

Synthesized Responses from Spring 2019 Institute Day Activity

GUIDING QUESTION: Where Can we do a better job in helping students reach their end goals?

1. **Sixty-four** out of every 100 hundred students who completed an MJC application did not enroll in any courses. What are some of the possible reasons? How can we help interested potential students get to the first day of class?

Possible Root Causes

Outreach

- No follow-up
- Everyone is encouraged to apply
- Website is complicated
- Students apply to multiple colleges
- Outreach ends mid-March

Advising

- Students think Ed Plan is class schedule
- No contact person/resource
- Review drop dates

Personal Issues

- Stigma/self-doubt/fear
- Students get jobs (x2)
- Family demands
- Housing
- Underprepared

Instruction

- Scheduling issues: class availability/section offerings
- Need night classes
- How effective are on-boarding courses (FTIC)
- Concurrent enrollment form is a barrier

Institutional

- Poor signage
- Cost of classes/Lack of Financial Aid knowledge
- Classes are often full
- Complicated financial aid

1. **Sixty-four** out of every 100 hundred students who completed an MJC application did not enroll in any courses. What are some of the possible reasons? How can we help interested potential students get to the first day of class?

Potential Solutions

Outreach

- Better, more frequent communication
 - Online
 - Weekly email/constant communication
 - Welcome letter (x2)
 - Create how-to video for registration (x2)
 - Chat function
- Student ambassadors outreach re: ASMJC leadership opportunities
- Highlight success stories of students
- Collect permanent email
- Text reminders
- Follow-up w/students who don't enroll (x2)
- Better advertisement/marketing
 - Consistent outward facing materials for prospective students (x2)
 - Enhance social media/text
 - Community outreach (let them know who we are)
 - Improve website (x2)
 - Consider re-branding
- Break up info into manageable pieces (New Student Day)
 - Use reps from Schools to introduce programs/careers
- Barbecue – social event

Research/Student Data

- Student focus groups

Instruction

- More online classes
- Two semesters of FTIC
- Work-based learning opportunities
- More late-start classes

Services

- On-site child care
- Faculty should promote student resources
 - Faculty mentors
 - Faculty visits to high schools/adopt a high school
- Student Services more visible on campus
- Staff bio/description in Starfish

Advising

- Encourage students to enroll in more classes
- Encourage summer enrollment
- Map timing of progress w/unit enrollment
- Form study groups
- Educate high school counselors and teachers about core steps to apply/register
- More “How To” Instructions
- Have students select at least one course they find interesting and want to take, even if it is just an elective – get excited about going to class and have a positive experience.

Institutional/Structural

- Single district transcript
- Winter Term
- Limit access to later steps until basic steps are completed
- Field trips to MJC
- Need more faculty
- Help w/life skills/adaptability/ transition/stress
- Incentives for FT enrollment
 - Free parking/Congrats email/pirate shirt/free meal
- Improve signage

2. **Nine percent** of students complete 30 college-level units in an academic year. What are the institutional barriers that prevent students from completing more units each year?

Possible Root Causes

Advising

- Access to needed classes
- Financial aid that is not a loan
- More guidance from counselors (hands-on help)
- Financial Aid (x2)
- Not enough counselors (x2)
- Students don't have knowledge on what to take
- Students in need of more support to enroll
- Students w/disabilities need more support
- Students get wrong advising
- Some students sign up for a load that is too intense for them to be successful
- We can't assume students know what to do next

Personal

- Students aren't prepared for managing 15 units
- Families not on board
- Work
- Families not on board
- Transportation
- Students don't understand how to navigate college – what is expected of them
- Students don't have knowledge on what to take

Instruction

- Lack of available courses (2)
- Classes needed for completion impacted
- Not enough online courses (x3)
- Lack of course availability (x2)
- Lack of night classes (x2)
- Class schedule – not enough sections
- Schedule conflicts (room use, time conflicts)
- Not enough core classes (i.e., math)
- Cost of books (x2)
- Limited course offerings
- Wait lists – not enough sections/students can't enroll in classes they want (x5)
- Some students take classes because they can't get into the ones they need
- Core classes are full
- Overlapping courses

Institutional/Structural

- No sense of community (x3)
- More access for families to MJC as a way to build long-term buy-in to college
- Parking
- Need better communication w/students
- Older students may not acclimate well to college system
- Process to enroll is intimidating
- Financial limitations for students who don't take enough units
- Costs (tuition, materials)

Services

- Child care (x3)

2. **Nine percent** of students complete 30 college-level units in an academic year. What are the institutional barriers that prevent students from completing more units each year?

