

Jones County Junior College's QEP 2017: Personalized Academic Coaching Experience

Julie Atwood, QEP Director julie.atwood@jcc.edu 607-477-4053

Personalized Academic Coaching Experience (PACE) supports the mission of Jones County Junior College (JCJC) to provide support for first-time freshmen students. JCJC's QEP evolved from the IE process, focus groups, an extensive literature review, and pressures from governmental oversight to improve academic progress and graduation rates. The intent of the QEP is to improve student learning outcomes, academic and career advisement, graduation/completion, academic progress, and to prevent voluntary and absences-related withdrawals. PACE connects all first-time freshmen seeking an Associate's degree with an Academic Coach from the initial date of enrollment.

PACE is housed in the Student Success Center and under the supervision of the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Director of PACE. The Academic Coaches' primary responsibility is to help students navigate the first year experience and mitigate common freshmen pitfalls. Extensive focus is placed upon both academic and life skills that will lead to student success and program completion. The academic coaches communicate weekly with students about campus activities, warns them about pitfalls and challenges commonly faced by freshmen, and guide students to required resources. Each Academic Coach has a School Status account to facilitate communications (email, phone calls, and texts), verification of grades and absences, and recording of contact and content. School Status is an online data management platform.

There are four full-time Academic Coaches and eighteen Administrators from various offices across campus that function as part-time coaches. The number of assigned students is dependent on the Academic Coach's professional responsibilities. The involvement of the College President, Vice Presidents, Deans, Directors, and other Administrative Personnel drives culture change in advisement, student responsibility, engagement, and advisement, as well as the Administrators' understanding of freshman students.

After training, each coach will focus on student engagement, problem solving, career development, time management, study strategies, and advisement. The intent of this focus is to increase students' GRIT (Duckworth, A., 2016. GRIT: The Power of Passion and Perseverance. New York: Scribner) in first-time freshmen.

Many instruments are used to assess student learning outcomes, such as the GRIT Scale, Assessment of Academic Strengths inventory, Student Perception surveys, Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency.

The program goals of the PACE program are: 1) connect the student with needed resources on campus, 2) engage in the learning process, and 3) students will succeed academically.

The student learning outcomes are 1) 85% of PACE participants will complete the electronic communication assignment in the Orientation Course with a minimum grade of 70, 2) The students in need of counseling services will rate their experience at the "satisfactory" level or higher level, 3) 85% of PACE participants will not exceed the number of allowed absences in classes, 4) 85% of PACE participants will not withdraw from college, 5) 85% of the tutored PACE participants will have the same or higher success rate of the college student in Humanities and Science divisions, 6) 85% of PACE students will meet with the academic advisor and academic coach within the first two weeks of their first semester of college, 7) PACE participants will achieve a higher mean GPA than the mean term GPA of the college, 8) The on-time graduation rate will increase each year of PACE operation.

The anticipated impacts during the first year of implementation include the following: 1) Improved retention rate of first-time freshmen, 2) Improved semester-to-semester persistence rate, 3) Decreased withdrawal rate of first-time freshmen and, 4) Improved success rate of first-time freshmen.