



News & Events

Minnesota State's Metropolitan State University Benefits from Lean Process Improvement

August 21, 2017

Metro State was founded in 1971 as 'the university without walls.' It didn't have a conventional campus, and was centered around adult, working students as well as community involvement. They didn't award grades

and students were awarded credit for their career and life experiences.

Flash forward forty years, and while some things have changed, some things haven't. Metro State has standardized some things, particularly when they joined the Minnesota State College and University system. But they still serve primarily adult or post-traditional students with an average age in the 30s. They transfer in over 60 credits on average, and work nearly fulltime as they go to school.

Basically, these are people who know what they want and don't have a ton of time to mess around with bureaucracy.

Metro State is in a perfect place to attract and retain adult learners in the St. Paul - Minneapolis metro area. And our students gave glowing reviews, but with a qualifier...

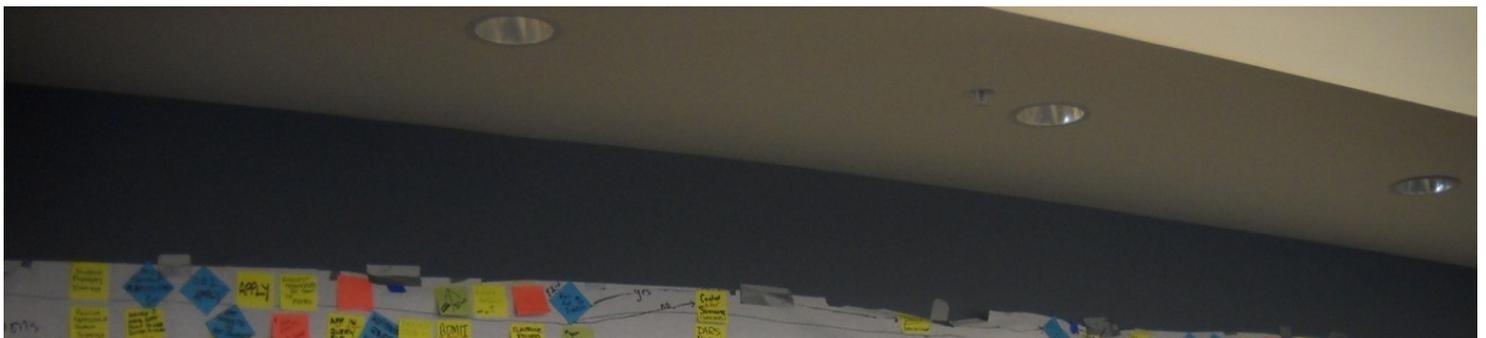
"Metro is great...once you get in"

To find out what students meant by this, a work group was formed and charged with determining the pain points in the process for entering students (the entering student pathway). The group pulled employees from all levels. All experts in their areas, but mainly communicating within their own silo.

Higher Education Lean Process Improvement

Using a focused higher ed Lean Kaizen methodology, the group mapped out the process that took a person from being a prospect to a registered student, ready to attend class. Each expert contributed their knowledge and part in the process, and the picture slowly began to take shape. It wasn't pretty:

- From admission to registration, a person experienced multiple hand offs with little to no communication between departments, resulting in confusion and frustration for students
- If a student had credits to be evaluated, it could be weeks or even months before they received their credit evaluation--something they need to register for classes or even orientation
- Online orientation registrants saw a steep drop-off in completion--why?
- Multiple cases of duplicated effort or incorrect/outdated information shared with students, resulting in a waste of time, energy, money, and student goodwill





Using Lean process improvement, the university discovered that their entering student pathway was less of a pathway and more like a leaky funnel.

The next stage of the higher education Kaizen methodology involved creating the ideal process. Using that as a base, the Lean consultants were able to help the university craft strategies to get there, as well as make recommendations to administration.

Results of Lean Process Improvement at the University

- Increased revenue by more than \$1.6M without any budget increase
- Decreased wait times from three weeks to three days
- Increased customer satisfaction scores from 72% to 97%
- Reduced expenses by more than 25%

The benefits of improving processes across silos in higher education can--and will--be enormous. Contact Lean Workflows to start today.

Andrew Melendres /

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Higher Education

Higher Ed, Higher Education, Lean Process Improvement, Case Study

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