions provided valuable qualitative insights into the student experience, revealing specific pain points such as challenges in navigating academic pathways, limited access to career development resources, and the need for more personalized academic advising.

3. Review of Existing Programs and Practices: The committee conducted an in-depth review of existing student support programs and academic advising practices at Denmark Technical College. This review highlighted both strengths and gaps in the current offerings. While successful initiatives, such as career fairs and tutoring services, were in place, the committee identified a lack of cohesion in how these resources were presented to and accessed by students.

4. Benchmarking Against Best Practices: To ensure the framework would be built on a solid foundation of proven strategies, the committee researched best practices from other institutions that had successfully implemented similar student success models. This benchmarking exercise gave the committee a clear understanding of the elements that should be incorporated into the framework, such as guided academic pathways, integrated career services, and continuous support post-graduation.

Setting the Stage for the Framework

1. **Establishing Clear Objectives:** Based on the assessments conducted, the committee established clear objectives for the framework. These objectives included improving student retention, persistence, and graduation rates, enhancing career readiness, and ensuring students received consistent support throughout their academic journey and beyond. The committee also set specific, measurable goals to track progress over time.

2. **Designing the Framework:** The committee designed the framework based on its deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities. This framework centered on three (3) key components: Guided Pathways, Career Pathways, and Perpetual Pathways. Each component was carefully crafted to address the issues identified during the assessment phase.

3. **Building Institutional Buy-In:** Recognizing the importance of institutional support, the committee worked to build buy-in from all levels of the college. This involved presenting the findings from the assessment phase and the proposed framework to key stakeholders, including college leadership, faculty, and staff. The committee also facilitated workshops and training sessions to ensure that everyone involved understood the goals and structure of the framework.

4. **Pilot Testing and Feedback:** To refine the framework before full implementation, the committee launched a pilot program involving incoming freshmen. This pilot allowed the committee to test the processes and resources developed during the planning year, gather feedback, and make necessary adjustments.

The first year of planning for the framework was a critical assessment, design, and preparation period. The committee identified key challenges through a rigorous collaborative process and established clear objectives. It developed a cohesive framework to guide students from their first steps at Denmark Technical College to their post-graduation success. By laying this strong foundation, the committee set the stage for the framework's successful launch and long-term impact.

Year One (1) – Pilot Year – 2021

During this year, students were advised by their academic champion the first semester and mentored by the faculty advisor and then transitioned to their faculty advisor their second semester and mentored by the academic champion and advisor. In addition, the committee strengthened its framework and launched YouScience to assist students with identity formation. YouScience is a tool that helps students discover their natural aptitudes and explore careers that match them. All first-year students are required to take YouScience within the first semester.

To further assess students, the college introduced the E-Proficiency Profile (EPP), a general education outcomes assessment of core skills to demonstrate program effectiveness and assess and demonstrate student learning. The general education outcomes assessment measures three (3) core skills areas – reading, writing, and mathematics.

The college also wanted academic champions to engage with students during their first semester. IDS 102 – Personal and Career Assessment and COL 103 – College Skills courses were added to all curriculum displays for each program. If the student majored in an associate or transfer program, they were enrolled in COL 103 their first semester. If the student majored in a diploma or certificate program, they were enrolled in IDS 102.

Year Two (2) – Implementation Year – 2022

The committee introduced the 1 + 1 model, allowing students to be advised by their academic champion for two (2) semesters if they were enrolled in an associate degree program and one semester if they were enrolled in a diploma or certificate program. This model was introduced because students need more engagement with their academic champion to solidify their major, participate in sessions to enhance study skills and development, identify students’ challenges, provide tailored support, and improve persistence and retention. The faculty advisor served as the mentor until the student was transitioned to them.

Identification of the Topic

In March 2023, through faculty and staff engagement, review of the data collected during the pilot and implementation year, and conversations with advisory council members and alumni, it was confirmed that the Guided Pathways Conceptual Framework was making a positive difference in student success. A survey was provided to advisory council members, faculty, staff, alumni, and industry leaders to further validate that the framework was beneficial to the college. The survey asked participants to rate, on a scale from one (1) to five (5), with five (5) being the highest, the importance of the following topics for the quality enhancement plan.

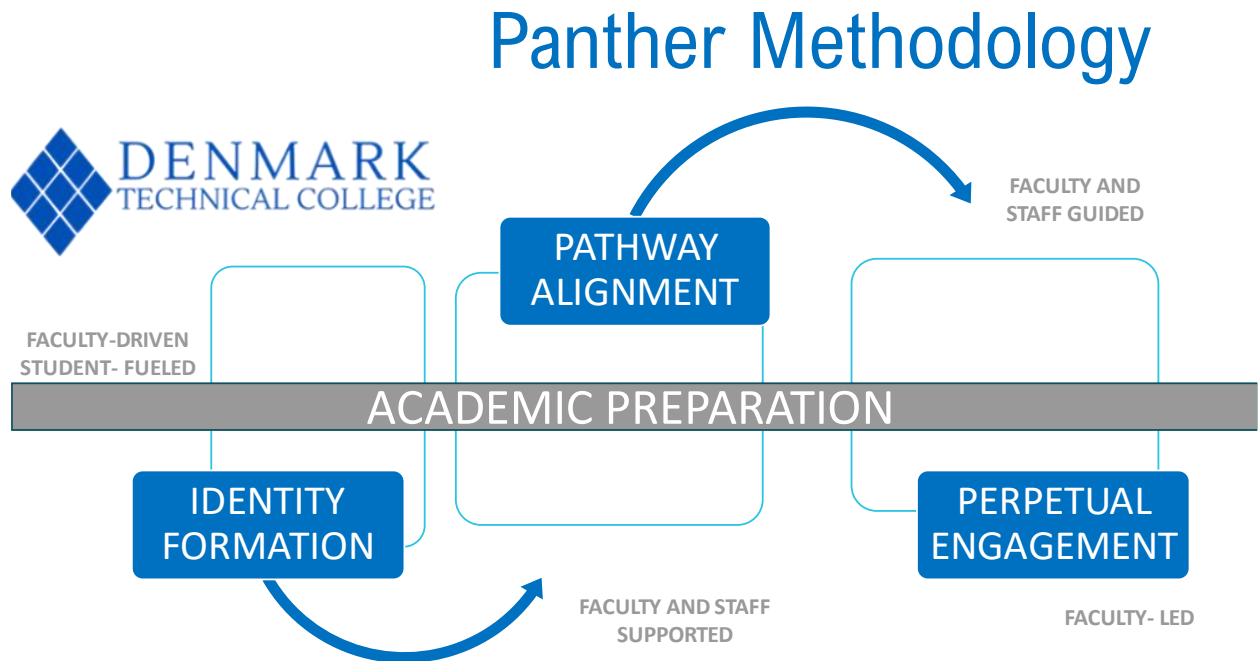
1. Academic Advising
2. Academic Mentorship
3. Career Planning and Pathways
4. Digital Literacy
5. Experiential Learning Opportunities
6. Financial Literacy

The survey revealed that 80% of the participants ranked Career Planning and Pathways as number five (5) and Academic Advising as number four (4). The college administration reviewed the data and feedback and determined that the Guided Pathways Framework should be institutionalized. Earlier results showed improvements in persistence, retention, and graduate placement rates.

