

Improve Retention, Improve Lives

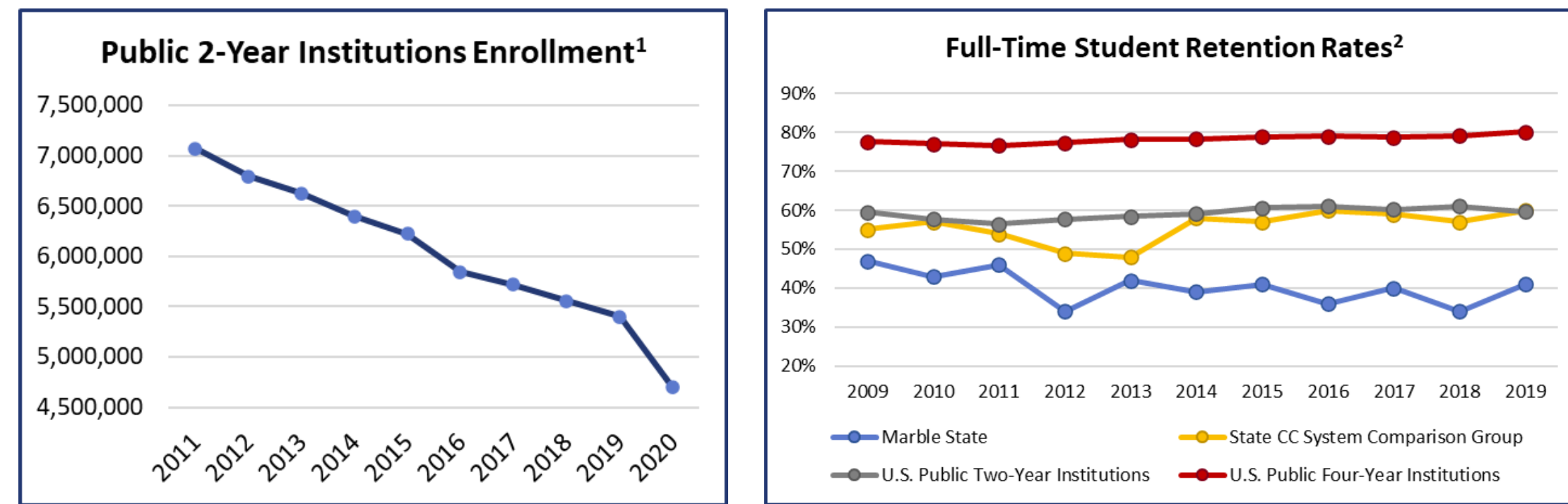


Stacie Hughes

DBA, MBA, CPA, CMA, CFM, CFE, CGMA, FCPA, NDCCDP
stacie.hughes@athens.edu

BACKGROUND

Community colleges provide services and resources that support and sustain society. Declining enrollment and persistently lagging retention rates at community colleges place the well-being of students, institutions, and society at risk.



DATA COLLECTION & METHODOLOGY

Data collection consisted of two major categories:

1. Comprehensive review of frameworks, best practices and benchmarks, and methods.
2. Examination of institutional documents and data and information-gathering interviews.

The methodology included a customized framework for evaluating retention practices at community colleges.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on a gap analysis, what innovative and student-centered solutions will secure and sustain higher retention year over year at Marble State Community & Technical College, enabling the institution to fulfill its mission?

RESULTS

Due to a lack of backup and succession planning and the significant reliance on a single student success specialist, the optimal solution determined by the methodological analysis and agreed upon by representatives of Marble State is to:

