

Simplifying Complexity in the Student Experience: Gathering Data

Institutional Complexity From the Student Perspective

Community colleges support a wide array of students, including traditional and nontraditional, daytime and evening, part-time and full-time, as well as career-oriented and academic transfer-oriented students. To meet the needs of this diverse student population, community colleges offer a complex variety of programs and courses, such that students in a community college may have a far greater number of choices available to them than students enrolled in a four-year institution.

Many community college students are confused or overwhelmed by the number and complexity of choices they face, which can result in “mistakes”—unexamined decisions they make that waste their time and money or that divert them from a promising academic or career path. For example, if a student is unsure which courses to take the next semester, the easiest decision may be to delay course enrollment for another semester or year—which may result in dropping out of college without ever having made the active decision to do so. Alternatively, the student may select courses impulsively, realizing only later that the chosen courses will not apply toward a degree or will not be accepted by the student’s desired transfer destination.

In an era of constrained financial resources in which student–counselor ratios can exceed 1,000:1, community colleges are struggling with how to help their students more effectively navigate the wide range of choices they must make. This practitioner packet is designed to help colleges identify areas where students struggle due to excessive complexity and to help colleges consider and implement relatively low-cost solutions that could strongly improve the student experience.

Many community college students are confused or overwhelmed by the number and complexity of choices they face.

This is part one of CCRC’s practitioner packet on streamlining the student experience. To learn more about how colleges can use data to inform a redesign, see [Simplifying Complexity in the Student Experience: Using Data](#) (part two). For information on how colleges can analyze data and evaluate and further refine reforms, see [Simplifying Complexity in the Student Experience: Evaluating a Redesign](#) (part three). For detailed examples of data collection and project management materials, see the [Appendix — Sample Documents](#) (part four).

A Case Study: Macomb Community College¹

In the spring of 2011, CCRC and Macomb Community College, a large comprehensive suburban community college outside of Detroit, embarked on a redesign effort to simplify students' academic decision-making processes. Macomb leaders suspected that complexities in the processes of intake, orientation, and course selection were hindering students from making optimal choices in course enrollment, program selection, and transfer.

The college's redesign process consisted of three phases. In phase one, the college—with the help of CCRC—gathered data on how students experienced intake, orientation, registration, advising, and the overall process of academic decision-making. In phase two, Macomb used the findings from phase one to identify areas for improvement and assembled work teams to devise and implement solutions. In phase three, Macomb (with CCRC) conducted research on the new processes and procedures that were implemented in phase two in order to assess their impact and then refine and improve them. Throughout this packet, we will return to the example of Macomb to demonstrate how other colleges could follow a similar path.

Gathering Information About the Student Experience

In order to help create a more positive college experience for students, an institution must first understand students' *current* experiences. Which pieces of their college experience are frustrating or confusing? What types of needs do students have, and how do current college processes either meet those needs or fail to do so? Gathering information on these questions will provide the college with a more solid foundation for redesigning college processes and services.

To understand students' experiences, colleges should gather data from both students and frontline service providers. Learning directly from students can be eye-opening: Things that seem straightforward and reasonable from the *practitioner's* perspective may not look at all the same from the *student's* perspective. In addition to students, it is important to gather information from academic advisors, financial aid advisors, information desk personnel, and computer lab personnel. These personnel see students every day; they hear their stories, experiences, and complaints. Thus they can help identify support tools or processes that seem to work well or poorly for different groups of students.

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Who Should Gather the Data?

Conducting research—gathering data, analyzing it, and reporting it—is time-consuming and requires both institutional commitment and knowledge of research methods. The initial exploratory data-gathering phase of research also represents a key first step within the larger change management process: By soliciting input from multiple stakeholders through interviews or focus groups, the college is more likely to generate nuanced findings and recommendations that all stakeholders—even those who might normally be resistant to change—can endorse.

The research team should include individuals who have earned the trust of the college community and who also have some research experience. For example, an institutional researcher, a well-respected senior administrator, and a social science faculty member might work

together on the project. If the research work falls outside the scope of normal work duties, participation on the research team should probably include release time.

What Methods Are Available for Collecting Data?

Colleges can gather information on the student experience through multiple methods and from several groups of college stakeholders. Below we focus on four types of data (focus group, interview, survey, and performance data) and two types of stakeholders (the students themselves, and frontline service providers) from whom CCRC gathered data to inform changes at Macomb.

Methods for Collecting Data			
TYPE OF DATA	FORMAT	PURPOSE	TYPICAL TARGET POPULATION
Interview	One-on-one meetings in which a respondent shares personal opinions with an interviewer	Allow in-depth exploration of individual attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors	Students, staff, and faculty
Focus group	Guided discussions with a small set of individuals who share opinions on certain experiences or topics	Provide quick way to explore general perspectives	Students
Survey	Questionnaire administered to larger groups to gather information on processes or tools	Quantify attitudes or opinions on specific processes or tools	Students, staff, and faculty
Performance	Either collected from institutional data sources or from performance-based tasks administered in interview, focus group, or survey contexts	Provide information on behaviors or outcomes	Students

Interview Data

Interviews provide a space for open and honest conversation with individuals. The one-on-one setting allows interviewees to share personal views and concerns (including controversial or unpopular perspectives) and provides ample time to delve into the nuances of each participant's background, experiences, and perceptions.

Interviewees should include a variety of individuals who each have different roles, experiences, and sources of information about student challenges and frustrations. Interviews with faculty and staff can be particularly useful, as the in-depth conversation provides time to gather two related but distinct types of information: (1) their understanding of the student experience, based on their daily interactions with students; and (2) their perspective on how the college might improve the student experience.

Interviews also provide an opportunity to learn whether and why faculty and staff feel well-disposed (or ill-disposed) toward potential changes in processes and approaches. Any eventual redesign will need faculty and staff support to be successful; thus, understanding and incorporating these stakeholders' perspectives will help the college design a strategy that most faculty and staff will support. Participating in the interview process also tends to pique stakeholder interest in the redesign. "Closing the loop" by letting participants know how their input informed the redesign will help maintain their interest, build their trust in the redesign process, and ensure potential interview participation in the future.

Interviews provide an opportunity to learn how faculty and staff feel about potential changes in processes and approaches.

Typically, interviewees are guaranteed confidentiality; that is, an individual's perspective will be formally recorded and may be shared as part of a larger report, but the individual's name will not be attached to his or her specific responses.

Gathering Interview Data at Macomb

CCRC researchers began their qualitative research at Macomb by interviewing key administrators and all of the college's full-time counselors and advisors. Data gathered from these interviews helped researchers identify key areas where students appeared to struggle. For example, counselors and advisors believed that new students did not strongly benefit from the college's online orientation; they noted that many students "wasted" their limited face-to-face advising session by asking questions that should already have been answered in orientation.

The nuts and bolts of conducting interviews. Interviews are typically 30 to 60 minutes in length, although interviews collecting additional types of data (such as survey or performance data, as discussed below) may require more time. Compensation is typically provided to students but not to faculty or professional staff.

Individuals should never be *required* to participate in an interview, as unwilling interviewees are unlikely to be helpful. In general, faculty and staff are pleased to share their perspectives, provided that the administration makes clear that the interviews are not meant to evaluate employees. Faculty and staff can be encouraged to participate with a recruitment letter.

An interviewer must consider how to put respondents at ease and help them to feel free to share their unvarnished perspective—even if that perspective is critical or controversial. A good interviewer maintains a positive tone, listens carefully, and uses follow-up questions to probe for deeper thoughts. An interview protocol helps the researcher manage interviews effectively; practice in using the protocol with volunteers (even with friends or family members) will help the researcher feel more confident and prepared, which in turn will help interviewees feel more confident and relaxed (see the appendix for a sample [interview protocol](#)).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important consideration in focus groups and interviews. At the start of any interview or focus group, the facilitator should explain how participants' input will be used (e.g., in public reports, internal memos, etc.) and assure participants that their individual input will not be personally identifiable in any way, unless their consent to do so is explicitly given. In focus groups, participants should be instructed to keep the content of the conversation confidential—that is, not to "gossip" to friends about other participants' thoughts or opinions.

