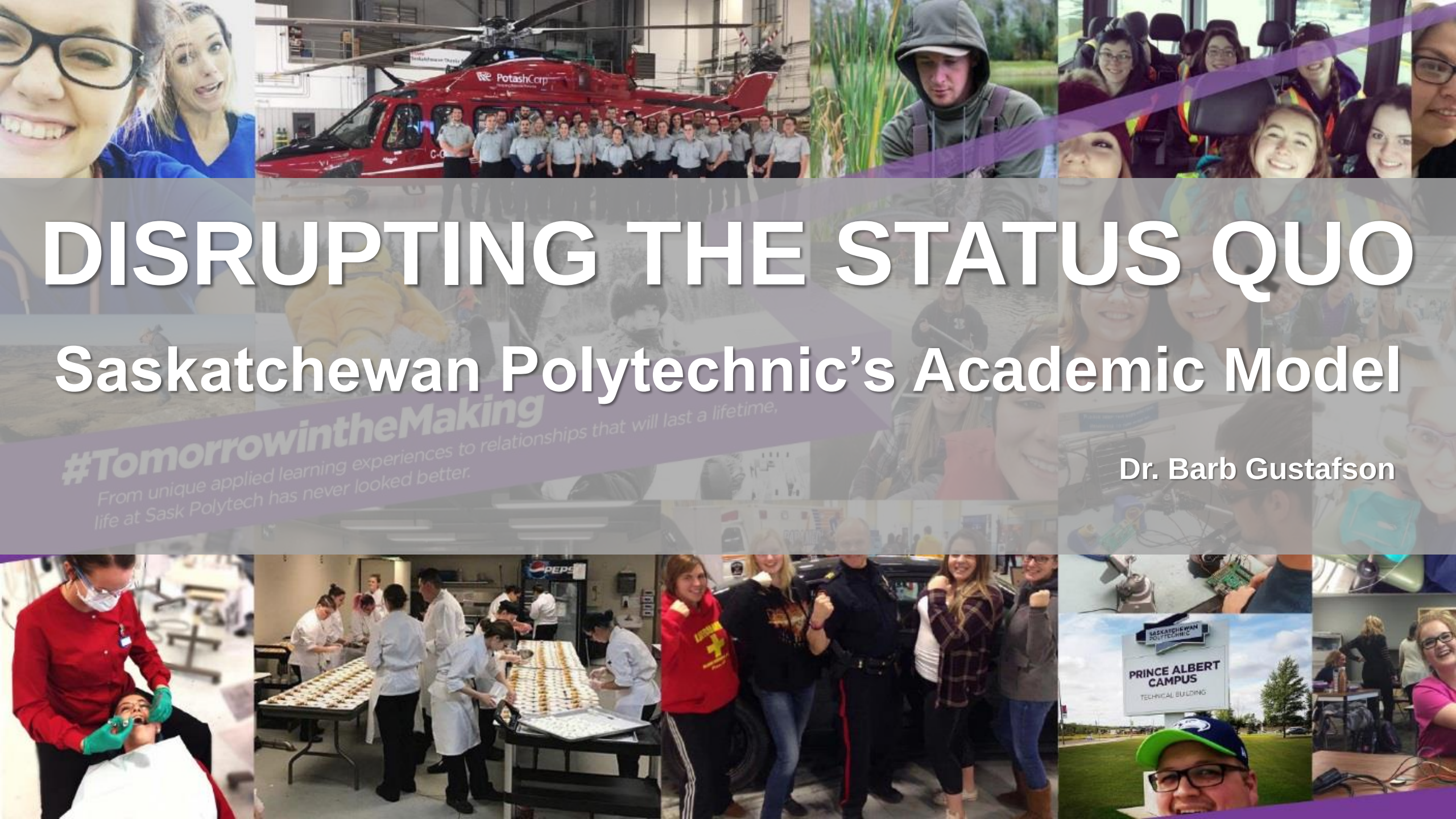


DISRUPTING THE STATUS QUO

Saskatchewan Polytechnic's Academic Model

Dr. Barb Gustafson

Overview

- The Situation:
  - Sask Polytech’s status quo
  - Disruption around us
- The Problem
- The Solution:
  - Bringing disruption home: development
  - Integrating disruption: implementation
- Evaluation: Lessons learned