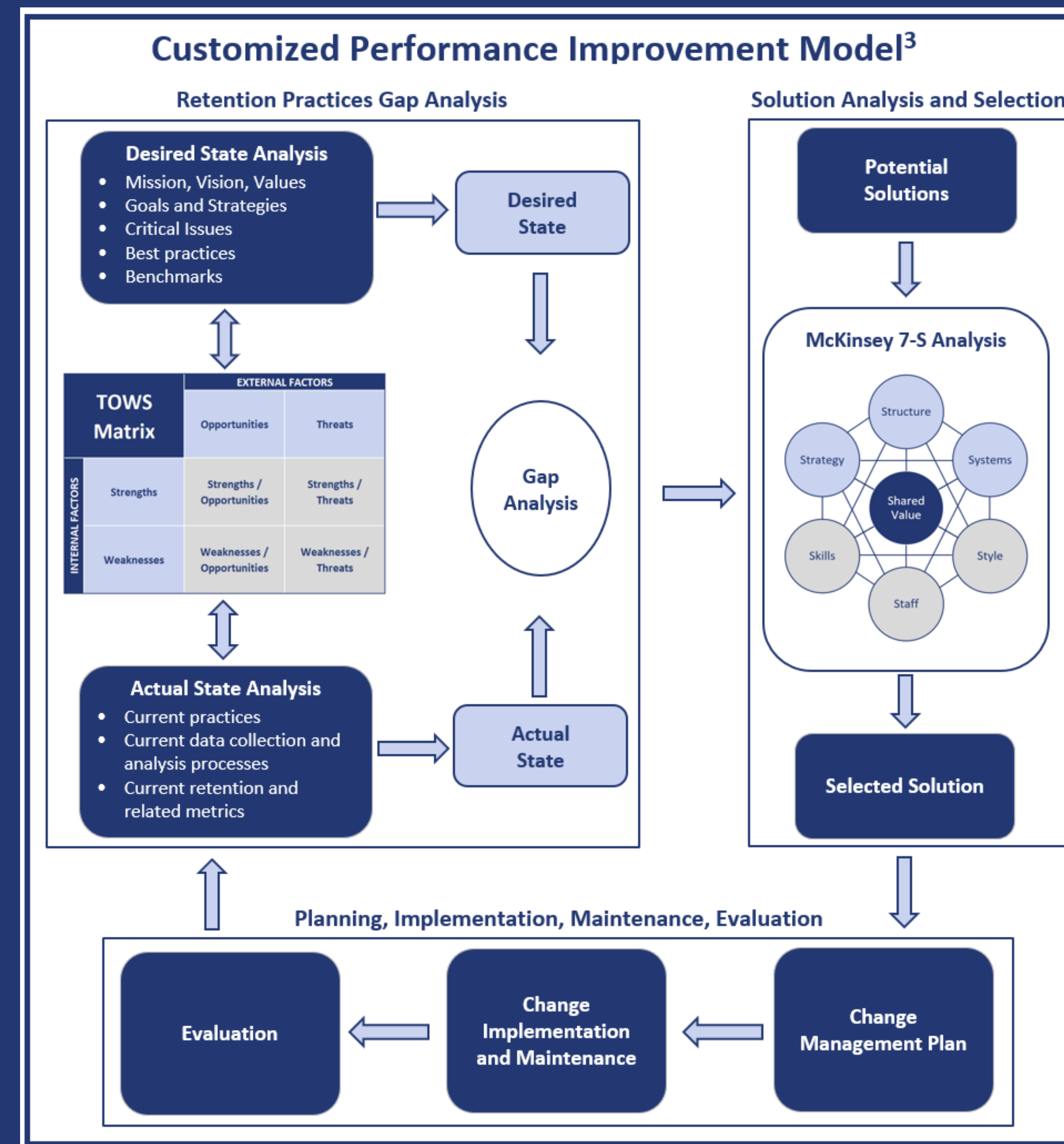
- Increase student success resources by adding staff to support current and expand future retention and intervention efforts and mitigate risk to operations.

A holistic framework for analyzing student retention practices at community colleges.

The **desired state** is informed by who the institution is, what it values, and where it is going as well as critical issues facing the industry and institution and best practices and benchmarks.

The **TOWS matrix** ensures analysis of internal and external factors, informs the desired and actual states, and aids in developing strategies.

The **actual state** includes current retention practices, data collection, analysis, and metrics. It is informed by and includes the strengths and weaknesses of the TOWS matrix.



Potential solutions are identified to fill the gaps identified in the gap analysis.

The **McKinsey 7-5 framework** facilitates a holistic analysis of potential solutions by determining the extent to which they are aligned with each of the seven elements of the institution.

The researcher identified and recommended the optimal solution based on the preceding analyses. The institution identified the **selected solution** upon review of the potential solutions.

References
 1. National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.). *Integrated postsecondary education data system*. <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>
 2. National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. (2021). *Persistence and retention: Fall 2019 beginning cohort*. <https://nscrclearinghouse.org/wp-content/uploads/PersistenceRetention2021.pdf>
 3. Van Tiem, D. M., Moseley, J. L., & Dessinger, J. L. (2012). *Fundamentals of performance improvement: Optimizing results through people, processes, and organizations* (3rd ed.). Wiley.

Acknowledgements
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CHANGE MANAGEMENT PLAN
 A comprehensive change management plan supports the effective implementation of change.