The Guided Pathways Conceptual Framework Team committee members conversed with its stakeholders and decided that the framework should be institutionalized. The committee felt that just focusing on freshmen would not increase the college’s overall institutional measures of success. Thus, the name was changed to Panther Pathways, and the choice was made for the institution’s topic for its Quality Enhancement Plan. The college expanded its reach to all first-year, returning, and alumni since they impact retention, persistence, and graduation rates. Further, all students impact placement rates since placement is measured one-year post-graduation.

V. The Panther Pathways Methodology Year Three (3) – Panther Pathways Fully Institutionalized – 2023

In July 2023, Panther Pathways became institutionalized.



The Panther Methodology at Denmark Technical College is a comprehensive approach to student success rooted in three (3) interlinked phases: Identity Formation, Pathway Alignment, and Perpetual Engagement. Each phase is critical in shaping students' academic journeys and ensuring they are well-prepared and supported throughout their education.

Identity Formation

The journey begins with Identity Formation, a faculty-driven and student-fueled phase. Here, the focus is on helping students develop a strong sense of self and purpose. Faculty members actively engage with students to uncover their strengths, interests, and goals. This phase is crucial as it lays the foundation for a student's academic and professional identity, empowering them to take ownership of their education and future career paths.

Pathway Alignment

The next phase is Pathway Alignment, building on the solid foundation of identity. This phase is faculty and staff-guided, ensuring that students receive the necessary support to align their academic pursuits with their personal and professional aspirations. Faculty and staff work collaboratively with students to map out a clear and achievable educational pathway, connecting their academic preparation to real-world opportunities and career objectives. This alignment is key to keeping students on track and motivated, as they can clearly see the relevance of their studies to their long-term goals.

Perpetual Engagement

The final phase, Perpetual Engagement, is faculty-led and involves continuous interaction between students and faculty throughout the educational experience. This engagement is not a one-time event but an ongoing process that ensures students remain connected, involved, and supported for seven (7) years post-graduation. Faculty lead initiatives that keep students academically, socially, and professionally engaged, creating a dynamic learning environment where students can thrive. This phase emphasizes the importance of sustained support and active participation in the college community, ensuring that students are prepared for graduation and life beyond college. This phase also assists alumni with items ranging from continued resume creation to building stackable credentials to assist with career growth and development post-graduation.

Academic Preparation as the Core

At the heart of the Panther Methodology is Academic Preparation. This core element is the thread that weaves through each phase, ensuring that all efforts are directed toward equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for success. Whether through identity exploration, pathway planning, or ongoing engagement, the ultimate goal is to prepare students academically for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

The Panther Methodology is a holistic framework designed to guide students from the moment they step onto campus until they embark on their professional careers. It is a cycle of continuous support, growth, and achievement, all driven by a strong and unwavering commitment to student success at Denmark Technical College.

The Panther Pathways Model has three (3) overarching goals.

1. Enhance Academic Planning and Advising
2. Strengthen Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness
3. Promote Lifelong Learning and Professional Development

Overarching Goal 1: Enhance Academic Planning and Advising

Goal 1.1: Clear Academic Planning

Objective: Ensure that 90% of first-year students create a comprehensive academic plan by the end of their first semester.

Action Steps:

- Develop mandatory academic planning workshops for all incoming first-year students.
- Implement the digital academic planning tool integrated into the student portal.
- Provide continuous professional development to the Academic Champions on best practices for guiding students in academic planning.

Assessment:

- Track the completion rate of academic plans.

- Conduct surveys to measure student satisfaction with the planning process.

Goal 1.2: Resource Utilization

Objective: Increase the usage of academic support services by 50% among first-year students within two (2) years.

Action Steps:

- Launch a campaign to raise awareness about available academic resources.
- Offer incentives for students who regularly attend tutoring and advising sessions.
- Monitor and analyze the usage patterns of support services.

Assessment:

- Utilize statistics from academic support centers.
- Collect student feedback through regular surveys.

Goal 1.3: Progress Monitoring

Objective: Implement a digital early alert system for regular academic progress checks, ensuring 80% of first-year students receive timely feedback and support.

Action Steps:

- Develop a progress monitoring system that alerts advisors and students about critical academic milestones.
- Schedule regular check-ins between advisors and students to discuss progress.
- Provide training for advisors on effective progress monitoring techniques.

Assessment:

- Monitor the frequency and outcomes of advisor-student meetings.
- Evaluate student retention and progression data.

Overarching Goal 2: Strengthen Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness

Goal 2.1: Career Alignment

Objective: Ensure that 90% of students identify a career path and align their academic programs accordingly by the end of their first year.

Action Steps:

- Implement YouScience for all first-year students.
- Integrate career exploration activities into the first-year experience curriculum.
- Provide access to career assessment tools.
- Facilitate workshops and one-on-one career counseling sessions.

Assessment:

- Track the number of students completing career assessments and workshops.
- Survey students on their clarity and confidence in their chosen career paths.

Goal 2.2: Skill Development

Objective: Equip 75% of students with the technical and professional skills needed for their careers through targeted workshops and training programs.

Action Steps:

- Partner with industry experts to develop skill-building workshops.
- Offer certifications in key technical and professional skills.
- Integrate skill development modules into relevant courses.

Assessment:

- Track participation and completion rates of workshops and certification programs.
- Collect feedback from students and employers on skill readiness.

Goal 2.3: Work-Based Learning (Experiential Learning)

Objective: Facilitate work-based learning experiences for 75% of students by their second year.

Action Steps:

- Establish partnerships with local businesses and organizations for internships and apprenticeships.
- Create a database of available work-based learning opportunities.
- Assign dedicated staff to support students in securing and succeeding in these experiences.

