



Annual Report: Fiscal Year 2022

The mission of Michigan Technological University's Office of Continuous Improvement (OCI) is to provide exceptional value and improve the University's performance by expanding a continuous improvement culture using Lean principles administratively, experientially and academically to our faculty, staff, students, and the local, state, national, and global Lean community. The University's performance will improve in the areas of operational delivery, financial position, quality, and experience and engagement and students will be prepared to meet tomorrow's needs.

Operational Structure in FY22:

Michigan Tech's continuing Lean transformation uses an embedded Lean facilitator model that places effective problem-solving techniques and improvement tools in the hands of our frontline supervisors and employees, empowering them to not only improve their work but also help others design improvements.

24 University employees are currently certified as Lean yellow belt practitioners, green belt facilitators, and black belt senior facilitators. They provide improvement services for the University and within their units, and they apply the principles to their own work responsibilities

19 University employees participated in the new, virtual Lean workshops on Lean fundamentals, root cause analysis, countermeasures, impact, and practical problem solving during the year

56 Current university employees have completed Lean Systems training since the program began and act as Lean partners and role models to help cultivate a Lean culture

3 Experienced Lean facilitators advised the OCI on Lean facilitator training, development, certification, strategy, and deployment through the Lean Community Development Group

OCI Conducted Activities in Three Focus Areas:

Activities of the Office of Continuous Improvement placed a strong focus on operational excellence, standards, achievement and performance metrics, and sustainability to promote best-in-class operations. OCI pursues three strategic initiatives:

1. Close the gap between current state and the University's strategic goals

- Coordinated Associate Vice President for Administration (AVPA) Monthly Report Outs. These are planned, intentional activities that reinforce the value of improvement work which in turn achieves greater operational effectiveness
 - Develop and deploy best practices and standard work
 - Provides a sandbox for experimenting with hybrid meetings and facilitation
- Initiated process management methods and led 2 units through process inventories. Process management is a preventive approach that reduces risk, encourages ownership, and makes processes learnable, viewable, and improvable
 - Units compare their process inventory to university and unit strategic goals, industry best practices, and critical success factors, looking for gaps and overlaps, lack of written procedures, and inefficiencies
- Developed Lean white belt opportunity for completion of five campus Lean workshops and associated post-work assignments. Post-work enhances learning transfer from training to the workplace
- Provided coaching for strategic goal setting, key performance metric development, and improvement project facilitation for AVPA direct reports and others

2. Foster the continuous process of people development

- Re-imagined the university's Lean yellow, green, and black belt certification program to increase

flexibility and reflect the reality of sustained, increased job demands

- Converted Lean academic courses offered through the Enterprise Program to online
 - Expanded access to students on internships and co-ops, where they are likely to encounter and experience Lean transformations in real time
 - Recognized by the Enterprise Program director for the highest student evaluation scores for all Enterprise academic courses
- Created and delivered sessions on Organizational Skills and Business Processes in the Workplace for Michigan Tech's Supervisor Success Series pilot
- Provided advisor, support, guest speakers, resources, and connections for [Leaders in Continuous Improvement](#) (LCI) student organization

3. Create strategic connections, promote collaborative partnerships, and share Lean expertise in the local, state, national, and global community

- Collaborated with the University of Michigan and Michigan State University Lean offices to share best practices and consult on issues
- Invited as a panel member for a transnational discussion on "Digital Lean Hotspots in the Educational Ecosystem" for the 7th European Lean Educator Conference
- Invited to deliver a plenary session "Sticky Learning: Improving Learning Transfer from Your Lean Training (Knowing) to the Workplace (Doing)" at the 2021 Lean Higher Ed (HE) Global Conference hosted by the University of Strathclyde in the United Kingdom. This plenary had the highest attendance of any session at the conference. Also invited to present "Brainstorming and Decision Making" to practitioners in the Lean HE Canada Network
- Served as chair of the [Lean HE Americas Division](#) and member of the Lean HE global steering group, examiner for Michigan Performance Excellence (MIPEX), and Michigan Lean Consortium (MLC) Events Committee volunteer

Looking Ahead to FY23:

- OCI will continue its strong focus on supporting Auxiliary units to transform the student experience through process management and improving processes that support critical success factors and industry best practices
- Campus-wide Lean Yellow Belt training will be restarted. This is the foundational training for Lean facilitators and the means by which we sustain our Lean certification program
- Student process improvement coordinators (PICs) will be hired. PICs reduce the load on our volunteer green and black belt facilitators and are student Lean ambassadors, and they learn and apply valuable Lean skills that they apply at Michigan Tech and leverage for job opportunities
- A redesigned Lean community of practice will be launched, with an emphasis on learning transfer, ROI, and building support networks
- Full participation in regional, state, national, and global activities will continue to ramp up
- Requests for improvement event facilitation from units around campus have dropped. Several factors are at play, including workforce availability and general feelings of overload by staff. As we move to the endemic stage of COVID-19, OCI will work to regenerate the demand for improvement event facilitation on campus
- University Leadership could support reigniting the demand for improvement event facilitation by encouraging managers to prioritize improvement work. Continuous improvement work engages the people who are doing the work in improving the work, and results in more time spent on interesting and value-added work, more even workloads, less fire-fighting, and less stress overall, helping us become a best place to work