The Status Quo

Sask Polytech History

- 1988 – SIAST created from several technical institutes and colleges
- 1997 – major reorganization into single provincial institute
- 2014 – new legislation and new name

MOOSE JAW & PRINCE ALBERT & REGINA & SASKATOON

PRINCE ALBERT CAMPUS
Home to our programs in the area of Natural Resources as well as a high fidelity simulation centre used for nursing and continuing care assistant training.

HANNIN CREEK
In partnership with the Sask Wildlife Federation, the Hannin Creek Educational Facility provides educational and applied research opportunities.

SASKATOON CAMPUS
State-of-the-art lab facilities including a nursing and health sciences Simulation Centre, Bioscience Applied Research Centre and the Digital Integration Research Group applied research centres.

REGINA CAMPUS
Industry-driven programs in the areas of Technology, Human Services and Health Care, as well as 10 shops for industrial trades training.

MOOSE JAW CAMPUS
State-of-the-art lab facilities for seven engineering technology programs.

The starting point for disruption

- As of 2014:
  - 4 campuses across Saskatchewan
  - 150+ programs within 12 schools
  - 27,000 distinct students
    - 150 international
    - 3300 Indigenous
  - 3750 graduates
  - 1700 employees
    - 1100 faculty
    - 500 administrative support
    - 100 management

Things are good – why change?

Disruption Around Us

Students

A growing number of students who are:

- Older
- Part-time students
- First generation
- Indigenous
- Mature with family, job responsibilities
- International or first-gen Canadian

Industry

- Demands from industry
  - *People without jobs, jobs without people* – Miner (2014)
- Need for more employability skills
- Need for updated technical skills
- Need for Work-Integrated Learning

Defining the problem

Disrupting the status quo

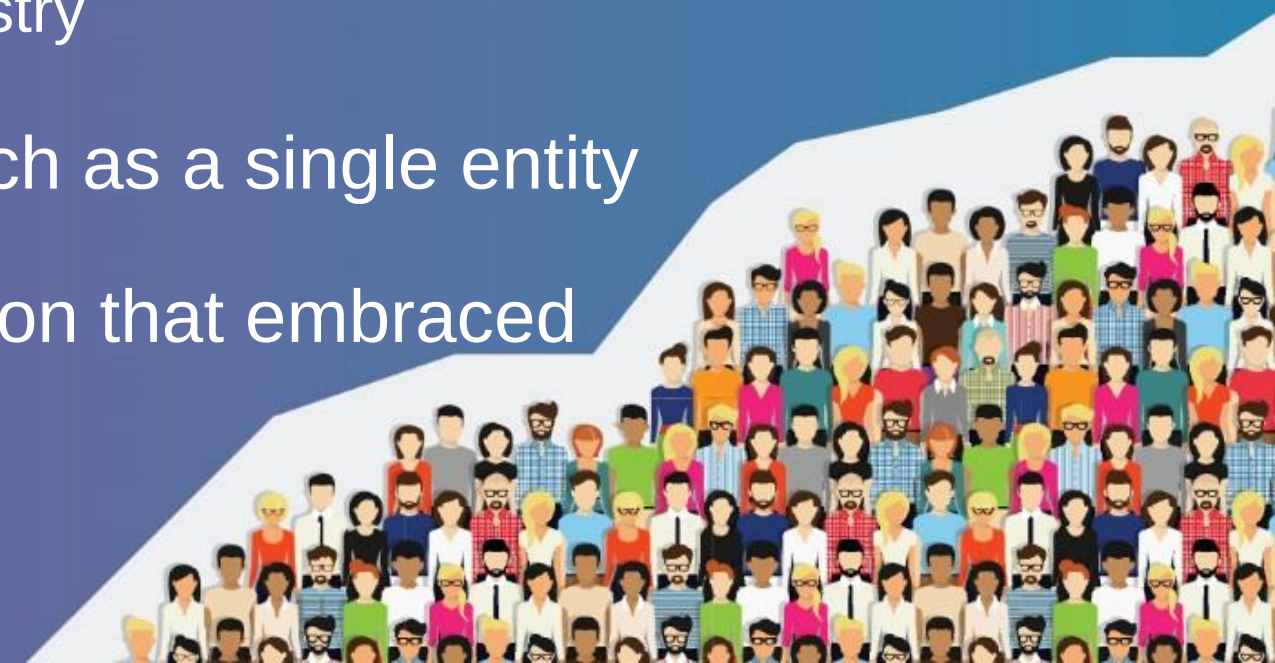
Project started with 4 general goals:

