Provost Working Group (PWG)
Kick-Off Meeting (October 23, 2026) Work Group Summaries

Reference Links:

- AIM Framework: https://www.utrgv.edu/academicaffairs/_files/documents/provost-vision-aim-framework-ay2026-2027-booklet.pdf
- Operationalizing AIM: https://www.utrgv.edu/academicaffairs/_files/documents/operationalizing-aim.pdf
- AIM Initiatives Dependency Mapping: https://www.utrgv.edu/academicaffairs/_files/images/aim-initiatives-mapping-chart.jpg
- For all Provost Messages, See https://www.utrgv.edu/academicaffairs/about/messages-from-provost/index.htm

Provost Work Group Members:

	PROVOST WORK GROUPS		
COLLEGE	FACULTY SUCCESS	STUDENT SUCCESS	PROGRAM SUCCESS
College of Engineering and Computer Science	Thuy Vu	Noe Vargas	Doug Timmer
College of Education and P-16 Integration	Velma Menchaca	Janine Schall	Maria Elena Corbeil
College of Fine Arts	Kurt Martinez	Rebecca Coberly	Eric Deerly
Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship	Andre Mollick	Jerald Hughes	Christian Sobngwi
School of Social Work	Leticia Villareal Sosa	Heather Vitek	Denise Longoria
College of Sciences	Chris Gabler	Tim Huber	Engil Pereira
College of Liberal Arts (2 representative due to college size)	Louis Falk, Dawid Wladyka	Andrew Fleck, Mi-son Kim	Salvatore Restifo, Ana Pena-Oliva
College of Health Professions	Murat Karabulut	Lin Wang	Rene Gonzalez
Library	Charles Roush	Carlton Nelson	Andrew Portner

Faculty Success PWG (Robert Dearth)

Meeting focus

The October 23 kick-off meeting focused on connecting the Provost Working Group's charge to the AIM initiatives under Faculty Success, particularly those affecting the faculty life cycle at the institution. The group discussed coordination with college working groups and faculty advisory bodies, implementation pacing, and initial priorities for faculty workload, performance tracking, and Watermark improvements.

Connecting the work to AIM. The group reviewed how Faculty Success initiatives intersect with faculty roles, expectations, evaluation, and professional scholarship throughout the faculty life cycle. It was

emphasized that clearer faculty understanding of their institutional responsibilities will support student success and faculty scholarship.

Coordinate college working groups and faculty advisory bodies. Members briefly discussed a strategy for engaging college-level working groups. The group emphasized establishing a communication and feedback process that connects college perspectives with institutional priorities.

Establish pacing and timelines. The group recognized that implementation timelines are shaped by academic scheduling, faculty evaluation cycles, and other institutional deadlines. Sequencing should provide timely clarity to faculty while allowing meaningful consultation and practical implementation.

Review initiatives already underway. Discussion centered on Initiative 1.1, HOP Policies – Workload; Initiative 1.7, Watermark Data Feed; and Initiative 1.3, Faculty Performance Tracking. These efforts were considered interconnected elements of a clearer and more effective faculty evaluation framework.

- See https://www.utrgv.edu/academicaffairs/_files/images/aim-initiatives-mapping-chart.jpg for initiative numbering.

Prioritize Watermark Faculty Portfolio improvements. The group was presented with the need for a comprehensive review of the Faculty Portfolio tool, including its underlying fields, workflows, and reporting capabilities. The objective is to remove unnecessary faculty data entry, generate useful evaluation reports, and connect Watermark to institutional sources of data (SOD). Members emphasized that this work should reduce faculty administrative effort, clarify evaluative processes, and strengthen consistency and equity in faculty evaluation.

Proposed next steps for the upcoming Friday meetings

- Convene each Friday over the next month, beginning with a working review of the underlying structure and functionality of the Watermark Faculty Portfolio tool.
- Identify redundant fields, manual entry requirements, reporting gaps, and opportunities to integrate institutional sources of truth into Watermark.
- Define the requirements for a faculty evaluation report and a streamlined portfolio process that supports clear, consistent, and equitable evaluation.
- Continue developing a communication and feedback process through which working-group members engage their respective college working groups and faculty advisory bodies.
- Identify college-level Faculty Success initiatives that directly affect faculty and should be considered for institutional prioritization, while aligning implementation with scheduling and evaluation timelines.

Intended output: A prioritized plan for reviewing and rebuilding the Watermark Faculty Portfolio tool, initial requirements for streamlined faculty reporting and evaluation, and a coordinated college feedback process to inform institution-wide Faculty Success priorities.

Student Success PWG (Jonikka Charlton)

Student Success Working Group – Initial Discussion Summary

The Student Success Working Group met as part of the AIM kickoff to begin identifying a small set of student success measures that can be monitored at the college and program levels. The goal was not to develop an exhaustive inventory of student success data, but to identify measures that are meaningful, actionable, timely, and within the sphere of influence of colleges and academic programs.