Some colleges have Institutional Review Boards (IRBs), which require specific confidentiality protections for research participants. Gathering information for purposes of institutional improvement typically does not require IRB oversight; however, if any member of the research team wishes to present or publish interview or focus group data outside the context of the college, IRB oversight may be required. In that case, the college's IRB may require specific consent forms that spell out participants' confidentiality protections.

Focus Group Data

A focus group is guided by a facilitator, who asks participants to share their thoughts and experiences related to the topic at hand. For example, in a student focus group, the facilitator might encourage students to provide feedback on current (or potential) support tools or processes, and on how well these tools meet students' needs. Researchers can then use this information to identify *themes*, or recurring concerns, ideas, or opinions voiced by participants.

Typically, focus groups are most helpful when the college is in an exploratory data-gathering stage and is seeking to gain a general understanding of participants' reactions to, or perceptions of, particular issues. Because focus groups allow diverse participants to share their thoughts and build on each other's ideas, they can result in new and unexpected insights. However, the group context is less appropriate if the college is gathering information on sensitive or controversial topics, as participants may be hesitant to voice unpopular opinions.

The nuts and bolts of conducting focus groups. Focus groups vary in size, but the most manageable and productive focus groups tend to be small, with perhaps three to seven participants. The findings that emerge from each focus group may vary depending on the group dynamics—for example, a highly opinionated person may sway a group's discussion in a particular direction—and thus three or four separate focus groups are often useful.

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Gathering Focus Group Data at Macomb

During the exploratory research phase, CCRC researchers conducted eight student focus groups at Macomb to explore more deeply the areas that appeared to be problematic for students based on staff interviews. Focus groups were conducted to get a general sense of student experiences in terms of intake and academic decision-making, including processes such as orientation, advising, course selection and registration, program selection, and transfer decision-making.

Because counselors and advisors suggested that different populations would have differing experiences and opinions, the researchers conducted separate focus groups with different groups of students: older (over age 20) and younger students, students who had decided on a program of study ("decided" students) and those who had not ("undecided" students), and first-semester as well as continuing second-semester students.

Prior to implementation, CCRC researchers conducted another set of four focus groups in which first-time college students in their first or second semester at Macomb completed individual self-advising tasks, and then discussed related issues with the larger group. After implementation of the reforms was complete, the research team conducted a final set of four focus groups in which students completed the same self-advising tasks and discussion process, in order to help the college understand the effectiveness of the redesign and further refine the reforms (see [part three](#) for more information).

Focus groups can last between 30 minutes and 2 hours, depending on the number of topics, the number of participants, and any additional planned activities (such as the gathering of performance data, see below). The facilitator should take detailed notes and, if participants provide their consent, the group's discussion should be recorded for later reference.

While students generally enjoy participating in focus groups, some incentive is typically necessary to recruit them to participate. Such incentives include gift cards (ranging from perhaps \$25 for a 1/2 hour to \$75 for 2 hours), free food, and college-branded gifts (see the appendix for a sample [student recruitment letter](#)).

Before conducting the focus group, researchers should create a protocol to help the facilitator effectively manage the discussion. Typically, a focus group protocol includes a set of broad questions about the topic of interest along with a set of potential follow-up questions, which can be asked if and when further probing is appropriate (see the appendix for example [focus group protocols](#)).

Survey Data

Surveys can be used to efficiently collect information from large and broad populations of people as well as from very specific groups. While focus groups or interviews leverage *open-ended questions*, or questions that allow participants to answer in their own words, surveys are more appropriate for *closed-ended questions*, or questions that require respondents to choose from a limited set of specific responses. Accordingly, surveys are better suited for digging into the details of an issue that is already partially understood rather than for exploring the outlines of a broad or vague issue.

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Gathering Survey Data at Macomb

After the research team identified online orientation as an area for improvement, based on the interviews and focus groups, they surveyed participants at the end of their online orientation session in order to gather feedback on particular aspects of the program. Information gathered from the orientation survey both shaped the design of the new orientation and served as baseline data against which post-implementation data could be compared, in order to track whether the redesigns effected any changes in the student experience.

The nuts and bolts of conducting surveys. While creating high-quality questions is important in the focus group or interview setting, it is absolutely critical in the survey setting, given that no facilitator is available to help clarify an unclear question or follow up on an unclear answer. After drafting the survey, the research team should test it with a small group of respondents to gather feedback on the clarity of the questions and answers and revise accordingly (see the appendix for [sample survey questions](#) and additional resources on survey design).

Beyond the quality of the questions themselves, the actual mechanics of the survey may also create challenges for respondents. In particular, long questionnaires can create survey fatigue. Survey layout can also contribute to fatigue; for example, too many items on one screen or page might overwhelm respondents. Accordingly, prioritize the most important information to collect and keep the survey short.

Surveys can be used on their own or in conjunction with interviews and focus groups. For example, distributing a demographic questionnaire to focus group participants can allow researchers to connect specific findings to different demographic groups.

Performance Data

Performance data provide information on how individuals perform or act in the “real world.” For example, to assess student experiences with an online system, researchers might analyze transactional data, including how many students log in to the system, how often they log in and how long they stay, and which tools they use. In an investigation of students’ academic success, performance data could include GPA or exam score data.

While some performance data may be collected through existing institutional data sources, other data may be collected as part of the interview, focus group, or survey context.

Gathering Performance Data at Macomb

The CCRC research team administered performance tasks during student focus groups, using “self-advising scenarios” which were designed to assess students’ abilities to choose appropriate courses or programs of study using the college’s website (including the college’s course catalog). Each student completed a unique scenario, or hypothetical situation (e.g., “you are interested in business and want to earn at least \$50,000 after graduation”), along with a related list of questions, such as which program of study would be most appropriate for the student’s hypothetical goals.

Students completed their own scenarios independently and then discussed their responses (as well as their related challenges and confusion) with the larger group. Together, the scenario-based performance data and the qualitative reactions provided a more complete picture of the challenges students faced as they attempted to self-advise using available resources (see the appendix for [example scenarios](#)).

The nuts and bolts of collecting performance data. Researchers may be surprised to discover how much useful performance data is hidden within existing systems such as online learning platforms, online registration systems, or even student ID card swipe logs. Researchers must anonymize such data (that is, remove student identifiers) before analyzing and reporting them. The information can be very helpful in tracking changes in real-life student behavior in response to an intentional redesign. Different types of performance data are relevant to different types of redesigns; the table below provides some examples of data that could be helpful under different circumstances.

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Examples of Performance Data Relevant to Different Redesigns

REDESIGN FOCUS	EXAMPLE PERFORMANCE DATA
Developmental education (assessed with student information system data)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of new students enrolling in developmental vs. college-level courses • In-course pass rates • Proportion completing college-level English or math with a C or better within a year
Course catalog (assessed with lab activity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of students able to successfully complete basic self-advising tasks using catalog • Identifying advising tasks which seem easier or more difficult for students to accurately complete • Identifying types of students who perform better or worse
Online student portal (assessed through online activity data linked to student login)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students visiting site • Average number of visits per semester • Average length of visit or number of pages per visit • Most popular pages or tools • Most popular search terms • Pages or tools that tend to be visited together • Pages or tools that trigger the most queries

Conclusion

Qualitative and quantitative data—gathered using the methods described above—can help colleges understand the student experience and gain clarity about the areas that most need improvement. Colleges who skip this exploratory data-gathering and analysis phase may embark on an ambitious redesign only to discover that they wasted time and resources on changes that do not fully address the real problems students are facing.

While CCRC conducted most of the research detailed in this packet, other colleges may undertake similar work by creating a research team, which can begin the research process by examining and adapting the documents included in this packet's [appendix](#). After gathering exploratory data, researchers need to extract some basic findings which will allow college's leadership to identify the areas most in need of reform and assign appropriate staff members to devise and implement solutions. [Part two](#) of this packet provides some suggestions in terms of how to design and implement redesigns that build on research findings, drawing on Macomb's experience.

Endnotes

1. For the full research see, Jaggars & Fletcher (2014).

Sources

Jaggars, S. S., & Fletcher, J. (2014). *Redesigning the student intake and information provision processes at a large comprehensive community college* (CCRC Working Paper No. 72). New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.