Assessment:

- Track the number and type of work-based learning experiences completed.
- Create surveys for students and employers on the effectiveness of their experiences.

Overarching Goal 3: Promote Lifelong Learning and Professional Development

Goal 3.1: Lifelong Learning

Objective: Foster a commitment to lifelong learning in 80% of students, measured by participation in continuing education and skill development programs post-graduation.

Action Steps:

- Offer workshops on the importance of lifelong learning and personal growth.
- Provide resources and information on continuing education opportunities.
- Create alumni networks that promote ongoing learning and development.

Assessment:

- Track participation in post-graduation education programs.
- Conduct alumni surveys to assess ongoing learning engagement.

Goal 3.2: Experiential Learning

Objective: Ensure 85% of students demonstrate the ability to adapt to changing job market demands by participating in at least two (2) professional development/experiential learning activities annually.

Action Steps:

- Organize seminars and workshops on emerging trends and technologies in various fields.
- Offer courses that emphasize adaptability and problem-solving skills.
- Encourage participation in extracurricular activities that foster adaptability.
- Offer boot camps for students who are offered an experiential learning opportunity.

Assessment:

- Monitor student participation in professional development activities.
- Evaluate student adaptability through assessments and feedback from employers.

Goal 3.3: Professional Networking

Objective: Engage 75% of students in networking opportunities and professional development activities in their first year.

Action Steps:

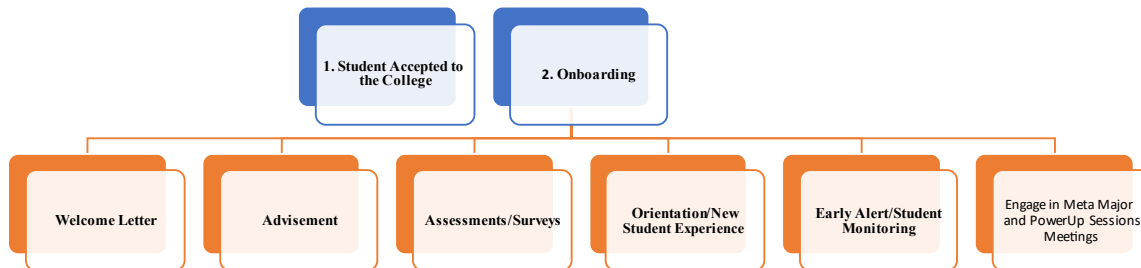
- Host networking events, career fairs, and alumni panels.
- Provide training on effective networking techniques.
- Develop a mentorship program connecting students with industry professionals.

Assessment:

Track attendance and participation in networking events.

Survey students on their networking skills and connections made.

The illustrations below outline the Panther Pathways Model for each tenet:



GUIDED PATHWAYS

After a student is accepted to the college, the Panther Pathway model begins with Tenet 1: Guided Pathways.

During the onboarding process, students receive:

1. a welcome letter from the Department of Career and Student Success with pertinent information.
2. academic advising.
3. mandatory assessment links to complete the YouScience, EPP, and Daily Miller assessments.
4. orientation during the New Student Experience (NSE) Week.
5. academic, social, and behavioral monitoring and support throughout the semester.

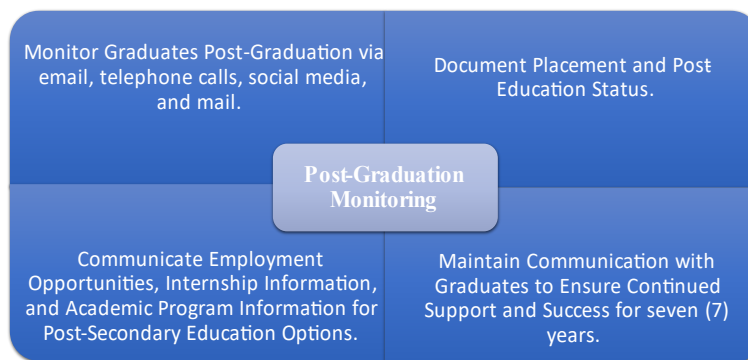
The next tenet covers career development. Tenet 2: Career Pathways allows students to participate in several opportunities to enhance their career development. The illustration below lists services and opportunities that are available to students. It also lists the key components of the Career Pathways tenet, such as YouScience assessments, career fairs, and boot camps, all of which aim to equip students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and opportunities to succeed in their chosen careers.

Through financial literacy workshops and exposure to career outlook data, students gain practical insights into the financial and professional landscapes they will enter. Additionally, experiential learning opportunities further enhance their readiness for the workforce. This illustration captures our commitment to supporting students' journey from education to successful employment.



The Perpetual Pathways framework (Tenet 3) depicted in the illustration below highlights Denmark Technical College's commitment to long-term student success, extending well beyond graduation. This initiative focuses on comprehensive post-graduation monitoring, ensuring that graduates receive ongoing support as they transition into their careers or further education.

The process involves continuous communication through various channels—email, telephone, social media, and US mail—to keep track of graduates' progress. The college also documents placement and post-education status while actively sharing relevant employment opportunities, internship information, apprenticeship information, and academic program options for continued education. By maintaining a consistent connection with graduates for up to seven years, Denmark Technical College ensures its alumni have the resources and guidance needed to thrive in their professional and academic endeavors.



PERPETUAL PATHWAYS

Implementation and Evaluation

To ensure the success of the Panther Pathways model, Denmark Technical College will implement a continuous improvement process based on data collection, analysis, and stakeholder feedback in alignment with the institutional assessment process – see section IX. Regular evaluations will assess the effectiveness of each goal and action step, adjusting as needed to achieve the mission and vision. This comprehensive approach will align with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Standard 7.2, focusing on quality enhancement and student success.

VI. Institutional Commitment to the Topic

Standard 7.2 – “The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies...”

Denmark Technical College’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Panther Pathways, has garnered substantial and widespread support across the institution’s various constituencies, reflecting a shared commitment to enhancing student success and academic achievement. This broad-based support is evident in the collaborative efforts of faculty, staff, administration, students, and external stakeholders who have actively contributed to the development, implementation, and ongoing refinement of the QEP.

Faculty Engagement:

Faculty members from diverse academic disciplines have played a crucial role in shaping the QEP. Their involvement began in the initial planning stages, where they provided valuable insights into the academic challenges faced by students. Faculty committees were instrumental in designing the Guided Pathways and Career Pathways components of Panther Pathways, ensuring that the initiative aligns with curricular goals and supports student learning outcomes. Faculty members continue to be key participants in the execution of the QEP, regularly contributing to the assessment and enhancement of the program based on their direct interactions with students.

