

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Moraine Park Technical College

Project Details		
Title	Implement a new faculty advising model for the College.	Status IN REVIEW
Category	2-Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives	Updated 09-23-2013
Timeline		Reviewed
	Planned Project Kickoff 01-01-2008	Created 11-24-2009
	Target Completion 01-01-2010	Version 6

1: Project Goal

A: The District wrote for and received a Title III grant to assist those students that are considered at-risk. The initiative ties to the prepared learner effort that is taking place in the Wisconsin Technical College System. Faculty advising is one of the methods the College wants to employ as a strategy for improved student success and retention. The model will be designed by first investigating best practices and evaluating our current model for enhancements in technique and processes. Additionally, Banner and document imaging will support the implementation of a high quality advising model by improving access and communication for advisors.

2: Reasons For Project

A: Faculty advising models have been noted as valuable to student success. Student retention and program completion are dependent on multiple factors and requires a more comprehensive approach. The current model does not work as effectively as intended. In addition, the statewide effort in the WTCS to do more as it relates to the prepared learner initiative, this is a good match. We are identifying at-risk factors using the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI) and this effort fits well into the plan of helping students succeed through various intervention strategies.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: Most impacted will be our students and the services we provide to them. The faculty will be significantly impacted by this as they are the advisors in the model. This would involve academics (faculty from essentially every discipline/instructional area) Admissions, Assessment, etc..

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: The entire process of how a student is advised. The model anticipates that the college will be the drive of the advising model versus being student initiated. Students would have interaction with their advisor on a regular basis and could take place in a face-to-face format, written communication (e-mail, letter, etc.) or verbal (phone). All students will have access to advising services.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: The time for this project takes into account the time to investigate and evaluate best practices as well as a full evaluation of our current process.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: Measures will occur through customer feedback (surveys, focus groups, etc.). In addition, faculty will be surveyed for input on effectiveness and opportunities for improvement.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Success will be measured by greater customer satisfaction with advising, greater knowledge of advisor and advising (what it is, how to access, etc.). Students will stay on track with completion of curriculum (program completion/graduation) and retention will be

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: The number of academic advisors on staff had increased to seven (7). In addition, as of July 1, 2013, the admissions specialists' titles were changed to the title of academic advisors. This resulted in a total of twelve (12) advisors. Ten are full-time, and two are part-time. The Admissions & Advising Manager for the Academic Advising department has worked with College key stakeholders to implement multiple improvements:

1. **Communication:** For external communications with students, an automated phone messaging system was implemented. Advisors record messages to send to newly admitted students and program students who have not registered. The system loads student numbers and blasts messages to students. Between April and August, 2013, more than 1100 phone calls have been made using the automated system, freeing up time for advisors to have more direct one-on-one contact with students and faculty. This resource provides the advisors another communication source for outreach to students. Additionally, prior to acceptance, students now need to attend a program orientation with their advisor. Internal communication has improved as the Advising and Records areas realigned communication to students related to graduation deadlines and preparation. In regard to other improvements to internal communications, the Academic Advisor assignments and the Handbook for Academic Advisors are posted on the College's internal portal under the Faculty tab.
2. **Increased Staff:** The department has realigned its staff to include Admissions staff. Students now have an advisor who works with them from application through to graduation. As well, with twelve advisors on staff, the department has an advisor dedicated to advising non-traditional occupations. The staff represent program and cluster-based advising models to alleviate workload and streamline their processes.
3. **Training and Professional Development:** An advising training process review started in February 2013. This review includes the transition to a new advising model. Throughout the summer, the team received cross-training in Admissions, Academic Policies, advising tools, and information from other service providers (i.e. financial aid, disability services). Nationally, the Academic Advising department has membership in the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and on the state level, staff is part of the Wisconsin Academic Advising Association (WACADA). The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) is starting a state group for counseling and advising management, which provides advisors an opportunity easily to network with the system.
4. **Student Success/Program Involvement:** The welding program added an orientation session and included the advisors. Advisors were included on the revision for and are part of the training for the College's newly-implemented student success course, College 101. Many of the advisors attend the faculty meetings and advisory committee meetings throughout the year. Advisors represent the team in the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) and the online curriculum committee. The advisors are part of several core program student registration events, including programs in allied health, electricity, HVAC, CNC and automotive. All programs have an assigned advisor, and all program students have an academic advisor. Advisement is also invested in a College-wide implementation of a new program orientation required of all new program students. Additionally, the Admissions & Advising manager is included on several committees and meetings: FTE generation, state manufacturing grant, marketing cross-functional team, summer welcome day, and the Banner functional user group.

The goal for Academic Advisement staff is to provide more intrusive, proactive advising to assist students and connect them earlier to a professional.

2: Institution Involvement

A: The Faculty Advising Action Project team has undergone changes because of personnel changes at the College. The original facilitator for the Action Project team as well as the Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs are no longer with the College. Additionally, in July 2012, the vice president position split, allowing for a Vice President for Academic Affairs and a Vice President for Student Affairs. However, the current Admissions & Advising Manager has been a part of the process from its inception. By working with Admissions, Registration, Financial Aid and other key Student Affairs representatives as well as the veteran and new academic advisors, the manager is delivering the message for Academic Advisement to both the Student Affairs and the Academic Affairs houses of the College. Faculty, advisors and staff assist and provide feedback to this process.

Collaboration with the deans, associate deans, and faculty has remained at the core of the changes. As programs get added to the advising model, the Admissions & Advising Manager, assigned Academic Advisor, dean, and faculty meet to share the process and expectations. An annual meeting is held with the deans or associate deans to discuss what has been working well and where

improvements can be made.

3: Next Steps

A: The next steps for the Academic Advising area include updates to the Handbook for Academic Advisors. With consultation of other Student Affairs areas, the Admissions & Advising Manager is in the process of identifying how the updated advising model correlates with recruitment, careers and areas in Student Affairs.

Additionally, technological changes, including best practices for advising online students, tracking software, calendaring options for students, and implementing workflow through Banner are all areas to be researched.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: The Action Project team developed a framework that allowed advisors to be more proactive, consistent, and organized in their operations with students. In the course of this project, objectives and expectations have been established. Academic Advisement has enhanced its internal and College-wide communication process as well as communication processes with students.

The Admissions & Advising Manager sits on several College committees and teams, allowing for visibility and recognition. This model Academic Advisement is using is based on technical college programming and processes, which is transitioning and working well. Perhaps the most notable change is that accountability resides with dedicated program advisors. Students, faculty, deans and other areas know the parties responsible for the advisement in program areas, and this has increased the accountability and professional perception of the position around the College.

5: Project Challenges

A: The Academic Advisement team experiences growing pains and some of the staff are experiencing a learning curve when the position is compared to a former model the College used. Unfortunately, in spite of all the improvements and changes, advisors are often forgotten in the grand scheme of the College operations because the model and process is so new. The program feels it still lacks enough history to develop sound advising guidelines. As well, several changes are taking place College-wide, including academic policies, student affairs policies, catalog improvements, and program requirements.

The advisors often find multiple programs and deans a challenge to manage and update. Additional challenges exist in relation to workflow regarding graduation status, pre-core reporting, student reporting and student status (admitted, provisional, etc.).