

## Project Details

Title	Implement a new faculty advising model for the College.	Status	REVIEWED
Category	2-Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives	Updated	09-13-2011
Timeline		Reviewed	09-26-2011
Planned Project Kickoff	01-01-2008	Created	11-24-2009
Target Completion	01-01-2010	Last Modified	09-26-2011

### 1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A:

*"Even though I was on the Moraine Park Technical College team that attended the NACADA Summer Institute with the charge to design a new Advising Model for the College, I had no idea that the little kernel of a plan that we came home with would result in the quality and level of this advising support system." That comment, made just last week, came from our Moraine Park Executive Vice President for Student Affairs as he reflected on the growth of this college initiative.*

*That opinion has been shared and voiced by many throughout this past year as individuals have recognized the value of the progress that we've made in just three years. Building on the foundation laid in Years 1 and 2 of growth and development of the Moraine Park NACADA Team system concept, this year has been one which has made its mark in the culture of our College.*

*In July, 2010, we were able to expand our staffing with the addition of an Academic Support Specialist assigned to Business Management, pre-admittance Medical Assistant students. In addition, she was charged to provide support for MPTC students planning to continue their education at a four-year institution. With the significant increase in articulation agreements between Moraine Park and a number of four-year colleges and universities, we recognized that we would soon see more of our students invested in seeking a bachelor's degree after completing their degrees at MPTC. Soon after the announcement and promotion of available Transfer Services through class visits, student government meetings, electronic communications and the use of Lunch 'n Learn opportunities, transfer advising appointment requests started to come in. In addition to meeting with students who were exploring the option to continue and those who had already made definite plans for transferring this coming year, our new advisor dedicated time and attention to developing relationships with transfer specialists from Wisconsin and other Midwest colleges. She took care to be there to welcome those college representatives when they came on campus to meet with our*

*students and made several trips to colleges and universities which are popular transfer institutions with our students. By the end of spring semester, over 95 students had connected with our advisor for assistance in making decisions to transition to a Bachelor degree-granting institution.*

*In addition, to serving students through individual contacts, we offered a college-wide Transfer Fair. Over a two day schedule, each of the 22 campus representatives met with Moraine Park students on all three campuses. Because all the transfer institutions were present on a campus at the same time, we were able to offer students the opportunity to meet with a number of colleges so that they could make immediate comparisons of details which might be important to their transfer choice.*

*By the end of the year, we had identified a permanent location for this advisor to house a small library of transfer materials for browsing and research in a corner of her larger office. The College now has an identified resource to meet campus needs for information about our articulation agreements and for opportunities for future education for our graduates.*

*As mentioned previously, this same Academic Support Specialist was also the first assigned to a group of pre-program students. These were students who had indicated the intent to enter the Medical Assistant program but who were still in the process of meeting the program pre-requisites. Many were completing pre-college developmental work; others were well on their way to being ready for admission to the program. This aspect of the assignment proved to be especially demanding as the 120 students could have been enrolled in any of the sections of the Development Education courses or any of the General Education options at admission. Accurate pre-program data for student identification and contact information was difficult to come by and was, in one case, not even available until after the end of the term which limited the effectiveness of targeted communication efforts. However, with the help of the Admissions Specialist who maintained pre-program entrance information, the advisor was able to offer her advising services through group information sessions. It is clear that next year we need to get assurances for program and pre-program enrollment reports early in the semester to be able to take advantage of the variety of advanced technological communication opportunities offered by the college to ensure each pre-program student gets individual attention.*

*In addition, end of the year evaluation showed that we need to increase the interaction between the General Education Dean and faculty members and any advisor who is assigned to pre-program advisees. In retrospect, we realized that assigning two pilot components of our advising model to one advisor demanded too much component development time to adequately meet newly identified needs. Formative evaluations at mid-year analysis demonstrated that we needed to make the transfer advising component a higher priority during this first year. Next year, we hope to share the*

*development of a “pre-program advising” component between two new advisors who will focus on serving those students getting ready to be admitted to a Health Science program.*

*This year, our second year advisors continued to provide services to the same targeted programs as the previous year. As faculty members, deans and advisors developed collaborative relationships; advisors were included in decision-making meetings, treated as full-members of the program work teams and were sought out for assistance in making significant changes to their programs. All of this has resulted from the mutual respect increase between these “teams” working together to help students be more successful.*

