This presentation provides a brief introduction to Prioritization Plus, the data platform that NIU is implementing to facilitate the program prioritization process during the 2015-2016 academic year.
Introduction to *Prioritization Plus*

Program Prioritization Data Platform

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**Brief Introduction and Overview**

- Review goal of program prioritization
- Discuss why a data platform is needed
- Briefly demonstrate capabilities of *Prioritization Plus (P+)*
- Describe how P+ will be used at NIU to facilitate program prioritization data collection and review during fall 2015 – spring 2016
- Share how to get started using the system
- Highlight where to find more information

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During this brief introduction and overview to *Prioritization Plus* we will:

Review the goal of program prioritization; Discuss why a data platform is needed; Briefly demonstrate the capabilities of *Prioritization Plus*; Describe how P+ will be used at NIU to facilitate program prioritization data collection and review during fall 2015-spring 2016

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**Goal of Program Prioritization**

- Maximize the impact of our institutional program portfolio, across both academic and administrative programs
- Process aligned with NIU’s vision, mission, priorities, and strategic framework
- Data-informed process, comparisons internal among unlike programs
- Process supported by NIU Board of Trustees, President, Provost, and Vice President for Administration and Finance

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The goal of program prioritization at NIU is to maximize the impact of our institutional program portfolio, across both academic and administrative programs. Further, the program prioritization process is aligned with NIU’s vision, mission, priorities, and strategic framework. The process is data-informed and comparisons are internal and among unlike programs. This process is supported by the NIU Board of Trustees, President, Provost, and Vice President for Administration and Finance.

**Programs Defined**

- A program is any activity or collection of activities that consume resources (dollars, people, space, equipment, time)
- A program is not a department
- Program inventory completed and available at [go.niu.edu/programinventory](http://go.niu.edu/programinventory)

Over spring and summer 2015, through an extensive series of data subgroup discovery meetings with all divisions and colleges, academic and administrative programs were defined along with a matrix of data measures, sources, and metrics. A program is defined as a collection of discrete activities/functions that consume resources (dollars, people, space, equipment, time). A program is not necessarily a department, center or area, although cases exist where that is the case for centers/areas. The complete inventory of academic and administrative programs is available at [go.niu.edu/programinventory](http://go.niu.edu/programinventory)
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**Why a Data Platform is Needed**

- Data-informed process necessitates reviewing centrally-collected institutional data as well as program-provided data
- Program data elements include measures and metrics that accurately reflect, measure, and describe the discrete elements of each academic or administrative program
- Program data needs to be collected, reviewed, and shared with Task Force members who will be reviewing programs

So, why is a data platform needed? The data platform will serve as the backbone for program prioritization. The establishment of a data-informed process for making strategic decisions regarding program investment necessitates reviewing centrally-collected institutional data as well as program provided data.

Examples of centrally curated information include enrollment, graduation rates, credit hour production, research, scholarly and artistic productivity, staffing and compensation data, as well as external indicators of demand and outcomes. In addition to centrally-collected institutional data, programs have their own data metrics. Programs will be encouraged whenever possible to benchmark against disciplinary norms and industry standards.

Those responsible for programs (typically individuals with titles such as department chair, director) commonly referred to in the program prioritization process as “program authors” have multiple opportunities to upload complementary and substitute data about their programs. Program author data/reporting upload is a necessary part of the Program Prioritization process and the data platform facilitates the inclusion of program data uploaded by program authors with other institutionally provided data.
What is Prioritization Plus (P+)?

- Web-based data platform designed for use with program prioritization process
- Provides secure, program-specific access for program authors, program approvers, and task force members to relevant program data
- Facilitates the review and decision making process

To help facilitate the collection, collation, and review of program data, NIU has licensed and is in the process of implementing a central data platform for use with program prioritization called Prioritization Plus. Prioritization Plus is a web-based data platform specifically designed for use by institutions engaging in program prioritization. It provides secure, program-specific access for program authors, program approvers, and task force members to relevant program data. The system facilitates the review and decision making process.
System User Roles

- **Program Author**
  - Responsible for completing the program narratives
  - One or more authors per program
- **Program Approver**
  - Reviewing and approving program narratives
  - One approver per program
- **Task Force**
  - Reviews and scores the program narratives

The system provides access and capabilities to several different user roles.

