



## Sub-Group Project Template

(All completed templates should be uploaded to the SharePoint site.)

### Project Title: *Comprehensive Career Advising Program*

#### Theme project is related to:

- |   |  |                                      |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Support | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Career Advising</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Instruction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjunct Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Distance Learning                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Advising    |

#### Project Description:

One of the key areas recommended for improvement by the QEP Open Forum attendees was Career Advising. The need for improvement is further supported by student results of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) survey. Through CCSSE, students indicated that they rarely use career counseling services and satisfaction is low, however, most rate these services as either very important or somewhat important.

The Career Advising Sub-Group proposes a three-pronged approach to enhancing the overall career services of the College

1. Create Career Exploration Opportunities in the Academic Curriculum
2. Enhance the Career Advising Services of the College
3. Market the Academic Programs and their Career Paths

#### Summary:

First, students will be offered dedicated career exploration and decision-making opportunities within their curricular studies. If students are better informed about their career options at the beginning of their academic experience, their focus will improve and they will be more likely to complete their program successfully. Subsequently, the QEP committee recommends that a career exploration component be embedded into the curriculums of all occupational degree programs, preferably in one of the introductory courses. By embedding a career component *into the classroom*, faculty and career counselors can collaboratively and creatively offer instruction that may include, but is not limited to, providing guest speakers from the industry and alumni and experiential field trips to various industries.

Second, the career services provided by the Career, Employment and Transfer Center staff should be enhanced by increasing the number of staff. Presently there are only 3 staff members (2 specialists and 1 counselor) that provide career advising college-wide. Of the three, two of the specialists provide general career advising, and one counselor provides in-depth career advising. In addition, these individuals also provide transfer and employment services to the students college-wide. Increasing the number of transfer students is one of the top priorities of the college's strategic plan. Subsequently, to improve the career services of the Center, additional staff is needed in the Center and/or in Student Affairs.

Additionally, the academic advisors in the Success Centers see a majority of the new and undecided students. These advisors need additional training about career options as it relates to the College's academic programs. With additional training, the advisors will assist students in making a more informed decision about identifying the best program choice based upon their career interests.

Finally, the programs of the college, including their career paths will be marketed both internally (to current students) and externally (at the high schools and in the community) to further increase awareness about the career opportunities available at JSRCC.

**The three-pronged approach is as follows:**

1. Create career exploration opportunities in academic curriculum
  - a. Embed a career exploration component in all occupational and technical degree programs, more specifically, in introductory courses.
    - Will include class activities such as providing guest speakers from the industry and successful alumni in the various career fields, internships/externships, and career simulations.
  - b. Create a new SDV 107 course to be taught by the current career counselor to focus on career exploration. The course will be open to all students but will target those in transfer programs. Students may substitute this course for SDV 100.
    - Will include class activities such as providing guest speakers from the industry and successful alumni, and career simulations.
  - c. Create two new staff positions to coordinate these career exploration components for the academic schools and for the SDV course, and to build relationships with and establish opportunities in area business and industry.
2. Enhance career advising services
  - a. Add 2-5 additional career advising staff.
  - b. Career advising specialists would be assigned to and specialize in a particular academic school at JSRCC so that they can be well versed in the career paths available to graduates of these programs
  - c. Cross-train current academic advisors (in the Success Centers) in basic career advising.
3. Market academic programs and their career paths
  - a. Provide current, accurate, and useable career information about programs in all publications and on Reynolds.edu
  - b. Develop marketing events and literature to promote college programs internally and externally
  - c. Sponsor annual program fairs for current students - require each academic program to be represented at career fairs such as Success Fest (internal marketing)
  - d. Promote the academic programs offered by the College in the high schools and in the community whenever possible (external marketing)

**How does this project support the mission and vision of the institution?**

This project supports the mission and vision in several ways:

1. Prepares students for career advancement
2. Prepares students for successful transfer to colleges and universities
3. Retains students as career-path students who are more likely to complete a program of study (thus increasing enrollment)
4. Increases opportunities for high school students through Dual Enrollment
5. Increases graduation rates as more program-placed students will graduate
6. Builds a skilled workforce that contributes to regional economic development
7. Responds to the growing need for workers in targeted areas

## How is this project tied to the strategic plan of the institution?

### Proposed 08/09 strategic plan:

#### 1.0 STUDENT ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

*Ensure that all Virginians in the JSRCC service area have access and opportunity to participate in lifelong learning.*

- 1.1 To ensure access and opportunity, increase JSRCC's full-time equivalent enrollment annually.
  - 1.1.1 Increase FTES by 3%, from 6,897 to 7,104, by increasing enrollment in strategic areas.
  - 1.1.5 Implement the college's [Retention Plan](#) (see 2.7.1).
- 1.2 Develop comprehensive plans for meeting the education and training needs in the distinct areas of the college's service region.

