

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: 2008-09-04

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

- Continued to develop and streamline New Student Orientation presentation and processes
- Further developed training program for advisors
- Streamlined ACC processes and procedures – file management, advisor assignments, and transfer to CORE advisors
- Developed CORE advisor guidelines and application
- Institutional Research and Planning conducted Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory
- Institutional Research conducted student focus groups
- Selected to present new ACC model at NACADA national conference
- Equipped a computer study lab within the ACC to allow students to practice Accuplacer test, to utilize career interests programs and to serve as an overflow lab for admissions.
- Created a link for a web-based Accuplacer practice test
- Create an Accuplacer-College Placement Test form for student signature to reinforce the purpose of the test and mandatory placement at SJC

Review (10-05-08):

San Juan College identified several areas of concerns in their existing Advising and Counseling practices, and has proposed to address them via this action project. The goals of the action project is to centralize advising and counseling center that would provide students with a seamless structure and support in making decisions regarding courses, programs and career decision making. The outcomes of such efforts are expected to impact and support the institution's student retention efforts, improve students' learning environment, and respond to data that will enable the identification of unmet student needs. Two college leaders were

appointed to create and support a quality-driven culture. Furthermore, with a help of a NACDA consultant, the college was able to implement a research driven “Total Intake model.” Despite the complexity of the proposed plan, which also included a comprehensive restructuring of the college’s academic advising and counseling services, the college reported some valuable accomplishments both in hiring as well as training of its new personnel by September 2007 as indicated by the previous reviewer. The college had requested assistance from AQIP in identifying best practices in recruiting specialty advisors, developing cross functional teams, and instituting computerized file management systems. This clearly is an indication that the college is cognizant of its challenges, and is being proactive rather than reactive in addressing the issues. The college hopes to increase the positive ratings on Noel Levitz surveys and increase its student retention and completion rates. The college has listed its accomplishment in its 2008 update that appears to be the continuation of its efforts from the previous year as stated above. While the college’s efforts in implementation of the process are evident, it has not yet collected data to evaluate its efforts in student retention and completion rates. Institutional research and planning is reported to have conducted a Noel-Levitz student satisfactory inventory but no data was reported with this update. This action project relates not only to category one (helping students learn), but also to 3 (understanding students’ and other stakeholders’ needs, category 6 (supporting organizational operations), and 8 (planning continuous improvement).

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

- Twenty 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).
- Enlisted the support of the Student Success Center and EDGE program to assist with advising and to provide administrative support in the ACC.
- Utilized IR assistance with focus groups and with conducting Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory.

Review (10-05-08):

The communication between the academic programs and the Advising and Counseling Center (ACC) appears to be informational, i.e., to update program changes. The college should be planning to involve the academic programs in its assessment efforts in a way that it could mature and become a collaborative effort between the academic and student services areas of the college. Additionally, the college should consider, if it has not done so already, a mission based approach to link the ACC activities to improving student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness. Activities that encourage a cross campus approach to sharing activities and assessment results may open up some areas to collaborations. This could be woven into its next steps that appear to involve various activities such as, organizing a cross functional ACC advisory team, instituting an electronic system to make announcements, and communicating with the college community.

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

- Develop online training modules for all advisors.
- Develop and implement assessment process.
- Organize a cross-functional ACC advisory team.
- Purchase an electronic screen to post announcements, updates, etc.
- Work closely with Admissions, Office of Technology Services and media services to develop video presentations for New Student Orientation and to develop new processes for orientation. Two-minute video clips will include: (1) Library, (2) School of Energy, (3) School of Trades and Technology, (4) Human and Health Performance Center and

(5) Office of Technology Services (6) Business Office/Payment Plan (these are all ideas for the future, the ones we have already developed are; Edge Program; Students with Disabilities; Learning Communities; Office of the President: Bookstore; Career Services; Student Activities.

Review (10-05-08):

The college only lists the various activities it has planned as its next steps. Therefore it is hard to comment on these steps in a specific way. However, the activities appear to be aligned with its overall goal and objectives.

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

•Collaboration with other departments within Student Services and Learning provide for opportunities to cross train staff and serve to breakdown silos. •Establishment of a computer Accuplacer study lab allows for students to freshen up on subjects prior to taking the placement exam. Taking the practice test may lower the number of students who are placed into developmental courses and reduce the time to graduation or transfer as well as save on educational costs.

Review (10-05-08):

The college has identified effective practices in collaboration with other departments within student services thereby providing opportunities to cross-train and break silos, and to impact student success rates on placement tests. Additionally, this project, if fully implemented, can be a trend setter in that its process can make assessment everyone's business at the college.

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

Challenges include turn over in staffing of CORE advisors and ACC staff and dual enrollment directives adding strain on budget and time for conducting Accuplacer tests.

Review (10-05-08):

The recognition of staff retention problem for the college should be the driving force for the college to assess its own staff needs and make improvements. Additionally, it would be beneficial for the college to implement a procedure of recognition and rewards for its staff accomplishments. Increasing staff retention rates may be the key to the success of this project.

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?

No assistance is necessary.

Review (10-05-08):

Reviewer # 9831