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Suggested citation: Jaggars, S. S., Fletcher, J., Stacey, G. W., & Little, J. M. (2014). *Simplifying complexity in the student experience: Gathering data*. New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.

Simplifying Complexity in the Student Experience: Using Data

In part one of this practitioner packet, we reviewed how colleges seeking to reduce complexity in the student experience can gather information through multiple methods and from multiple groups of college stakeholders in order to identify areas that need improvement. In this part, we discuss how colleges can use the collected data to devise and implement solutions to identified problems. We use examples from the redesign effort that Macomb Community College embarked upon in 2011 to aid the discussion.

This is part two of CCRC's practitioner packet on streamlining the student experience. For information on how colleges can gather data on the student experience, see [Simplifying Complexity in the Student Experience: Gathering Data](#) (part one). For information on how colleges can analyze data and evaluate and further refine reforms, see [Simplifying Complexity in the Student Experience: Evaluating a Redesign](#) (part three). For detailed examples of data collection and project management materials, see [Appendix — Sample Documents](#) (part four).

Analyzing Data and Reviewing Findings

In order to determine where to focus their energies, colleges should analyze the exploratory data that they have gathered (see part three for a discussion of data analysis). Once initial analysis yields findings, the data and findings should be reviewed widely. The goal of this review process is not only to identify the areas of the student experience that are most in need of improvement but to also create an appetite for change and to identify stakeholders who can help lead the change process.

In order to generate broad-based support for change, it is helpful to include as many people in the review process as possible. As the college's leadership prepares to share the findings with others in the college, they may find it helpful to first consider the following questions.

What strengths did students identify? Highlighting the college's current strengths and celebrating its successes will help soften the blow of any negative findings and will provide faculty and staff with a strong positive foundation on which to build future improvements.

What processes, activities, or departments were mentioned the most? The most important findings will need to be discussed in the most depth and detail with the personnel who are responsible for the relevant processes and activities. The conversation should focus on ideas for future improvement that emerged from stakeholder interviews rather than on past problems or who is to blame.

What should be emphasized is how processes and policies appear from the student perspective, and what can be done to improve the student experience.

Who should be involved in initial conversations? Any individuals who play key roles in the processes or activities targeted for change, who are highly visible players in campus politics, or who are deeply passionate about supporting student success should certainly be included in initial conversations. Although a given campus organization (e.g., a particular collective-bargaining unit) may not initially seem relevant to the issue at hand, it may nevertheless have influence over the change process; thus, the organization’s leaders should be included in initial conversations and updated regularly.

Key Steps in Implementing Redesign Changes

Assembling Work Teams

Campus-based conversations about the findings will help shape and solidify a set of recommendations for improvement. At that point, leaders can assemble work teams which can fill out the details of each recommendation and oversee the nuts-and-bolts work of the improvement process.

Work teams should harness the varied knowledge of a broad group of stakeholders. For example, to oversee changes to the student intake process, Macomb Community College assembled a team that included not only academic advisors but also representatives from enrollment, financial aid, and other frontline student services. Again, any departments involved in processes targeted for change should be well represented on the work team. Personnel from these departments should be allowed to directly participate in imagining and implementing solutions, rather than being unilaterally compelled to implement someone else’s ideas.

Negative staff responses to suggested improvements may signal concern and commitment to student success, which can be harnessed for positive change.

Potential Faculty and Staff to Include on Work Team	
READY TO ACT: SHOULD BE HEAVILY REPRESENTED	
Doers	These individuals typically have positive attitudes about change and have a track record of getting things done. They know the system extremely well and are often turned to for creative troubleshooting and problem solving.
Team players	These individuals have positive attitudes, get the job done, and follow procedure. They turn to the doers for direction or when they run into trouble. They are critical to any team.
RESISTANT TO CHANGE: AT LEAST SOME SHOULD BE INCLUDED	
Ambivalent	These individuals are neither active proponents nor opponents of change, but are important to include if they play a key role in processes targeted for improvement. They often become proponents of change if they are exposed to real student stories documenting the need for change and are given a role in imagining potential solutions for improvement.
Naysayers	These individuals have strong negative opinions about the proposed changes. Their inclusion should be considered carefully: Some may become the strongest and most effective proponents once their concerns are taken into account, while others may continue to resist change regardless of the work team’s best efforts.

As leaders recruit work team members, it is helpful to remember that faculty and staff attitudes toward the suggested improvements will vary; some will be ready to act, while others will be resistant to change. Initial conversations about the findings may have sparked emotions, both positive and negative. In some cases, negative emotions signal deep levels of concern and commitment to student success, which can be harnessed for positive change.

By including “naysayers” who initially seem to resist change, work teams can craft solutions that address these individuals’ valid concerns and ensure greater buy-in during a reform’s implementation and refinement. However, some individuals will likely remain resistant regardless of the nature or extent of proposed changes and may not represent the best selection for a work team.

Orchestrating the Change Process

After a work team is assembled, it takes over the leadership of the change process and performs the “heavy lifting” of developing solutions and moving the change process steadily forward. At Macomb, team leaders orchestrated the change process by identifying low-hanging fruit, establishing sound goals, involving information technology specialists, creating realistic timelines for task completion, and holding structured meetings in which team members’ responsibilities were made clear.

Identifying Low-Hanging Fruit

As work teams begin the process of devising and implementing solutions, it may be helpful to first identify which problems could be addressed fairly quickly at minimal cost. Team members, particularly frontline staff who have the greatest insight into new students’ struggles, should develop and implement simple changes that address some of the more straightforward issues that emerged from the data.

Establishing Goals That Make Sense for Students

While early wins are important, developing a long-term vision for students lays the foundation for more ambitious goals. To realize this long-term vision, the team might discuss: What is the outcome desired by the institution? Do students’ perspectives reveal problems that must be addressed before that outcome can be reached?

For example, if the college’s goal is for students who have decided on a program to enroll only in courses that fulfill their program requirements, but findings indicate that decided students do not understand their program’s requirements, then work teams could think through how and where to make requirements more clear.

As work teams devise potential solutions, frontline faculty and staff can gather input and feedback on these solutions from the students they see every day, which can lead to further revisions and refinements.

Involving Information Technology Specialists Early On

Many redesigns will impact, or will be impacted by, the college’s information technology infrastructure. Thus work teams should involve information technology staff early on. In some cases, an information technology staff member will need to formally join the team to ensure that process redesign and technological tools work seamlessly together; in other cases, regular communication

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between the team's leaders and technology staff will be sufficient. If the needed technical expertise is not available on campus, and if the budget allows, it may be helpful to enlist consultants.

Developing a Timeline and Setting Deadlines

To develop a realistic timeline, the team's leaders should work backward from the desired outcome. For example, if a new college catalog is the desired outcome, when does the finished product have to be available on campus? At what point does the printer need it to meet that deadline? Working backward from that date, how much time will the graphic artist need to put the catalog together? Setting ambitious but realistic deadlines will help keep the team on task and prevent team members from wasting time in potentially interesting but ultimately unhelpful conversations.

Holding Structured Meetings

To maintain momentum, work teams should meet regularly and frequently (e.g., every two weeks) and develop structured agendas for each meeting with action items clearly identified (see appendix for a [sample agenda](#)). Team leaders should also hold team members accountable for tasks assigned.

Providing Leadership and Support

The work teams are responsible for leading the bulk of the change process. However, the college's leadership also plays a critical role in inspiring not only the work teams but also the larger college community in supporting and moving forward with the change process. Two key ways to inspire the community are emphasizing shared values and creating a culture of trust.

Emphasizing Shared Values

In their book on collaboration in the university setting, Kezar and Lester¹ argue that successful collaborative efforts occur when leaders clarify and emphasize how these efforts will promote individuals' preexisting values.

A fundamental shared value for most community college faculty and staff is that of student success. When communicating the need for change, leaders should consistently invoke the importance of designing processes that respond to student needs and that support their success. When leadership works to engage faculty and staff who will play a role in implementing change, they can use data on the student experience to frame the conversation and invoke these shared values. If and when group members disagree, the team's leaders can return to the touchstone question: "What did students have to say about that?"