Possible Solutions

Advising

- Family orientations
- More Pell Grants
- Have faculty go to high schools
- Faculty implementing Starfish
- Encourage students to enroll in more units
- Help w/life skills/transition
- Career exploration (x2)
- More weekend/evening counseling
- Mandatory FTIC or guidance class
- More counselors
More math counselors
- Mandated counseling
- Each student should have a clear timeline to understand when they will finish/financial impact (x2)
- Explain the value of completing a degree w/ transfer
- Early advising –need to know what classes to take
- Not enough access to counselors
- Need to balance course load (1-2 difficult courses)
- Simplify education plans

Instruction

- Short courses (5 weeks) –cohort of 3 compressed classes
Term lengths – 5-8 weeks
Mini-sessions/short-term/late start classes
Need more variety in schedules to accommodate different work schedules (night/weekend) (x2)
- More online courses/courses at work place (x2)
- More OER courses
- Program sequences of courses (x2)
- Strategic use of summer/possible winter term
- Open more sections of impacted classes
- Create cohorts of 15 unit students (or other unit numbers) – pair w/specific support services (x2)
- FTIC – linked to a school and set of courses
- Work-based learning opportunities
- Faculty need information about services
- Measure effectiveness of onboarding classes
- Faculty training for equity groups

Services

- Better services for night and weekend students (offices are closed at 5:00) (x4)
Bookstore open until 8 pm, 1st 3 weeks (x2)
- Longer library hours – especially on Saturdays
- More services (tutoring, student instruction, counseling)
- Map timing of progress w/unit enrollment
- More student study groups (x2)
- Aptitude test/peer support
- Teach time management
- Offer childcare
- Book Loan Program (x2)
- Advertise equity programs
- Create cohorts/learning communities
- Provide assistance w/scholarship applications
- Add'l assistance for financial aid (follow up) (x2)

Institutional/Structural

- Single transcript (MJC & CC)
- Encourage summer enrollment
- Incentives (parking) for FT students
- Winter term
- Review data for students who drop
- Campus wide collaborations
- Don't allow students to be on multiple wait lists
- Better partnership between college and community
- Mobile computer labs
- Update laptops in the library – laptop loan program
- Automatically award degrees w/option to opt-out
- Alert to remind students to graduate
- Use text messaging
- Timeliness in responding to students
- Families who don't meet financial aid limits

Research Questions

- Understand why students leave
- Ask students why they register in specific courses (broader research questions)

3. Nearly a **third** of our students do not persist from the fall to the spring semester. What can the College do to change this attrition rate?

Possible Root Causes

Personal

- Not balancing their course load
- Not feeling connected to the campus community
- Unsuccessful in courses because they are not prepared so they quit
- Fall semester is overwhelming to new freshmen
- Students trying to balance work, school, kids, etc.

Advising

- Lack of available counselors
- Students need more guidance
- Counselors viewed as not helpful – give confusing guidance

Instruction

- Class availability
- Need courses are not offered or there is only 1 section
- More sections of higher level math and science (students are going to other colleges to fill that requirement) (x2)
- Feedback to students is sometimes negative
- Fewer sections available in spring

Services

- Students don't have access to child care
- Veterans need access to counseling and ed plans to complete matriculation

Institutional/Structural

- Costs (tuition, materials)
- Students are unable to pay fees if they can't turn in supplies to clear account (open library for services)
- Books are too expensive, especially if student doesn't have financial aid
- Poor priority dates – students enroll in whatever they can, even if it doesn't meet their program needs

3. Nearly a **third** of our students do not persist from the fall to the spring semester. What can the College do to change this attrition rate?

Possible Solutions

Outreach

- Partner w/ASMJC to do more outreach
- High schools need more info on financial benefits of MJC

Advising

- 1 or 2 difficult courses, mixed w/2 less difficult, and maybe one fun, course in first semester (x2)
- Enroll in a major course in 1st semester
- Help students figure out their major sooner
- Simplify education plans
- Counselors should let students know transcripts will be automatically evaluated
- Counseling options – 1x per month

Services

- Require 1 hour of tutoring 1st semester
- Facilitate more opportunities for student study groups (e.g., math/science lab for group study)
- Better access to library resources (i.e., library open the week prior to spring semester)
- Increase access to mental health services

Instruction

- Offer more math classes
- Eight-week classes for working adults (x3)
- More evening classes
- Package program courses for easy scheduling
- Package program courses for an entire year
- Major-specific courses for cohorts of students
- Faculty should talk more about the value of a degree (lifetime earnings w/degree chart)
- FTIC for all students

Professional Development

- Help faculty w/strategies in serving DSPS students
- Sensitivity training for instructors – students struggling in math/English need help but don't always get it
- More training for faculty. New and tenured.

