The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Joliet Junior College

Project Details	

Title	Plan and Implement Suitable Advising and Orientation for Students	**Status**	COMPLETED
Category	1-Helping Students Learn	**Updated**	09-13-2007
Timeline		**Reviewed**	09-24-2007
Planned Project Kickoff	03-05-2005	**Created**	11-24-2009
Actual Completion		**Version**	3

1: Project Goal

A: Identify the current advising and orientation processes. Observe and participate in identified processes to understand their components and assess their effectiveness. Develop a plan incorporating the best practices, creating a suitable core advising and orientation system for students. Potential outcomes include: students' consistent understanding of the expectations of JJC's college life; an increased value of academic advising resulting in decreased self-advising; improved knowledge for students of academic choices with respect to successful degree completion; improved student retention and completion rates; enhanced perception for JJC as a student centered environment; potential efficiencies in human, physical and financial resource utilization.

2: Reasons For Project

A: The students' learning process begins when they make the decision to attend JJC. Orientation and advising is a critical part of a student's initiation into college life and academic success. Inherent in our mission is the belief that education provides for a better quality of life; therefore, the college's commitment to learning must begin as the student enters the institution.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: Counseling, Advising and GSD; Admissions/Financial Aid; Academic Departments (with individual faculty advisors and orientation programs); Retention Committee (QSL2); Enrollment Management Committee; Academic and Student Support Services

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: Staff Training; Student Intake Process; Planning and Budget Process; Retention Interventions; Space Utilization Planning

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: (1)Update staff throughout the three-year action project process by communicating to individual departments and the following groups: Administrative Council, Department Meetings, Student Services Division Meeting, Department Chair Meetings, Student Government, CCC, Blazer, Diversity Committee, CCC Advisor Club Meeting, Union Meetings, Academic Standards Committee (2)Encourage and seek new staff and faculty to join the project as it evolves (3)Partner with QSL2 Committee) (4)Develop an interactive website for the project (5)Engage the campus in the questionnaire process (6)Update faculty and staff at the general sessions during Professional Development Week

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: Identify, implement and assess staff training needs; Assess and modify student intake process; Develop budget that reflects orientation and advising priorities; Identify, modify and assess retention practices

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Enrollment data; Retention data; Graduation and completion rates; Student and staff satisfaction; Budget

8: Other Information

A: (1)Create and distribute a questionnaire to faculty and staff regarding all current JJC orientation and advising practices including budget, assessment, and evaluation. (2)Compile data collected from this questionnaire for future analysis. (3)Identify and track a benchmark population attending the current orientation process for future analysis purposes. (4)Collaborate with QSL2 to create an interview guide for distribution to Illinois Community Colleges regarding their current orientation process. (5)Conduct a literature review of current research findings on community college orientation and advising initiatives (6)Compile data collected by QSL2 for future analysis purposes.(1)Analyze year one findings and craft definitions of suitable advising and orientation. (2)Disseminate all year one findings to the committee and interested faculty/staff. (3)Follow-up on benchmark population. (4)Develop an orientation and advising process.(1)Pilot and assess the orientation and advising process developed in year-two. (2)Follow-up on benchmark population (3)Prepare final recommendations

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: In 2006-2007, the Quality Action Project Team for Orientation and Advising of Students worked to finalize the action steps and priorities. The data was reviewed by appropriate faculty and staff and further recommendations were added to the priorities and appropriate action steps were defined. Specifically, the team accomplished the following: ☐ Reviewed year two priorities and adjusted them by gaining continuing feedback from faculty and staff. ☐ Submitted final plan Recommendations of the Final Plan: • Add Admissions Counselors/Advisors o Create campus-wide positions that are intermediary to current recruitment and advising efforts. o Main focus is to guide, advise and inform students of correct source regarding subject area of interest information • Determine Advising Path o Clarify a student's advising path at point of entry o Restructure student categorization process within Colleague o Associate a student with major or intended area of interest o Use subject area association as a vector to direct incoming student's to appropriate advisor • Advising Model o Develop a plan to 'fine tune' current advising model utilized at JJC. o Redistribute student advising load amongst more specialized subject advisors o Subject advisors conduct individual and group advising sessions for their area of interest • Self-Directed Advising o Determine adequate tools needed for students interested in alternative advising methods beyond the traditional advising model. o Cultivate the self-directed advising experience for student's interested in this option. o Improve and expand advising tools for part-time, returning and distance education learners. • Review and Synthesize all new student information o Gather and review all new student related information o Create a simplified, streamlined, non-repetitive orientation package for use by incoming students and their associated department • Create an On-going Committee to Oversee Orientation o Develop a standing committee to coordinate, assess and adapt Orientation to changing climate at JJC o Committee comprised of administrators, faculty, staff and experienced students • Create a Common Campus-wide tour and Information Network o Create system to provide timely, immediate information regarding the college experience o Provide direct access to system for interested students and parents through: ☐ Campus Tour Program ☐ Information Stations strategically located across campus sites ☐ Easily accessed web-based information site • Require GSD 100 or similar course o Target first time, full-time degree oriented students o Have information web-based for part-time or returning students • Creation of a Freshman Center o Dedicate personnel to the ongoing process of orientation o Commit space and funding for Freshman Center development and expansion • Add Admissions Counselors/Advisors o Create campus-wide positions that are intermediary to current recruitment and advising efforts. o Main focus is to guide, advise and inform students of correct source regarding subject area of interest information

