Action Project

Institution:	Baker College		
Submitted:	2007-02-27	**Contact:**	Mike Tyler
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Timeline:
Planned project kickoff date: 03-01-2007
Target completion date: 12-30-2009
Actual completion date: --

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:
Design of a Process for Student Advising

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:
This project would result in the design of a new model for advising for students. As part of this project, a needs analysis of what different segments of students need from advising will be explored along with a review of current practices across all of our campuses and best practices at other institutions to identify what works. The project will also provide an opportunity for collaboration between admissions, student services, career services, and academics on how to most effectively provide advising. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that students start in the right program, receive the support needed to persist to graduation, and begin rewarding and successful careers.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:
Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities:
In the Noel-Levitz Survey in 2005, advising was an issue where we were not meeting student expectation. A significant number of Conversation Day provocative propositions also called for strengthening our student advising processes. Retention data and data from the Constellation Survey provide support for this project as well.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:
Academics (counseling and academic advising in particular), Admissions, and Career Services

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:
Student advising begins with admissions before a student enrolls with Baker College. Beginning with new student orientation, admissions hands the student off to academics. As the student nears the end of their program, Career Services assists the student with work experience and identifying employment opportunities. Advising includes assisting a student select a program and deciding what classes to take and assisting with other decisions.

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):

We anticipate spending approximately a year in the planning phase before initiating pilot projects. The pilot phase should also last a year. The results of the pilots will be used in the third year to finalize a system-wide design for advising.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

The action team will meet monthly to review progress. The leaders of the four action teams will also meet periodically to review progress of the four projects.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:

One measure will be student satisfaction with advising as indicated on the Noel-Levitz survey. The action team will develop additional measures related to student retention and other outcomes.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

An action team led by the System Vice President of Academics has been formed to oversee this project.

K. Project Leader and contact person:

Contact Name: Denise Bannen, Vice President of Academics

Email: denise.bannan@baker.edu

Phone: (810) 766-2148 Ext.

Annual Update: 2008-09-11

A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

The AQIP Advising Action Project Team began its work in February 2007. To date, the team has met 15 times (9 during the past year) and several subcommittees of the team have each met several additional times. Subcommittees were formed to develop a plan for an advising tracking software system, determine job qualifications and responsibilities for First Year Advisors (FYAs), and plan the training for the FYAs. In addition, committees of the various stakeholders, i.e., Admissions Department, Business Office, Financial Aid Department, Career Services Department, Counselors/Academic Advisors, and Registrars, met to make decisions regarding their use of the tracking system and to develop training for the FYAs. Meeting time during the past year has been devoted to choosing an advising approach and selecting the group of students who would have FYAs during the first phase of implementation. Decisions were made regarding the timeline for full implementation. The various functions of the Student Tracking System were determined. An electronic questionnaire was developed for new students that will provide demographic information as well as information about the students' confidence regarding choice of program and ability to do college level work. Planning for the training for the FYAs took place. The intrusive advising model was chosen. This early intervention, proactive and intentional approach to advising differs significantly from the more reactive approach currently used at Baker College. Additionally, FYAs will be held accountable for the persistence and success of their assigned advisees. The first phases of the in-house software system have been completed. When fully developed the software system will assist in assigning student advisors and tracking advising visits. It will include a messaging system, a means for making

appointments online, and will allow for sharing of information relevant to all students, a group of students, or individual students. A student status and red light/yellow light system will alert advisors of special groups of students and to issues with which students need to deal. Also, faculty will be able to electronically alert advisors of concerns due to the electronic version of the "Student Referral Form" which will be incorporated as a "pop up" before faculty enter student attendance electronically. Implementation of this comprehensive advising system for all new students will occur over a three year period, with the first phase taking place in fall 2008 with new, first-time students who do not require any developmental education courses. The initial target group was chosen in order that the assessment of results would not be confounded by simultaneous changes as a result of the Improving General Education through Increased Collaboration action project. All campuses have hired First Year Advisors who attended a week-long training in August. Training was facilitated by staff from the following departments: Academics, Admissions, Business Office, Career Services, Computer Information Systems and Financial Aid. All staff members who work with students have been or soon will be trained on the Student Tracking System software.

Review (09-21-08):
Baker College is pursuing the important goal of strengthening student advising, as a means of enhancing student success and student retention. This project addresses several AQIP Categories and Principles, including: helping students, understanding student needs, measuring effectiveness, and collaboration. It is apparent that the College uses professional advisors. What is not clear from this update is whether the faculty have a formal or informal role in advising, and whether the faculty role has any impact. The original Action Project summary mentions Career Services. It is not clear from this update whether Career Services is playing a role.