Building a Culture of Trust

Cultivating trust among work team members and between the work team and the larger college community is critical. Kezar and Lester² point out that the most successful collaborations are supported by an administration that "leads by listening." College leadership should practice a lead-by-listening strategy when attending work team meetings, so that team members realize that they are genuinely responsible for devising and implementing changes. More generally, leadership can model the practice of leading by listening by regularly referring back to the student and staff perspectives gathered in the exploratory data collection phase.

A sense of trust and openness can also be developed among team members by conducting team-building exercises at the start of the process and by holding members to confidentiality

The most successful collaborations are supported by an administration that "leads by listening."

standards when discussing sensitive topics.

Finally, to help cultivate trust among the larger college community, college leadership and members of the work teams can make frequent presentations to provide updates at administrative, faculty, senior academic staff, and advisor meetings, and they can solicit feedback on each team's unfolding plans.

Identifying Areas for Evaluation

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of specific changes, work teams need to measure relevant outcomes both “pre” and “post” any planned changes. Thus, once work teams have defined the changes they plan to implement, they should also identify which student outcomes they expect to be impacted by those changes and conduct an assessment of these outcomes prior to implementation.

In some cases, the exploratory data collection process (discussed in [part one](#)) will already have adequately captured appropriate pre-implementation outcomes. In most cases, however, the existing exploratory data will be too broad, complex, or imprecise to capture the specific outcomes of interest. Thus, the work teams will need to consider how to collect more precise measures of each outcome. For instance, at Macomb, CCRC collected additional pre-implementation survey and performance data to serve as a baseline for post-implementation outcomes (see [part three](#)).

Devising Solutions at Macomb Community College

After reviewing their findings, Macomb leaders settled on two areas in strong need of reform: the student intake process (particularly online orientation) and the provision of advising-related information resources. They assembled a work team to tackle each area (see appendix for [organization charts](#) of each work team).

Redesigning New Student Intake

The work team tasked with redesigning student intake met every two weeks over a working hour-and-a-half lunch. The dean of student success was the team's chairperson who kept discussions moving forward and refocused team members on the needs of students when the conversation drifted. The manager of counseling and advising acted as the project manager and kept the change process on-track by creating clear meeting agendas and holding team members accountable for assigned tasks (see appendix for a [sample meeting agenda](#)). Over the course of a few months, the team designed a new entry process, began to re-conceptualize online orientation, and created a new lab to assist students with the intake process.

Reorganizing the Entry Process

Upon review of the data, the work team discovered that students were confused about the college's entry process, termed the “[Seven Easy Steps](#)” (applying for admission, applying for financial aid, obtaining a student I.D., taking the placement exam, completing orientation and meeting an academic advisor, registering for courses, and paying for courses). For example, some students took a day off of work to come to campus and complete all seven steps in one day, only to find that this was

The project manager kept the change process on-track by creating clear meeting agendas and holding team members accountable for assigned tasks.

not possible. As another example, students were often unaware of the purpose and consequences of the placement exam until after they had taken it.

The work team decided to reorganize the entry process into three broad steps (called “[Easy Start 1–2–3](#)”) by using the college’s new tag line —“Discover, Connect, Advance”—and to implement clear communication about what students needed to do, where they needed to do it, and how long it would take.

Step one (“Discover”) tasks could be completed online: applying for admission, applying for financial aid, participating in the redesigned student orientation, and preparing for the placement test. Step two (“Connect”) tasks were designed to be completed in person during a half day on campus: meeting with an academic advisor for a “Starting at Macomb” session, taking the placement exam, and meeting with a counselor for a course planning session. The final step (“Advance”) consisted of tasks that could be completed online or on campus, such as registering for classes.

The new process created a more intuitive pathway for students and provided more opportunities for face-to-face connection. In addition, while some students had circumvented some steps in the old system, the new process was mandated through registration blocks. Although shifting to mandatory orientation and more in-depth advising might deter some time-starved students from enrolling, the work team and college leadership felt that these activities would help create a strong foundation of success for the students who needed it most.

Redesigning New Student Orientation

Findings from CCRC’s exploratory data collection suggested that most students neither remembered the content of the college’s [online orientation](#) nor perceived it as helpful. Thus, the work team focused on how to redesign online orientation to be more interactive, personalized, and engaging.

The team first focused on defining the learning outcomes of orientation. Then they considered specific content that would support those learning outcomes and envisioned interactive activities that would help teach and reinforce key outcomes. For example, in order to help students understand course requirements, they decided that the orientation might include a hands-on activity that required interpreting the course catalog.

To personalize orientation, the team identified different categories of students with different needs (such as veterans or students transferring from another college) and determined which activities would be required or optional based on a student’s category. Finally, to make orientation more engaging, the team conceptualized a series of videos that would introduce real Macomb students and their perspectives on key orientation content.

The [redesigned orientation](#) was technically ambitious and was implemented in collaboration with the college’s website redesign consultant as well as with the college’s information technology staff. A little more than one year after the work team’s first meetings, new students received newly redesigned content and videos; approximately one year later, interactive activities were added.

Creating Student Services Labs

The exploratory data collection revealed that many students needed help in completing intake steps online. Only one location on each of Macomb’s two campuses provided an open computer lab and personnel who were somewhat knowledgeable about student entry processes: the career services office. Some students discovered the lab by word of mouth and asked the staff to help them

The work team focused on how to redesign online orientation to be more interactive, personalized, and engaging.

navigate the intake process; other students were unaware that it existed. While career services staff were happy to help students, they also worried that intake-related tasks distracted from their primary mission of helping students with career counseling and job placement.

With these findings in mind, the intake redesign team repurposed an existing computer lab on each campus (previously used only for scheduled online orientations) into student services labs, each staffed with a full-time technician. The labs were a huge success from the beginning: During the first two registration periods after their inception, nearly 8,000 students used the labs, primarily to participate in new student orientation and complete other steps in the intake and registration process.

Redesigning Information Provision

The data collected in the exploratory research phase indicated that many students were self-advising as they selected courses, programs, and transfer schools; that both students and advisors were uncertain about students' abilities to accurately self-advise; and that some of that uncertainty was due to poorly organized, inconsistent, and difficult-to-apply information provided by the college.

To tackle these issues, the information provision work team was charged with conducting a college-wide audit of communications regarding program, transfer, and career information, as well as developing a master information resource that would provide clear, accurate, and consistent information on key topics. Similar to the intake team, the information provision team met every other week, with the assistance of a team chairperson and a project manager, who created clear agendas and action items.

Conducting an Information Audit

Student feedback made it clear that they were confused by conflicting information related to course, program, transfer, and career options, which was available from multiple sources (e.g., the information office, orientation, the career services office, counselors and advisors, individual instructors, the online portal, program web pages, and printed communications such as the course catalog).

To understand what type of information students were receiving and how to improve it, the team began by performing a college-wide communications audit. They requested that each academic program and administrative department provide copies of all relevant information shared with students, either online or on paper. The team then began to design a new process of coordination to ensure that the information was clear, consistent, and regularly updated across multiple sources.

The team decided that the master information resource should be centrally stored and updated, and that it should be used to help populate all relevant online and paper resources. The team quickly realized that the college's course catalog should comprise the core of this master resource.

Redesigning the College Catalog

Based on the exploratory data regarding the kind of program and course information students would find helpful, the team developed a new template for course and program descriptions appearing in the college catalog. The new template required every department to generate information about course sequencing, transferability, and career opportunities for each program of study, and ensured that the information was consistent across all programs.

Students were confused by conflicting information related to course program, transfer, and career options they received from various sources.

The new template required approval from the college's curriculum committee (similar to many colleges' faculty senates). Accordingly, the work team's academic members, including several deans and a key member of the curriculum committee, worked closely with program faculty to ensure that the faculty understood the need for the new template and how to appropriately populate it (see the appendix for a [comparison](#) of the old and new course catalogs).

Conclusion

Using exploratory research data to drive the change process provides multiple advantages. Data provide clarity and concrete evidence that change is needed, give direction and shape to reforms, and serve as a tool to generate trust, momentum, and enthusiasm among staff.

Work teams that represent a broad array of campus stakeholders can design solutions that are creative, responsive to students' needs, and feasible to implement. However, implementation does not represent a one-time end goal but rather a long-term process of ongoing assessment and refinement. In [part three](#), we describe how colleges can assess the effectiveness of their reforms and use these data to inform ongoing improvements, using Macomb as a case study.

