

Dabney S. Lancaster Community College

Student Success Leadership Institute

Final Action Plan

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Initiative One:

Shift Advising Process from a Centralized Model to a Shared Model That Utilizes Student Services and Faculty Advisors

Framework Area(s):

- Entry
- Progress
- Completion

Timeframe:

2016

Summer: Build a coalition and momentum for change; determine how we are going to communicate our vision for change (specific objectives for intended outcomes)

August: Communicate initiative to faculty and staff with In-service presentation. Demonstrate why this change is needed to establish buy-in (strategic communication). Recruit faculty and staff to serve on cross-functional work groups to identify issues and develop solutions.

September- November: Cross-functional work groups meet to map out process and sub-processes; committee works to identify additional areas of waste, pinch points, and error; various process simulations with “students” registering for spring classes that present different scenarios

2017

January-February: Work on identifying and developing solutions to problems; update to faculty and staff during in-service. Work groups present recommended process to leadership team.

March-April: Develop training programs for advisors/program heads. The initiative’s progress is evaluated and timeline adjusted if needed.

May-August: Implement training for advisors and available faculty over summer

August-October: Provide training for all faculty and staff

October: Implement new advising model for Spring '18 semester with program heads advising their students and advisors working with special populations determined by work groups.

Potential Costs:

Costs are intended to be limited, though it is anticipated that program heads will require release time to accommodate additional responsibilities. As the work groups identify issues related to faculty workload, the costs will be further evaluated and a complete assessment of cost will be conducted by April 2017.

Impacted Stakeholders

This initiative is expected to affect a wide range of stakeholders. Students will benefit the most as this new model provides them with an assigned advisor, whom they can contact for guidance in planning their academic career. As the student progresses further into their program of study, they will be assigned to a faculty member in their program, providing them with an official source of academic

guidance. This initiative should foster better connection between students, faculty, and staff, increasing retention, progress, and ultimately completion, as they receive accurate advice from a trusted source.

Faculty, specifically program heads, will be affected as their workload will now shift into areas where some may not be as familiar. Here, training will be crucial so that faculty feel supported and proper accommodations are made to take into account busy times in the academic semester that may overlap with busy advising times. Through the planning process, communication is critical as faculty and staff must identify the critical issues that will determine the success or failure of this initiative.

Anticipated Impact

Through this initiative, the following goals are set in order to measure the anticipated impact of the initiative:

The primary anticipated impact of the initiative is to increase the first-time, full-time 150% graduation rate to **40% (Cohort 2021)**.

In order to achieve this goal, additional benchmarks will be set to monitor the overall goal of increasing student success. These additional goals are as follows:

- Increase Fall-to-Spring retention for part-time students to **60%**
- Increase Fall-to-Spring retention for full-time students to **95%**
- Increase Fall-to-Fall retention of part-time students to **35%**
- Increase Fall-to-Fall retention of full-time students to **70%**
- Increase the percentage of first time students completing at least 12 credits with a 2.0 GPA through two semesters to **80%**

Initiative Two:

Develop structured programs that offer clear, streamlined pathways to completion

Framework Area(s):

- Entry
- Progress
- Completion

Timeframe:

2016-17 Academic Year

Develop template to use for all academic programs of study by September

Evaluate transfer electives according to programs to identify possible reduction in options in order to streamline pathways and maximize possibilities for transfer.

Produce structured programs for all programs by April 1, 2017 in time to implement new programs of study for Fall 2017.

Potential Costs:

Possible release time for faculty involved in the restructuring process. However, costs should be limited generally. If summer work is required due to limited availability during academic year, stipends will need to be accounted for to compensate faculty who are off-contract.

Impacted Stakeholders

Students will be provided with more streamlined pathways for completing their degrees and certificates. Program Heads will have the chance to thoroughly review course offerings and reflect upon the pathways that work most effectively for educating students. Elective offerings will be reduced, which may affect current and potentially long-time adjunct instructors. Efforts will be made to ensure they work with faculty and staff when identifying the elective offerings that hold the most value to students.

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In order to achieve this goal, additional benchmarks will be set to monitor the overall goal of increasing student success. These additional goals are as follows (to be achieved by 2021):

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Initiative Three:

Redesign SDV 100 to promote better career exploration and academic decision-making within new meta-major academic structure.

Framework Area(s):

Primary

- Entry
- Progress

Secondary

- Completion

Timeframe:

2016/17 Academic Year

Convene task force to evaluate outcomes of SDV and develop strategies to restructure course, including expanding to two credits, as well as providing a more intensive career and academic exploration component, similar to the College's current SDV 101 in Education course.

Develop new course outline by April for piloting in Fall 2017

2017/18 Academic Year

Pilot new course in fall 2017, identifying revisions

Communicate new course to faculty during January in-service and solicit feedback about how to implement new structure across all programs.

2018/19 Academic Year

Implement new SDV course structure for all sections.

****This initiative requires the development of meta-majors. The College anticipates information from the VCCS about possible system-wide meta-majors, which will dictate how DSLCC restructures academic programs and units. Until this process is complete, the redesign will be limited.***

Potential Costs:

A possible component of this redesign is the streamlining of instructors. It is feasible that current costs associated with hiring multiple adjuncts, each of whom teaches 1-2 sections will be combined to hire 1-2 staff who teach multiple sections. Though some of the costs for this proposed position may be redundant, there may be a need to devote additional monies to support salary teaching costs.