Staff and Administrative Involvement:

Staff members across various divisions and departments, including Student Affairs, Academic Advising, and Career Services, have demonstrated strong support for the QEP by integrating Panther Pathways into their daily operations. Administrative leaders have also endorsed the plan, recognizing its potential to significantly improve retention, persistence, and graduation rates. This commitment is reflected in allocating resources, including dedicated personnel and funding, to support the successful implementation of the QEP. Regular meetings and workshops involving staff and administration have fostered a culture of collaboration, ensuring that all aspects of the plan are effectively coordinated.

Student Participation:

Student voices have been central to the development and ongoing success of the QEP. Through focus groups, surveys, and student government forums, students have provided critical feedback that has shaped Panther Pathways’ objectives and strategies. Their active participation has ensured that the QEP addresses real-world challenges the student body faces, making it a relevant and impactful initiative. The inclusion of students on the QEP’s committee further demonstrates the institution’s commitment to incorporating student perspectives into decision-making processes.

External Stakeholder Support:

The institution has also sought the input and support of external stakeholders, including alumni, local employers, and community partners. These groups have endorsed Panther Pathways as a vital initiative that enhances academic outcomes and prepares students for successful careers and civic engagement. Partnerships with local businesses and organizations have enriched the Career

Pathways component of the QEP, providing students with valuable internship and employment opportunities.

Institution-Wide Communication:

Transparent and continuous communication across the institution has reinforced the broad-based support for the QEP. Regular updates on the progress of Panther Pathways are shared through town hall meetings, newsletters, and the college’s website, keeping all stakeholders informed and engaged. This ongoing dialogue has fostered a sense of shared responsibility and collective ownership of the QEP, ensuring its success and sustainability.

The Quality Enhancement Plan at Denmark Technical College is not just an administrative initiative, but a comprehensive, institution-wide effort supported by faculty, staff, students, and external partners. This broad-based support underscores the college’s collective commitment to student success and the long-term impact of Panther Pathways on the academic and professional futures of its students. Further, the institution's QEP is supported by various constituencies, emphasizing collaboration, communication, and shared responsibility in the pursuit of student success.

QEP Logic Model

A Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a systematic approach to improving institutional effectiveness by focusing on key student learning and success areas. For Denmark Technical College, the QEP incorporates three (3) tenets: Guided Pathways, Career Pathways, and Perpetual Engagement.



The QEP logic model for Guided Pathways, Career Pathways, and Perpetual Engagement at Denmark Technical College outlines a comprehensive approach to enhancing student outcomes. By focusing on structured academic plans, career readiness, and ongoing alumni engagement, the initiative aims to improve student retention, academic performance, and career success, ultimately contributing to the institution's overall effectiveness and impact.

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Logic Model depicted in the illustration is a structured framework that outlines the strategic inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts associated with Denmark Technical College's Panther Pathways initiative. This model serves as a roadmap for improving student success through intentional advising, experiential learning, and targeted academic support.

QEP Logic Model

| INPUTS | ACTIVITIES | OUTPUTS | OUTCOMES | IMPACT |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Faculty • Staff • Alumni • Academic Champions • Student Support Services • Industry Partners/Employers • Academic Champions • Funding • College Strategic Plan initiatives • Institutional Measures of Success • Experiential Learning Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional Advising (1+1 model) • Metamajor Meetings • Mandatory Study Hall • Program delivery • Career Fairs • Career Bootcamps • Experiential Learning (internship, apprenticeships) • Faculty Mentorship • Faculty, Staff, and Student Development • Expanding course offerings for career readiness (COL 103 and IDS 102) • Identify Formation (YouScience) • Program support • Survey • Focus Groups • Advisory Council Meetings • Tutoring and Academic Workshops (PowerUp Sessions) • Career Counseling • Networking Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Expanded curriculum • Examinations • Evaluations • Industry certifications and licensure • Survey completions • Recorded academic support provided • Employment placement • Curriculum Display maps • Advising Records • Support listing for needed services • Statistical data/utilization rates • Documentation • Attendance Records • Strengthened Alumni Contributions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students completing the YouScience assessment • Number of industry certificates earned by students • Percentage of students passing an industry certification or licensure the first time • Percentage of students placed post-graduation • Percentage of students participating in an experiential opportunity while enrolled • Percentage of students completing associate degrees within two years • Percentage of students completing certificate and diploma programs within 1.5 years • Percentage of students who are prepared for work post-graduation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in retention, persistence, graduation, and placement rates • Increase in first-time pass rates for industry-recognized certifications or licensure • Increase in student experience in their field of study (experiential learning) • Improved academic performance • Greater alignment between student goals and institutional offerings. • Increased job readiness and satisfaction • Increased economic mobility • Sustained institutional support |

Literature Review and Best Practices

Guided Pathways

Guided pathways have been widely studied to enhance student success through structured and clear educational trajectories. The foundational work by Bailey, Jaggars, and Jenkins (2015) presents a comprehensive analysis of community colleges that adopted the guided pathways model. Their findings indicate significant improvements in retention and graduation rates, attributing these outcomes to structured academic plans and proactive advising, which help students stay on course and complete their degrees more efficiently.

Further supporting this, Kalamkarian, Boynton, and Lopez (2018) report that colleges implementing guided pathways observed increased completion rates. The study underscores the importance of clear, coherent program maps and integrated support services, which guide students through their educational journeys with fewer obstacles.

Scrivener and Weiss (2013) highlight the positive impact of performance-based scholarships linked to guided pathways, demonstrating that financial incentives combined with structured guidance can lead to higher course completion rates and better academic performance.

Career Pathways

Career pathways are integral to aligning educational outcomes with labor market demands. Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl (2010) emphasize the growing importance of connecting education to career opportunities. Their research indicates that career pathways, which integrate academic and technical education with work-based learning, enhance students' employability and career readiness.

Another study by Symonds, Schwartz, and Ferguson (2011) discusses the value of pathways that combine rigorous academics with career and technical education. This model ensures that students are prepared for both postsecondary education and the workforce, contributing to higher employment rates and job satisfaction among graduates.

Karp and Stacey (2013) further highlight that career pathways that incorporate non-academic supports, such as career counseling and job placement services, are crucial in helping students achieve their professional goals.

Perpetual Engagement

Perpetual engagement, particularly with alumni, plays a critical role in fostering continuous support and long-term success for students. Tinto (2012) underscores the importance of building a strong sense of community and belonging among students and alumni. This engagement enhances retention and graduation rates by creating a supportive network that students can rely on throughout their educational and professional journeys.

