

Joliet Junior College, IL

Project: Course Scheduling Assessment and Implementation Plan

Declaration

Briefly describe the project in less than 100 words. Be sure to identify the key organizational areas (departments, programs, divisions, units, etc.) and key organizational processes that this action project will affect, change, and/or improve.

A: The overall goal of the Scheduling Action Project is to develop a student ‘friendly’ course scheduling process that will begin in fall 2017 (and subsequent terms). The new scheduling platform will introduce new procedures for identifying and establishing steps for implementation and ongoing management of scheduling in departments and divisions (including educational centers). The new scheduling protocol will support student success by improving course offerings and realizing a 1% increase in enrollment from fall 2017.

Describe your institution’s reasons for initiating this action project now and how long it should take to complete it. Why are this project and its goals high among your institution’s current priorities? Also, explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution’s recent or soon-to-be submitted Systems Portfolio.

A: The College has observed that students are not able to take courses at the time they need them. Inconsistencies have developed from a multiple-source approach to scheduling courses. These inconsistencies have created a situation in which the software programs designed to help facilitate the schedule are no longer able to efficiently do this task.

Because scheduling is divided between various academic departments and divisions, inconsistencies have developed which have contributed to an inefficient and unsatisfactory course schedule. There needs to be an improvement in course offerings to support the retention, persistence, and completion of our students. At present, the College does not have an established or stated set of standards for scheduling courses, has not clearly scheduled so that students can complete the defined pathways in each program, and has allowed each area to define its own course offering plan that is not based on a comprehensive student focused cross-divisional review.

Currently, the College has only partially implemented a software scheduling product, 25 Series, that was purchased about seven years ago. It is not utilizing resources that are currently available to address the institution’s scheduling needs. Because of the lack of shared scheduling guidelines and principals, the use of the current software is excessively time-consuming and cumbersome if it is used at all. Course schedule information is automatically transmitted from Colleague to the 25 software but manual corrections of automatically transmitted schedule data requires a full week’s worth of work (40 hours) to clean up error messages each semester and that currently only assists in the scheduling of non-academic meetings. While the 25 Series software has aided with scheduling of non-academic use of classrooms and the college’s ability to see what is being scheduled throughout the campus it has not helped with creating a student-friendly schedule of course offerings. The X25 reporting component provides information on classroom utilization but it is “after the fact” using snapshots of our data that is gathered twice a semester. X25 is not real-time or predictive nor does it include analysis and recommendations. The lack of shared scheduling standards has produced practices that carry out-of-date information forward, that show sections with zero openings though no one is registered, that allow sections to be offered at times that create room conflicts, and that create changes that are driven more by faculty wants rather than student need. Students who do not work with a counselor or advisor for scheduling assistance have no idea how to plan ahead for when a specific course will be offered because there is no long-term plan for the schedule. The College also is not making the best use of its resources in offering a student-friendly schedule that uses classroom space in an economical, efficient manner.

List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress toward each goal. Be sure to include when you anticipate submitting the project for formal reviews.

A: Project deliverables include:

- An analysis that defines and identifies specific changes needed to the current course schedule
- Due to human resource constraints and our desired timeline to implement changes for fall 2016, an outside consultant will be needed to conduct the evaluation of the last 3-5 years of course schedules. This team will identify an appropriate consultant, obtain or contract for these services, manage the consulting process, and develop recommendations based on this evaluation.
- Identify and establish steps for implementation and ongoing management of identified solution(s). This process will include establishing who will own the work, including providing oversight, and how the impact of the solutions will be evaluated and unexpected issues resolved. This will include training modules for individuals who are assigned the work.
- Create a multi-year schedule plan that maximizes student enrollment and completion and that will improve retention through the establishment of a clearly defined course offering plan.

Describe how various members of the learning community will participate in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project’s duration.

A: The following list names those identified as part of the project based on three categories. This information will be used to help establish a project communication plan. It will help to ensure that we receive contributions from those doing and impacted by this work.

Project stakeholders = those who are involved or affected by this project.

- Control = organizational authorization, resource control (these are people who hold decision making authority over budget dollars and resources)
- Impact = internal/external outcome producers (these are people who are responsible for the work – if it is not done they get asked to explain)
- Interest = internal or external folks who will or possibly will be affected by implemented change

Stakeholder Name	Stakeholder Type	Involvement

Vice-President, Academic Affairs	Control/Impact	Data Steward for all of Academic Affairs
Vice-President, Student Development	Control/Impact	Reviews decisions of direct reports
Executive Director, Information Technology	Control/Impact	Reviews decisions of direct reports
Chief of Staff	Control/Impact	Communicates to College President
Registrar, Keith Tillman	Impact	Create dates for registration and payment
Systems Analyst, Annette Sanchez	Impact	Key person for Colleague
Director, Applications Support Services, Otto Stuckmaier	Impact	Key person for Colleague
Dean of Enrollment Management	Impact	Over the Registrar Office/Reviews enrollment management
Academic Deans	Impact	Responsible for the academic schedule
Chairs	Impact	Specific responsibility for department schedule and work with faculty to assess scheduling needs and student needs
Director of Academic Effectiveness, Kristin Cisemier	Impact	AQIP Liaison
Senior Administrative Assistant, Maureen O'Keefe	Impact	Responsible for credentialing and faculty pay
Scheduling Specialist, Kayra Jimenez	Impact	Responsible overall for scheduling data entry
Director OIRE, Joe Offermann	Impact	Providing data and indicating impact on reporting
Faculty	Interest	Provide input/concerns
Staff	Interest	Provide input/concerns
Students	Interest	Provide input/concerns

Q: Describe how the institution will monitor project progress/success during, and at the completion of this project. Be sure to specifically state the measures that will be evaluated and when.

A: By using the consultant service for two consecutive years, JJC intends to achieve these following outcomes. Frequency of schedule evaluation after the two year period will be determined by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Academic Deans.

- We intend to fix output: use the schedule evaluation to inform changes to the current course schedule that will enable us to realize a 1% increase in enrollment.
- We intend to fix process: document a clearly defined process for scheduling and establish the mechanism through which scheduling guidelines will be implemented, monitored, and managed
- We intend to fix the supporting system: establish a four-year schedule template to offer courses based on completion guides and pathways. This schedule will be fixed but will also allow for needed exceptions and review.

Q: Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

A: The project team identified the following anticipated difficulties:

- Budget amount falls short of what is needed for an external consultant to do the work. Estimated cost is \$45K per year for the annual subscription.
- There may exist issues with Colleague to Ad Astra communication in establishing a secure connection for real-time information exchange.
- Clear assistance in managing impacts of drop dates. Mechanisms need to be established and communicated by the project team to the full Academic Affairs and Registration functional areas.
- Ad Astra's timeline to begin and complete work – this is outside JJC control and will be determined with the external consultant's capacity to serve its clients.

Q: Provide any additional information that the institution wishes reviewers to understand regarding this Action Project.

A: An accurate, equitable and efficient course scheduling process impacts many systems within a community college – from increasing qualified adjunct applicant pools to increasing persistence of students and streamlining pathways to completion. Stakeholders from both student development and academic affairs are mindful of the impact a redesigned and effective schedule will have on enrollment and student success, so much so that, testing of the new platform will be diligent and roll out will include ample training and buy-in from all employees who have a function and role in course scheduling.