Institutional/Structural

- Register for fall & spring together
- Early access to register for 2nd semester
- Faculty and student services outreach to struggling students/successful students w/ congratulations
- Email students who do not pass and remind that they are not a failure – many successful people failed at first
- Give students a way to support each other – similar to the Bridge Program model
- Bring back “College Hour”
- Incentivize returning students (parking, bookstore coupon, free books, laptop loans)
- Videos of people w/success stories because of getting a degree
- President, VPs, deans visiting classrooms at end of semester
- Shuttles to either campus
- Offer “incentive” for students who only want 1 or 2 courses to transfer back to UC/CSU
- Establish a book loan program or open education resources
- Spring “Returning Students Day/Open House/Parent Day” (tours/information)
- “Community Day” – invite the community to the College
- Google 360/Pokemon Go idea for MJC campus
- Upgrade webpage (too many “clicks” to get where students need to go)

Research/Student Information

- Student Focus groups
- Follow-up on reasons students don't return

4. Many students transfer without obtaining a degree. If they do not complete a bachelor's degree, they have no credential. What can the College do to help more students transfer *with* a degree?

Possible Root Causes

Advising

- Students are not aware of requirements
- How can we help more students transfer with a degree?
- We don't communicate the advantages of obtaining Associate degrees consistently

Instruction

- Classes unavailable

Personal

- Lack of financial aid
- Difference between HS and college
- Lack of family support
- Students don't anticipate not completing a BA degree when they transfer

Institutional/Structural

- Lack of community
- The ADN program receives 700+ apps, 500 qualify, and 50 are accepted (7%)

Professional Development

- Faculty need professional development re: knowledge of requirements (x2)

4. Many students transfer without obtaining a degree. If they do not complete a bachelor's degree, they have no credential. What can the College do to help more students transfer *with* a degree?

Possible Solutions

Outreach

- Awareness push period (week or month of marketing – signage, tables, emails, website)
- Advertise more on campus/online about applying for a degree/graduation

Advising

- Major advising (faculty members. Core classes required for graduation)
- General advising by program specialist
- Clarify educational goal when they select for application
- Students should enroll in Nurse 115 (or other School guidance course) so they know what the route is and see alternatives for other medical fields
- Educate students so they understand the value of getting a degree
- Explain the value of a two-year degree

Instruction

- 5 week intensive courses
- 15 unit or 9 unit student cohorts (enroll in same classes and pair w/support services)
- Faculty visits to high schools
- Schedule availability of classes
- More compressed/combined classes
- Change Guidance classes to be meaningful to pathways
- Offer a transfer studies degree

Services

- Monitor progress (secretary) using catalog and college guidelines
- Departmental follow-up (program specialists and secretary)

Institutional/Structural

- Skills certificates for competencies (critical thinking, etc.)
- Rewards along the way for academic-based courses (x2)
- Scale up Middle College/dual enrollment to all local high schools (x2)
- We need social media communication with students
- Give the *option* for automatic conferral – semester before eligible
- Include graduation/transfer information in new-student orientation
- Graduation application workshops
- Use Starfish – Student alerts when close to graduating w/link to application
- Check transcripts of students w/high units to determine what classes are missing
- Various check points/milestones to review progress
- Priority registration for college-ready students (includes commitment to earn degree or transfer w/in 4 semesters)
- Bring families on campus
- Streamline registration/application process
- Email to students notifying them they are eligible to apply for a degree (x3)
- Ask students to complete a “check-list” of courses completed until they reach graduation/degree goals
- Consider changing the name of the College – “Junior” may give a misconception that this isn’t a real college
- Specialized evaluators for each school
- Improve use of technology – specialist follow-up w/chat, email, Pirates Net
- Automatic degree audit and automatic Financial Aid appeal
- Transfer students should be awarded a degree
- CSUs/UCs provide incentives for students w/degrees when they transfer

5. Many students complete the requirements for a degree but do not apply for it to be conferred. Others apply months or even years later. What are the potential impacts of automatic degree conferral. How could the College establish a method of automatic conferral and minimize the negative consequences for students? Should we?

Possible Root Causes

Personal

- Not balancing their course load

Instruction

- Some programs (Allied Health) are made up of a group of very structured courses. Some are 60+ units
- Impact of remedial units
- Does "activity" have to be a requirement for all programs (Allied Health)?

Professional Development

- Faculty have limited knowledge about process of degree application/conferral – need professional development
Students don't understand financial aid implications

Institutional/Structural

- Do students even know they have to apply to graduate?
- Do students lose fin aid automatically when degree is conferred, as a rule?
- It's a crime that students don't know that they've graduated
- Some students take courses at MJC and Columbia – different program requirements
- What extraneous steps are at one college or the other that are unnecessary?
- Students may need online notification/ alert when they are close to completion

5. Many students complete the requirements for a degree but do not apply for it to be conferred. Others apply months or even years later. What are the potential impacts of automatic degree conferral. How could the College establish a method of automatic conferral and minimize the negative consequences for students? Should we?