Framing the Discussion

The conversation began by considering what a student on a successful path toward graduation is doing, experiencing, or accomplishing that tells us they are on the right path. From there, the group considered the other side of the equation: What are we doing, or what conditions are we creating, that make those outcomes more likely?

This framing intentionally moved the discussion away from identifying what students may lack and toward examining the educational environment, experiences, opportunities, and supports that the university can influence. The group also distinguished between measures that simply describe an outcome and measures that can help faculty, programs, and colleges understand what is happening and respond.

Potential measures were considered using five questions:

- **Matters:** Does it tell us something important about student success?
- **Moves:** Can colleges and programs meaningfully influence it?
- **Leads to action:** Would a change in the measure prompt a useful response?
- **Is timely:** Can we obtain the information soon enough to intervene?
- **Teaches us something:** Can it help us investigate why something is happening, rather than simply report what happened?

Themes from the Discussion

Several themes emerged. Participants emphasized the importance of looking **upstream of retention and graduation**, which remain essential institutional outcomes but occur relatively late in the student journey. There was strong interest in identifying earlier signals that can help colleges recognize where students are progressing successfully and where barriers may emerge.

The discussion also reflected a broad conception of student success. Participants identified academic progress and course success, but also engagement with advising and university resources, meaningful academic experiences such as undergraduate research, preparation for employment and graduate education, and indicators available through the learning management system. Student survey data was

identified as potentially valuable, with a need to clarify what questions or dimensions would provide actionable information.

Another recurring theme was the need to move beyond surface-level outcomes toward **deeper analysis of student learning challenges**. Rather than treating a course success rate as an endpoint, for example, the group was interested in using such information to ask additional questions about where and why students encounter difficulty and what changes in teaching, curriculum, academic support, or other conditions might improve their experience and outcomes.

The conversation reinforced that **student success is a shared responsibility**. Colleges and programs have important levers, but many effective responses will require partnership with colleagues and resources across the university rather than creating new or duplicative efforts.

Initial Student Success Metrics

The group identified the following as a **first draft** of priority areas for continued development:

1. **Retention**
2. **Graduation**
3. **Course success rates**
4. **Success markers / progress toward key academic milestones**
5. **Advising engagement**
6. **Job placement / post-graduation outcomes**
7. **LMS activity / engagement**

The discussion also surfaced several areas that may warrant incorporation into these measures, use as diagnostic drill-downs, or further consideration as the framework develops: resource utilization, undergraduate research and other meaningful academic experiences, student survey data, pathways to graduate school, and deeper indicators of student learning and learning challenges.

Next Steps

This initial list should be viewed as a starting point rather than a finalized dashboard. The next phase will require defining each measure more precisely, determining which measures can be meaningfully filtered to the college and program levels, identifying appropriate leading and diagnostic indicators beneath the headline measures, and clarifying what actions colleges can take when the data signal an opportunity or concern.

A key principle for that work will remain: **the purpose of measurement is not simply to know what happened, but to help us understand where we can act to make student success more likely.**

Program Success PWG (Laura Saenz & Christine Shupala)

Meeting focus

The October 23 meeting focused on the work group's charge to develop a lean approach to program assessment and review. The group connected the AIM Program Success initiatives with a shared understanding of program success, initial identification of potential metrics, and an overview of UTRGV's current comprehensive Academic Program Review process.

Connecting the work to AIM. The group began by reviewing the Program Success lifecycle—develop, review, validate market fit, and sunset or continue—and its related initiatives (4.1 to 4.6 and 3.1 to 3.5). Initiative 4.1 positions program review and continuous improvement as the central mechanism, informed by new program development, career outcomes, policy implementation, rebranding, and organizational fit. Faculty qualifications and teaching effectiveness provide additional connections to program quality.

Establish the lean assessment charge. The concept of lean program was discussed. Members were asked to consider a continuous review system that routinely monitors programs, identifies meaningful deviations early, locates improvement work close to the program, and reserves intensive review for concerns requiring strategic attention.

Develop shared definitions and potential measures. The group engaged in discussion on a shared definition of program success including academic quality, student outcomes, relevance, demand, sustainability, and institutional contribution. The group considered differences across program types and lifecycle stages, connections with faculty and student success, and evidence that can be used to guide program action.

Understand the current review process. The group reviewed UTRGV's comprehensive APR model, including the maximum ten-year interval, unit and program self-studies, institutional data, external review, action planning, and follow-up. The overview identified existing evidence on faculty, students and outcomes, curriculum, and learning that can inform a lean approach.

Proposed next steps for the scheduled November 5 follow-up meeting

- Continue working on definition of program success and three to five essential characteristics; identify questions requiring further discussion.
- Begin organizing potential measures using dimension, metric, and rationale. For each measure, identify the decision it informs, available evidence, and who can act on the findings.
- Identify which current APR elements and data can support routine review, where reporting can be simplified, and what should remain part of comprehensive review.
- Clarify responsibilities across programs, departments, colleges, and central offices, and identify priorities and shared dependencies for continued work.

Intended output: A draft definition of program success, an initial dimension–metric–rationale table, and priorities for developing the lean review process.