

Working Group of the Budget and Finance Committee

The Faculty Senate

Phase I: LMCIS/SWOTS Analysis Review

Summer 2021

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many challenges for our society and organizations of all types and sizes, including the institutions of higher education. The pandemic has already forced the University of Memphis to cut its budget significantly and these budget shortfalls may persist. The University has been able to manage this initial cut with minimum impact on the operating budgets of academic units. It is unknown whether a round of additional new cuts will be necessary in the foreseeable future. Should further budget reductions become necessary, academic deans will have to plan for potential cuts. In the face of budget reductions, academic affairs units must also maintain their educational and financial sustainability. A collaborative effort where academic affairs units provide deans with guidance to assist them, should they need to make difficult budgetary cuts, is the best choice for a university that values shared governance. Examining our academic programs, and considering new configurations of them, is a way of securing our sustainability while providing a quality education that is affordable for our students.

Sustainability is a process (journey) of achieving shared value for all stakeholders. sustainability is a continuous dynamic process whereby universities ensure improvement in the face of everchanging financial and social challenges. Our focus is on the educational, governance, and financial sustainability of all academic units at the University of Memphis. The concept of Lean Management and continuous improvement strategies (LMCIS) encourages colleges to continually monitor spending patterns and constantly looking for ways to conserve without harming productivity and effectiveness of their academic programs. Any savings achieved can be redirected to support new market driven and student demanded programs. New needs may be new software, new databases, faculty conferences on new technology, faculty release time to upgrade skills, and possibly new courses to meet an ever-changing market environment. As a state university, most of our funding is from taxpayers and student tuition. The funds spent here are a burden for taxpayers and students and should be conserved wherever possible. Therefore, we need to establish the best practices of doing university activities better, stronger, and more sustainable (BSS).

Our introductory meeting with deans of Academic Units on November 18, 2020, suggests two major concerns of the “expectation, what needs to be done, and “timing” of when to complete this report. The Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) has decided to conduct the Lean Management and Continuous Improvement Strategies (LMCIS) reviews in three phases, based on suggestions from deans, insights from faculty and the Faculty Senate, and consultation with

the Provost Office and the Office of Institutional Research (OIR). These phases would take place in Spring/Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022.

Phase I of the LMCIS/SWOTS review was conducted as follows:

1. The Faculty Senate approved the following charges given to the BFC by the Provost to initiate phase I of the educational and financial sustainability for all Academic Affairs Units at the University of Memphis:
 - To review and evaluate the efficiency of administrative faculty and staff support in each unit.
 - To review and evaluate academic programs and identify those programs that may be unsustainable and need improvements, restructuring, downsizing, or consolidation.
2. The BFC and its working groups developed material, manageable, and relevant educational and financial KPIs appropriate for the LMCIS review process, following the SRI model.
3. Data for educational and Financial SRI-driven KPIs were collected for five years from 2016-2020 for all academic units and related colleges by the OIR and placed into an “LMCIS Dashboard” accessible to all faculty and administrators through the [OIR Academic Unit KPI dashboard](#).
4. Guidelines to all senators were given for scheduling a meeting with faculty in their units to complete the LMCIS Faculty Senate program review and complete a related strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and safeguards and sustainability (SWOTS) analysis template.
5. Senators completed and submitted the LMCIS/SWOTS analysis reports for their units by April 15, 2021.
6. The completed and submitted LMCIS/SWOTS analysis reports were compiled and integrated into a single report for each college. Further analyses of KPIs across colleges were conducted by the working groups of the BFC.
7. The integrated LMCIS/SWOTS analysis report for each college and the senators reports for departments within the college were submitted to the dean of each college in May and June 2021.
8. A meeting with deans of all colleges was scheduled in the summer of 2021 and they are asked to submit their report back to the BFC by September 10, 2021.
9. The working group of the BFC received synopsis reports from deans, compiled these reports, and will present the review report to the Faculty Senate indicating that the Phase I LMCIS/SWOTS review is completed.

II. Phase I Final LMCIS/SWOTS Report

This phase I final LMCIS/SWOTS report consists of a summary of the reports received from each unit within the college and a comparison across colleges relevant to educational and financial KPIs and budgetary issues. Recommendations relevant to the educational and financial sustainability of colleges, departments, and programs are for ongoing and future continuous improvement in the post-pandemic era at the University of Memphis. This report details specific challenges, opportunities, strengths, weaknesses, findings, conclusions, recommendations, and comments relevant to Phase 1 educational and financial sustainability of all colleges, departments, and programs.

