

NACADA OUTSTANDING ADVISING PROGRAM AWARD

Institutional Description:

Established in 1967, Spokane Falls Community College (SFCC) is a public, comprehensive, two-year college. It is one of two separately accredited institutions comprising Washington State Community College District 17, the State's largest community college district both geographically and in the number of students served. The district is within a six-county, 12,302 square mile region along the Washington-Idaho border. SFCC serves Spokane, an economically challenged urban area of approximately 500,000 people, in addition to the surrounding rural, isolated counties of Ferry, Lincoln, Orville, Stevens, and Whitman.

Program Development:

In 2010, SFCC was awarded a Title III grant. The Grant's project team reviewed local and National data on student success. The Project Team noted a significant gap (i.e., Noel-Levitz's Student Satisfaction Inventory, greater than 1.5; CCSSE) in students' advising experiences/satisfaction and the importance of advising to students' at the College. Using data to inform their decision, the Team chose to focus one of its grant objectives on redesigning the academic advisement program at SFCC, with the goal of improving the student experience and moving the needle on student achievement.

Institutional knowledge and culture proved to be more challenging than not; there were unresolved tensions, territorial issues, severed relationships, image/branding problems, workload concerns (i.e. unionized institution), and much more. The Team and Administration realized that they had to take a (or several) step backwards in order for the institution to move forward. As a result, the decision was made to dedicate year one of the grant to repairing relationships between instructional faculty/faculty advisors, faculty counselors, and administration to improve student success. Year one in one word---challenging

After working diligently to repair relationships in year one, the Team began to conceptualize the future state of advising and student achievement at SFCC. The Team work started with recruitment for the redesign workgroup that would include instructional faculty/faculty advisors, faculty counselors, and staff. The Team successfully recruited 15 people to serve on the workgroup. The workgroup was responsible for research (i.e., literature review, interviewing other institutions, facilitating focus groups with faculty), development, and implementation of the new advising program. To demonstrate the importance of building a durable and sustainable advising program, the Executive administration allocated funds to send a team of nine people to the 2012 NACADA Summer Institute (SI). The NACADA SI workgroup (now branded as 'Austin 9') was charged with the creation of a comprehensive plan for first-year students with deliverables for implementation. This "comprehensive plan" was to include both a mission and vision statements, expectations, roles and responsibilities, professional development plan, student learning outcomes, handbook, program evaluation, and budget proposal.

In preparation for the 2012 SI, the Dean of Students held three meetings with the 'Austin 9' workgroup. They were provided and responsible for studying the CAS Standards and NACADA's Pillars of Advising (e.g., NACADA's Concepts of Advising). The purpose of the meetings and assignments was to prepare the workgroup for their work overall, and their work at SI specifically. The workgroup arrived in Austin ready to work, and all was well until dinner the first night. The task of developing a clear and concise action statement in 25 words or less was a challenge for our group of nine with various levels of advising knowledge and experiences. Tensions rose and an outburst at the dinner table. The Dean decided that a public dinner was not the most appropriate place to hold a discussion, and the group would meet later at the hotel.

Later that evening, after much discussion the group agreed to focus on the common goal---student achievement; however, the root of the problem was obvious to the Dean, and some relationship would take longer to repair. 'Austin 9' was divided into small groups and each group worked on one

component of the comprehensive plan. For example, one small group worked on professional development, while another small group worked on the mission and vision statements. In the evenings, the workgroup would gather to reflect on the day's activities and each small group would present its work, while the workgroup served as the "vetting body" for approval of each group's work. By the closing day, the workgroup presented its 25-word action statement and the comprehensive plan. Other SI attendees and the small group facilitator praised the group's achievement. The group was energized and ready to share the comprehensive plan with the Executive administration.

Upon their return to campus, members of 'Austin 9' met with the Title III team and shared a draft of the comprehensive plan. The Grant team provided input and the workgroup decided to continue their work to prepare for their meeting with the Executive Cabinet. In the meantime, SFCC was awarded an Achieving the Dream (AtD) grant, and a new President and Vice President of Student Services was appointed at SFCC. On the 30th of October 2012, members of the 'Austin 9' and all counselors met with the President. They presented their work, the new President rejected their plan, noting that the comprehensive plan was "too much" but more importantly, only "just in time" training focused on information was needed. The President's statements were devastating to 'Austin 9' for two primary reasons 1.) they had completed their charge as originally outlined, even working into the late evening; and 2.) they learned at SI that good advising is more than informational; it is relational too.

The next two months were critical because the workgroup and Grant Team would have to take three steps back to take one step forward. The Dean reassured members of the workgroup that their labor was not in vain, and that we would not throw out the "baby with the bath water" (i.e., the comprehensive plan); however, we would honor the President's requests. After some thought, the Dean decided to dismantle and incrementally scale the comprehensive plan. The Dean explained the vision, and the workgroup was pleased with the idea. The immediate next step was the creation of a three-year timeline (including tasks and responsible parties) for implementation of the comprehensive

plan. For instance, one of the first tasks was establishing a collaborative, campus-wide academic consulting team (ACT) that would serve as the governing body for advising-related matters.