2: Institution Involvement

A: The QAP team itself had diverse representation in leadership from both student development administrators and faculty and a large number of involved members throughout its three-year course. The team provided the college community with the list of priorities and requested feedback regarding these and the action steps appropriate to each. The team submitted a technology request for budget review which brought a new group into a greater understanding of the project. Close scrutiny of the project by the Counseling Department in particular was encouraged in order to receive recommendations from this integral part of the faculty.

3: Next Steps

A: Next steps include budget approval for FY 2009 in order to put the priorities into practice. Given the significant changes over the last year in the college leadership, the final draft of the project will be reviewed when all appropriate staff are in place. AQIP leadership is

also investigating involvement in the Policy Center for the First-Year Experience. Information w as collected at the annual HLC-NCA conference in spring 2007.

4: **Resulting Effective Practices**

A: The AQIP process in general has allow ed for conversations to take place about orientation and advising in a venue that w as less threatening and more supportive and collaborative. The team w ould like to reiterate the fact that the college is in the midst of leadership and personnel changes and it is the expectation of the team that the w ork w ill be resumed in the near future.

5: **Project Challenges**

A: We face the challenge of seeing a good set of recommendations result in actual process improvements in a timely manner. A significant part of this project hinges on the addition of appropriate softw are w hich w ill allow the improvements in our orientation and advising process to move forw ard. All of the recommendations become a college budget issue.

6: **AQIP Involvement**

A:

Update Review

1: **Project Accomplishments and Status**

A: This important project w ill have a clear and direct impact on Category 1, Helping Students Learn. It is likely to also have impact on Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs and Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations. Finally, w ell defined processes in this area w ill also impact Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships. As such, the project is quite broad based and w ill have a large impact on the institution. At this point in time, the institution has made a great deal of progress in relation to understanding and planning. The next steps, implementation and assessment, w ill be the critical pieces in accomplishing the larger objectives. The planning process has resulted in a large number of recommendations, and students w ill clearly benefit if there is appropriate follow -through. This action project, as provided to the review er, does not contain specific target dates and no end date is included. As a result, the review er cannot determine if the project is progressing on schedule. How ever, it appears that the project is scheduled for completion in the next 6 months. The project speaks to development of a plan for orientation, but does not specifically state implementation w ill occur w ithin the original three-year time frame. As such, it appears that the project is on schedule and the final plan can be completed in the next 6 months.

2: **Institution Involvement**

A: The report indicates that there has been broad-based input and review of the actions taken to date. This indicates the commitment of the institution to involving all members of the community in their continuous improvement processes and should be commended. Maintaining this level of communication through implementation w ill help to ensure ongoing support by all key players.

3: **Next Steps**

A: Budgeting is a key element in achieving the ultimate goals, w hich w ould be implementation of the many recommendations. Once final planning is complete, the institution may choose to end this action project, and start the next w ith the budgeting process as the first step in a multi-year implementation. While it is recognized that new leadership w ill by necessity have their ow n priorities, it is hoped that proper recognition w ill be given to the broad-based efforts that led to the selection of this project as w ell as the plans that have been developed. Based on this history, any change in commitment to this project may impact not only student learning, but also the ability of the institution to progress in developing a system w ide commitment to continuous improvement efforts by all employees.

4: **Resulting Effective Practices**

A: Before completing the current project, the institution will likely benefit from a careful review of the processes involved in this project. Undoubtedly there are important lessons to be learned that will aid in the ongoing quality efforts. Leadership changes certainly can slow down projects and at times threatens to derail them altogether. It appears that if nothing else, the project has impacted communication, and the team can likely identify specific practices that were effective in promoting communication that can be maintained or used in other aspects of institutional life and operation.

5: Project Challenges

A: Having completed the planning process, budgetary issues may create a barrier to implementation. Effectively addressing these issues may prove to be time consuming and difficult as resources are limited. By opening a new action project focused on implementation of the recommendations created to date the administration will be able to demonstrate their commitment to the process by continuing to highlight the advising needs of students as one of the key projects facing the institution. By identifying and using the effective communication practices that helped to support the current project, the institution can transparently consider resources and priorities as you maintain your quality journey.

6: AQIP Involvement

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