Barnes and Nobles College (2018) report that institutions that maintain ongoing relationships with alumni through mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and networking

events see improved student outcomes. These initiatives provide continuous support and resources, helping students and graduates navigate their careers successfully.

Weerts, Cabrera, and Sanford (2010) discuss the impact of alumni engagement on institutional support and student success. Their study indicates that engaged alumni are more likely to contribute to their alma mater, both financially and through mentoring, thus enhancing the educational experience for current students.

The literature reviewed reveals that guided pathways, career pathways, and perpetual engagement effectively improve student outcomes. Guided pathways provide structured academic plans and support, leading to higher retention and graduation rates. Career pathways align education with labor market needs, enhancing employability and career readiness. Perpetual engagement, particularly with alumni, offers continuous support and resources, contributing to long-term student success. Together, these approaches create a comprehensive framework that supports students from entry to education through their professional careers.

Alignment with Complete College America

Denmark Technical College's Panther Pathways initiative aligns closely with the strategies promoted by Complete College America (CCA) to enhance student success and completion rates. The key elements of Panther Pathways—Guided Pathways, Career Pathways, and Perpetual Pathways—echo the CCA's Game Changer strategies, particularly in their emphasis on structured support, proactive advising, and career readiness.

1. Guided Pathways and CCA's Structured Scheduling: Guided Pathways at Denmark Technical College ensures that students have a clear and structured academic plan from the moment they are accepted. This approach aligns with CCA's advocacy for structured scheduling, which aims to provide students with a predictable pathway to graduation, minimizing the risk of taking unnecessary courses that do not contribute to their degree completion (Complete College America, 2017).

2. Career Pathways and CCA's Guided Pathways to Success: Denmark's Career Pathways initiative integrates career development into the academic journey, similar to CCA's Guided Pathways to Success (GPS) model. By providing students with career exploration opportunities, internships, apprenticeships, and professional preparation workshops, Panther Pathways ensures that students are academically prepared and career-ready upon graduation. This alignment with CCA's GPS model helps students make informed choices about their academic and career trajectories, reducing time to degree completion (Complete College America, 2018).

3. Perpetual Pathways and CCA's 15 to Finish: Perpetual Pathways at Denmark Technical College includes post-graduation monitoring and ongoing support to ensure students' long-term success. This approach supports CCA's "15 to Finish" initiative, which encourages students to take a full course load each semester to graduate on time. By providing continuous support and encouraging efficient progression through academic programs, Panther Pathways helps students stay on track for timely graduation, aligning with CCA's completion goals (Complete College America, 2015).

The Panther Pathways initiative is well-aligned with the strategies and goals advocated by Complete College America. By focusing on structured academic planning, integrating career readiness, and providing continuous support, Denmark Technical College is committed to improving student outcomes and increasing graduation rates, which aligns with national best practices.

VII. Standard 7.2 – “The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success...”

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Student Success Outcomes (SSOs)

Denmark Technical College’s commitment to academic excellence and student achievement is anchored in a strategic focus on improving specific student learning outcomes (SLOs) and overall student success. Addressing these crucial areas is a cornerstone of the institutional mission, ensuring that all students meet academic expectations and are fully prepared to thrive in their chosen careers and as lifelong learners. In addition, fostering an environment where students are actively engaged in their educational journey is supported by a robust framework of targeted learning outcomes that align with academic goals and industry needs. By focusing on measurable and specific outcomes, we can track progress, identify areas for improvement, and implement evidence-based strategies to enhance the student experience.

The following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Student Success Outcomes (SSOs) have been created to provide measurable goals to assess the effectiveness of the Panther Pathways initiative, ensuring that students are not only completing their academic programs but are also well-prepared for their careers and future educational endeavors.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

1. *Academic Planning and Navigation:*

SLO1: Students will develop and demonstrate the ability to create and follow a personalized academic plan, ensuring timely progress toward degree completion.

SLO2: Students will understand and utilize academic resources and support services to enhance their learning experience.

2. *Career Readiness:*

SLO3: Students will identify, and articulate career goals based on self-assessment tools (e.g., YouScience) and career exploration activities.

SLO4: Students will develop job-seeking skills, including resume writing, interview techniques, and professional networking, to secure internships, apprenticeships, and post-graduation employment.

3. *Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:*

SLO5: Students will engage in critical thinking and problem-solving activities related to their chosen meta-major, applying these skills in academic and real-world contexts.

SLO6: Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret assessment data to make informed academic and career decisions.

4. *Communication Skills:*

SLO7: Students will enhance their written and oral communication skills by participating in courses like COL 103 and IDS 102 and engaging in data conversations and meta-major meetings.

SLO8: Students will communicate their academic progress, challenges, and achievements effectively with advisors and academic champions.

Student Success Outcomes (SSOs)

1. Retention, Persistence, and Graduation Rates:

SSO1: Increase in student retention from the first year to the second year, reflecting the effectiveness of onboarding, advisement, and the early alert process.

SSO2: Increase in student persistence from the fall semester to the spring semester, reflecting the effectiveness of onboarding, advisement, and early alert process.

SSO3: Improvement in graduation rates within the expected completion timeframe demonstrates the success of structured academic pathways.

2. Academic Performance:

SSO4: Higher cumulative GPA and course completion rates for students participating in Panther Pathways, indicating improved academic engagement and success.

SSO5: Reduction in the number of students placed on academic probation, showcasing the impact of proactive advisement and academic support.

3. Career and Post-Graduation Success:

SSO6: Higher percentage of students securing internships, apprenticeships, or employment in their field of study before or shortly after graduation.

SSO7: Increased enrollment in post-secondary education programs or career advancement opportunities, reflecting the effectiveness of career pathways and continuous support.

4. Student Engagement and Satisfaction:

SSO8: Improved student satisfaction scores in surveys related to advisement, orientation, and overall college experience.

SSO9: Higher levels of participation in meta-major meetings, career fairs, and professional development workshops, indicating strong student engagement with Panther Pathways initiatives.