1. To make explicit our Academic Model

2. To address external disruption
   - Meet the future needs of students
   - Meet the future needs of industry

3. To strengthen Sask Polytech as a single entity

4. To create an academic vision that embraced polytechnic possibilities



The Solution: The Academic Model Phase 1

In the beginning: Academic Model

- Planning began in 2013
- 2 faculty members hired in Fall 2014
- Work began in December 2014

Reporting structure

- Provost and VP, Academic
  executive sponsor
    - AVP, Learning & Teaching
      project sponsor
        - Deans, academic AVPs

      Steering Committee
        - 2 project managers
          researchers/writers

Development: Step 1 – Gather ideas

- Appreciative Inquiry approach
  - Build on our polytechnic strengths
- Dialogue encouraged through:
  - Sharing statements of values, principles, promises
  - Background papers
  - Lots of communication
  - Campus meetings

Development: Step 2 – Analyze

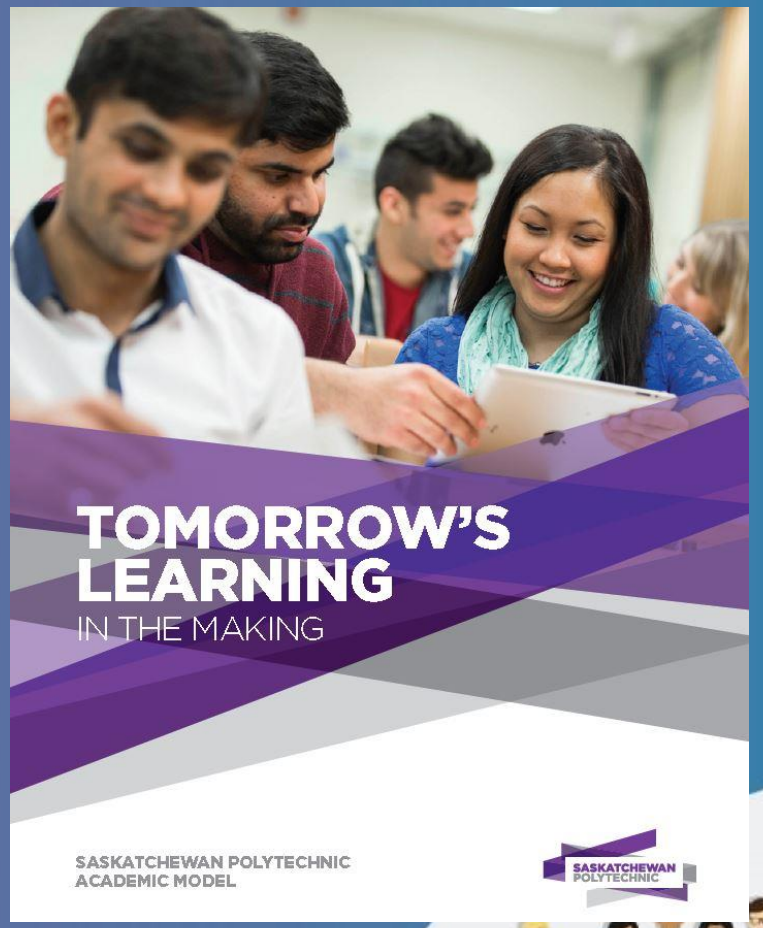
- Sorting for common themes
- Consultations on draft Model
- Piloting with five programs
- Steering Committee discussions
- Polling senior academic leaders on what to include

