

Action Project

Institution: San Juan College
Submitted: 2006-09-13 **Contact:** Laurie Gruel
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Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: 07-01-2006

Target completion date: 06-30-2008

Actual completion date: --

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Centralized Advising and Counseling Center for San Juan College

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

The goal of the centralized advising center is to provide for a comprehensive advising and counseling model to increase student retention at San Juan College. This centralized model for advising, when fully implemented, will link to the strategic goals of San Juan College, specifically Valuing Educational Access and Student Success. The Center will provide a critical underpinning for a holistic learning environment. It certainly is a need based student support system. The stated purpose of the Advising and Counseling Center is to coordinate and support a program that provides students with academic information and personal counseling, and assists students in developing sound educational, career, and professional goals in order to make more effective decisions about courses and programs according to their values, interests, and skills.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities:

San Juan College has undertaken this major initiative as research indicates that students persist at a higher rate when strong advising is present at the institution. Quality advising is a result of planned development and commitment to an effective advising program. According to the Noel Levitz 2005 National Research Report, students rated academic advising as one of their most important needs. San Juan College advising committee members have collected information from the National Advising and Counseling Association, as well as information from student focus groups in fall 2004. The information from the students indicated one of their top concerns was the current advising process. Some of the current obstacles described by students involved hours of availability which do not match up between faculty and students, advisors assigned outside the student's field of study, faculty advisors lacking current information such as transfer guides or program requirements, or advisors lacking good communication and relationship building skills. The College also does not have a clearly designated position in charge of advising. The sometimes inconsistent information, or information that is just incorrect, is not being controlled by one office which leads to these discrepancies. The lack of enforcement of pre-requisites leads a number of students to be unprepared for coursework assigned. Inconsistent and outdated articulation agreements cause students preparing for other college curriculums to be advised wrongly in their coursework at San Juan College.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

The organizational areas most affected by, or involved in this project, include the San Juan College Counseling Center, Dean of Humanities Office, Dean of Business Office, Dean of Math and Sciences Office, Dean of Allied Health Office, Dean of Energy Office, Dean of Trades and Technologies Office, TRIO Talent Search Office, TRIO EDGE Program Office, Admission Office, Vice President for Student Service Office, Vice President for Learning Office, Director of the Kirtland Campus, Aviation Program Office, and staff and faculty currently involved in advising.

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:

The organizational process (es) this Action Project will change and improve are student advising leading to student retention and increased completers.

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):

The process of implementation for this Action Project involves a timeline which started early in the spring of 2005. The committee was formed and as a result of that committee's discussions, Tim Champarde, a consultant for NACADA, visited the campus in April, 2005. He interviewed students, faculty, administration, and Counseling Center staff to determine the state of advising on campus and recommend a model, supported by research, to improve advising on the campus. He recommended shifting to the least intrusive model, using the Total Intake Model. In this model, initial advising of all students is conducted in a central advising unit (Pardee 2000). Student are referred to advisors in their field of study or academic program after reaching specific criteria (which could include completion of remedial courses, a certain number of credit hours, all general education classes, etc.). The committee met to determine the model to be used late in the summer of 2005, and the Vice Presidents for Learning and Student Services requested that the final model to be determined by May 2006. The committee has meet on a routine basis during the fall of 2005 and the winter of 2006 to further develop and agree on the model of advising needed at the College. The centralized model of advising was agreed to in a meeting with the Vice Presidents in March, 2006 and the finalized model will be presented in May, 2006. Implementation of this advising center model will start in the summer of 2006 as budget discussions have occurred to secure the necessary funds for the implementation. The Advising Center will be initiated with first-time students going through the centralized model in the fall semester of 2006. Over the course of 2006, core faculty advisors will be selected and trained to complement the work of the professional advising and counseling staff so students will be engaged in quality advising throughout their San Juan College career. The advisor selection and training will be fully implemented by fall 2007 to complete the full centralized advising center model program.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

The College will monitor the success of this Action Project in a number of ways. The first is to continue to use the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey results to assure that our ratings continue to increase in a positive ratio compared to previous years and the national averages concerning advising on campus. We will utilize the results obtained from student focus group on an annualized basis to assure that we are meeting all student needs in our advising efforts. Retention and completion benchmarks will be established to indicate through hard data that we are achieving those goals of increased numbers respective for each area. The baseline numbers are to be established in the 2005 cohorts.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:

As indicated in Item H, the success of this Action Project will be measured by increasing positive ratios in the succeeding Noel Levitz surveys, taken every two years and base-lined on the 2005 survey. Retention and completion numbers of students will be increased as measured through comparison with 2005 baseline numbers. Student focus groups and internal surveys will be conducted on an annualized basis to maintain student satisfaction indicating a successful advising program.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

The "champion" for this effort will be joint effort of the Vice President for Learning and the Vice President for Student Services, as the Advising Center will report to that office. They have agreed to jointly assure this effort is successful as both areas have responsibility in the final outcomes.

K. Project Leader and contact person:

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Annual Update: 2007-09-02

A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

When fully implemented, this action project will link to the College's strategic goals of Valuing Educational Access and Student Success. To this end, the following was accomplished this year: •All counseling/advising staff attended the NACADA national conference in Fall 2006. •Created a timeline of key steps, processes and dates. •Hired core advisors in January, 2007 (met individually with the school deans to get approval, talk about programs that needed either Core or Specialty advisors. •Hired two full-time advisors in January, 2007 •Conducted a training session for core advisors and specialty advisors during convocation week, January, 2007. All participants rated the overall helpfulness of the training session as high (five on a scale of 1 -5) and the information and its application to individual programs as high (five on a scale of 1-5). Participants felt the sessions embraced our core objectives of valuing people and training personnel to effectively serve students. In addition, participants felt the sessions allowed for greater collaboration between Student Services departments. •Created a self-evaluation form for core advisors to determine individual and group professional development needs. •Conducted several training/information sessions for internal advisors. (staff who advise in various areas/programs including the Native American program, EDGE, Talent Search, Recruitment) Participant comments and suggestions were continuously incorporated into the informational sessions. •Acquired the duties of new student orientation, thus ensuring a stronger, more accurate advisement session. This Action Project will be continued one more year.

