



DISRUPTING THE STATUS QUO

Saskatchewan Polytechnic's Academic Model

#TomorrowintheMaking
From unique applied learning experiences to relationships that will last a lifetime,
life at Sask Polytech has never looked better.

Dr. Barb Gustafson



A man with long blonde hair and a beard, wearing a black t-shirt and a high-visibility orange and yellow safety vest, is standing in a forest. He is looking up and to the right, holding a branch of a young pine tree with his right hand. The background is a blurred forest with tall trees and green foliage.

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



- 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

Industry



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



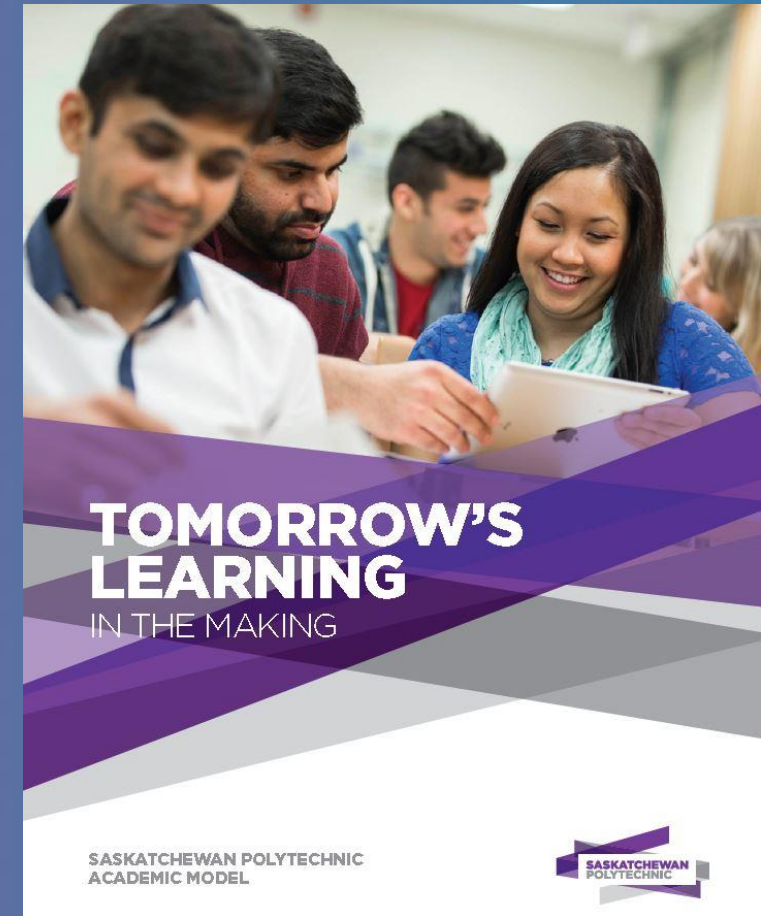
Development: Step 3 – Write

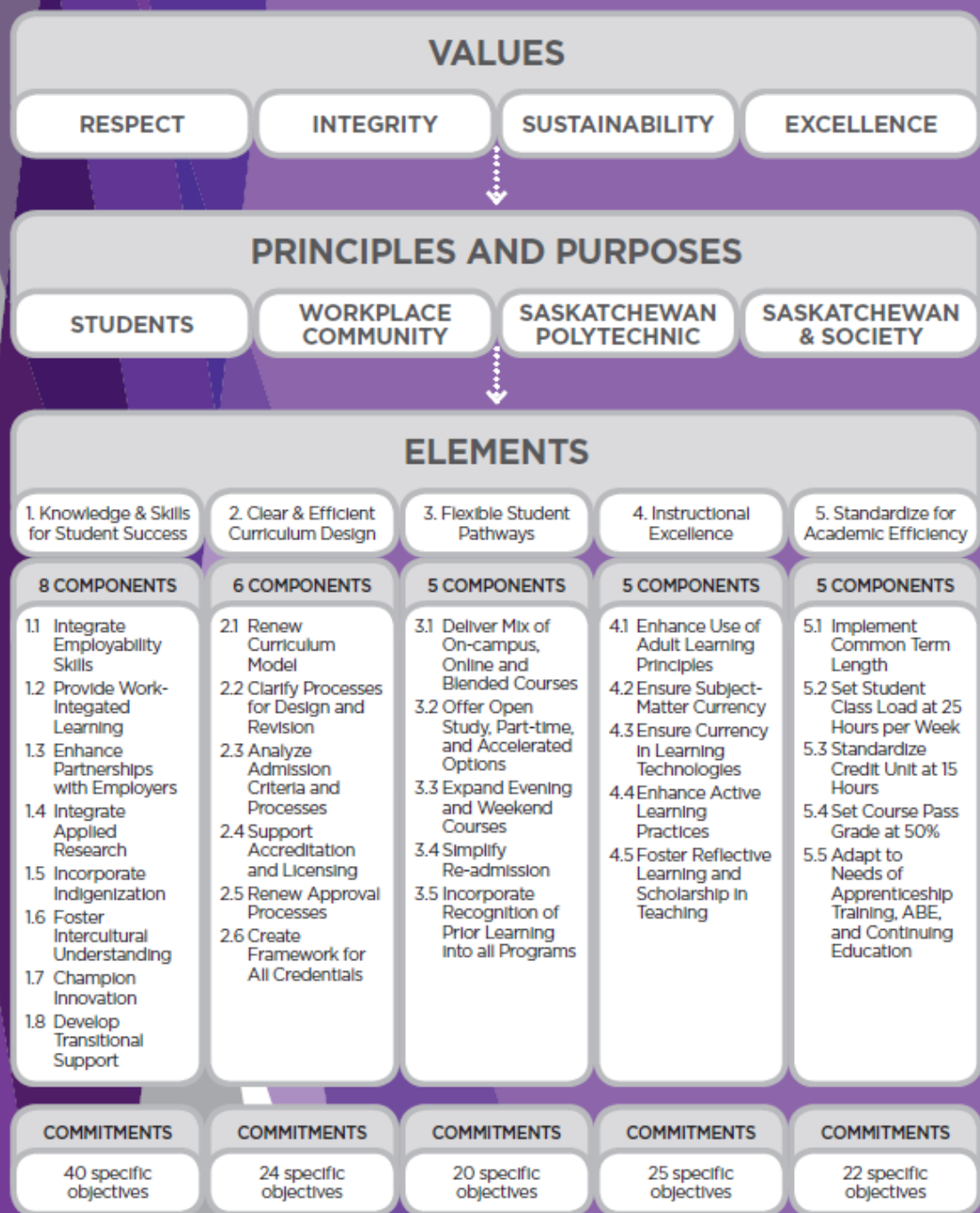
- After a year of consultation – time to write
- 100s of ideas = 5 major elements
- Each element defined by components
 - Further details within commitments
- Aim: aspirational but achievable plan



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



**Wait ...
What?
We have to change?**

**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?

1. Knowledge for Student Success	2. Clear & Efficient Curriculum Design	3. Flexible Study Pathways	4. Instructional Excellence	5. Standardize for Academic Efficiency