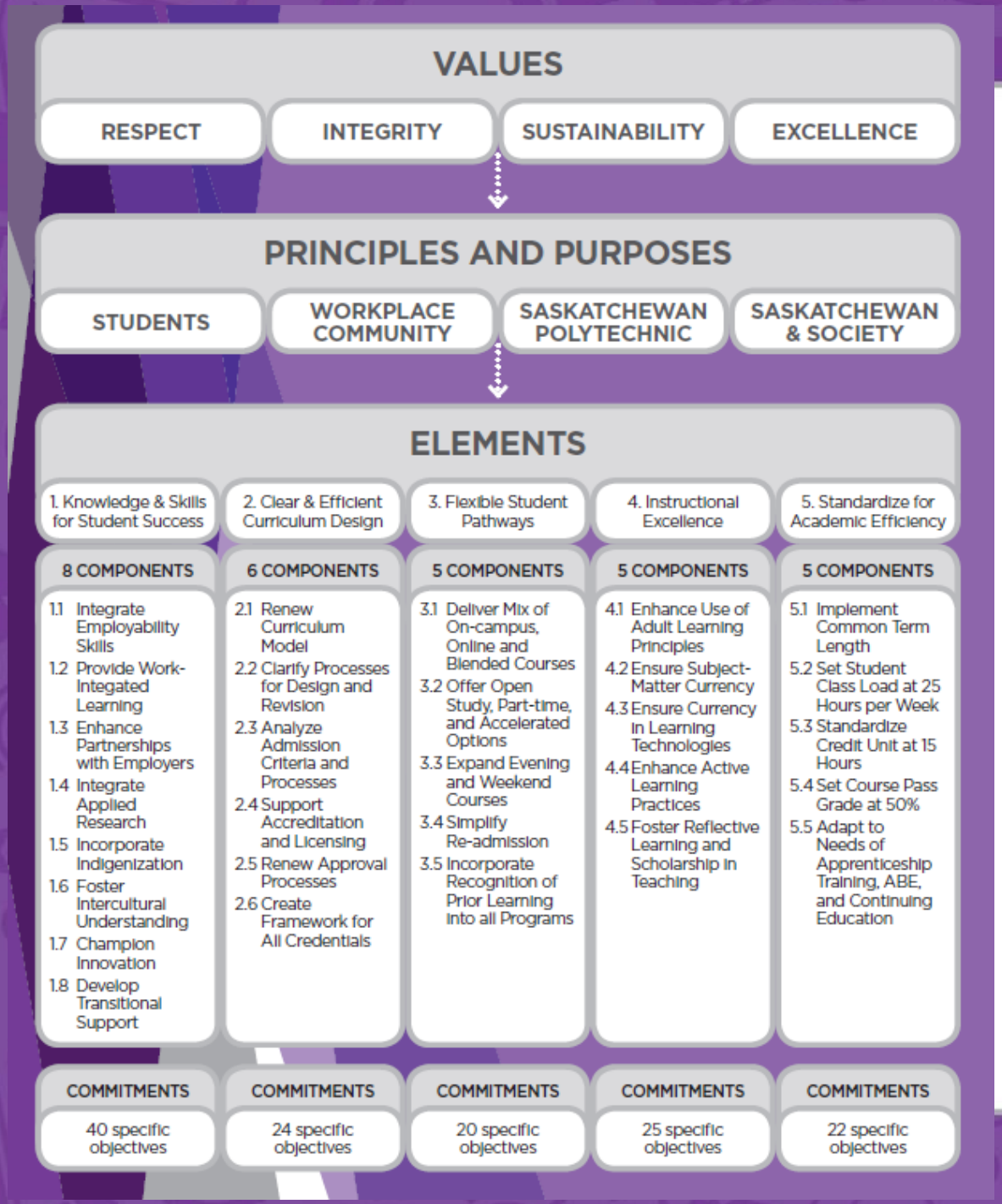
Development: Step 3 – Write

- After a year of consultation – time to write
- 100s of ideas = 5 major elements
- Each element defined by components
  - Further details within commitments
- Aim: aspirational but achievable plan