Endnotes

1. Kezar & Lester (2009).
2. Kezar & Lester (2009).

Sources

Kezar, A. J., & Lester, J. (2009). *Organizing higher education for collaboration: A guide for campus leaders*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

This practitioner packet was prepared by Shanna Smith Jaggars, Jeffrey Fletcher, and Georgia West Stacey of the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, and by Jill M. Little of Macomb Community College. Funding was provided by The Kresge Foundation.

Suggested citation: Jaggars, S. S., Fletcher, J., Stacey, G. W., & Little, J. M. (2014). *Simplifying complexity in the student experience: Using data*. New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.

Simplifying Complexity in the Student Experience: Evaluating a Redesign

In order to determine whether a redesign is achieving its goals—and to continue to refine and improve the redesign—colleges should measure key outcomes both before and after implementation. To provide an example of redesign evaluation, we describe how Macomb Community College evaluated its redesigned student orientation and academic catalog.

This is part three of CCRC's practitioner packet on streamlining the student experience. For information on how colleges can gather data on the student experience, see [Simplifying Complexity in the Student Experience: Gathering Data](#) (part one). To learn more about how colleges can use data to inform a redesign, see [Simplifying Complexity in the Student Experience: Using Data](#) (part two). For detailed examples of data collection and project management materials, see [Appendix — Sample Documents](#) (part four).

Planning the Evaluation

Most evaluations use a pre–post method, comparing key outcome measures before and after the redesign to determine whether (and to what extent) those outcomes improved. The most rigorous evaluation methods compare pre–post changes between two groups of students—an intervention group and a comparison group. However, as we discuss below, sophisticated comparison group methods are not always feasible in the context of full-scale redesigns.

In order to plan and conduct an evaluation, colleges should consider: (1) which key outcomes to measure, (2) for whom those outcomes should be measured, and (3) when these outcomes should be measured. Colleges may also wish to draw on pre- versus post-redesign focus group and interview data to tell the “story” of what has changed.

Determine What to Measure

Part one of this packet provides an overview of four different types of data (focus group, interview, survey, and performance) and how each can capture different aspects of the student experience. In planning how to evaluate a redesign, colleges should identify key student experiences or outcomes that ought to be immediately and directly impacted by the redesign, and determine which type of data might best capture them.

For example, based on a review of student and staff perspectives, Macomb redesigned the college's course catalog and its new student orientation. Redesign team members expected the catalog

Colleges should identify key student outcomes that ought to be directly impacted by the redesign, and determine which type of data might best capture them.

changes to immediately improve students' abilities to self-advise. They also hoped that, over time, this would improve retention rates. Because the catalog redesign would have an immediate and direct impact on self-advising accuracy, but only a diffuse, long-term, and difficult-to-quantify impact on retention, the college's evaluation of the new course catalog focused on students' self-advising abilities. Similarly, to evaluate the redesigned student orientation, the college focused on students' perceptions of the orientation's helpfulness.

In addition to changes to the catalog and orientation, Macomb's efforts to improve the student experience included a website redesign and other related improvements unfolding over several years. To help evaluate the larger suite of changes, the college is also tracking student retention across time.

Determine Who to Measure

Data on key outcomes should be gathered for the specific group of students targeted by the redesign. At Macomb, the evaluation of the new student orientation focused on new incoming students, and it was straightforward to compare the outcomes of those who took the old orientation in the summer of 2012 and those who took the new version in the summer of 2013.

However, the target group for the catalog redesign was less obvious. The new catalog, released in the spring of 2013, would affect new students as they registered for the fall of 2013; but these students would already be affected by the redesign of the larger intake and orientation process, making it difficult to isolate the impact of the catalog redesign. In its evaluation, the college therefore decided to focus on the impact of the catalog redesign on the self-advising skills of first- or second-semester students who were already enrolled in spring 2013. This tactic allowed them to compare spring 2012 and spring 2013 students, both of whom had experienced only the old intake and orientation process.

In the ideal research setting, colleges would implement the redesign with one subset of the target group (the intervention group), and compare these students' improvements with a second subset of the target group (the comparison group). However, with comprehensive redesigns such as the one at Macomb, it is not possible to implement the redesign for only one subset of the target group. (For example, imagine the chaos that would ensue if two entirely different college catalogs were distributed to different groups of students at the same time.) Thus the college could only compare pre- and post-redesign outcomes for relevant target groups (e.g., by comparing students who took the orientation in the summer of 2012 and those who took it in the summer of 2013).

The disadvantage of this kind of pre-post evaluation is that other conditions may shift at the same time as the redesign implementation. It is helpful therefore to measure and compare changes in those outcomes that are very relevant to the redesign (i.e., those that should be directly and immediately influenced by it), as well as in outcomes that are less relevant (i.e., those that seem unrelated to the redesign or those that are so broad and complex that they are unlikely to shift quickly). If the very relevant outcomes shift while the less relevant ones do not, evaluators can have more confidence that the redesign, and not larger contextual factors, influenced those changes.

For example, at Macomb, the new catalog included clearer and more useful information about programs of study and course requirements, but it did not have much more information about transfer. To investigate whether changes in student self-advising accuracy were due to the redesign or rather to a change in the student body or other contextual factors, the research team measured self-advising performance in terms of program and course selection (which was expected to improve) and in terms of students' understanding of the transfer process (which was not expected to improve).

With comprehensive redesigns, colleges should compare pre- and post-redesign outcomes for relevant target groups.

Determine When to Measure

In a pre–post evaluation design, the pre-data should be gathered shortly before implementation. When to collect post-data depends on when colleges can reasonably expect the changes to impact key outcomes among the target population. However, colleges should be careful to ensure that the pre- and post-data are collected at comparable points in time. For example, if pre-measurement takes place in the late fall, then post-measurement should probably also take place in the late fall of the following year, in order to ensure that student outcomes are as comparable as possible between the two measurements.

After the first round of post-redesign data collection, colleges should further refine the redesign based on the data. Accordingly, additional rounds of post-data may be helpful to track ongoing outcome improvements.

Data collected post-redesign can be used to evaluate its impact and further refine the reform.

Analyzing Focus Group and Interview Data

While outcome evaluations typically rely on a quantitative analysis of survey and performance data (discussed in the next section), researchers may also draw on focus group and interview data to tell the “story” of what has changed, using qualitative analysis. Such analysis can be formal (transcribing all interviews and creating a set of rules to code transcript statements and identify emergent themes) or informal (jotting down one’s impressions and synthesizing them afterward). In order to provide actionable data as quickly and efficiently as possible, most colleges approach qualitative data analysis informally; thus, in the following discussion, we focus on the informal analysis approach.

During each interview (or focus group), the interviewer or an assistant should take detailed notes that capture key points (e.g., the respondent’s main opinions, suggestions, or ideas). Afterward, the interviewer should also record his or her own impressions regarding the implications of those points.

As additional interviews and focus groups are completed, these initially vague impressions will begin to sharpen into recognizable themes. It can be helpful to conduct a final and slightly more formal process of coding, using the original notes. For example, a coder could assign a color to each identified theme, and then highlight the appearance of each theme within the notes using the appropriate color. The frequency of different colors then provides a sense of how often, and in what context, the theme was discussed.

Analyzing Qualitative Data at Macomb

To capture students' perceptions about the intake and advising process at Macomb, researchers at CCRC used a formal process, transcribing each interview or focus group and tagging each quote with specific codes.

For example, a student in one focus group described how advisors helped him with course selection:

They basically printed out a list of classes that I could take, but they didn't say which one would be the best one. They just highlighted every single one, and said "pick from these," and I really didn't know which would be the best to take. ... It was more confusing for them to give me those classes than it was to just choose what would be right.

CCRC researchers coded this quote as reflecting confusion with course selection. Student quotes were also tagged according to relevant characteristics, such as whether the student was decided or undecided on a program of study.

By combining coded information across transcripts, researchers determined that students who were undecided on a program of study were three times more likely than decided students to make comments about difficulties or confusion regarding course selection.

