



Karl Brooks

JJC Dean of Student Success Karl Brooks, who has been with the college since March of 2008, explains how JJC strives to help all its students succeed through a wide variety of programs and services.

What is your role at JJC?

My role as one of the deans in the student development division is to support the retention of JJC students and ensure that they have the programs, services and accommodations they need in order to succeed. As dean of student success, I oversee the departments of Academic Skills, Counseling and Advising, Career Services, Student Accommodations and Resources (StAR), Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA), Project Achieve, as well as the areas of general student development and the transfer program. Our mission is to keep our students here at JJC and help them identify clear, successive pathways to achieving their goals.

What services or programs are available at JJC to help students succeed?

JJC has a diverse range of support services, and it depends on the student and their individual needs as to which service is best for them. Counseling and career services are critical to the success of every student, since these areas help students explore their interests and strengths and discover the possibilities for their academic pathway and a future career. StAR, for example, is a vital service for our student population with special needs, providing them with tools and resources to do well in the classroom. Other populations such as first-generation or non-native English speaking students can find resources tailored specifically for them in programs such as OMSA or Project Achieve. As an institution, it's our job to ensure that

students and their families not only have the services they need to help them succeed, but know about them; I never want to hear a student say, "I didn't know" that assistance is available to them at JJC!

How do you think the new Campus Center will help in improving the way JJC serves students?

The new Campus Center provides easy, streamlined access to vital student services, and having a central location for these departments also increases collaboration among the faculty and staff whose job it is to help our students do well in college. As soon as you walk into the building you'll see the Enrollment Center on the right, with admissions, financial aid and registration – the place where all our students need to start. As you walk down the hallway, or what is known as the Student Street, students will see the other key programs that are here to help them succeed at JJC such as Career Services, Counseling, OMSA, Academic Skills, Project Achieve and StAR. And that's the message we wanted to send by designing the building this way: the success of our students is the main priority at JJC.

What drives you personally in your work at JJC?

First and foremost, my personal mission is about making sure this institution meets its goals of helping students be successful and supporting them in their educational journey. I enjoy helping

students discover who they are and figure out how they are going to be a contributing member of society, both while in college and afterward.

Can you share a particular success story that means a lot to you?

We've seen so many success stories here: so many students come to us without direction or in need of guidance and assistance, and we've seen them through to become confident, successful graduates who have gone on to great things. One that particularly stands out to me is the story of a young man whose mother called me very angry, demanding to know why her son had been placed in developmental classes and why he would not be earning credit for those classes. I explained to her that this is where he needed to be placed based on his test results, and that this was for his benefit – he needed to take these classes first in order to move up and do well in other classes. I told her it was our goal to see him be successful, and promised that I would personally see him through the process and help him reach his goals at JJC. Three years later, that young man graduated from JJC with an A.A. degree and transferred to University of St. Francis to complete his bachelor's degree. Watching him walk across the graduation stage was a proud moment for me and especially his mother, who hugged me afterwards and couldn't wait to introduce me to the rest of her family. It is stories like these that make my job so rewarding.