

Quality Enhancement Plan

Sub-Group Project Template

J. Sargeant Reynolds
Community College



Due March 7, 2008

(All completed templates should be uploaded to the SharePoint site.)

Project Title:

Theme project is related to:

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Career Advising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjunct Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Distance Learning |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advising | <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction |

Project Description: To better serve our students and their advising needs, we propose an electronic, web-based advising system that would consist of three parts, outlined below.

1. E-advising website that would house:
 - Frequently Asked Questions
 - A gpa calculator
 - Videos and podcasts walking students through what to expect when meeting with an advisor, how to best utilize advising resources at the college, transfer and career resources, time management, etc.
 - E-mail advising system
 - Links to articulation agreements
2. E-mail advising system would entail:
 - Students would be able to interact with an academic advisor through completion of an on-line advising form which an advisor would download and then correspond with the student via e-mail.
 - Student peer advisors would monitor a chat room during specified hours to answer general questions regarding advising and classes at JSRCC.
 - Blackboard classes that would allow advisors to enroll students by program so that, for example, the pre-Allied Health advisor could interact with those students, answer questions, and post announcements and useful information regarding career, transfer, and internal processes specific to that student population.
3. Expanded MyJSRCC portal that would include: an interactive degree audit so that students could assess how their completed courses would “fit” into a variety of JSR degrees; an interactive scheduling tool to better assist students in managing their school schedule and “outside” demands.

E-advising would coexist with the college’s advising model and would provide a centralized location where our students would gain more access to relevant advising, career and transfer information and academic advisors.

How does this project support the mission and vision of the institution?

The mission of the College is to provide access to education that will do the following:

- 1) develop individuals for employment and/or for career advancement;
- 2) promote personal enrichment and lifelong learning; and
- 3) build a skilled workforce that contributes to regional economic development.

This project is consistent with both the above-stated mission and the vision of providing a dynamic learning environment that will change lives and enrich the community. First it is consistent with these because it would increase the accessibility of the college to working students whose hours make it difficult for them to come to the campus for services and information and for students who cannot easily come to one of the campuses because of transportation issues or distance from the college. Secondly, as students increasingly avail themselves of distance learning classes, there is a concomitant need for the student services to also be available online. Finally, a user-friendly system of electronic advising can be used as a tool to increase students comfort level with computers and with other electronic devices and thereby be part of their overall preparation for the world of work or for matriculation at four-year colleges. Those students who already enjoy the use of technology will enjoy receiving services using their favored methods of communicating (i.e. ipods, cell phones, blackboard, websites and emails).

How is this project tied to the strategic plan of the institution?

The E-Advising project is directly tied to supporting the goals set forth in the college's Strategic Plan. Increasing the breadth and access of advising for students would increase student success, increase retention, and ultimately positively impact student graduation rates.

Strategic Plan objectives:

- 1.0 Providing access and opportunity to students
- 2.3 Improve the delivery of academic advising and support services in order to increase retention and student success.
- 2.6 Increase the college's first-time, full-time, program-placed student retention rate from 56% to 65% (90th percentile for peer institutions) and the first-time, part-time, program-placed student retention rate from 41% to 45% (90th percentile for peer institutions).
- 4.0 Ensure that transfer to four-year colleges and universities is a seamless process for JSRCC students
- 7.3 By June 2010, JSRCC will become a recognized leader in providing excellent customer service.

E-Advising is also directly connected to the college's Retention Plan. The implementation of electronic advising would directly positively impact student retention and would specifically address improving services to part-time, distance, and evening students (Objective 2.3.3)

What data (internal and/or external) supports the importance of implementing this project?

Internal Data:

- The overall college retention rate is 38.3%, compared to 40% for all VCCS institutions.
- According to our CSSE data, over 50% of our students are working full time and are caring for dependents living with them.
- In five years, the percentage of enrollment attributable to distance learning has almost doubled. Distance learning accounts for 22% (3,994) of the college's enrollment.
- In comparison with 29 like institutions, JSRCC is spending more on instruction (5% difference) and less on academic support (6.5% difference), institutional support (2% difference) and student services (30.6% difference).
- Forty-one percent (41%) of students indicated that they never talked about career plans with an advisor or instructor.
- Of the 5 broad categories assessed by CCSSE, the largest gap compared with consortium institutions was in the "support for learners" category.