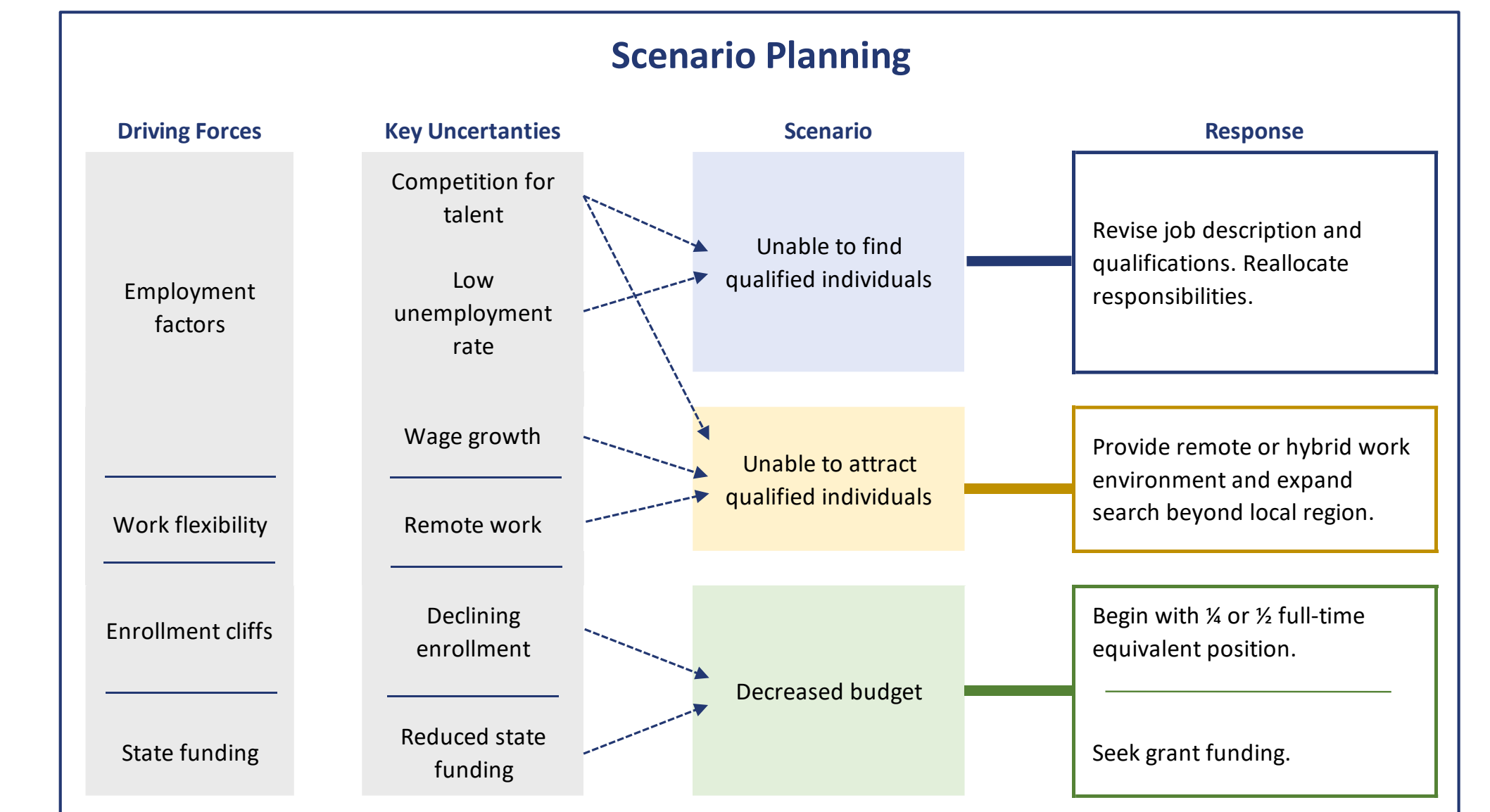
- Change management team
- Strategic vision

By adding student success staff, the institution can provide more effective retention and intervention measures to improve student outcomes, supporting the institution's mission and long-term success.