Goals & Objectives:

Using the comprehensive plan and timeline as a guide, ACT created goals with objectives to continue its work.

<u>Goal</u>	<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Results/Outcomes</u>
<p>To increase the number of faculty advisors participating in advising.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT, Instructional Deans, VPL collaborated on communication and recruitment strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter 2013: The “Austin 9” had evolved into ACT and had a membership of 16 faculty and staff to ensure college-wide representation. • Spring 2013: The number of faculty advisors increased from 22 to 35. • Fall 2013: The number of faculty advisors increased from 35 to 45. • Spring 2014: The number of faculty increased from 45 to 50. • Fall 2014: Faculty advisors increased from 50 to 55. • Spring 2015: Faculty advisors increased from 55 to 73. It is important to note that during this term, the Executive Cabinet and the AHE (i.e., Union) had reached an agreement that adjunct/part-time faculty and completion coaches were approved to serve as advisors. • Currently (as of fall 2016), there are over 100 faculty advisors and completion coaches. Moreover, ACT’s membership is well over 35 that includes faculty, staff, and administration.
<p>Create an on-going, campus-wide professional development (PD) calendar to meet the training needs of new and seasoned faculty advisors that includes assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present two (2) 50 minute Learn-n-Go sessions each quarter hosted by ACT. <i>(See appendices for example of Learn-n-Go communication materials)</i> • Leveled professional development series (e.g., Level 1=Novice; Level 2=Intermediate, Level 3=Experienced) <i>(See appendices: Level 1 lesson plan)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Learn-n-Go sessions were designed to address specific advising needs requested by faculty. The sessions ranged from ‘how to navigate technology’ to ‘career exploration in advising’. • Approximately 70 faculty advisors successfully completed the leveled professional development series with 40 of those individuals completing all three levels.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an online (i.e., CANVAS and websites) advising resources for faculty advisors. Faculty advising website: https://apps.spokane.edu/EasyWeb/Default.asp?ID=3322&page=6157&VLD=0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CANVAS course was finalized in <u>April of 2013</u>, and has served as one method of PD for faculty advisors who seek to update/refresh their knowledge OR are unable to attend the learn-n-go and/or department-level advising sessions. The CANVAS advising course is full of resources for new and seasoned faculty advisors. There is also a quiz built into the course to assess faculty advisors' knowledge and needs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host a FREE regional Spring Advising Symposium. (<i>See appendices: Symposium material</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the last 4 years, SFCC has hosted a FREE Advising Symposium. The College invites regional institutions to participate. Each year the number of attendees has increased, with an attendance range of 100-175. This event is something the area institutions have grown to expect from the "community college".
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and implement a college-wide Consulting Summer Institute (CSI) for faculty advisors and student services staff (<i>See appendices: CSI session guide</i>) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly, rotating department-level advisor trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This practice was recently (fall 2016) implemented with the goal of continuous quality improvement for all faculty advisors. Moreover, the model would serve as foundation for departments to host 'Advising Days' with their respective faculty and assigned student loads.
<p>To decrease the gap between importance and satisfaction with academic advising (Noel-Levitz's SSI & CCSSE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACT intentionally focused all of its professional development efforts on 'daily advising practices' to equip faculty advisors, completion coaches and counselors/academic advisors with the informational, conceptual, technological, and relational aspects of advising to address the satisfaction and learning needs of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 2011, the gap between importance and satisfaction of advising continues to shrink at SFCC. The overall importance/satisfaction gap has drop from 1.42 in 2011 to 1.25 in 2015. (<i>See appendices for more information</i>) The 2014 CCSSE results also indicated an improvement in the advising experience of students.

<p>Create and map-out Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for advising to reinforce advising is teaching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the top 10 advising SLOs from the original 48. Determine key times during the student life cycle when advising would be most impactful. 	<p>ACT narrowed the 48 advising SLOs to the “Core 4”. ACT partnered with IR to map out learning across the advising experience for students. With support from IR, ACT was able to identify experiences were advising could most impactful and move the needle on student achievement. <i>(See appendices: Advising SLOs)</i></p>
<p>Secure a budget for all academic advising initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding for advising Work with Executive Cabinet to allocate funds to pay adjunct faculty advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall 2012: Advising was added as an intervention to the AtD grant that included funding to support advising initiatives. Fall 2014: Executive Cabinet allocated State funds of \$25K for all advising initiatives. Spring 2015: The Vice President of Learning assigned \$10K per year from the instructional budget for payment to adjunct faculty advisors. Current/Fall 2016: Executive Cabinet increased the advising initiative budget to \$30K, which is significant in during a time of budget cut/reductions. [This does not include the additional \$10K from the Vice President of Learning]
<p>To implement required advising for all students with fewer than 30 earned credits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a (student) communication plan Outline <u>specific</u> advising learning outcomes and lesson/session plans for faculty advisors working with under 30 credit students. Work with IT to create holds for new students’ accounts Partner with the New Student Orientation Program to ensure communication with new students about mandatory advising. And development of a draft education plan. Work with Institutional Research Office to obtain data on new students, and assist with the program evaluation plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All students are required to meet with their assigned faculty advisor or counselor prior to registration. The common purpose of these meetings is students will develop or update (from NSO) their six-quarter plan for completion with their assigned faculty advisor/counselor. At the completion of the meetings, students are released to register for the prescribed classes.