To complement pre-post quantitative outcome evaluation, qualitative data can be collected in a pre-post manner. For example, a college could use focus group or interview data to track whether undecided students' experiences with course selection tended to shift from pre- to post-implementation, such as from *confusing* to *straightforward*.

Analyzing Performance and Survey Data

While qualitative data provide context and explanation about people's perceptions and opinions, quantitative data are more useful for measuring the direction and strength of those perceptions and opinions. For example, a survey could ask students to rate their satisfaction with advising from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

Perhaps the most useful way to summarize results from a typical quantitative dataset is to calculate percentages. For example, using a satisfaction survey, researchers can calculate the proportion of students who were dissatisfied (a rating of 1 or 2), neutral (a rating of 3), or satisfied (a rating of 4 or 5). Further analysis could then examine the group of dissatisfied students to understand who they are and how the redesign might be refined to improve their experiences.

Below, we describe how Macomb analyzed quantitative data to determine the extent of improvement based on student perceptions and outcomes across time.

Survey Data Analysis

To determine whether the redesigned orientation was more helpful to students as they sought to make decisions regarding program, course, and transfer school selection, a survey asked students to rate the orientation's helpfulness in several areas on a scale from 1 (not helpful) to 3 (very helpful). The research team calculated the percentage of students who rated each item as very helpful and compared that percentage between the pre- and post-implementation cohorts.

As the table below shows, the proportion of students rating orientation items as very helpful improved across a number of areas, with the improvements concentrated among the areas that were the strongest focus of the orientation redesign.

Quantitative data are useful for measuring the direction and strength of people's perceptions and opinions.

Student Perceptions of Orientation's Helpfulness

PERCENTAGE REPORTING "VERY HELPFUL"			
AREA	PRE	POST	DIFFERENCE
Functions available in WebAdvisor	71	78	+7
How to log into/use WebAdvisor	69	76	+8
How to read/understand course catalog	70	69	0
How to read/understand a program plan	68	69	+1
How to read/understand schedule of classes	78	79	+1
Options for areas of study	70	70	0
Options for transfer	57	66	+9
How to choose the right courses	61	66	+5
How to register for classes	68	70	+2
How to get more information on areas of study, transfer options, courses to take	66	71	+5
How to get more information on employment/career options	58	68	+10

Note. Differences may be slightly different from the whole-number differences between columns 1 and 2 due to rounding error.

While the overall results were encouraging, Macomb was most concerned with whether orientation was helpful for students with specific information needs. For example, students who had already chosen an area of study would probably ignore information about how to choose a program, while undecided students would find that information much more helpful. To differentiate between these students, the survey also asked students whether they had chosen a specific area of study and whether they had already selected a transfer destination (or had any interest in transferring).

The table below focuses on the "helpfulness in choosing a specific area of study" item, broken out by students' level of decidedness. The college was most interested in whether perceptions of helpfulness improved among the "maybe" and "no" students. Unfortunately, no strong improvements were observed. Accordingly, the college is continuing its efforts to improve the helpfulness of orientation in this area.

Student Perceptions of Orientation's Helpfulness in Choosing an Area of Study

PERCENTAGE REPORTING "VERY HELPFUL"			
CHOSEN SPECIFIC AREA OF STUDY?	PRE	POST	DIFFERENCE
Yes	75	75	0
Maybe, trying to narrow options now	67	69	+2
No, no idea yet	60	61	+1

The third table focuses on the "helpfulness in understanding options for transfer" item, broken out by students' interest in transfer. The college expected that students uninterested in transfer would ignore information about transfer options. Similarly, students who were already decided on a specific transfer destination would be unlikely to find information about alternative transfer options helpful.

The college was therefore most interested in whether perceptions of helpfulness improved among the remaining students—those who were unsure whether they wanted to transfer, or who were interested in transfer but undecided on their destination. And indeed, the perceived helpfulness of the orientation regarding transfer options for this group of students improved by 16 percentage points, compared with more modest improvements among the other two groups.

Student Perceptions of Orientation’s Helpfulness in Understanding Options for Transfer			
PERCENTAGE REPORTING “VERY HELPFUL”			
INTERESTED IN TRANSFER?	PRE	POST	DIFFERENCE
Yes, and have specific school in mind	64	67	+3
Unsure, or unsure which school	49	66	+16
No, not interested in transfer	57	64	+7

As we emphasized earlier, evaluation analyses work best when they focus narrowly on the population of interest. If Macomb had concluded their analysis with the overall numbers presented in the first table, they would have overlooked the 16 percentage point improvement for the most relevant students.

Evaluation analyses work best when they focus narrowly on the population of interest.

Performance Data Analysis

As described in [part one](#) of this practitioner packet, students’ self-advising skills were assessed at Macomb using hypothetical scenarios that included self-advising questions with verifiable right or wrong answers. Using a grading rubric designed by the college’s advising staff, each student’s scenario was graded on a 0–100 percent scale. For example, a 0 percent score on “selecting courses” indicates the student responded incorrectly to all items related to course selection, and a 100 percent score indicates uniformly correct responses.

The research team averaged students’ scores within each group of items and calculated the difference between the pre-implementation and post-implementation cohorts. As the table below shows, students’ low pre-implementation performance improved substantially after the introduction of the new catalog. This improvement was concentrated in the areas of selecting courses and choosing a program of study; students’ understanding of transfer did not improve at all.

Changes in Student Performance on Self-Advising Tasks			
AVERAGE % CORRECT ITEMS			
TASK FOCUS	PRE	POST	DIFFERENCE
Selecting courses	40	63	+23
Choosing program	76	86	+10
Understanding transfer	50	50	0

As discussed above, the course catalog redesign had not incorporated additional information about transfer. Thus, the absence of improvements in this area was expected and furthermore helped confirm that improvements to self-advising in the other areas probably derived from the redesign rather than from a change in the student population or contextual factors.

Conclusion

A redesign should be viewed as an ongoing process, not as an end in itself. Similarly, the redesign evaluation should be understood as a continuous, iterative process, providing the college with timely data on both positive progress and areas for further improvement.

In the case of Macomb, the redesign clearly made substantial improvements to some aspects of the student intake and self-advising experience. Nevertheless, the data also indicate specific areas where the college has more work to do. Eventually, the college hopes to stabilize all orientation “very helpful” percentages as well as the percentage of correct self-advising items at a level of 80 percent or better. Accordingly, one next step for the college will be an improvement in the clarity, availability, and user-friendliness of information related to transfer options and requirements.

A redesign evaluation should be understood as an iterative process that provides data on progress and areas for further improvement.

This practitioner packet was prepared by Shanna Smith Jaggars, Jeffrey Fletcher, and Georgia West Stacey of the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, and by Jill M. Little of Macomb Community College. Funding was provided by The Kresge Foundation.

Suggested citation: Jaggars, S. S., Fletcher, J., Stacey, G. W., & Little, J. M. (2014). *Simplifying complexity in the student experience: Evaluating a redesign*. New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.

Simplifying Complexity in the Student Experience:

Appendix — Sample Documents

This appendix contains documents that may be useful in a college's efforts to undertake a redesign similar to that described in parts one through three of the practitioner packet. All of the sample documents mentioned in the packet are included here.

List of Documents

Conducting Research

1. Recruitment Example: Inviting Students to Participate in a Focus Group [p. 2](#)
2. Informed Consent Example: Student Focus Group Consent Form [p. 3](#)
3. Interview Protocol Example: Faculty and Staff Semi-Structured Interview [p. 5](#)
4. Focus Group Protocol Example: Student Focus Group, Exploratory Phase [p. 8](#)
5. Performance Data Example: Focus Group Scenarios [p. 11](#)
6. Survey Example: Post-Orientation Survey Questions [p. 14](#)
7. Additional Resources for Survey Research [p. 16](#)

Coordinating a Work Team

8. Recruitment Example: Inviting Staff and Faculty to Participate in a Work Team [p. 17](#)
9. Meeting Agenda Example [p. 18](#)
10. Organization Charts for Macomb's Work Teams [p. 19](#)

Macomb After the Redesign

11. Old vs. New Entry Process Guide (Easy Start 1-2-3 vs. Seven Easy Steps) [p. 20](#)
12. Old Academic Catalog vs. New Academic Catalog [p. 22](#)
13. Old Orientation vs. New Orientation [p. 24](#)

1 | Recruitment Example: Inviting Students to Participate in a Focus Group

Dear Student:

[College Name] invites you to participate in a focus group interview among a small group of students like yourself. The purpose of this study is to better understand student experiences at [College Name] in order to identify ways that the college can improve its services to students.