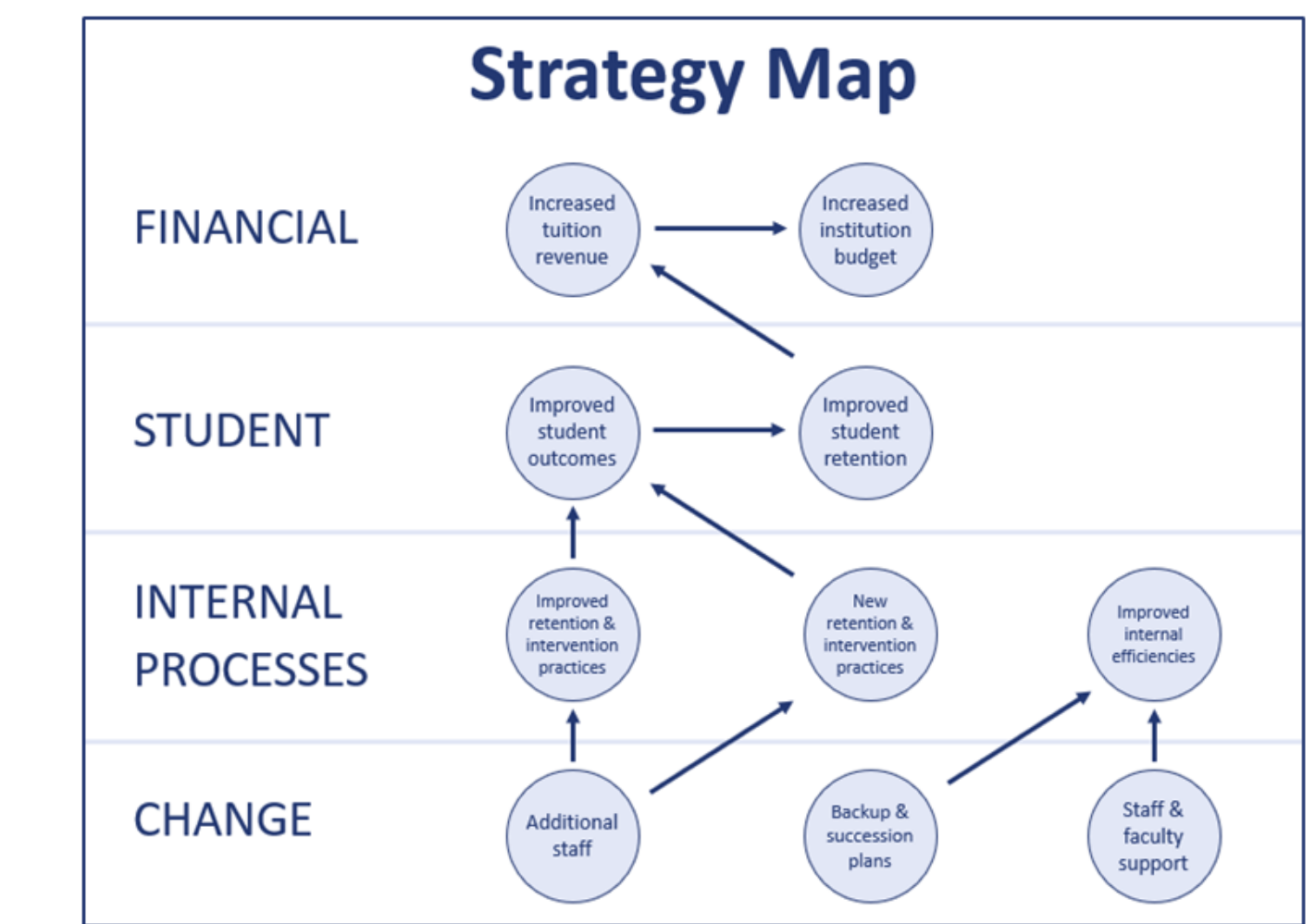
- Communication plan
- Change effectiveness metrics

Metrics to Measure Change	
Improved student retention	Adherence to timeline
Student satisfaction	Adherence to action plan
Number of retention and intervention practices	Change management team satisfaction
Time to fill position	Employee buy-in
Time to productivity	

- Reinforcement strategies
- Scenario planning



Strategy map



Action plan

MARBLE STATE ACTION PLAN						
PROJECT NAME		PROJECT MANAGER	START DATE	END DATE	OVERALL PROGRESS	
Improve Retention, Improve Lives		To Be Appointed	8/1/2022	10/1/2023		
AT RISK?	ACTION	KOTTER MODEL STEPS	RESPONSIBLE	START	FINISH	DURATION (DAYS)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determine whether to move forward with solution.	Step 1. Create a sense of urgency.	President	8/1/22	8/31/22	30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Form change management team and assign roles.	Step 2. Build a guiding coalition.	President	9/1/22	9/30/22	29
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review change management plan and make edits deemed necessary.	Step 3. Form a strategic vision.	Change management team	10/1/22	10/31/22	30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enlist volunteers to help create a vision for the new position.	Step 4. Enlist a volunteer army.	Change management team	11/1/22	12/31/22	60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify barriers and develop plans to remove them.	Step 5. Enable action by removing barriers.	Change management team and volunteer army	11/1/22	12/31/22	60
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determine staffing needs (a single FT or more than one PT)		Change management team	1/1/23	1/31/23	30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop job description.	Step 6. Generate short-term wins.	Dean of students or designee	2/1/23	2/28/23	27
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare and present budget request.	Step 7. Sustain acceleration.	Dean of students or designee	3/1/23	3/31/23	30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create and post job notice.		Human resources	6/1/23	6/30/23	29
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conduct search.		Hiring committee	7/1/23	8/31/23	61
<input type="checkbox"/>	Onboard new student success staff.	Step 8. Institute change.	Dean of students or designee	10/1/23	10/31/23	30

Disclaimer: This study used pseudonyms for the name of the Historically Black Community College, the names of the informational interview participants, and the location of the college in recognition that confidentiality and anonymity are paramount in academic consultative research.