Possible Solutions

Advising

- Check in @ unit milestones to see if student wants to confer (Starfish)
- Community effort to provide intrusive counseling/support
- Educate students about financial aid and how much they qualify for
- Teach students how and when to use Degree Audit
- Special Program presentations
- Graduation/Transfer Center w/Multiple counselors & specialists included
- Provide counseling for degree applicants re: financial aid implications
- More intrusive communication about degree completion

Instruction

- Provide faculty with key dates related to degree application
- Increase faculty role in communicating issues surrounding degree completion

Institutional/Structural

- Auto conferral w/opt out option (x3)
- No automatic conferral bc fin aid will cut off
- Until we have an automated process, we need to contact each student eligible for a degree
- Impact on evaluations ... what does it look like? Workload?
- Students ought to maintain agency over degree conferral
- Do students know they have to apply for degree?
- At what point in their education should they be notified? Should be consistent.
- Completion Checklist – How are you doing?
- Text alerts
- Hire more FT counselors
- Present graduation & transfer info to students
- 2 FT Counselors per division
- President communications in graduation month (“please apply if close to graduating. Not sure? See advisor/counselor) (x4)
- Exit plan – countdown for graduation/transfer
- Integrate degree process in CANVAS – develop a more intuitive online experience through the degree process
- Auto notify 2 or more times/semester about applying for degree – include links & steps

6. The only way we know if CTE students are obtaining employment in the field in which they studied is by their response to a CTE Outcomes Survey sent a year after they leave the college from Santa Rosa College. Fewer than 500 students completed this survey in the baseline year. How can we increase the number of students who complete the survey?

Possible Solutions

Instruction

- More frequent contact from faculty
- Give students a heads-up about the survey before they leave the college to update most used contact info (x2)
- Faculty follow-up

Institutional/Structural

- Students continue to use Career Services after graduation (x3)
- Have a simple text survey that goes to former students (Y/N response): Have you obtained employment in the field in which you studied?
- Collect permanent email and cell phone numbers (on graduation application)
- Notify students through email when survey is coming
- Send internal surveys (x5)
- What can MJC do to help you on your path?
- Give them a call after the surveys go out
- Direct email (surveys) from MJC
- Identify students and know where they are
- Social media info flow
- Letter of congratulations from School of "xx" with request to do survey
- Info sheet on survey when students pick up diplomas
- Technology – Integrate into CTE Certificates a social media connection
- Share success stories with current students
- Have an assigned staff member reach out to employers and have all past MJC students and/or current students complete survey
- Exit interview w/students
- Make sure permanent email is on graduation application
- Have an assigned staff member reach out to employers and have all past MJC students and/or current students complete survey
- Exit interview w/students

Foundation

- Alumni program: "Sponsor a Student" – professional gift
- Alumni Recruitment (x2)
- Create Alumni association and provide 2 free years of membership/Invite students to Alumni gatherings
- Alumni incentives (\$10 Starbucks card for survey completion) (x3)
- Give graduates an incentive: free class/\$100 cash
- Invite students to Alumni gatherings or Career Expos

7. **915** students transferred to a UC or CSU. **395** earned an ADT. **1,006** earned an associate degree. As an institution, do we value either the ADT or local associate degree one over the other? If so, why? Which should we promote?

Possible Root Causes

Advising

- Students may not be familiar with advantages of ADTs

Institutional/Structural

- Everything depends on where the student is going. If headed to a CSU, the ADT makes the most sense. But UCs are not as interested in G.E. requirements and thus an ADT w/heavy GE may not be advantageous.
- Students in CTE programs benefit from AA degrees since many do not offer ADT degrees.
- Students may complete an ADT, but it doesn't always add up to the 60 units students need for transfer – or may go over 60 units.
- Students who want to transfer are not generally interested in taking additional units
- ADTs are relatively recent – they don't provide value to all students
- The historic status of AA/AS means more to students than "ADTs", a new program
- Constantly changing processes and policies at the institutional level generates confusion for both students and staff

Research and Student Data

- What proportion of ADT recipients successfully transferred to UCs or CSUs vs associate degree earners?

Possible Solutions

Advising

- Respect student agency in making the choice, once assisted by thorough counseling
- Honor students' agency in making their own degree decision. That needs to be assisted

Institutional/Structural

- Guidance class and FTIC could address this information w/students
- Require guidance in first semester
- Promote AA degree, because it contains the requirements for ADT & gives students more options/safety net
- We should promote both (x4)
- ADT for all students who say they will transfer
- Discuss campus-specific transfer needs
- Promote degrees AND certificates
- Promote the type of degree that helps individual students (out-of-state don't benefit from ADTs)
- If an ADT gives more assurance of transfer credits, then that needs to be emphasized
- Promote AA degrees because, in our study area, the AA contains the requirement of an ADT. In this way our students have more options.