8 COMPONENTS	6 COMPONENTS	7 COMPONENTS	5 COMPONENTS	5 COMPONENTS
1.1 Integrate Employability Skills	2.1 Renew Curriculum Model	3.1 Deliver Mixed-mode and Online and Extended Courses	4.1 Enhance Understanding of Adult Learning Principles	5.1 Implement Common Term Length
1.2 Provide Work Integrated Learning	2.2 Clarify Processes for Design and Revision	3.2 Offer Open and Accelerated Options	4.2 Ensure Successful Matter Curriculum	5.2 Set Student Class Load at 25 Hours per Week
1.3 Enhance Partnerships with Employers	2.3 Analyze Admission Criteria and Processes	3.3 Offer Evening and Weekend Courses	4.3 Ensure Curriculum in Learning Technologies	5.3 Standardize Credit Unit at 5 Hours
1.4 Integrate Applied Research	2.4 Support Accreditation and Licensing	3.4 Simplify Admission Processes	4.4 Enhance Learning Practices	5.4 Set Course Pass Grade at 50%
1.5 Incorporate Indigenous Knowledge	2.5 Renew Approval Processes	3.5 Incorporate Prior Learning and Recognition for Learning into all Programs	4.5 Foster Reflective Learning and Scholarship Teaching	5.5 Adapt to Needs of Apprenticeship Training, ABE, and Continuing Education
1.6 Foster Intercultural Understanding	2.6 Create Framework for All Credentials			
1.7 Champion Innovation				
1.8 Develop Transitional Support				

