

# HIKING THROUGH THE VALLEY OF DESPAIR

## **What is the Valley of Despair?**

Whenever an organization experiences significant change, there is always a dip in performance. We sometimes call this the “**valley of despair.**” It is important to recognize the reality of the valley or this dip in productivity. While the impact of change is unavoidable, we can work together to reduce the severity and duration of the reaction, and realistically acknowledge the challenges and provide support.

## **Ways to prepare for the trip through the Valley:**

- Embrace new processes, technology, and ways of working.
- Follow Organizational Change Management recommendations as a means to reduce the duration and intensity of the performance dip that is part of changes.
- Stay informed and share information with others.
- Acknowledge and accept challenges.
- Develop a plan within your department/unit to prepare for launch.

## **Guiding Principles for How to Implement Change:**

### **Model the Modernization mission and goals.**

Focus on the long-term future of WSU. Embrace future modern and standard processes, make work simpler, and enable the University to make data-driven decisions.

### **Implement according to plan.**

Execute work according to guidance given. Avoid straying from provided steps, information, and best practices.

### **Communicate Frequently**

Clearly, concisely, and consistently communicate real-time information to keep your team current.



# SUPPORTING YOUR TEAM ON THE JOURNEY

## **Suggested Strategies for Supporting Your Team:**

- Listen to and share concerns, ideas, and suggestions.
- Empathy is critical, but be wary of commiserating.
- Openly communicate and be transparent with knowledge and information.
- Remember that change is a *process*, not an event.
- Understand that each individual will experience change in a different way.
- Create an open dialogue about shared and differing experiences.
- Don't underestimate the value of your voice and participation in helping to foster change.
- Ask for support when you need it.