Assessing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Student Success Outcomes (SSOs) involves a combination of direct and indirect assessment methods, as well as qualitative and quantitative data collection.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

| | SLO | Assessment Method | Tools | Data Collection |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|---|--|--|
| Academic Planning and Navigation | SLO1 SLO2 | Track student usage of academic advising services and completion of personalized academic plans. | Advising appointment records, academic plan submission, and review rates. | Measure the percentage of students who develop and follow their academic plans and track any changes in their academic progress (e.g., course completion rates and adherence to the plan). |
| Career Readiness | SLO 3 SLO 4 | Evaluate student participation in career readiness activities and their performance in job-seeking tasks. | Participation logs for career fairs, resume workshops, boot camps, and mock interviews; pre- and post-workshop surveys; employer feedback on internship readiness. | Collect data on student engagement in career development activities and their ability to secure internships or employment. Post-graduation surveys can also provide insight into the application of these skills in the workforce. |
| Critical Thinking and Problem Solving | SLO 5 SLO 6 | Use course assignments, projects, or case studies that require critical thinking and problem-solving. | Rubrics for grading critical thinking skills, analysis of assessment results, and student reflections. | Collect and analyze student work samples from relevant courses (e.g., COL 103 and IDS 102) to assess their critical thinking abilities. Faculty evaluations of these assignments will provide data on student competency in this area. |
| Communication Skills | SLO 7 SLO 8 | Assess communication skills through written assignments, presentations, and participation in discussions. | Rubrics for assessing written and oral communication, advisor feedback, and peer evaluations. | Gather data from course assignments, presentations, and communication logs with academic advisors to evaluate improvements in communication skills. |

STUDENT SUCCESS OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

| | SLO | Assessment Method | Tools | Data Collection |
|--|------------|--------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
|--|------------|--------------------------|--------------|------------------------|

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| Retention and Graduation Rates | SLO 1 SLO 2 SLO 3 | Analyze institutional data on retention and graduation rates before and after the implementation of Panther Pathways. | Institutional research data, student tracking systems, and retention rate reports. | Track year-over-year retention, persistence, and graduation rates and compare these with benchmarks set before the implementation of Panther Pathways. |
| Academic Performance | SLO 4 SLO 5 | Monitor student GPAs, course completion rates, and academic standing. | Academic records, grade reports, and early alert systems. | Collect and analyze data on student GPAs, course completion rates, and academic probation rates to assess overall academic performance. |
| Career and Post-Graduation Success | SLO 6 SLO 7 | Survey graduates to determine employment status, salary, and satisfaction with their career preparation. | Alumni surveys, employment databases, and follow-up interviews. | Conduct surveys and gather employment data six months and one-year post-graduation to assess the effectiveness of career readiness initiatives. |
| Student Engagement and Satisfaction | SLO 8 SLO 9 | Collect feedback from students on their satisfaction with Panther Pathways activities and their overall college experience. | Student satisfaction surveys, focus groups, and course evaluations. | Analyze survey results, focus group discussions, and course evaluations to measure student engagement and satisfaction with the initiative. |

VIII. Standard 7.2 – “The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (d) commits resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP...”

Resources

Institutionalization of the QEP

The institutionalization of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Denmark Technical College represents a strategic commitment to enhancing student learning, success, and overall institutional effectiveness. By embedding the QEP's principles and practices into the college's core operations, Denmark Technical College aims to create a sustainable framework for continuous improvement. This narrative outlines the process of institutionalizing the QEP, highlighting key strategies, structures, and practices to ensure its longevity and impact.

The development and implementation of Panther Pathways completely changes the institution's culture. Its innovation encompasses the concept of creating a student-centered institution whose employees have the potential to effectively change their interactions with students from connection to enrollment to progression, completion, and, lastly, post-graduation. This innovative model will prepare faculty and staff to collaborate more intentionally by organizing communities of practice in the college community. It will also be sustained through the deliberate implementation of the tenets of Panther Pathways.

Key Strategies for Institutionalization

1. Leadership and Governance

- **QEP Steering Committee:** This team has been established to oversee the continued implementation and continuous improvement of the QEP. This team includes representatives from the administration.
- **Integration with Institutional Planning:** Leadership ensures that the QEP is integrated into the college's strategic planning and budget processes. This alignment guarantees that resources are allocated effectively to support QEP initiatives.

2. Faculty and Staff Engagement

- **Professional Development:** Provide ongoing professional development for faculty and staff to build capacity in areas related to Guided Pathways, Career Pathways, and Perpetual Pathways/Engagement. This training includes workshops, seminars, and collaborative learning opportunities.
- **Collaborative Culture:** Foster a culture of collaboration among faculty and staff, encouraging cross-departmental partnerships and the sharing of best practices.

3. Student Support Systems

- **Enhanced Advising:** Implement comprehensive advising systems that support students throughout their academic journey. This includes proactive advising, regular check-ins, and the use of data to identify and support at-risk students.
- **Career Services:** Strengthen career services by developing robust career counseling, job placement programs, and partnerships with local industries to provide experiential learning opportunities.

4. Assessment and Continuous Improvement

- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Utilize data to assess the effectiveness of QEP initiatives continuously. This includes tracking key performance indicators such as retention rates, graduation rates, and employment outcomes.
 - **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement regular feedback mechanisms, including surveys and focus groups, to gather input from students, faculty, staff, and employers. Use this feedback to refine and improve QEP activities.
5. **Alumni and Community Engagement**
- **Alumni Network:** Develop a strong alumni network to provide mentorship and support to current students. This network also serves as a resource for career connections and continuous engagement with the college.
 - **Community Partnerships:** Build partnerships with local businesses and community organizations to enhance career pathways and provide real-world learning experiences for students.

Sustainability and Long-Term Impact

The institutionalization of the QEP at Denmark Technical College ensures that the principles and practices developed through the QEP are sustainable and have a long-term impact. By embedding these initiatives into the college's operational framework, Denmark Technical College can continually enhance student learning and success. Key elements of sustainability include:

- **Ongoing Evaluation:** Regularly evaluate the impact of QEP initiatives through comprehensive assessment plans. Use these evaluations to make data-driven adjustments and improvements.
- **Resource Allocation:** Ensure that financial and human resources are dedicated to supporting QEP activities. This includes securing funding for professional development, technology enhancements, and student support services.
- **Institutional Commitment:** Foster a college-wide commitment to the QEP's goals and objectives. This involves leadership advocacy, faculty and staff engagement, and student participation.

The institutionalization of the QEP at Denmark Technical College represents a strategic effort to embed a culture of continuous improvement in student learning and success. By aligning the QEP with the college's mission, engaging faculty and staff, enhancing student support systems, and building strong community partnerships, Denmark Technical College ensures that the benefits of the QEP are sustainable and impactful. This comprehensive approach will enable the college to fulfill its mission of engaging, educating, and empowering students to achieve their full potential.

