

STUDENT SUCCESS BEST PRACTICE: RAPPAHANNOCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE



ADDRESS: 127645 COLLEGE DRIVE
GLENNNS, VA 23149

WEBSITE: WWW.RAPPAHANNOCK.EDU

STUDENT SUCCESS CATEGORY --

- ACADEMIC PROGRAM
- STUDENT SERVICES
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- COLLEGE BUSINESS PRACTICE
- TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION
- OTHER:

TITLE: "SOAR FOR STUDENT SUCCESS"

PROCESS

The Vice President of Instruction and Student Development, Webmaster, and Public Information Manager were the team who guided and implemented this best practice. After conducting a series of four focus groups with students where they were asked about their opinions on the printed magazine, it was redesigned using this feedback. In addition, a publication from JMU was used as a model for how to recruit students using print media. To guide the website redesign, we used Google analytics to examine how users enter the site, how long they stay on the site, and what they view on the site. Additionally, questions that were submitted via the old website were examined to identify common themes from visitors to the website. The new site was designed to make it faster for visitors to find what they are looking for, and anticipate what questions they may have about how to begin the on-boarding process, as well as questions they may have about specific meta-majors and programs of studies.

STRATEGY & IMPLEMENTATION

Students' noted that they chose RCC based on affordability, a small college atmosphere with personalized attention from faculty and staff, high quality transfer programs, convenient locations, excellent instructors, and the cutting edge technology available to them both in the classrooms and the library. The focus groups helped highlight that the attributes that drew students to the college weren't used to create a unique RCC brand and celebrated in the college marketing materials. During the summer of 2016, both the website and SOAR magazine were redesigned to focus on the traits of the college that the students in the focus groups noted were most important to them. Both the redesigned website re-imagined SOAR magazine were launched during the fall 2016 semester.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

Approximately 10 students were involved in focus groups to view the old website and RCC magazine. A follow up focus group is planned to help evaluate the new publication. Google analytics will also be used to compare page views from the old website against the page views from the redesigned website to determine if number of views have increased.

PLAN FOR SCALE & SUSTAINABILITY

This process will be used to redesign a printable program map for all the degree and certificate programs we offer. After the faculty and deans determine the content of the course maps for each program, the academic deans will work with the college marketing director to develop the printable program maps for each program. This will be done with existing college staff and resources, and this project will be completed during the 16-17 academic year.

COLLEGE DESCRIPTION

Rappahannock Community College (RCC) is a two-year public institution of higher education in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). RCC was established in 1971 as a comprehensive, open-enrollment community college with two campuses (one at the North (Warsaw) and one at the South (Glenns) end of the region.) In addition to the two campuses, RCC serves adult and/or dual-enrolled students at 15 SACSCOC approved off-campus sites.

The RCC service region in eastern Virginia is large and sparsely populated. It includes the residents of Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, New Kent, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties. Colonial Beach and West Point are towns in our service region. Since the 2010 census, most of the service region has shown little growth with six counties losing population. There are two areas of growth (New Kent County and King George County.) The makeup of the population is 77% white, 19% black, and 4% other minority.

In 2015-16, RCC's annualized headcount was 4,690. The credit student population was 52% program placed, 37% dual enrolled/not program placed, and 11% unclassified. Sixty-three percent were female, 23% minority, and 69% 21 years old or younger. Of the program-placed students, 57% were in the AA&S transfer program, 22% in Applied Science Degree (AAS) programs, and 21% in CTE certificate programs. Eighty-six percent attended part-time and 27% took all their courses in a distance learning mode (interactive video, hybrid, or online).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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