Development: Step 4 – Complete and approve

- Completed on schedule
- Approved by senior management council September 2016





4 institutional values

4 purposes by key stakeholder group

5 major themes or elements

29 components

150 commitments

Academic Model Phase 2: Implementation

Implementation: Team adjustments

- Rebuilding
  - AVP/project sponsor departs
  - One project manager retires
- Refocusing
  - A stronger project management approach
  - Translating a visionary document into projects

Implementation: A new perspective

- Moving the Academic Model from small-group to institutional ownership
- Getting more people more involved
- Communication and more communication

Implementation: Year 1

- Start with “simpler” changes
  - Standardizing passing grade
  - Defining course and term structures
- Create foundations
  - Credential Qualification Framework
  - Policy changes

Where do we start?

Implementation: Year 2

- Integrating change into programs
  - Clearly defining expectations
- Strengthen the foundations
  - Curriculum Framework
  - Quality Assurance processes
  - More policy and procedure changes

Implementation: A continuing story

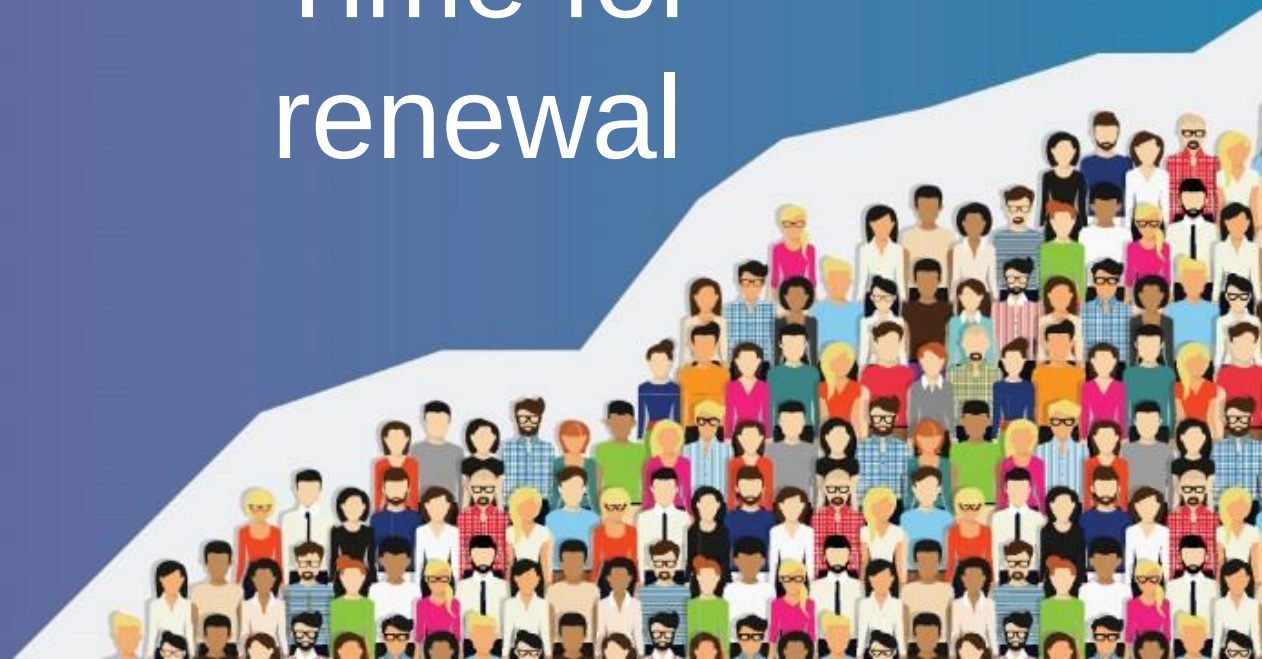
- More complex commitments
  - Indigenization of curriculum and teaching practice
  - Intercultural competencies
  - Academic Council
- Plus, continuing to align 150 programs with a new model of practice

