



September 20, 2024

Work in the Office of Continuous Improvement is conducted under the leadership of [Dr. Ruth Archer](#), a recognized global leader in Lean in Higher Education.

The Office of Continuous Improvement: Respect | Interconnected | Believe | Incremental Michigan Tech has been transforming the way it works and solves problems for over 15 years through the use of Lean processes, methods, and tools. This Office works with University employees and students to create effective and efficient processes so that students can focus on learning and faculty can focus on teaching and research. Activities in the Office of Continuous Improvement emphasize operational excellence, standards, performance metrics, and sustainability to promote best-in-class operations. They endeavor to:

1. *Help people create easier, simpler, more reliable processes*
2. *Support building a culture where employees feel comfortable bringing problems and mistakes forward*
3. *Deliver services including facilitation, consulting, coaching, and thought partnership*
4. *Provide learning and development opportunities*
5. *Blame the process, not the person, when things go wrong*

The Office of Continuous Improvement is launching the next cohort of Lean Systems Training in October 2024 with 17 employees currently signed up to participate, which will add to the body of trained improvement leaders on campus.



**Michigan
Technological
University**

Office of Continuous Improvement

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Date: September 17, 2024
To: Theresa Coleman-Kaiser, Associate Vice President for Administration
Subject: FY24 Annual Report for the Office of Continuous Improvement

Please accept this annual report on the activities of the Office of Continuous Improvement (OCI) at Michigan Tech.

OCI activities are designed to close the gap between current state and the University's strategic goals, foster the continuous process of people development and create strategic connections, promote collaborative partnerships, and share Lean expertise in the local, state, national, and global community.

Sincerely,

Ruth Archer, PhD
Director of Continuous Improvement

Key Milestones for the Office of Continuous Improvement at Michigan Tech, Fiscal Year 2025									
Overall	OCI continues to support the university's performance in the areas of safety, operational delivery, financial position, quality, and experience and engagement, while also preparing students to meet tomorrow's needs.								
Lean Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created and delivered Lean Systems Green Belt training, Yellow Belt workshops, and Lean academic courses. Strengthened impact and metrics development for the Lean Systems Green Belt training team projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45 university employees are currently certified as Lean yellow belt practitioners, green belt practitioners and facilitators, and black belt senior facilitators. They apply the principles to their own work, and many facilitate improvement work for the University and within their units. <table> <tr> <th>Example Green Belt Projects</th><th>Impact</th></tr> <tr> <td>Internal Audit – Update audit process to streamline workflow</td><td>Anticipated outcomes include an increased number of completed audits, quality of findings and improvements, and risk reduction; quicker review time with auditors; audit data requests identified upfront; and a better overall auditee experience leading to enhanced departmental cooperation.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Residential Living – Provide key seasonal knowledge to residential students at the point of need, through social media and the website</td><td>Test case: Total student interactions with housing staff during the first 2 weeks of contract renewal dropped from 153 daily interactions in the previous year to 65, significantly increasing the number of students who were able to complete the task independently and saving 7+ hours of staff time per day.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Financial Services – Redesign the budget spreadsheet creation process</td><td>The new process reduced the time to create these complex spreadsheets from 90-140 minutes per index (48 indexes) to 17-30 minutes per index, saving 60+ hours of budget manager time, while also including a new Budget Actual feature and providing a clear set of directions.</td></tr> </table>	Example Green Belt Projects	Impact	Internal Audit – Update audit process to streamline workflow	Anticipated outcomes include an increased number of completed audits, quality of findings and improvements, and risk reduction; quicker review time with auditors; audit data requests identified upfront; and a better overall auditee experience leading to enhanced departmental cooperation.	Residential Living – Provide key seasonal knowledge to residential students at the point of need, through social media and the website	Test case: Total student interactions with housing staff during the first 2 weeks of contract renewal dropped from 153 daily interactions in the previous year to 65, significantly increasing the number of students who were able to complete the task independently and saving 7+ hours of staff time per day.	Financial Services – Redesign the budget spreadsheet creation process	The new process reduced the time to create these complex spreadsheets from 90-140 minutes per index (48 indexes) to 17-30 minutes per index, saving 60+ hours of budget manager time, while also including a new Budget Actual feature and providing a clear set of directions.
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Campus Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided consultation and thought partnership to HR throughout the development of the new MTU leadership competencies training program. Served as coach and thought partner for Facilities Management director of operations, helping him visualize his work and priorities, and making sure those priorities are visible to managers and staff. Advised and coached the Essential Education assessment working group leaders. Coached Associate Vice President for Administration (AVPA), her direct reports, and others on strategic goal setting, key performance metric development, and improvement project identification and execution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example: Portage Lake Golf Course (PLGC) tournament entries were received through paper entry forms and payment was collected at the course the day of. In 2023, all major tournament events for PLGC were registered online. Impact included a 9k+ increase in tournament revenues, increased data integrity with a corresponding improvement in business analytics, and a better tournament experience for all. 								

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented the “Everyday Excellence” AVPA employee recognition program to enhance employee engagement, wellness, and retention, and reinforce behaviors that support AVPA goals and values. 344 submissions in FY24, 449 to date. • Received the Making a Difference Outstanding Leader award, given to the Michigan Tech employee who creates a positive and motivating work environment, recognizes others for their contributions, supports work-life balance and encourages professional development, and responds well under pressure (grace under fire).
Student Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taught fall and spring Lean academic courses, educating 70 students on Lean culture, principles, methods, and tools. • Supported a student Process Improvement Coordinator (PIC) who updated training materials and managed yellow belt documentation. PICs reduce the load on volunteer green and black belt facilitators, are student Lean ambassadors, and learn and apply valuable Lean skills they apply at Michigan Tech and leverage for job opportunities.
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated bi-monthly book discussions for the Michigan Lean Consortium. • Managed quarterly virtual Lean Higher Ed Quick Takes for the Lean HE Americas Division to educate the Lean Higher Ed community on Lean culture, principles, processes, methods, and tools as they are applied at universities and colleges. • Invited as a panel member for a transglobal discussion on “The State of Lean HE” for the 2023 Lean HE Global Conference. Also invited to deliver a session “Using Lean HE Best Practices to Create Goals and Develop Tactics.” • Invited speaker at the 2023 Lean Solutions Summit, speaking on “Teaching Lean to the Next Generation.” • Served on the Lean HE Global steering group.
Looking Ahead to FY25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In alignment with the university’s risk management initiative, promote the benefits of current state process maps, which include continuity planning/risk mitigation, training and succession planning, and identification of inefficiencies. • Refine and extend risk management strategies across AVPA.