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

There are currently 12 members of the AQIP Advising Action Project Team, including system staff and staff from seven out of ten campuses. Campus representatives include two Presidents, a VP for Admissions, a Director of Career Services, two Deans, a Department Chair/Faculty, a Director of Counseling and Assessment. System staff includes the VP for Academics, VP for Finance, the Director of Scholarships and Grants, and a Computer Programmer/Analyst. Having wide representation from both campuses and departments has helped maintain general awareness of the AQIP Advising Project. Team members have also solicited input from their departments and campuses. And as indicated in the answer to the first question, various departments have met to make decisions regarding their use of the tracking system and to develop training for the FYAs. Updates on the project have been presented to various groups. The Presidents Council and System Executive Committee were updated on the project and apprised of the budget implications; they have given their full support to the project. In addition, the AQIP liaison has met with the Operations Committee (a campus-wide committee representing all functional units) on every campus to provide updates and respond to concerns. Team involvement and motivation has been high because of the fall 2008 target date for the first phase of implementation. Since all departments who meet with students will use the Student Tracking System, there is widespread interest in and anticipation of the implementation of the advising program and the supporting student tracking software.

Review (09-21-08):
It is apparent that there is a high level of participation and communication involved in this project, to include senior administration and front-line professionals. Baker College should be

commended for this level of organizational involvement and commitment.

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

Continued training and support will be provided to the First Year Advisors. They will meet at least quarterly as a group to share concerns and best practices. After the first quarter on the job, FYAs will evaluate the week-long training they received as to its effectiveness in preparing them for their job. This will allow appropriate alterations to the process before the next group of advisors are hired. The final phases of the Student Tracking System software will be completed and implemented. Assessment and evaluation of the First Year Advising program and the supporting Student Tracking System software will be conducted. Data will be collected on measurable outcomes such as quarter-to-quarter retention and student satisfaction. Staff satisfaction with the tracking software will be assessed. The performance of First Year Advisors will be evaluated. This data will allow modifications of systems and processes prior to implementation of the second phase, scheduled for Fall 2009. The second phase will include complete implementation for all new students on several campuses. Following this, full implementation with all students on all campuses is scheduled for 2010.

Review (09-21-08):
The College has appropriately emphasized the importance of measuring the effectiveness of the new advising system. You have mentioned retention and student satisfaction. Under retention, will you include successful completion of individual courses? Will there be a strong connection between advising and learning support services (tutoring, etc.)?

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

The team's decision to expand advising from academic advising to student advising including student interactions with admissions, financial aid and business office services, and career services may result in a more "effective practice" that could be adopted or adapted by other institutions. Additionally, the move to an intrusive advising model may prove beneficial in reaching students and helping them be more successful at the start of their college career. Developing in-house a student advising software system which allows various departments and campuses to track visits, share appropriate information, and identify student issues should result in more effective student advising. This may be an "effective practice" that could be adopted or adapted by multi-campus institutions whose students commonly attend more than one campus. It may also be effective for large institutions where students frequently have to interact with many different offices as a way to insure consistent information is provided and student follow-through is promoted. It is our intent that student will no longer perceive that they are receiving the "run around." This perception was evident in the last student survey conducted by the College and should be resolved by using the First Year Advisor as a single point of contact.

Review (09-21-08):
The Student Tracking System that is under development at Baker College could be one of your most important contributions. The College has the worthwhile goal of eliminating student perceptions of getting the "run around." This will require highly effective record keeping and communications, on a continuing basis.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

The new advising system has created a need for more staffing. This has presented a challenge for campus budgets. Moving to the next phase of implementation will require additional staff. This

challenge has been addressed in part by implementing the advising program over a three year time frame. If the program has a positive impact on retention as anticipated, the increase in student enrollment will help to offset some of the associated costs. The need for ongoing training in how to use the advising software system could be a challenge. The team may address this challenge by establishing a train-the-trainer program. Work continues around access to the student tracking software and which individuals will have access to what information. Some student information needs to be maintained as confidential while other information needs to be available to advisors. Identifying these levels of security and maintaining them as the system comes on line will remain a challenge. These issues continue to be addressed by working groups representing functional units across the system. Some members of the action team are struggling with balancing their regular campus responsibilities with the responsibilities generated by this action project. This may be somewhat alleviated by the need for fewer team meetings once the first phase of the program has been implemented. Concerns about time commitments will continue to be addressed as well by continuing to emphasize that work on AQIP projects is central to our role in helping students, not an additional responsibility.

Review *(09-21-08):*
You mention the important issue of confidentiality of student records. Have you established policies/procedures for maintaining a balance between access to student records and confidentiality? Do you have inter-collegiate athletics? If so, have you considered the role of athletic coaches in promoting retention and student success?

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

The project team is not seeking assistance at this time.

Review *(09-21-08):*