Quality Enhancement Plan Budget

Resources

Denmark Technical College is committed to supporting and continuing to implement the Quality Enhancement Plan. The College has had and will continue to have adequate resources as it implements and institutionalizes Panther Pathways.

Physical Resources

The Career and Student Success labs are housed in Smith Hall on the first floor. The office of the Executive Director for Career and Student Success is located in Smith Hall, Room 109. The Panthers' Writing Labs are in the Academic Support Building, Rooms 101A and 101B. Each lab contains technology to enhance student learning.

Professional development to adequately train faculty and students will be available every year and will present opportunities for train-the-trainer workshops for additional staff members throughout implementation. The computer labs accessible to students will be located in Smith Hall.

Fiscal Resources & Budget

Resources for the QEP implementation consist of directly budgeted activities and resources from various existing operational areas and personnel. Support for the implementation will be provided through the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the offices of Institutional Advancement and Effectiveness, Information Technology, Sponsored Programs (Title III), Public Relations and Marketing, and other system services.

Personnel

The Executive Director of Career and Student Success, who will also serve as the QEP Director, and the two (2) Academic Champions are all employed by the College. Each has been assigned to this initiative. The college will hire two (2) additional Academic Champions during the 2024-2025 Academic Year. The total salary plus fringe for these positions is \$125,960.00.

The College plans to use part-time personnel with relevant experience as professional tutors. Funds for these positions are budgeted in years three (3) through five (5). The professional tutors will work twenty (20) hours per week at \$15 per hour for forty-five (45) weeks. These hires will be based on the demand, and as such, the number and hours of contracts will depend on the work generated by the students. The total budgeted for professional tutors annually is \$13,500.00.

Contractual

Assessments

The QEP process will utilize several student assessments to gather data and improve the model throughout the institutional implementation.

| Assessment | Cost |
|--|-------------|
| Daily Miller | Free |
| YouScience Precision Examinations | \$11,826.02 |
| E-Proficiency Profile Exam (EPP) (Territorium) | \$11,375.00 |
| Total Cost | \$23,201.02 |

Tutoring

While professional tutoring services will be available, the college has also invested \$9,800.00 annually to purchase an institutional subscription to Tutor.com.

Supplies

This category includes routine consumable supplies such as printing paper, letterhead, file folders, labels, pens, easels, and report covers.

Professional Development/Travel

Each year, funds are allocated for the Executive Director for Career and Student Success (QEP Director) and the Academic Champions to travel to the National Symposium on Student Retention and National First-Year and Second-Year Experience Programs. Funds are also available for them to attend professional development opportunities pertaining to the first-year experience.

Marketing

The college will allocate \$10,000 for marketing materials in Year 2, and \$5,000 for each subsequent year.

The QEP Budget reflects the anticipated expenses incurred over five (5) years, including Year Zero and Pilot Year One. The budget outlays expenses in the following categories: Personnel, Contractual, Supplies, Professional Development/Assessments, and Marketing.

The budget for the QEP will remain consistent with Year 5 for the subsequent years. Budget funding is supported through Title III and the college.

PANTHER PATHWAYS BUDGET

| | Year 0 2020-2021 | Year 1 2021-2022 | Year 2 2022-2023 | Year 3 2023-2024 | Year 4 2024-2025 | Year 5 2025-2026 | Year 6 2026-2027 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Personnel | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$139,460 | \$139,460 | \$139,460 |
| Contractual | \$ 0 | \$33,001 | \$33,001 | \$33,001 | \$33,001 | \$33,001 | \$33,001 |
| Assessments | | | | | | | |
| Tutor.com | | | | | | | |
| Supplies | \$5,000 | \$ 14,453 | \$14,453 | \$10,250 | \$ 10,250 | \$ 10,250 | \$ 10,250 |
| Professional Development/Travel | \$15,000 | \$21,838 | \$21,838 | \$21,838 | \$21,838 | \$21,838 | \$21,838 |
| Marketing | \$0 | \$4,500 | \$10,000 | \$10,000 | \$ 5,000 | \$ 5,000 | \$ 5,000 |
| Educational | | | | | | | |
| Promotional | | | | | | | |

IX. Standard 7.2 – “The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (d) includes a plan to assess achievement.”

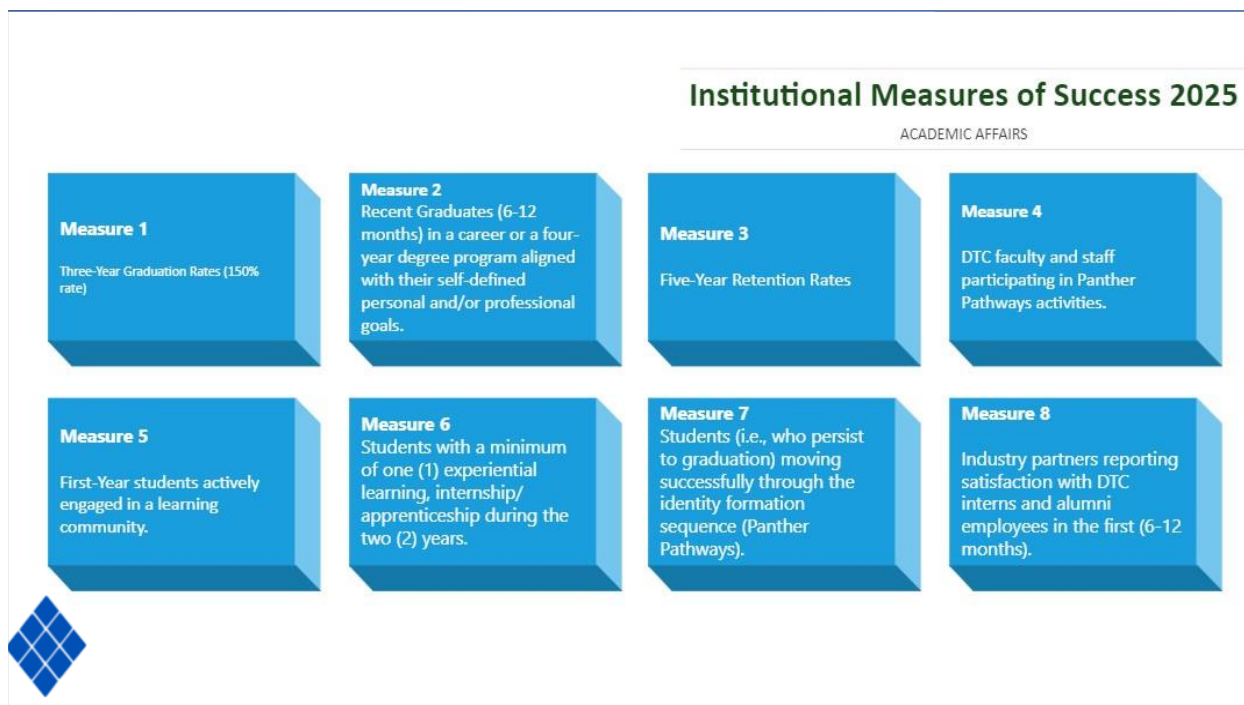
Denmark Technical College’s Panther Pathways initiative is a cornerstone of the institution’s commitment to enhancing the quality of education and ensuring student success. This initiative, part of the broader Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), is designed to provide a structured, supportive, and engaging academic journey for every student, emphasizing measurable outcomes and continuous improvement.