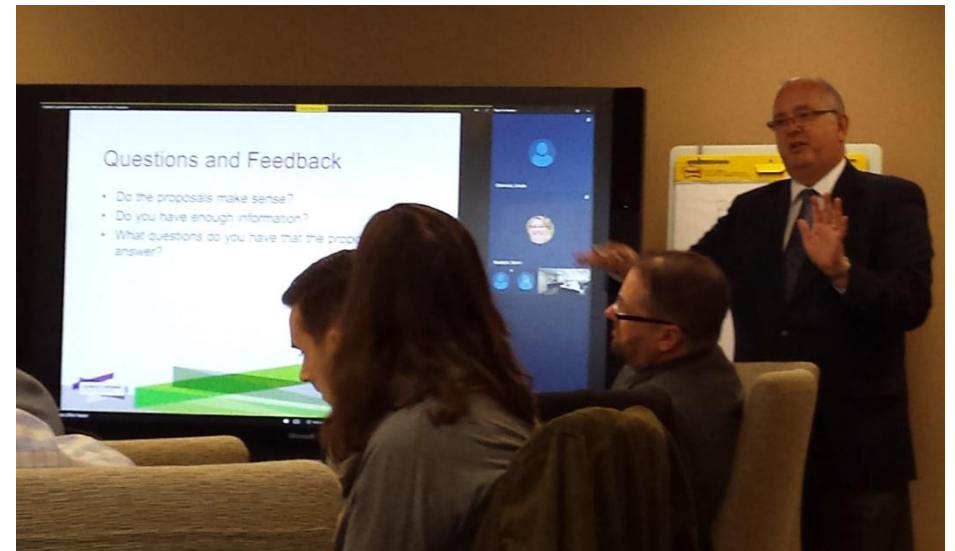
Evaluation:
Some
(sticky) notes
on lessons
learned





Positives

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



Academic Model

Period Highlight:

