Changing the Game

San Jose Evergreen Community College District

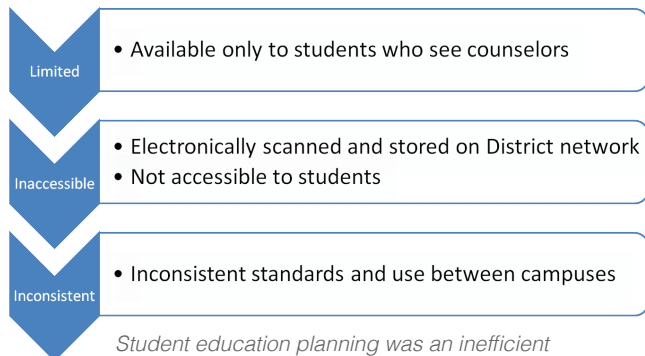**San José-Evergreen Community College District,** which educates more than 20,000 students annually, recognized that in order to help their students reach their educational goals, they needed to change the way they do business. What started out as a project intended to comply with California's Student Success Act ended up inspiring a cultural shift that has transformed the district.

Assessing the Situation.

Inefficient processes. Education planning was a counselor-led exercise that resulted in hand-written paper plans that would become obsolete if the student's goals changed or a course became unavailable. The process was also time-consuming, requiring about an hour per student. When you consider that California's legislation requires each incoming student to have a documented educational plan, and the fact that the district has only 30 counselors, it was clear that a new approach was needed.
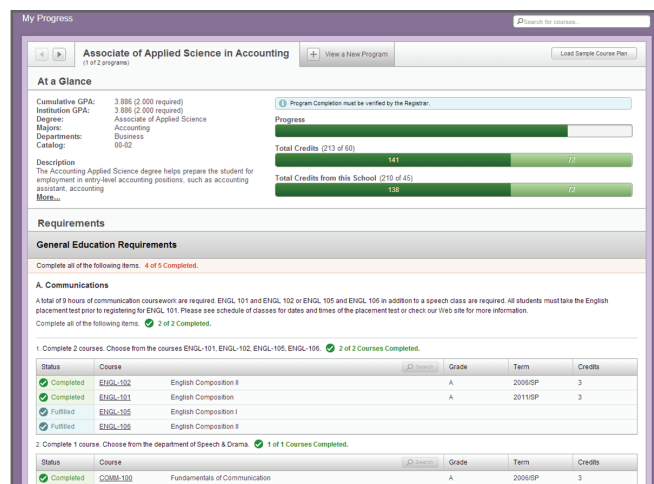
Wasted resources. Due to the counselors' limited availability, most students proceeded through registration without guidance as to which courses would meet their program requirements. In many cases, those requirements were not clearly defined and the path to success was vague. Students often ended up wasting time and money on courses they didn't need. In addition, administrative tasks—like advising, registering for classes, and paying bills—required students to take time away from work and family obligations to come to campus and handle them in person.

Technology limitations. SJECCD's internally developed registration tool provided a limited view of students' progress toward their educational goals. Students weren't able to discern how their transfer credits stacked up against current requirements nor could they see what courses they should be scheduling in future terms in order to stay on track.

- **Limited**
  - Available only to students who see counselors
- **Inaccessible**
  - Electronically scanned and stored on District network
  - Not accessible to students
- **Inconsistent**
  - Inconsistent standards and use between campuses

Student education planning was an inefficient process for both students and counselors.

Leveraging Technology to Empower Success.

We leveraged SJECCD's administrative system, Ellucian's Colleague®, and implemented a student planning module to streamline education planning, advising, and registration. Now students can log in to a web-based portal where they can set their educational goals, easily identify the courses they need to take, register for multiple terms, and visually track their progress. It puts all of the necessary information at their fingertips while giving them the flexibility to change their schedule or goals without losing momentum. Plus, there are safeguards built in to prevent them from taking classes they don't need, thereby reducing wasted resources and increasing the likelihood that they will reach their goal.

Now students can clearly map out the path to success, track their progress, and connect with their counselors.