The study will require no more than [estimated time] hours of your time. The atmosphere is kept relaxed, and previous participants have told us that they have found the experience quite interesting and worthwhile. In appreciation for your participation, you will receive [compensation amount].

If you would like to participate in this study, you can set up an appointment by calling [contact person name and phone number]. When you call, please indicate you are calling about the [College Name] study. Should you get voicemail, please do the following:

Leave your *name* and *daytime number* and say you are calling about the [College Name] study. We will return your call as soon as possible.

Please indicate which date you would like to attend:

[Day of week and date] [First time slot] OR [Second time slot]

[Day of week and date] [First time slot] OR [Second time slot]

Since each time slot in the study is limited to a specific number of people who qualify, calling us quickly will improve your chances of becoming one of the limited number of students who will participate in this study.

Your input is valuable to us, and we hope you are able to participate.

Sincerely,

[Staff Member Name]

[Staff Member Title]

2 | Informed Consent Example: Student Focus Group Consent Form

To be handed out at the focus group and signed before students begin participation.

[College Name]

INFORMED CONSENT

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in a research study on students' experiences at [College Name], which is designed to gather feedback to help improve the college's practices. You will be asked to share your experiences at [College Name] in a focus group with other current [College Name] students. The conversation will be audio-recorded with your permission and used for research purposes only.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: The research has the potential risk inherent in focus groups of sharing personal opinions or information with a group of individuals who will know each other. Your participation in this focus group is voluntary, so you may choose not to respond to a particular question if you do not wish to. Beyond this group, your identity will remain confidential. The potential benefit from your participation is contributing to the improvement of the college's programs. There are no negative consequences if you do not wish to participate in the research.

PAYMENTS: You will receive [incentive] as payment for your participation.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality will be ensured throughout the research. You will not be identified by name or any specific identifiers in any reports or documents. Data will be stored in the locked offices of [College Name] personnel and will be used only for professional research purposes.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately [estimated time].

HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED: The results of the study will be used to identify ways [College Name] may better serve its students.

PARTICIPANT’S RIGHTS

- I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
- My participation in research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to student status or other entitlements.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his/her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator’s phone number is [phone number].
- If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the [College Name] Institutional Review Board /IRB. The phone number for the IRB is [phone number]. Or, I can write to the IRB at [address].
- I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant’s Rights document.
- The focus group discussion will be audiotaped, and the audio files will be accessed only by the principal investigator and members of the research team. Please choose one:
 - I consent to be audio/video taped.
 - I do NOT consent to being video/audio taped.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant’s signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Name: _____

3 | Interview Protocol Example: Faculty and Staff Semi-Structured Interview

Initial Interview Protocol

Background Question

- What is your role at the college, and how long have you been in that role?

For Those in a Counseling or Advising Role

- Based on your experiences working with new students, is there anything about the enrollment process at [College Name] that students find particularly confusing or frustrating?
- How helpful do you think the current orientation is? (*Probe:* Are there any ways in which you think it ought to be changed?)
- Once students are enrolled and begin taking classes, what kinds of things do they come to you for during the first two semesters?
- What information do students need in order to make good decisions about:
 - o course selection?
 - o major or program selection?
 - o transfer programs or schools?
- Do you show students how to use the online degree audit? (*Probe:* Why or why not?)
- Are there any issues that students come to you for that you feel they could handle themselves if they knew how to find the right information?

For Those Serving on the Orientation or Information Review Committees

- Why do you think you were selected to serve on this committee?
- The mission of the committee you're serving on is to [insert mission here]. How do you feel about that mission? (*Probe:* If that mission is accomplished, do you think it will make a big difference to student success? Why or why not?)
- If you had your own way, what would you want the result of this committee's work to look like?
- Do you think the final product is likely to match your vision? Why or why not?
- Do you have any concerns about problems or challenges the committee might encounter? If so, do you have any ideas about how to work through those problems?

For Stakeholders Not Sitting on Either Committee

- What have you heard about the work of the [orientation/information review] committee?
- How do you feel about what they are trying to do? (*Probe*: Do you think their work will make a big difference to student success? Why or why not?)
- Do you have any concerns about their work? If so, do you have any suggestions about how to deal with those potential problems?

Follow-Up Interview Protocol

For Those in a Counseling or Advising Role

- How do you feel about the changes to orientation?
- How do you feel about the work that's been done by the information review committee? (*Probe*: Do you think it's going to be easier now for students to understand the pros and cons of different programs, or to make good decisions about the courses they need to take? Why or why not?)

For Those Serving on the Orientation or Information Review Committees

- I understand the committee has done a lot of work over the past year, including [summarize what committee has done]. What has your particular role been in this process? (*Potential probe*: How would other committee members describe your contribution or impact?)
- How do you feel about what the committee accomplished? (*Probe*: Do you think the committee's work will make a big difference to student success? Why or why not?)
- What did the committee do well? What made that possible?
- Were there any stumbling blocks or barriers you encountered? If so, how did you work through them?
- *If they feel the committee was not as effective as it could have been*: Is there anything that you think, had it been done differently, that might have made the committee's work more successful?
- *If they expressed a worry in last interview that hasn't yet been brought up*: In our last interview, you mentioned [summarize some of respondent's worries from first interview]. Did that end up being an issue? If so, how did you work through it?
- *Follow-up for those also in a counseling/advising role*: Based on the changes recommended by the committee, how has or will your job really be affected? What is the lesson to take away from this, especially as it applies to other schools?
- Part of the purpose of this research is to provide an example for other colleges to follow in their own attempts to improve student success. What would be your advice to other colleges that want to do something similar?

For Stakeholders Not Sitting on Either Committee

- How do you feel about the changes that have happened as a result of the [orientation/information review] committee?
- In our last interview, you mentioned [summarize some of respondent's worries from first interview]. Did that end up being an issue?
- Part of the purpose of this research is to provide an example for other colleges to follow in their own attempts to improve student success. What would be your advice to other colleges that want to do something similar?

4 | Focus Group Protocol

Example: Student Focus Group, Exploratory Phase

Provide brief background of study and follow informed consent process, if required by college's IRB.

Participant Introductions and Study Goals

First, let's go around and have everyone introduce yourselves. Tell us your program—or if you haven't decided on one yet, what you think you're interested in—and also let us know if you're interested in eventually transferring to a four-year school.

Great. We're hosting this discussion because the college wants to understand the issues that students face in making decisions—about things like enrollment, courses, programs of study, and whether and where to transfer. We hope we can identify ways for the college to improve programs and services, to make your student experience less complicated and more straightforward.

Discussion 1: Enrollment

We'll start by talking about the enrollment process. By enrollment, I mean the entire process from when you first contacted [College Name] to when you began classes. So that includes things like applying for admission, applying for financial aid, placement testing, orientation, meeting with counselors or advisors, and registering and paying for classes.

Questions

- Were there parts of the enrollment process that were particularly confusing or challenging?
- Looking back, what information would have made the enrollment process easier?
- How many of you attended an orientation at [College Name]?
 - Was it an online orientation, or did you come to campus?
 - What was it like?
 - Was there information that would have been helpful to have been covered in your orientation?
- How many of you registered for classes using [college's online portal]?
 - Did you run into any problems when you used [college's online portal] to register for classes?
 - How could [college's online portal] be changed to make it easier to use?
- Did you meet with a counselor or advisor for a course planning session?
 - If *yes*: How did they help you choose courses for the first semester?
 - If *no*: How did you choose what courses to take that semester?

Discussion 2: Post-Enrollment

Now we're going to focus more on your experiences after you first enrolled, in your first or second semester of school, as you tried to choose a program of study, choose specific courses to take in the next semester, or choose a transfer school (if that is your goal).

Questions

First, think about how you go about choosing courses for the next semester.

- What kind of information do you use to help choose your courses?
- Where do you get this information?
- What information or resources do you *wish* you had, to help you choose courses?