External Data:

In our review of best practices of e-advising, it is apparent that similar institutions are serving their varied student populations by providing web-based advising resources to their students.

SACS broadly defines student learning as changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors or values. What is the definition of student learning in the context of this project?

In the context of e-advising, student learning is multifold. First, through the use of the e-advising resources, students will increase their knowledge about advising resources at JSRCC, how to best use those resources, and gain better and more information about the academic programs that exist at JSRCC. Secondly, students will have greater access to interact with both advisors and fellow students (through Blackboard and peer advising). Retention research indicates that engagement with staff/faculty and fellow students positively impacts retention. Finally, students will gain the skills to develop a schedule, utilize an advising program, and will be more empowered to be active participants in their educational experience.

What are the specific learning outcomes?

There are several learning outcomes anticipated as result of this project. First, students will learn how to select classes in their programs and therefore will take fewer classes that are not in their specified program. Secondly, students will learn how to identify the prerequisites and co-requisites for their classes resulting in fewer students in classes who are not prepared for the class. More students will be able to explain their choices of electives in terms of their career goals. The retention rate will improve. The average of "W" grades per student will decline. The GPA will improve among students whose GPA's are below 3.0 at the beginning of the project.

How will you know that the identified learning outcomes have been achieved (assessment)?

Several assessment measures will be used. Students who utilize e-advising services and those who do not will be compared on academic success (defined as GPA), length of program completion, adherence to academic program requirements, and engagement. A baseline of credits taken prior to graduation will be established and then compared to how many credits specific academic programs require. The same measure will be taken a year into the project and the two statistically compared. Similarly, records of students taking classes with prerequisites and co-requisites will be compared before and during the project. Surveys of students about the basis for their choices of electives will measure whether they have considered career goals and life-style needs when selecting electives. Standard measures of retention will be taken. "W" grades and GPA's will be gleaned from the People Soft system and compared with those before the project's implementation.

What best practices are going to be used as a part of this project and why?

Anne Arundel Community College (AACC). Counseling, Advising, and Retention Services. Retrieved January 8, 2008 from: <http://www.aacc.edu/advising/>

Arizona State University (ASU). Academics, eAdvisor Tools. Retrieved January 8, 2008 from: <https://webapp3.asu.edu/students/>

Linda Wagner (2001, June). Virtual Advising: Delivering Student Services. Retrieved January 8, 2008 from: <http://www.westga.edu/%7Edistance/ojdl/fall43/wagner43.html>

National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). Distance and Online Advising Resources. Retrieved January 8, 2008 from: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/clearinghouse/Links/distance.htm>

The University of Arizona (UA). (2001). Guidelines for the Use of Official Student Email Addresses. Retrieved January 7, 2008 from: <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/emailguidelines.htm>

University of California- Las Angeles (UCLA). Online Advising, Virtual Counseling, Virtual Counseling FAQ Page, Ask Email, Email Factsheet. Retrieved January 7, 2008 from: <http://www.college.ucla.edu/up/counseling/onlineadvising.htm>

Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (2000, November). Guide to Developing Online Student Services. Retrieved January 8, 2008 from: <http://www.wcet.info/resources/publications/guide/guide.htm>

What resources (human, fiscal, academic, technology) will be needed to complete this project?

- Hiring of a coordinator for E-advising program who has the skills and knowledge to develop and update the e-advising website and is aware of best practices in e-advising.
- Time and resources of college's web developer.
- Costs of further expanding the MyJSRCC portal (additional server space, human cost of either programmer time or hiring additional programmer to create interactive degree audits, etc.).
- Potential costs to set up and maintain Blackboard sites for specific advising programs.
- Hiring and training of students to serve as peer advisors.
- Staffing time and resources to script, tape and edit advising educational videos and podcasts. Or if such tools already exist, cost to purchase such tools.

What could be the impact on student learning if this project is not implemented?

We will continue to see that students do not engage with the academic advising process and are often not properly advised which leads to frustration, retention and graduation issues. In addition, e-advising services are critical to serve the diverse student populations that exist at a community college: students who are educated at a distance (Distance learning accounts for 22% of the college's headcount), students who are non-traditionally aged, and students who have many other responsibilities in addition to schooling.

Name(s) of faculty/staff involved in the preparation of this project template.

Cynthia DeRiemer, Lois Bradley, Susan Roach, Kimberly Phillips, Val Fisher, Evelyn Cronin, George Flowers, Meg Buchanan Foster