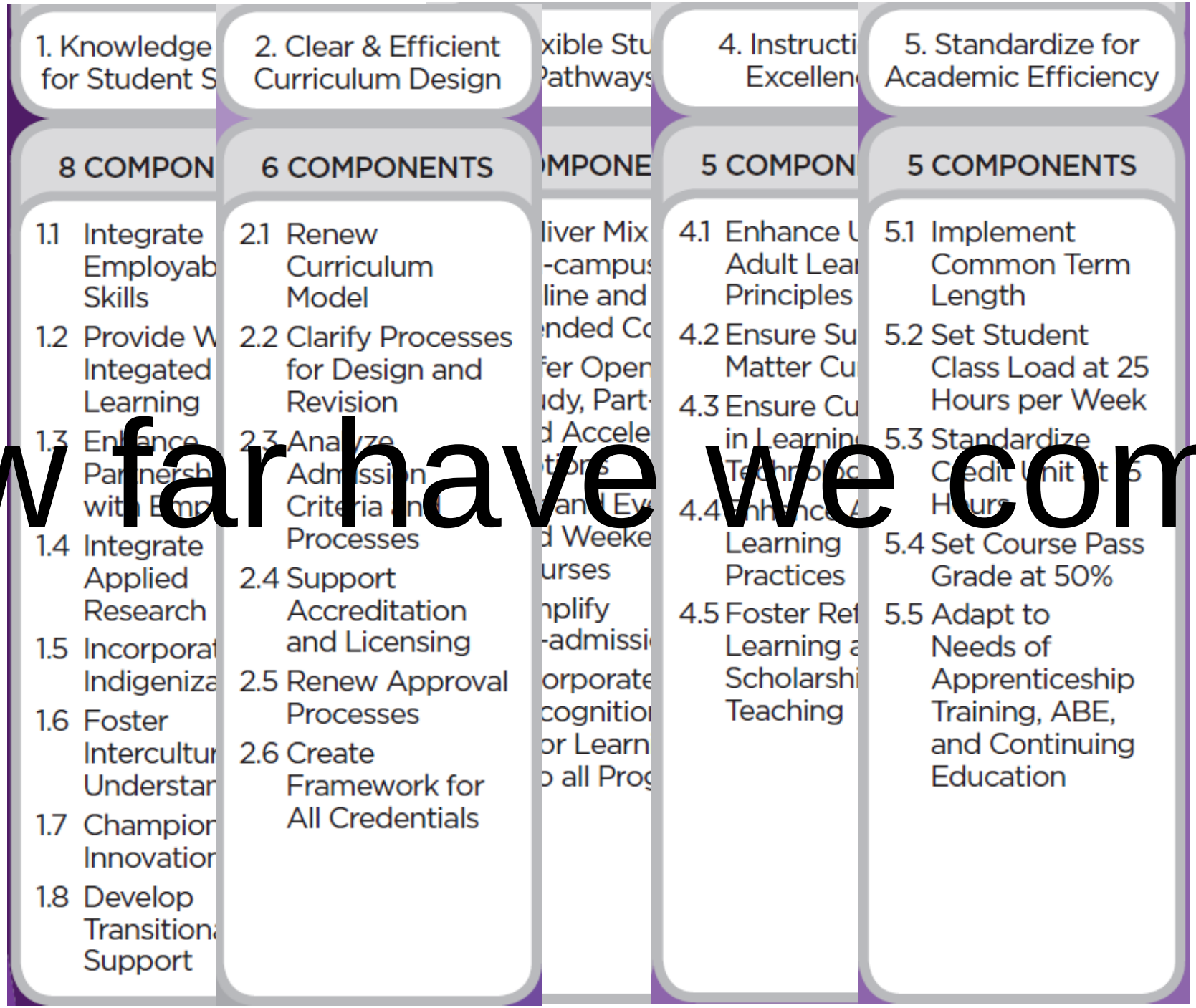
Are we there yet?

