



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project advances four integrated goals: (1) increasing STEM enrollment, retention, persistence, and graduation rates; (2) strengthening faculty teaching and mentoring through Personalized Mentoring Practices (PMPs) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL); (3) enhancing staff capacity in data collection and analysis; and (4) supporting the re-enrollment of students who previously stopped out, including those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. During Quarter 1, activities focused on leadership establishment, infrastructure development, baseline data analysis, early faculty and staff engagement, and strategic planning, establishing a strong foundation for implementation and measurable progress.

PROJECT LEADERSHIP, STAFFING, AND COMPLIANCE

A major Quarter 1 milestone was the hiring of the Project Director—a Ph.D. in Mathematics and an M.Ed. in Instructional Design—who provides dedicated leadership and brings extensive experience in higher education, data analytics, student success, and QEP leadership. The project also engaged External Evaluator Dr. Mindy King, with more than 20 years of experience evaluating federally funded initiatives, and Limelight Analytics LLC to provide independent evaluation and performance measurement support, ensuring rigorous data collection, analysis, and compliance throughout the SIP project.

Searches were initiated for two additional full-time Title III positions—a Data Analyst and a Student Support Specialist—with hiring anticipated in the next quarter. The team also worked closely with institutional leadership to ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state regulations, including Texas Senate Bill 17.

BASELINE DATA AND EARLY IMPLEMENTATION

Goal 1: Five-year baseline metrics for STEM student outcomes were established using Fall 2016–Fall 2020 cohorts. Analyses identified a 57% first-year retention rate, a 69% second-to-fourth-year persistence rate, and a 37% five-year graduation rate. These benchmarks will guide data-driven interventions and support tracking of required annual improvements. STEM recruitment efforts were initiated to meet the Year 1 objective of conducting at least one Title III recruitment activity. The project supported recruitment through participation in

Cardinal View events, featuring a Title III STEM Majors booth. More than 115 flyers were individually distributed to students. Planning also progressed for the Inspiring STEM Series, a faculty–student co-presentation initiative scheduled for Fall 2026, with a mathematics faculty member secured to participate.

Goal 2: Ten STEM faculty members, particularly those teaching high-impact and gatekeeping courses, were contacted to initiate participation in project-supported professional development and mentoring efforts. 10% of STEM faculty expressed interest in PMP- and SEL-focused professional development.

Goal 3: Quarter 1 included development of a professional development model focused on A/B testing with AI and/or predictive analysis. A pilot partnership was established with the Marketing Team, supporting the long-term objective that 80% of staff involved in student success services complete Title III-supported training by the end of the project period.

Goal 4: Planning began for a Q2–Q3 marketing campaign to re-engage stopped-out students. The Director met with the Marketing Team, offered Title III support for data collection and analysis, and students who respond will be referred to Admissions counselors for reapplication assistance.

CONCLUSION

By the end of Quarter 1, the SIP project established leadership and staff, finalized baseline metrics, initiated faculty engagement aligned with PMP and SEL as well as staff engagement, ensured compliance, and completed Year 1 recruitment activities. These accomplishments demonstrate strong institutional readiness and alignment with project performance measures, positioning the initiative to achieve targeted improvements in STEM student success outcomes.