*Each of the advisors has taken on a role of being a campus resource for an identified task based on personal expertise and interests. By the end of this academic year, one advisor was serving as facilitator for the campus-wide Behavioral Intervention Team. Another advisor has, on a regular basis, been the representative for presentations on various aspects of this advising model for such groups as the New Faculty Academy, New Student Orientation, etc.*

*In addition to the three Academic Support Specialists funded by the College, we now have three other advisors who are part of our academic advising model whose positions are funded through grant awards. Each of these advisors was hired for their positions as described by using our standard Academic Support Specialist Position Description, but, because of the targeted student populations of their grants (Nursing students and Student Support Services/Trio students) priorities given to each component of that description may vary from the College’s more expansive advising procedures. Interaction between all of the advisors occurs as needed. The SSS/Trio advisors were strategically located right next to two of the College Academic Support Specialists. This has been helpful for everyone as the MPTC advisors have specific program knowledge while the SSS/Trio advisors have the time and resources to provide support above and beyond what can be provided when our common caseloads are over 500 – 600 students.*

*This year, the Title III Director has worked with the College Organizational Development Office to design a Professional Development Series for advisor orientation to the college and the responsibilities and standards of our advising model. This year the series included: Developmental Education, Client Reporting, Advising Students with Disabilities, 4-year Transfer Opportunities, Sexual Harassment, Development and Maintenance of Advising Assignment Data Base, and Development of Advising Program Evaluation Instruments. All 6 Academic Support Specialists were invited to participate when appropriate. In addition, we offered three Webinar’s to these advisors as well as to those College faculty members who are still advising. These Webinars were: Appreciative Advising, Are we Making a Difference, and The Digital Student. Three more advisors gained expertise in giving and*

*implementing StrengthsQuest for helping their advisees recognize the talents they bring to their college experience. One Academic Support Specialist attended the Midwest Regional NACADA Conference and another attended a Noel-Levitz Conference on Retention. All of the Moraine Park advisors traveled to Northeast Wisconsin Technical College to spend the day with the advisors there as their advising model is very similar to ours. Two MPTC advisors attended the state-wide called meeting on Retention. This summer all of the Academic Support Specialists, except for the nursing advisor, participated in a summer reading project focusing on the book, "Understanding Poverty" by Ruby Payne. It is very apparent from this generous menu of professional development opportunities that Moraine Park is committed to providing quality advising to our students. Moraine Park Organizational Development unit has offered to provide assistance in translating this Advising Professional Development Series into a Skillsoft format so new advisors will be able to take advantage of these learning opportunities as they come on board.*

*This year our student contact records show that our three MPTC Academic Support Specialists provided advising services to 1153 individual Moraine Park students. Last year the total number of students given advising support by the two (at that time) Academic Support Specialists totaled 608. This year those same two advisors met with 1006 students. Obviously, increased faculty members support and access to classes in addition to a better understanding of what help an advisor can give and publication of advising services on our College Portal has helped us to expand the number of students who are benefitting from this service.*

*Student Success numbers for the targeted programs of all three advisors this year totaled 929 students retained and 304 students graduated, with some student overlap reported in these last numbers due to multiple majors/programs. Within those programs, 1450 students were in good standing at the end of the academic year with cumulative GPAs of 2.0 or greater.*

**R:**

The Moraine Park Technical College Action Project Team is commended for continuing to implement and extend the student advising model. The Action Project Team has expanded staffing, provided support for students planning to attend 4-year higher education institutions, offered on-going professional development to faculty advisors and Academic Support Specialists. These accomplishments demonstrate commitment to Helping Student Learn (Category 1) as well as Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives (Category 2).