Implementation: looking forward

- The Academic Model has become a part of Sask Polytech
- Reactions range from:
  - “It’s like eating an elephant”
  - “It’s not that big a deal”
  - “We’re done with that, right?”
  - “That’s why we’re … (insert unrelated change here)”

Time for renewal





How far have we come?

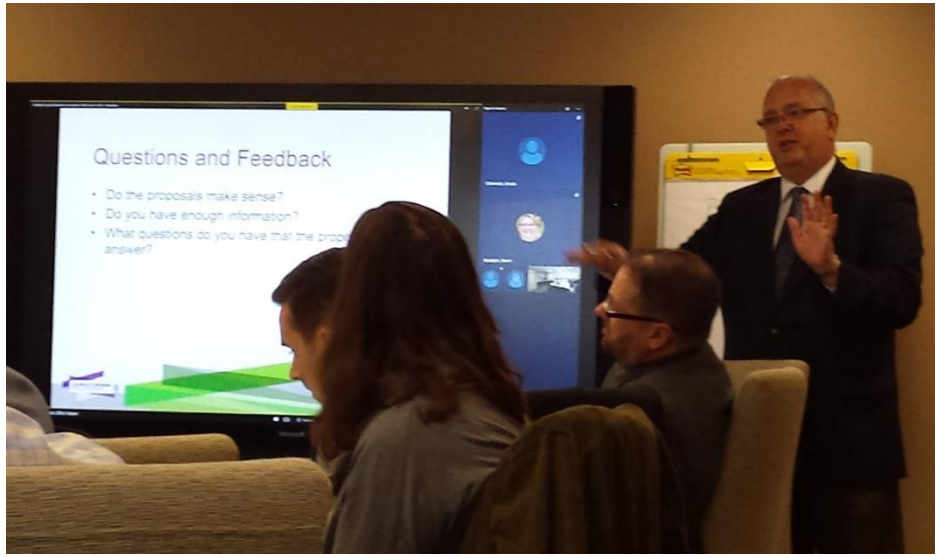
Evaluation: Some (sticky) notes on lessons learned