III. Review Process and Procedures

Phase I of the LMCIS/SWOTS analysis review was conducted in summer 2021 by following the below procedures and step-by-step processes:

1. Access the [OIR Academic Unit KPI dashboard](#) for each academic unit (College and Department) for five years 2016-2020.
2. [Access Strategic Resource Investment, https://www.memphis.edu/sri/](https://www.memphis.edu/sri/) for 2022 and use SRI as a benchmark for KPIs.
3. Do trend and variance analyses for the five years KPIs and related SRI benchmark for each department to identify significant abnormality and red flags and cause and effects of abnormalities.
4. Do comparative analyses across colleges to find out significant differences and cause and effects of the differences.
5. The collected KPIs from the dashboard are measures of productivity in each department. They do not represent or measure efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, benchmarks such as SRI, average KPIs over five years, and peer KPIs need to be identified to, compared against, and used as measures of efficiency and effectiveness, which are relevant measures.
6. Integrate all unit's LMCIS/SWOTS reports to one report for each college.
7. Include individual unit's LMCIS/SWOTS reports for all departments within their respective colleges.
8. Submit these individual unit's LMCIS/SWOTS reports for all departments and the integrated report for each college to the dean of that college.
9. Make appointments to discuss the submitted reports.

IV. Plan of Action

A careful review of selected KPIs, SRI data, submitted departmental LMCIS/SWOTS review reports and related synopsis suggests several educational, financial sustainability, and governance issues relevant to each college. Deans of colleges were asked to review these reports and address the important and relevant issues identified by focusing on educational (program results and productivity), financial (effectiveness and efficiency of administrative faculty and

staff support) and governance sustainability. Deans were asked to prepare the self-assessed and faculty-driven review report after all data for the school, departments, and degree programs have been reviewed. Deans were asked to be specific and relate conclusions and recommendations to relevant findings and objectives.

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats
- Safeguards/Sustainability

More than 50 important **observations and considerations**, where future actions, changes or explanations are needed, were identified, and discussed with deans of colleges relevant to the three sustainability areas:

A. Financial Sustainability

B. Educational Sustainability

C. Governance Sustainability

V. Completion of Phase I LMCIS/SWOTS Analysis Review Process

Deans of all 12 reviewed colleges were asked to address things that concern them about their college/school educational, financial, and governance sustainability and safeguards that will take to ensure activities will be conducted better, stronger, and more sustainable (BSS). The review process and related reports provide an opportunity and present a platform for deans and the provost to discuss and resolve sustainability-related issues. The deans were submitted to a synopsis one-page report to the BFC. This report provides a synopsis of meeting discussion with deans and their responses to the concerns and challenges raised in the meetings. Several deans took the LMCID/SWOTS analysis review, the meetings with the BFC very seriously and prepared a comprehensive and relevant report in addressing educational, financial, and governance sustainability challenges of their college and discussed safeguards and sustainability measures that are designed to make their college more sustainable. Some deans did the minimum possible to discharge their reporting responsibility, whereas a few deans did not respond at all despite receiving several gentle reminders. Thus, the Phase I of the lean management and continuous improvement strategy (LMCIS) sustainability review process was completed on September 15, 2021. Phases II and III will be determined by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate in consultation with the Provost Office and will be presented to senators in October meeting of the Faculty Senate.

Lessons Learned from the LMCIS/SWOTS Analysis Phase I Sustainability Process

- 1.** Sustainability is a process (journey) of identifying concerns and challenges and turning them into opportunities of doing financial, educational, and governance activities better, stronger, and more sustainable (BSS).
- 2.** Educational, financial, and governance sustainability issues are critical in obtaining and sustaining Carnegie Level I (RI) at the University of Memphis.
- 3.** The Phase I LMCIS/SWOTS sustainability review process:
 - a. provided a new platform that guaranteed that faculty were given the opportunity for input on financial, educational, and governance issues at the department, college, and university levels.
 - b. highlighted the need for and importance of two-way communication between administrators and faculty/staff in narrowing the perceived trust gap and enabling participation, engagement, and impacts of faculty in shared governance and the sustainability decision-making process.
 - c. established a common set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for academic units that can be referenced and viewed by administrators and faculty.
 - d. provided a framework and roadmap for the continuation of the Phase II and III sustainability review process.
 - e. created a pathway that paralleled the SRI budget process for deans of all academic affairs units to have more informed and transparent discussions with the central administration to address financial, educational, and governance issues of colleges and consideration of restructuring organizational structure and academic programs.