Review (10-09-07):

The college is making solid progress implementing this action project, which relates strongly to AQIP category 1, helping students learn, category 3, understanding students' and other stakeholders' needs, category 6, supporting institutional operations, and category 8, planning continuous improvement. This ambitious action project, which involves comprehensive restructuring of the college's academic advising and student counseling services is designed to support the institution's student retention efforts, to improve students' learning environment, and to respond to data identifying areas where student needs are unmet. Over the past year, the college has hired new advisers to staff the centralized advising center and has provided advising and counseling staff with multiple forms of internal training and opportunities to learn from colleagues at other institutions while attending the annual conference of the National Academic Advising Association. These are valuable achievements, which document the college's desire and capacity to support the systematic development of its personnel. This, in turn, is a vital characteristic of high-performing organizations: processes that allow personnel to acquire and use new skills and knowledge support the institutional capacity to respond to existing and new opportunities and challenges.

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

Both the Vice President for Learning and the Vice President for Student Support Services are charged with championing this project. To assure successful implementation, the following staff and faculty were involved this past year: •Advisement committee transitioned into Implementation team. •Ten program update meetings held with a variety of programs in each school to keep ACC advisors, CORE and specialty advisors informed of program changes. •ACC advisors attended school meetings in each school (total of 20 meetings). •ACC worked closely with Admissions, OTS and media services to develop video presentations for New Student Orientation and to develop new processes for orientation. Two-minute video clips produced include: (1) Welcome by Dr. Carol Spencer, President, (2) EDGE – student support program, (3) Student activities, (4) Bookstore, (5) Security and Native American programs.

Review (10-09-07):

The appointment of two college leaders as project "champions" constitutes clear evidence that the institution's leadership is committed to creating and supporting a quality-driven culture. Likewise, the development of new communication strategies directed toward advisers and students can serve to support broad-based involvement in the action project, which can strengthen individual and group ownership of the planned changes and can allow the project to benefit from the skills and expertise of additional people. A culture of broad-based

involvement is another key characteristic of high-performing organizations; the college has an opportunity to maximize these benefits by taking additional steps to encourage participation in this and in future action projects by faculty, staff, and administrative personnel.

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

Phase II of the development and implementation of the Central Advising and Counseling Center action project are as follows: •Continue to develop and streamline New Student Orientation presentation and processes. •Develop online training modules for all advisors. •Further develop training program for advisors. •Develop and implement assessment process. •Streamline ACC processes and procedures – file management, advisor assignments, and transfer to CORE advisors. • Organize a cross-functional ACC advisory team. • Conduct Noel-Levitz student satisfaction survey • Conduct student focus groups throughout academic year.

Review (10-09-07):

The college's planned next actions are critical, for they include the development of new student orientation processes, new advisor training processes, new institutional assessment processes, and new administrative and logistical processes. Accomplishing these objectives in a single year will be extremely challenging; this challenge will be more manageable, however, if the institution takes specific care to make use of skills and expertise within its own community. The college's planned use of repeated Noel-Levitz student satisfaction survey is an important step in developing a culture of continuous assessment based on systematic fact-based information gathering, for high-performance organizations manifest an ability to gather relevant information and to analyze it effectively as they plan improvements.

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

Effective practices that have resulted from work on this action project include: •Students "register" for new student orientation at Admissions – class sections created for each session. This enables us to pull all the information we need from Datatel instead of checking various locations and creating spreadsheets. •Stronger advisement system, especially for at risk students. Students stay with ACC advisor until criteria met (student has successfully completed all needed developmental classes and has declared a major) for transfer to CORE and specialty advisors.

Review (10-09-07):

The college's work to gather data efficiently and to use information effectively are to be lauded; the consistent use of this information to conduct institutional assessment is a crucial institutional capacity for high-performance organizations. The progress that the institution has made improving its use of information through datatel means that the college is well-positioned to improve its use of information in other ways that will contribute to its growth as a quality-driven institution.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

The ACC has never been fully staffed since implementation. Additional advisors were not hired until sixth months into implementation, causing an overload for the existing ACC staff. This prevented the existing staff from being able to effectively develop and assess processes and procedures. Full staffing of the ACC will provide staff with the opportunity to develop, assess and implement more effective training, processes and procedures. Challenges include: •Developing an efficient computerized file management system •Developing assessment processes and procedures. •Recruiting new CORE advisors.

Review (10-09-07):

The college's analysis of its academic advising staffing needs is compelling: full staffing of the ACC is necessary for the success of this action project and for the institution to best exploit the achievements that it has already secured while working on this project. Designing assessment systems is challenging for all institutions; as the college requests, an AQIP staff member will contact the institution to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing help on this vital task.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

Assistance is appreciated in identifying best practices in the following areas: (1) recruiting core/specialty advisors, (2) developing cross-functional ACC advisory team, (3) developing an efficient computerized file

management system and (4) developing assessment processes and procedures. Contact Ken Kernagis, ACC Director at kernagisk@sanjuancollege.edu

Review (10-09-07):

An AQIP staff member will consult with the college about its requests for assistance.