Impacted Stakeholders

The SDV experience for students will be improved through this redesign. It is intended that by taking this revised development class, already part of an initial core cluster of seven credits, students will be

better equipped to confirm their choice of major, reducing the potential for major changes, which are a primary reason for extending time to completion and increasing the overall cost of earning the College degree/certificate. Faculty will also be involved in this redesign, potentially serving as a vital part of the new course instruction content and possible delivery.

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Initiative Four:

Develop system for improved outreach to applicants in order to encourage more new enrollments.

Framework Area(s):

Primary

- Connection

Timeframe:

2017/18 Academic Year

Develop a taskforce, led by the College's admissions officer, to review and develop new protocols for prospective student outreach, including the establishment of a prospective student database and revisions to all communications, specifically the website.

Review Employee Work Profiles for Career Coaches to consider possibility of extending contracts to 11 months in order to provide services in recruiting students who have applied but not yet enrolled.

Add additional career coach to James River High School.

July 2018

Employment of career coaches is extended to incorporate new recruitment duties.

Potential Costs:

The major cost associated with this initiative is the added salary associated with the extension of the career coach contract. However, a small increase in application yield would more than cover the added cost of one month's salary and will be less costly than making a part-time position into full-time. This initiative in large part relies on the successful implementation of the new advising model, which in theory should relieve current Student Services staff of some advising responsibilities, particularly the College's Admissions Officer, who will then use that time to accomplish the objectives of this initiative.

Impacted Stakeholders

The most significant impact will be to prospective students, who will receive more attention and follow-up from the College. Armed with more information about program offerings and a better connection to the College through personal contacts, it is anticipated that more applicants will enroll in fall classes.

Anticipated Impact

Through this initiative, the following goals are set in order to measure the anticipated impact of the initiative:

Increase the application yield to **60%**

Increase the number of first time in college students by **25%** over 2015-16 numbers.

Implementing the Process of Change

These initiatives represent major changes to college processes and responsibilities. To implement them all effectively, a targeted effort is needed to create a sense of urgency, build buy-in, enable action, and sustain acceleration. Though the initiatives are distinct, they are all inter-connected, and thus, the process of change for one will be the same if not very similar to the process for the others. After all, the anticipated impact of these initiatives are consistent: increase enrollment and retention to achieve the ultimate goal of efficient and successful award completion.

To that end, we will build a sense of urgency for these initiatives through strategic communication, focused on describing through presentations and conversation the concern we all share for student success, and the different approaches to help more students make their way through the pipeline. The main point of urgency centers on the need to rethink the college's current advising model. Specifically, over the past five years, the college has suffered from a revolving door of advisors, with several changes in personnel in a short period of time. Accurate, meaningful advising cannot occur without skilled, trained personnel; however, because of the high turnover rate, training cannot effectively keep up with the personnel changes. The communication strategy will highlight this problem and the need to think differently about how advising responsibilities are handled at the college.

The Guiding Coalition for these initiatives will be the SSLI team with the addition of several key members. The SSLI team consists of the Director of Student Services, two full-time faculty, the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In addition, the team has added two key members, the Retention Coordinator and the Director of the Achievement Center, a grant-funded program for at-risk students. As a team, this group will be charged with providing oversight to various committees and taskforces and will meet regularly to ensure the implementation remains on track. The President will also serve a crucial role in providing insight and guidance as the team moves forward.

In addition to the Guiding Coalition, key members of the college community will be targeted to join committees, workgroups, and/or task forces. These groups will consist of a diverse body of faculty and staff charged with identifying concerns and solutions to various problems as well as building support for the initiatives from their colleagues. These members will be individually recruited during the fall in-service week for the initiatives beginning in the fall 2016 semester.

To successfully implement these changes, the college must remove or at least minimize potential barriers, namely the lack of funds necessary to support a change to faculty workloads. The major initiative is the revision of the advising model, which requires faculty to add a substantial responsibility to their workload. To accommodate this change, it may be necessary to provide overloads or course releases, which may necessitate hiring adjuncts to teach courses. Further, gaining buy-in from faculty, many of whom already may feel overworked, is critical to success. To overcome this major obstacle, there must be open communication between faculty, staff, and administrators, to understand the concerns, identify solutions, and find compromise. Existing resources may need to be reallocated in order to best accommodate the needed changes.

Along the way, the college must generate short-term wins in order to maintain momentum for the changes. Initiative two provides an opportunity for a short-term win provided the teams can develop a

template for structured programs that can be replicated across the college. A template, agreed upon by academic program heads, will provide a tangible resource that represents a streamlined pathway for students in any academic program and illustrate to the college community that change is possible.

To sustain acceleration, strategic planning must be done to budget effectively for the needed changes. To this end, groups will work to trim elective offerings in an effort to limit options for students that otherwise present problems for transfer. By limiting elective offerings to those identified as most essential to an academic program, the college can design pathways that better suit the schedules of our busy students. Eliminating certain electives may also reduce the college's reliance on adjunct instructors, freeing up resources to devote to other initiatives. Further, as the college experiences successes, these wins must be publicized, both within and outside the college community, to develop positive public relations and good press.

The college is committed to successfully implementing and sustaining these initiatives. Through a well-developed communications strategy; the dedication of a talented team of faculty, staff, and administrators; and the hard work and innovative ideas of the college community, DSLCC is confident its students will be in a better place for widespread success and completion of their academic goals.