Program description:

Through intentional, collaborative working relationships between colleagues (e.g., faculty and staff) as well as college personnel and students, the purpose of the advising program at Spokane Falls

Community College is to educate first-year students (i.e., fewer than 31 earned credits) on their curricular and co-curricular opportunities that support both teaching and learning across the student life cycle. Because of these relationships and intentionally-designed learning opportunities, SFCC’s advising program strives to help students reach their goals and live productive lives as educated citizens.

Procedures used in program evaluation:

As previously stated and noted below, both the Noel-Levitz’s SSI and CCSSE are administered at SFCC for program evaluation. The SSI is administered every three years, and the CCSSE is conducted during the off cycle of the SSI. During the interval of SSI and CCSSE, SFCC completes a local survey with support from the Institutional Research Office, to measure students’ learning (with an emphasis on the advising SLOs) qualitatively with micro-interviews and focus groups. Thus, the process for program evaluation at SFCC is a mixed (quantitative and qualitative) method approach, and data are used to continuously improve the advising process for students.

Results/Outcomes:

The advising program that was developed at NACADA SI 2012, and incrementally implemented at SFCC has served the college well. The Office of Institutional Research provided the following data based on the State of Washington’s Student Achievement Points, Noel-Levitz’s SSI, CCSS, and micro-interviews with students. While the College cannot report causation, there is definitely a strongly correlation between the implementation of the new advising program and the improvements reported by students regarding their advising experience at SFCC.

Student Achievement Points:

Student Achievement Points Categories	Baseline (2011-2012)	2012-13	2013-14
No momentum	25.7%	33%	30%
Basic Skills		3%	0%

First 15 College Credits	17.5%	31%	32%
First 30 College Credits	27.4%	22%	31%
45 College Level Credits		1%	3%
Quantitative Symbolic Reasoning Point		5%	9%

Noel-Levitz's SSI:

	2015			2011			Previous Wording if different	Change
	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap		
71. General information about college services is easy to find on the SFCC internet page.	6.38	5.12/1.65	1.26	6.23	5.15 / 1.59	1.08		.15 increase in importance; .03 decrease in satisfaction
72. I like having a choice about how I receive my financial aid.	6.00	5.43/1.56	0.57					
73. The Higher One ATM Machines are conveniently located.	5.35	4.76/1.67	0.59					
74. I know who to get help from for degree/program advising.	6.35	4.96/1.84	1.39	6.19	4.53 / 1.80	1.66		.16 increase in importance; .43 increase in satisfaction
							The online Ed Planner is valuable to my educational experience.	
75. Educational planning is valuable to my educational experience.	6.29	5.27/1.50	1.02	5.69	4.74 / 1.50	0.95		
76. My academic advisor has helped me take responsibility for my own education.	6.12	4.91/1.86	1.21					
77. There is someone on campus who can help me cope with most of my non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.).	5.30	4.30/1.71	1.00	5.37	4.24 / 1.72	1.13		.07 decrease in importance; .06 increase in satisfaction
78. My academic advisor helps me determine my educational goals.	6.05	4.74/1.85	1.31	6.11	4.57 / 1.81	1.54		.06 decrease in importance; .17 increase in satisfaction
79. I meet with my academic advisor regularly.	5.43	4.21/1.85	1.22					
80. My academic advisor has helped me put together an educational plan to meet my academic goals.	6.06	4.62/2.06	1.44					

CCSSE:

Student reported greater satisfaction or awareness on the following items related to academic advising at SFCC:

CCSSE ADVISING RELATED RESPONSES:
"My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward."
"The online Ed Planner is valuable to my educational experience."
"More likely to get and seek out information about the requirements for my educational program from a counselor or faculty advisor."
"More likely to agree that the co-curricular programs (lecture series, student success workshop, educational planning seminars, and other special programs and activities) offered by your college enhance their learning."
"Counselors and advisors care about students as individuals."

Potential for adaption by other institutions:

It's been five years since SFCC implemented its new advising program, and there are have been many successes as well as challenges, but through it all the College has learned from each experience. SFCC has learned the importance of:

1. an adaptable plan and scaling. The advising plan must have a firm foundation, so that when changes occur the program remains focused on the 'spirit' of advising;
2. identifying a student group to pilot prior to implementing new policies and procedures;
3. partnership/collaboration, particularly in times of fiscal instability;
4. use of data to inform decision-making;
5. Committed leadership.

These learned experiences are applicable to any advising program, at any institution.