#### 2.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING

*Ensure that teaching and learning remain the focus of JSRCC in helping students achieve their personal learning and career goals.*

- 2.3 Improve the delivery of academic advising and support services in order to increase retention and student success.
  - 2.3.1 Finalize and implement an advising model that includes a training component.
  - 2.3.5 Meet the benchmark for intermediate level of services for on-line interactive advising system as defined by the VCCS Virtual Advising Project.
- 2.6 Increase the college's first-time, full-time, program-placed student retention rate from 56% to 65% (90<sup>th</sup> percentile for peer institutions) and the first-time, part-time, program-placed student retention rate from 41% to 45% (90<sup>th</sup> percentile for peer institutions).
- 2.8 Increase the college's graduation rate of first-time, full-time, program-placed students from 10.7% to 20% (90<sup>th</sup> percentile for peer institutions) by 2010.

#### 4.0 TRANSFER

*Ensure that transfer to four-year colleges and universities is a seamless process for JSRCC students.*

- 4.1 Continue to expand relationships with four-year universities and colleges to facilitate transfer of JSRCC students.

## What data (internal and/or external) supports the importance of implementing this project?

**Internal Data:** The QEP Committee distributed this information in the data profile:

- 41% of students indicate they never talked about career plans with an advisor or instructor
- JSRCC spends 30.6% less than 29 other like institutions on student services
- The retention rate for first-time, full-time, curricular students is 55%
- The retention rate for first-time, part-time curricular students is 40%.
- The overall retention rate is 38.3%.
  - These retention statistics indicate that enrolling in a program increases the retention rate.
- 34% of respondents to QEP's "Career Advising" section commented on the need to provide direct career advising to students.

- 60% of SOAR students change their curriculum after attending SOAR – that’s 1,000 first year students of the 4,000 new first year students each year (as per Thomas Hollins, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs)

**External Data:**

Ashburn (2006): For years, administrators at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, in Richmond, VA, had a hunch that students were not taking full advantage of the college's advising services. Still, they were disappointed two years ago, when the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) revealed that their students rarely used career services and only occasionally sought academic advising.

Daire & Fuller (2007): Future income and future status have a greater influence on the career choice of Black/African American college students than on the career choice of White college students.

Levin & Hussey (2007): Students, faculty, and advisers must have ready access to current, accurate, and useable information about programs and curricula (Commission for Undergraduate Education 1995). This is particularly true for institutions that offer a large number of majors and have a large enrollment of exploratory students. In such institutions, approximately 60% of entering first-year students report some degree of uncertainty about their education plans. It is necessary for faculty and professional academic advisors to have effective informational and conceptual tools to be able to address students' needs as they explore and develop their education plans

Legutko (2007): This study determined the influence of an academic workshop on appropriate declaration of a major for students who graduated, but were previously undeclared. A posttest-only control group design revealed that students in the workshop made more accurate and informed decisions about their major, made fewer inappropriate decisions, and increased their confidence to formally declare a major.

**SACS broadly defines student learning as changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors or values. What is the definition of student learning in the context of this project?**

Through this comprehensive career advising program, students will have the knowledge and ability to make informed decisions regarding their career paths and will be able to actively demonstrate this knowledge.

**What are the specific learning outcomes?**

1. Students will be able to clearly identify the career paths available to them.
2. Students will understand the connection between academic coursework and potential careers.
3. Students will be more likely to complete a curricular program.
4. More students will gain the academic and career knowledge necessary to successfully transfer to a four-year college or university with the desired credits related to their career path.
5. New students will enroll at JSRCC due to additional marketing initiatives.

**How will you know that the identified learning outcomes have been achieved (assessment)?**

1. Pre- and post-surveys for students participating in career exploration activities
2. Future CCSSE results will indicate that students will have greater satisfaction with career services and will use them more frequently
3. Other assessment tools such as the Graduate Follow-up will indicate greater satisfaction of the graduates’ chosen career and greater satisfaction with the career advising services offered by the College
4. Increased curricular enrollments
5. Increased number of program completers
6. Increased retention rates
7. Increased graduation rates

## **What best practices are going to be used as a part of this project and why?**

### **1. Create career exploration opportunities in academic curriculum**

By requiring that all occupational curriculums embed a career exploration component in their curriculum, we are modeling, with some adaptations, the successful “best practices” of Montgomery Community College as determined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

Spotlight Online (2007): National Association of Colleges and Employers Best Practices. “Montgomery Community College in Texas embedded successfully a career module in all first year developmental English Writing II classes. Division faculty counselors and career counselors provided one-hour class presentations to students on career decision making. Career services practitioners chose career exploration as one of the embedded modules because research shows that there is a need for early intervention with students who are undecided about their majors. The career exploration modules also were emailed to all students who take developmental courses.” The success of the program was measured by pre and post test surveys and increased instructor referrals for career counseling.