**Program Author** – individuals with this system role are responsible for completing program narratives, typically with titles such as department chair, director, or manager. In the system, a program may have one or more authors designated with access to the data and narrative write-up for that program.

**Program Approver** – individuals with this system role are responsible for reviewing and approving program narratives. While a program can have more than one author defined, only one approver may be assigned to a program. Generally, deans and vice presidents will serve as approvers for the programs they are responsible for.

**Task Force** – individuals with this system role will be the task force members who will be charged with reviewing and scoring program narratives.
The data platform will serve a very specific purpose and will be utilized by a variety of different users in the various roles previously defined. Program-specific institutional data will be pre-loaded into the system by the NIU program prioritization data support team.

When the system is configured and made available, program authors will receive access to the institutional data for their program(s), aligned to established program review criteria questions.

Program authors will draft narrative responses to program criteria questions and add supplemental data as desired. Offline templates will be made available that authors can use to draft their narrative responses in Microsoft Word for easy copy and pasting into the online templates within the system.

After program authors have completed their work, program approvers will review completed data and narrative write-ups and approve.

Task force members will then review approved program data and score programs using established review criteria.
The system utilizes a program template structure, consisting of a program summary as well as criterion summary and questions pertaining to each criterion. The system allows for up to 125 words to be included in the program summary, where program authors can offer a high level overview of what the program is and who it serves.

Then for each criterion, program authors can draft up to 500 words to respond to the criterion in general and/or specifically to each criterion question. The 500 words may be distributed as desired across the criterion questions and criterion summary.
Let's take a brief look at the features of the Prioritization Plus system. Program Authors and Program Approvers will be receiving more information and login credentials to access the system later in September when the system goes live.
After logging into the system, selecting “Program Information” and then “Edit Program Information” you can view the Program Information Form.

From this area in the system, a series of three drop-down menus appear. In the “Program” drop-down menu, select the program that you wish to access. The next drop-down menu, “Criterion” updates to show the “Program Summary”. In the Author/Approver Write-up field that appears, this is where you can enter, or copy/paste, a program description for your program. Using the provided editor, you can highlight text and format as desired, such as italicize and bold. Click the “Save” button to save your work. You can further edit and save changes as desired. You can logout of the system and re-enter at any time to continue your work.
To select a criterion, choose a criterion and select from the Criterion drop-down menu. After doing so, the Question drop-down menu updates to the default criterion summary field. This is where you can enter a criterion summary if you wish.
Any institution-provided data can be viewed by simply navigating to the particular question in which the data is aligned. In this academic program example, by navigating to “Criterion 2: Quality of Students” and then selecting “Question 2.2 Student Performance” the average ACT score and high school grade point average of incoming freshman is displayed.
To enter the narrative response to a criterion question, simply click in the provided Author/Approver Write-Up field and either begin typing, or you can copy/paste content from Microsoft Word or other word processor of your choice. You can use the provided editor tools to format your text as you wish. Be sure to save your work after each significant change to avoid losing any of your work.
Beyond the basic textual input capabilities demonstrated, the additional system capabilities include:

- Adding 1 supplemental data table, 5 rows X 7 columns max, per question
- Adding 1 image (diagram/chart) per question, recommended dimensions to be no larger than 500 pixels wide by 400 pixels high
- Export write-up report, including all institutional and author-provided data
To get started, review the criteria and questions for your program(s). Academic and administrative program criteria and accompanying questions are listed on the previously mentioned Program Prioritization website, on the “Criteria” page.

More details for logging into Prioritization Plus will be emailed to program authors for how to login to Prioritization Plus and access institution data associated with criterion questions. To learn more about the Prioritization Plus system, visit the NIU Program Prioritization training page at go.niu.edu/pptraining

Training will be available for program authors, program approvers, and task force members, covering complete details for using the Prioritization Plus data system.
For more information about Program Prioritization at NIU, visit go.niu.edu/pp