4

Plan

Actual

% Complete

Actual (be

Steering Committee

ACTIVITY	PLAN START	PLAN DURATION	ACTUAL START	ACTUAL DURATION	PERCENT COMPLETE	PERIODS
Communications						
Meet with Steering Committee	12/14/2015	1	12/14/2015	1	100%	
Meet with Academic Council	12/14/2015	1	12/14/2015	1	100%	
Create email for Anne re: mass distribution of AM draft	12/14/2015	1	12/14/2015	1	0%	
Distribution of Draft Model - Anne's Office	1/4/2016	1	1/4/2016	1	0%	
mySaskpolytech postings	1/4/2016	1	1/4/2016	1	0%	
Meet with Academic Council	1/4/2016	1	1/4/2016	1	0%	
Meet with Academic Council	1/4/2016	1	1/4/2016	1	0%	
Contact Student Assoc.	12/14/2015	1	1/5/2016	1	0%	
Set-up Campus consultations - Linda L.	1/4/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Campus consultations	1/4/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Update on mySaskpolytech	1/4/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Pilots						
Finalize Gap Analysis & Evaluation Plan	1/4/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Orientation meeting for Pilot projects	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Stage 1 - OH&S Practitioner	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Stage 1 - Addictions Counselling	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Gap Analysis - OH&S	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Gap Analysis - Addictions Counselling	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Stage 1 - Internal Reliability	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Stage 1 - Business Certificate Program	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Stage 1 - Architectural Technologies	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Stage 1 - Geomatics and Surveying Engineering	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Stage 1 - Perimeter Security	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Stage 1 - Internal Reliability	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Stage 3 - External for OH&S Practitioner; Program Council	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Evaluation of pilots: all stages	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Report on pilots to Steering Committee	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Final Academic Model to Steering Committee	1/6/2016	1	1/6/2016	1	0%	
Begin list of projects	12/14/2015	1	1/5/2016	1	0%	
Present list of projects and suggested teams to Steering Committee	1/11/2016	1	1/5/2016	1	0%	
Revise plan based on Steering Committee	1/11/2016	2	1/5/2016	1	0%	
Create chart of tasks/Gantt chart	1/11/2016	4	1/5/2016	1	0%	
Create list of policies for revision	1/4/2016	4	1/5/2016	1	0%	
Research Academic Council policy for draft	1/4/2016	1	1/5/2016	1	0%	
Input from Pilots Stage 1	1/21/2016	6	1/20/2016	1	0%	
Input from Pilots Stage 2	3/21/2016	4	1/21/2016	1	0%	
Input from Pilots Stage 3	3/21/2016	3	1/21/2016	1	0%	
Report on implementation plan to Steering Committee	5/9/2016	1	1/21/2016	1	0%	
Finalize policies with research and recommendations	4/25/2016	2	1/21/2016	1	0%	
Finalize glossary	4/25/2016	1	1/21/2016	1	0%	
Academic Model to Steering Committee	6/6/2016	1	1/21/2016	1	0%	
Academic Model to Deans' Council	6/6/2016	1	1/21/2016	1	0%	
Academic Model to SMC	9/5/2016	1	1/21/2016	1	0%	
Other Tasks						

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

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



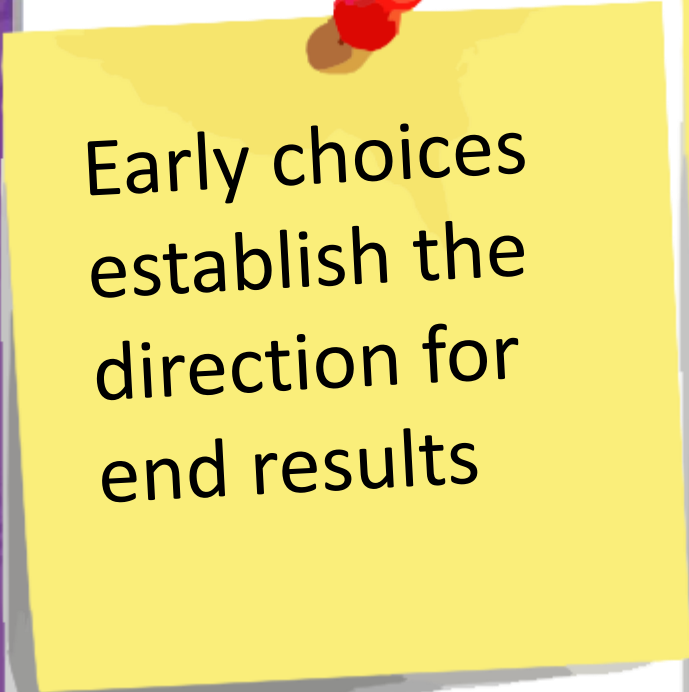
3. To strengthen Sask Polytech as a single entity




4. To create an academic vision that embraced polytechnic possibilities




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

Change leaders need to give followers time to catch up

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

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast"

Personal lessons learned ...


“Embrace ambiguity”

It's hard to let go

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

Be a “chaos pilot”

Life gets in the way of plans



Always thank
people for
listening ...



Barb Gustafson, PhD

Director, Learner Pathways
Prince Albert Campus

barb.gustafson@saskpolytech.ca

References:

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



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



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