### **2. Enhance student services**

Levin & Hussey (2007): Students, faculty, and advisers must have ready access to current, accurate, and useable information about programs and curricula (Commission for Undergraduate Education 1995). This is particularly true for institutions that offer a large number of majors and have a large enrollment of exploratory students. In such institutions, approximately 60% of entering first-year students report some degree of uncertainty about their education plans. It is necessary for faculty and professional academic advisors to have effective informational and conceptual tools to be able to address students' needs as they explore and develop their education plans

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2002) definition of academic advising includes the following notes on career advising, showcasing the need for our suggestion to cross-train academic advisors in career advising:

#### **Typical activities (of an advisor):**

1. Assisting students with decision-making and career direction.
2. Interpreting various interest/ability inventories that provide students with information related to their career choices.

### **3. Market academic programs**

Shek (2002): County College of Morris in New Jersey operates a local public access channel through a local cable provider. CCM used this outlet to form a consortium with local public schools and libraries, which has also expanded the school's awareness in the community. “The TV channel allows us to go into the homes where people don't have access to computer or don't have access to transportation to come to the college,” says Robert Bryan, director of television and video services at Cuyahoga Community College in Ohio.

## **What resources (human, fiscal, academic, technology) will be needed to complete this project?**

- 2-5 additional career advising staff
- Staff time and resources to cross-train academic advisors in basic career advising
- Staff time and resources to train career advising specialists to specialize in their assigned academic school
- Faculty time to enhance introductory courses to include a career exploration component
- 2 new staff members to coordinate working with business and industry, to recruit speakers for the new SDV 107 courses and for the occupational/technical programs' career exploration component, and to coordinate on-site visits
- Resources and materials for new SDV 107 classes
- Transportation for on-site career exploration visits
- An additional responsibility of the current Career Counselor will be to design and teach the career exploration SDV 107

**What could be the impact on student learning if this project is not implemented?**

1. Many students will not complete programs because they have no direction or career-oriented goals.
2. Students will continue to demonstrate dissatisfaction with career services (CCSSE).
3. Students will continue to be unaware of career options and career counseling services at JSRCC.
4. Students will waste time and money taking classes that do not meet their career goals.
5. Students will waste time and money taking classes that will not transfer to their chosen school.
6. Students will leave the college without transitioning to the career of their choice.
7. There will continue to be unfulfilled workforce needs in our community.

**Names of faculty/staff involved in the preparation of this project template.**

Joel Adler, Robin Beale, Diane Brasington, Vicki Bruce, Sherry Compton, Beverly Davis, Kristen Ellis (intern), Holly Gordon, Barbara Grano, Twandra Lomax-Brown, Jackie Manley, Nancy Mihalko, Valerie Paige-Clark, Fred Ruffin, Jennifer Schoof (intern), T. Kemper Steele, Karen Pettis-Walden

Works Cited

Ashburn, E. (Dec 1, 2006). 2-Year-College Students Rarely Use Advisers, Survey Shows. The Chronicle of Higher Education, 53, 15. p.NA. Retrieved February 19, 2008, from Academic OneFile via Gale:

<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId=AONEFor>

Daire, A P, LaMothe, S., & Fuller, D P (March 2007). Differences between Black/African American and White college students regarding influences on high school completion, college attendance, and career choice. (Brief Report). Career Development Quarterly, 55, 3. p.275(5). Retrieved February 19, 2008, from Academic OneFile via Gale:

<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE>

Hill-Hogan, C. (April 1990). Minority recruitment and retention: a career ladder approach. Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 90, n4. p.523(3). Retrieved February 15, 2008, from Academic OneFile via Gale:

<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE>

Legutko, R S (March 2007). Influence of an academic workshop on once-undeclared graduates' selection of a major. (Table). College Student Journal, 41, 1. p.93(6). Retrieved February 19, 2008, from Academic OneFile via Gale:

<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE>

Levin, J., & Hussey, R B (May-June 2007). Improving advising in the sciences: analysis of the educational environments of science- and math-related majors. Journal of College Science Teaching, p.28. Retrieved February 19, 2008, from Academic OneFile via Gale:

<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE>

National Association of Colleges and Employers (October 10, 2007). Best Practices: Embedded Career Module Helps Reach First Year Students--Montgomery College. Spotlight Online Publication:

<http://www.nacweb.org/pubs/spotlightonline/2007/c101007.htm#3>

Shek, K. (March 19, 2002). Cable TV Used For Promotion, More Access. Community College Times. Retrieved March 3, 2008, from American Association of Community Colleges: <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2002). The role of student affairs and services in higher education: A practical manual for developing, implementing and assessing student affairs programmes and services. p 25-26. <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/UNESCO.htm>