The application also facilitates counselor interaction, enabling them to view and approve a student's course selections with the click of a button. Now students complete their education plans prior to meeting with their counselors, which allows them to spend that time discussing other important issues, like internships, study abroad, and job placement. It also frees up the counselors to spend more time helping at-risk students. Not only has the new system enabled counselors to reach more students and help them advance toward their educational goals, it has helped district administrators identify which courses are in demand and offer enough sections to meet their students' needs.

> ## "The whole system is more efficient."
> *-Dr. Tamela Hawley, interim vice chancellor*
> *for institutional effectiveness and student success*
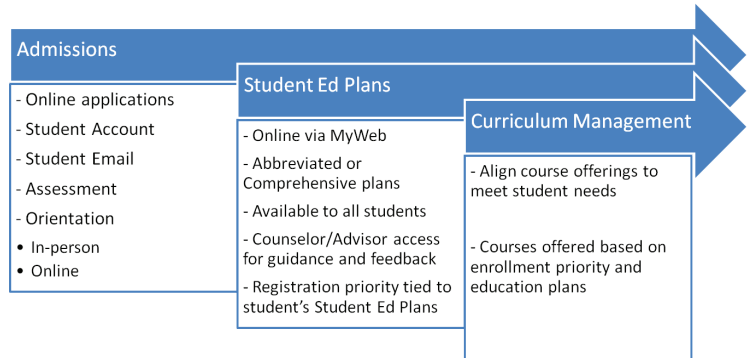
CAMPUSWORKS

Measurable Results

Changing the Game.

By the end of 2014, just two years after the Student Success Act was signed into law, more than 2,600 students had already created education plans at SJECCD. By April 2015, that number increased to 4,700 students. "We've taken our old way of doing things and turned it on its head," said Dr. Hawley. "We anticipate that all new students will have access to Student Planning by the end of spring 2015, and all current students will have access this fall."

SJECCD's new technology is so powerful it's already helping students succeed. According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office's last scorecard, SJECCD's retention and persistence rates have increased. Over the next five years, the district is hoping to see at least a 5 percent increase across all student success metrics. While it's still too early to measure how this affected completion, Dr. Hawley said, "With this new system in place, we expect completion rates to improve as well."

Admissions
- Online applications
- Student Account
- Student Email
- Assessment
- Orientation
  • In-person
  • Online

Student Ed Plans
- Online via MyWeb
- Abbreviated or Comprehensive plans
- Available to all students
- Counselor/Advisor access for guidance and feedback
- Registration priority tied to student's Student Ed Plans

Curriculum Management
- Align course offerings to meet student needs
- Courses offered based on enrollment priority and education plans

SJECCD's new model is optimized for success.

> "It's one thing to have a wonderful administrative system.
> It's another thing to utilize it to change our way of doing business."
>
> *-Dr. Tamela Hawley*

SUCCESS CHECKLIST

☑ **Cultural commitment to change.** It's natural for people to resist change, especially when they don't understand the reason behind it. By clearly communicating why change is needed and how it will benefit your students, faculty, and staff, you will win support across your institution.

☑ **Start with a Business Process Review.** By beginning with the end goal in mind, you will be able to identify and eliminate operational barriers that are standing in the way of student success and completion. Involve key stakeholders from every department to develop a shared vision of the desired student experience and ensure a consistent approach.

☑ **Clean and complete degree audit system.** When implementing a student planning module, you'll want to be sure that all catalogs that affect your students are in the system. Program requirements tend to change over time, so it's important that current students receive proper credit for the courses they've already completed.

☑ **Data audit.** In order for student planning to work properly, it's critical to accurately capture information that was previously stored outside the system, like paper plans, and streamline it to work within the parameters of the new system. Once the application is in use, it's important for all stakeholders to use the fields consistently.

☑ **Clearly defined course requirements and transfer equivalencies.** In order for your system to help students track their progress towards their goals, course requirements and transfer equivalencies must be clearly defined.

**Want to change the game at your institution? CampusWorks can help.
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