## 2: Institution Involvement

### A:

*Throughout the academic year, the Title III Task Force groups met to continue the piloting and implementation of Assessment and Placement; Early Alert; Academic Advising, Campus Connections; Tutoring and General College (developmental) courses. This year the Early Alert Task Force, the Campus Connections Task Force and the Academic Advising Task Force benefitted from the addition of one Academic Support Specialist member. In addition, the Title III Director facilitated each of these task forces, plus the Title III Steering Committee and Budget Committee. She was given the assignment to supervise the Academic Support Specialists so all advisors were kept well-informed about new initiatives. A more comprehensive Task Force charged with designing a holistic individualized support system for students at risk was facilitated by the same advising supervisor and one of the Academic Support Specialists was assigned to this Task Force as well. The Title III Director/Advising Supervisor also served on the College Leadership and Planning Team who, last year rewrote the MPTC Goals and Strategies for the next five years.*

*In January, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, assisted by the Title III Director, gave a presentation to the College Board of Directors on the growth of our Student Support System over the past five years. The new Academic Advising Model was identified in that presentation as a significant addition to our student success initiatives*

*At the Spring Semester 2011 Faculty In-Service, an Instructional Dean who supervises six of the programs who have been assigned to the three Academic Support Specialists acknowledged the value of these employees to his programs. He invited anyone who had questions about any of those six programs to feel free to address their questions to the advisors as well as to him because their understanding of the programs matches his own.*

*At every opportunity for professional development, the Title III Director was invited to speak about the new student success initiatives especially those which involved academic advising and early alerts. Information about the new model and the value and availability of the advisors was included in the Academic Faculty Handbook and the Student Handbook this year.*

*Information pertinent to advisors, both Academic Support Specialists and Faculty Advisors, was highlighted on our new Moraine Park "MyMPTC" portal with the opportunity for our own site on the Faculty Tab, entitled Student Support and Retention.*

*As programs reviewed the skill levels required for each course with the Title III Director and an Academic Support Specialist, program curriculum was rearranged and, in one case, expanded to facilitate student needs which were identified through student advising sessions.*

*As the Title III grant cycle comes to a close and we reflect on the past five years of experience, we recognize that the growth and success of this first Phase of our new Advising Model has been the positive result of collaborative efforts of our campus-wide community. The process has been embraced by the College as it has met its promise for full implementation within the five years.*

**R:**

The Action Project Team is commended for involving a wide-range of key stakeholders in the development of the new Academic Advising Model within the new Student Support System. By continuing to involve faculty/advisors, academic support specialists, program directors, deans/administrators and the Board, the Action Project Team can expect continued refinement and adoption of the Advising Model across the institution. The promotion of the model by key institutional administrators to the Board of Directors as an exemplary program garners continued institutional support and also celebrates accomplishments. Promoting collaboration, a principle of high performance organizations, will advance the goals of the Action Project.

**3: Next Steps**

**A:**

*In the coming year, Academic Advising will move out of the Title III reporting line as that grant is at the end of its award cycle. A new Admissions and Advising Associate will be hired to coordinate and supervise those two areas. That Associate will report to a new Dean of Admissions and Retention who has just been hired. This year the Title III Director wrote a grant proposal for state funding to hire two new Academic Support Specialists. One will serve the Allied Health programs and one will serve the pre-program nursing students. Both will carry the same heavy caseload (500 and above students) as the other advisors. The Transfer advisor will no longer be working with pre-program students but has traded for two regular program assignments. The original two advisors requested the addition of a few new programs as so many of their current program students were actually double-majors in closely related programs. Those are the programs they requested to add for the coming year.*

*Advising will continue to be a focus of another federal grant program, however. This year, our original two Academic Support Specialists were asked to select two of their assigned programs to receive more intensive services. These services were to include such strategies as: helping to develop and implement a program-specific orientation for one of the programs, provide individual program planning with a degree audit for students in those selected programs, and conduct StrengthsQuest exercises, Risk Management Inventories and Career Intent Surveys for their target programs to provide background to build on when meeting with the students one-on-one. Those activities will be measured and student behavior and results will be monitored and reported in the Perkins Report at the end of this coming academic year.*

*The Professional Development Series for Academic Support Specialist training will continue with planned presentations already set up for: 1)Foundations for Excellent Advising – identified by the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education Standards and Guidelines for Academic Advising; 2)Advising LGBT students – Providing a Safe Space for Recognizing Diversity; 3)Increased Collaboration with Diversity Services; 4)Financial Aid – General Information for Advisors; 5)Using Outlook and Lync to increase personal communication with student groups; Blog, Facebook or Wiggio – which works for you? - Workshop Topics for Winterim Meetings.*

**R:**

The Action Project Team has identified new opportunities to provide Leadership and Communication (Category 5) as new staff assume responsibilities within the Advising Model and the program strives to meet new grant requirements. Providing new services, continuing professional development offerings and measuring performance results are appropriate next steps in the implementation of the Advising Model Action Project.