Positives

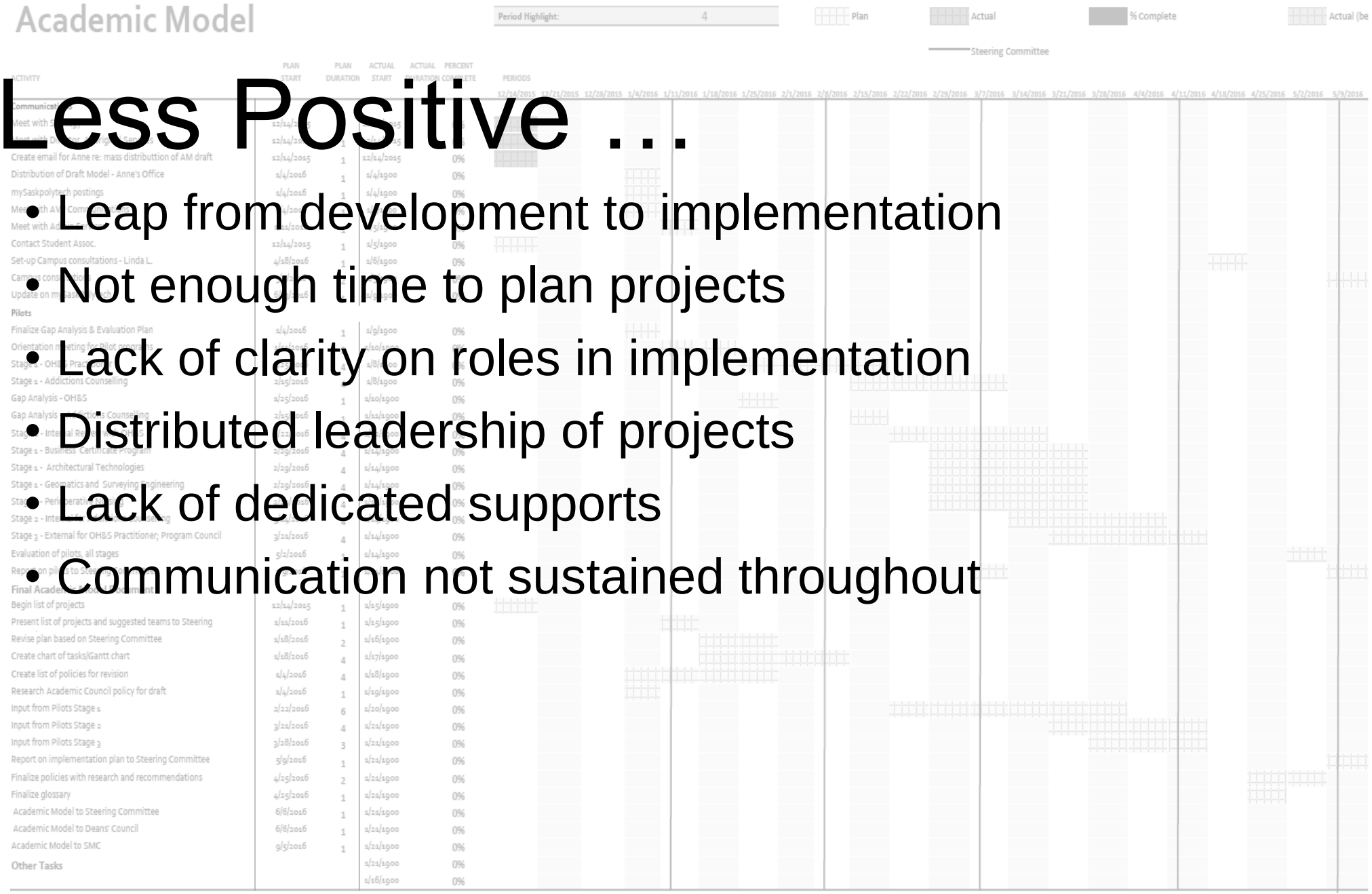
- Dedicated resources
- Research first
- Lots of consultation, opportunity for input
- Enthusiasm from all those closely involved
- Implementation of basics first

Ask me about the Academic Model

SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC



SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC



Less Positive …

- Leap from development to implementation
- Not enough time to plan projects
- Lack of clarity on roles in implementation
- Distributed leadership of projects
- Lack of dedicated supports
- Communication not sustained throughout

SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC

Did we solve the problem?

1. To make explicit our Academic Model 
2. To address external disruption 
   Meet the future needs of students
   Meet the future needs of industry
3. To strengthen Sask Polytech as a single entity 
4. To create an academic vision that embraced polytechnic possibilities  

SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC

On projects…

Early choices establish the direction for end results

Senior academic leaders care deeply about their work and love to talk about the future – they just don't get much time to do that

Don't forget to stop and celebrate your successes

On implementing a change …

A vision and a project are two very different things

Trying to change a polytechnic is like trying to fix a vehicle while it's going full-speed down the highway

Change in higher ed is more continuous improvement than projects

Change leaders need to give followers time to catch up

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast"

Personal lessons learned …

"Embrace ambiguity"

Dedicated time and resources to think about the future is a tremendous gift

Be a "chaos pilot"

It's hard to let go

Life gets in the way of plans

Always thank people for listening …

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References:

Miner, R. (2014). *The great Canadian skills mismatch: People without jobs, jobs without people and more*. Miner Management Consultants.

SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC

Tomorrow in the making

https://saskpolytech.ca/about/about-us/reports-and-statistics/documents/Academic-Model.pdf

saskpolytech