



J. SARGEANT REYNOLDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Nannette Smith

Associate Vice President Academic Affairs

EXPERTISE: Nannette Smith arrived at J. Sargeant Reynolds seven years ago from the Virginia Community College System office in Richmond, Virginia.

What motivated Fuel Smart Fridays and when?

The conversation started during the summer of 2008 as gas prices began to rise, and we were concerned students might not be able to afford to come back to school. We wanted to explore ways to remove barriers.

Why was a four day work week considered and then rejected?

Our financial operations personnel explained that we wouldn't save a lot of money because the facility still had to be cooled and maintained. Also, many employees would find it difficult to adjust babysitting schedules and other personal affairs to accommodate a four day work week.

How was the dean of arts & humanities involved?

She found information about Volunteer State's Full Time Friday on the internet. She brought the idea forward to our team. We used their weekly classroom plan as a template and inserted our own courses. If they so choose, students can come on Friday each week and pursue 12 credit hours worth of classes.

How has your PR department been involved?

Because we decided to do this so late in the summer, we needed the PR department to get word out. They did a terrific job.

Who implemented Fuel Smart Fridays at the campus?

I appointed one of our deans the project director. He has a very capable assistant. My assistant worked as our liaison to the bookstore. The head of the academic support center, who handles tutoring, is also involved. Seventy-five percent of the students told us they don't think they'll need any tutoring, but that may change. We'll try to tailor some tutoring time for Friday attendees.

Why was enrollment for Fuel Smart Fridays low at first? What remedied the situation?

We found out that misinformation was originating in our success center, the first point of contact with students. They wrongly understood they were required to take the full Fuel Smart Friday course load or none at all, and that they could not mix Fuel Smart courses with traditional offerings. Once we corrected the staff's misunderstandings, they communicated with students and clarified. Enrollment began to rise, and it's still rising.