**4: Resulting Effective Practices**

**A:**

*At many national retention or advising conferences we have continued to hear recommendations for institutions to adopt faculty advising systems as the most effective means for supporting student success. Our experience is that our students are benefitting from the service provided to them by full-time professional advisors who are willing to adapt schedules, styles and approaches to meet the personalities of the students who tend to select their assigned programs. Our transition from a system where faculty members were advisors to one which removes the administrative aspect of advising*

*from their shoulders and replaces them with full-time advisors could have been one filled with tension. In fact, many feared that would be the case. Because the student contact plans were jointly developed by the faculty members, deans and advisors and no rigid structure was imposed as the "right way" to deliver these services, mutual respect has grown over the years. Now faculty members call the advisors and ask them to make classroom visits. Advisors are invited to participate in advisory board meetings where faculty and deans meet with potential employers from the community to hear what they need from future potential employees so that curriculum reflects the reality of the workplace. Student advising sessions occur wherever it's convenient for students – in labs, in lunchrooms, over Telepresence and IVC, in classrooms and even in traditional advisor offices. The flexibility of this model reflects and matches the complexity of our students' lives. We want to be consistently supportive and we let the "system" provide the structure that will result in meeting student needs to be successful.*

**R:**

The Action Project Team is commended for evaluating trends in the field and adapting them to meet institutional needs. Continue to celebrate the accomplishments of the Action Project and positive relationships between the faculty and advisors. By institutionalizing the successful practices and developing a long-term strategic plan to sustain these effective practices, the institution will ensure the continued success of the Advising Model.

## **5: Project Challenges**

**A:**

*Challenges for the future:*

*1) Funding for the two new Health Science Academic Support Specialists is only provided for this first year through the state grant, so the College will need to plan to pick up the cost for those service providers in the coming year. With an economic environment which is stretched to the limit, this will be a challenge.*

*2) In the past, Moraine Park Technical College has not provided advisors for students who had not yet been admitted to a program. The development of an effective delivery or student contact plan for the pre-program students in the assignments of these two new advisors will call for creativity and a willingness to experiment with new approaches. Previously, only program faculty members were asked to provide advising services. Now with the*



*onset of provision of advising services to pre-program students, cooperation and collaboration with our General Education faculty members will contribute significantly to the success of this new component.*

*3) Moraine Park Technical College provides a high number of courses and even full programs on-line. As is true with campuses across the nation, we struggle with providing personalized advising support for students in those courses. Fortunately, our College has recently invested in a number of cutting edge technological communication tools. The challenge for the advising team will be to embrace those new technologies as a means to meeting students in personally supportive ways.*

*4) As always, with advising caseloads over 500 students per advisor, student contact plans become overwhelming if we are limiting our services to a traditional structure of one-to-one advising sessions. With this new technology, we should be able to reach students electronically in small groups and create advising centers on-line. Efforts to find successful models to emulate will prove to be worth the time. As funding for attendance at professional conferences shrinks, our advisors will benefit from developing and maintaining an on-line network of other professional advisors for support and collaboration so "best practices" can be easily adapted for application on our own campus.*

## **R:**

The Action Project Team is commended for clearly articulating several key challenges facing the on-going success of the Advising Model. It appears that the Team understands the importance of Leading and Communicating (Category 5) during uncertain economic times. Also, by responding to these changes proactively the Team demonstrates the importance of this high performance organizational principle. As new staff are hired and additional grant proposal requirements established, the Action Project Team will have the opportunity to apply, at the next highest level, several principles of high performance organizations, including: Broad-based Involvement, Promoting Collaboration, Agility and Responsiveness to Change, and Foresight to Plan Proactively.

MPTC has made excellent progress toward accomplishing the stated goals of the Action Project. As the institution nears the completion of this Action Project they may consider institutionalizing successful practices and developing a long-term strategic plan to mitigate on-going challenges.