An effective assessment plan for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Denmark Technical College involves comparing institutional performance to national benchmarks among community colleges. This plan assesses the effectiveness of Guided Pathways, Career Pathways, and Perpetual Engagement. It includes specific goals, assessment methods, and performance targets based on national data. Panther Pathways will submit an Annual Outcomes Assessment and Plan and Report each year as part of the college’s assessment process (Appendix A). The assessment lists the goals for the year, how the goal is tied to the outcome, the measures that will be used to assess the goal, achievement targets, findings and results, and an action plan for the goal.

Assessment of Achievement

A key component of the Panther Pathways initiative is implementing a robust plan to assess student achievement at each phase of the journey. Denmark Technical College is committed to using data-driven strategies to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Panther Pathways, ensuring that the initiative meets its goals and continuously improves.

Quantitative Metrics: The college will track key performance indicators (KPIs) such as retention rates, graduation rates, course completion rates, and job placement rates. These metrics will provide a clear picture of student progress and the overall impact of the Panther Pathways initiative.



The Institutional Measures of Success 2025 outlines the college’s eight (8) key performance indicators (KPIs), which are aligned with assessing the effectiveness of Panther Pathways. These indicators are integral to the Panther Pathways initiative and designed to ensure that the college is achieving its strategic goals, particularly in student success, faculty and staff engagement, and industry partnerships.

Measure 1: Three-Year Graduation Rates (150% rate) – Goal 42%; Baseline: 24%

The first KPI focuses on increasing the three-year graduation rates for students. This measure reflects the percentage of students who complete their programs within 150% of the standard program time (e.g., three years for a two-year degree). Achieving a high graduation rate is critical as it indicates the effectiveness of the college’s academic programs and support services in helping students complete their education in a timely manner.

Measure 2: Recent Graduates in Career or Four-Year Degree Programs – Goal: 93%; Baseline: 87%

The second KPI tracks the success of recent graduates (6-12 months post-graduation) in securing employment in their chosen careers or enrolling in four-year degree programs that align with their self-defined personal and professional goals. This measure is crucial for assessing how well the college is preparing students for the workforce or further education, ensuring that their academic experiences translate into real-world success.

Measure 3: Five-Year Retention Rates – Goal: 56%; Baseline: 16%

The third KPI focuses on the college's five-year retention rates. This measure looks at the percentage of students who remain enrolled at Denmark Technical College or within the higher education system over a five-year period. High retention rates are indicative of strong student

satisfaction, effective academic and support services, and a learning environment that encourages persistence and completion.

Measure 4: Faculty and Staff Participation in Panther Pathways – Goal: 90%; Baseline: 0%

The fourth KPI measures the level of faculty and staff participation in Panther Pathways activities. Active engagement from faculty and staff is essential for the success of Panther Pathways, as it ensures that students receive the guidance, support, and mentorship necessary for their academic and personal development. This measure also highlights the college's commitment to fostering a collaborative and supportive educational environment.

Measure 5: First-Year Students Engaged in Learning Communities – Goal: 90%; Baseline: 0%

The fifth KPI tracks the engagement of first-year students in learning communities. Learning communities are a vital component of the Panther Pathways initiative, as they provide students with a supportive network of peers and faculty, enhancing their academic and social experiences. This measure ensures that students are integrated into the college community early on, setting the foundation for success.

Measure 6: Experiential Learning Participation – Goal: 90%; Baseline: unknown

The sixth KPI focuses on the percentage of students participating in experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, apprenticeships, or other hands-on experiences, during their first two years at the college. These opportunities are crucial for bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world application, providing students with practical skills and experience that enhance their employability.

Measure 7: Progression Through Identity Formation Sequence – Goal: 85%; Baseline: unknown

The seventh KPI measures students' success, particularly those who persist to graduation, in progressing through the identity formation sequence within the Panther Pathways initiative. This measure is important for ensuring that students acquire academic knowledge and develop a strong sense of identity and purpose that will guide their professional and personal lives.

Measure 8: Industry Partner Satisfaction – Goal: 90%; Baseline: Unknown

The eighth and final KPI assesses the satisfaction of industry partners with Denmark Technical College interns and alumni employees within the first 6-12 months of their employment. This measure is critical for maintaining strong relationships with industry partners, ensuring that the college's programs are aligned with workforce needs and that graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of their chosen professions.

These Institutional Measures of Success for 2025 provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the Panther Pathways initiative and Denmark Technical College's commitment to student success. By focusing on these KPIs, the college can continuously improve its programs, support services, and partnerships, ultimately enhancing all students' educational experiences and outcomes.

Qualitative Feedback: In addition to quantitative data, Denmark Technical College will gather qualitative feedback from students, faculty, alumni, industry partners/employers, and staff through surveys, focus groups, and interviews. This feedback will offer valuable insights into the student experience and help identify areas for improvement.

Regular Review and Improvement: The college's leadership and the QEP committees will regularly review the data collected from these assessments. This ongoing evaluation process will ensure that Panther Pathways remains responsive to students' needs and aligned with the college's mission. Based on the findings from these assessments, any necessary adjustments to the initiative will be made, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Panther Pathways is more than just an academic framework; it is a commitment by Denmark Technical College to provide a supportive, engaging, and outcome-focused educational experience. By guiding students through Identity Formation, Pathway Alignment, and Perpetual Engagement, and by implementing a rigorous assessment plan, the college ensures that every student is equipped with the tools and opportunities needed to succeed in their academic and professional endeavors. Through Panther Pathways, Denmark Technical College reaffirms its dedication to enhancing the quality of education and achieving measurable, positive outcomes for all students.

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