For those of you who have decided on a major or program of study...

- How did you come to choose your program?
- In what ways could [College Name] have been more helpful in making this decision?

For those of you who have not yet decided on a program...

- Do you have a sense of how you will go about deciding upon a program?
- What could [College Name] do to help you make a good decision?

For those of you who are interested in transferring to a four-year college...

- What factors are most important in making your decision on which school to transfer to?
- How do you seek out this kind of information?

Have you met with counselors or advisors since enrollment?

- If not, why not?

For those of you who have met with a counselor or advisor:

- Did they help you choose courses? (*Probe: How did that work? Or see other potential probes below.*)
- Did they help you choose a major/program of study? (*Probe as necessary.*)
- Did they help you choose a transfer college? (*Probe as necessary.*)
- What other topics have you gone to a counselor to discuss?

Conclusion

We are almost out of time, so I just have a couple of general questions to wrap things up.

Final Questions

- Based on your experience, what advice would you give to other students starting the enrollment process at [College Name]?
- Any other comments or suggestions on what [College Name] can do to make this type of decision-making easier for students in the future?

Thank you so much for your time; this was really useful feedback. We appreciate you taking the time to share your insights and opinions. Please let us know if you have questions or additional thoughts.

Additional follow-up questions/probes to encourage more in-depth responses throughout the discussion, when and if needed.

- Can you tell us more about that?
- What was that experience like? / How did you feel about that?
- How did you know what to do? / How did you figure it out?
- Did you have any questions?
- Where did you go for help?
- Was that important to you?
- Why was that?

5 | Performance Data Example: Focus Group Scenarios

Below, we provide example scenarios for three different types of self-advising topics: choosing a program of study, choosing a transfer school, and choosing courses. To cover the scope of programs, transfer destinations, and courses provided at your institution, you may wish to create several variations on each type of scenario.

Scenario Example 1: Choosing a Program of Study

YOUR PROBLEM: You've never been to college before, and you decide to start at [College Name] next semester. You've always liked the health field, and you hope to work in that field eventually. Your parents have agreed to help pay for your education, but they expect that when you finish, you'll be qualified to get a job with a starting salary of at least \$30,000. To get started, you want to declare a major (or program of study) at [College Name], but you have no idea which program you should declare, or how much education you'll need to meet your starting salary goal.

YOUR SOLUTION: Use the provided materials and the [College Name] website to: (1) search for a health-related program of study that will help you meet your salary goals, and (2) learn some basic information about this program that will allow you to answer the questions on the following page.

Sample Questions

1. What program (or major) should I pursue at [College Name]? _____
2. I can start taking courses right away in my health program.
 - Yes
 - No, there are prerequisites I need to take first.
3. The majority of the courses in my program can be completed at which campus?
 - [Location]
 - [Location]
 - [Location]
4. The health program in which I'm interested is a Selective Admission program.
 - Yes
 - No
5. When I've finished this program at [College Name], what type of degree will I have earned?
 - No degree; it's a noncredit program.
 - Certificate
 - Associate degree
6. What will I need to do with my education after finishing this program at [College Name]?
 - I'll be done; finishing the program at [College Name] should allow me to meet my goals.
 - I'll need to transfer to a four-year college, since I'll probably need at least a bachelor's degree to meet my goals.

If you decide that you will need to transfer, also answer the following questions about transfer.

7. How many of the credits from this program will transfer toward a bachelor's degree?
- All of my credits from this program will transfer.
- Most of my credits from this program will transfer.
- It depends on where I transfer and what my major is.
8. How do I learn about transferring (transfer guide, how to apply, admissions procedures, etc.) to another university/college?
- Visit the university or college I'm planning or considering attending
- Visit the Articulation and Transfer office at [College Name]
- Visit the Counseling and Advising office at [College Name]
- Visit the Career Services office at [College Name]

Scenario Example 2: Choosing a Transfer School

YOUR PROBLEM: You want to earn a bachelor's degree in journalism. You've already completed 6 courses at [College Name], and you decide it's time to transfer to a four-year school. You want a school that offers a program that will accept all 6 of your [College Name] courses as counting toward their journalism bachelor's degree. The 6 [College Name] courses you have already completed are:

Course	Grade
ENGL 1180	A
PSYC 1010	A
HUMN 1210	B-
ENGL 1190	B+
SPAN 1260	A-
PHIL 2200	C+

YOUR SOLUTION: Use the [College Name] website to search for information on journalism programs offered at transfer schools partnering with [College Name]. Choose the transfer school that will accept all the courses you've taken into its journalism bachelor's degree program (or if none of them will accept all, choose the school that will accept the most). Also learn some basic information about this transfer school that will allow you to answer the questions on the following page.

Sample Questions

1. What transfer college/university at the University Center seems like your best option?
2. Which of your completed courses will this transfer college/university accept as counting toward its journalism degree?
- ENGL 1180 PSYC 1010
- HUMN 1210 ENGL 1190
- SPAN 1260 PHIL 2200
3. What is the minimum cumulative GPA (grade point average) required for admission to this transfer college/university's journalism program? _____

4. What is the maximum number of [College Name] credits accepted by this college/university's journalism program?
- 32 62
 92 124
5. Does this college/university require you to complete an associate degree before you can transfer to their journalism program?
- Yes No

Scenario Example 3: Choosing Courses

YOUR PROBLEM: You've never been to college before, and you decide to start at [College Name] next semester. Eventually, you want to get an associate degree in business management. You're in a great situation: You did well on the placement test, so you can start college-level courses right away; and you can afford to go to school full-time. To get started, you need some basic information about the program, including which college-level courses you ought to take.

YOUR SOLUTION: Use the provided materials and the [College Name] website to search for basic information on the business management associate degree that will allow you to answer the questions on the following page.

Sample Questions

1. I can start taking courses right away in the business management program.
- Yes No, there are arts and sciences courses I need to take first.
2. The associate degree in business management requires the completion of at least one math course.
- Yes No
3. The associate degree in business management requires the completion of a PHED 2000 or higher class.
- Yes No
4. How many credits are required to complete the associate degree in business management?
- 18 24–25
 62 90

6 | Survey Example: Post-Orientation Survey Questions

First, please give us some information about your educational goals.

Have you chosen a specific area of study yet?

- No—I have no idea yet which area(s) I want to study.
- Maybe—I have two or three areas I’m particularly interested in, and I’m trying to narrow down my choice.
- Yes—I plan to study in the area of: _____
- Not applicable—I’m only taking a few courses here and don’t plan to focus on a particular academic area of study.

Are you interested in eventually transferring to a specific four-year school?

- No—I have no plans to go to a four-year school.
- Maybe—I might want to go to a four-year school eventually, but I’m not sure where.
- Yes—I eventually want to transfer to: _____

Now, please give us some feedback on the orientation you just completed. To what extent did the orientation help you understand...

The functions available in [online student portal]

- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

How to log into and use [online student portal]

- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

How to read and understand the course catalog

- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

How to read and understand a program plan

- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

How to read and understand the schedule of classes

- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

My options in terms of what academic areas I could study at [College Name]

- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

My options in terms of four-year schools I could transfer to

- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

Which courses I should take in the upcoming semester

- Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

How to register for courses

Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

How I can get more information on areas of study, transfer options, and which courses to take

Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

How I can get more information on employment and career options

Not at all helpful Somewhat helpful Very helpful

7 | Additional Resources for Survey Research

(1) Fowler, F. J., Jr. (Ed.). (2009). *Survey research methods* (4th ed., Vol. 1). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

(2) Rea, L. M., & Parker, R. A. (2012). *Designing and conducting survey research: A comprehensive guide* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

8 | Recruitment Example: Inviting Faculty and Staff to Participate in a Work Team

From: [Key Administrator]

Subject: [Research Study]

As most of you know, the college has been working with the [Research Institute] on a project entitled [Project Name]. [4–5 sentence description of project and goals]. We would like to include you on the work team to address [focus of working group].

I have attached a draft work plan for the group which includes a tentative timetable. My hope is that the first meeting can be used to better define the work plan and develop a realistic timeframe to accomplish the tasks. The goal is to implement a redesigned [outcome] for [date] so that [rationale for date]. The [types of recipients of this email] copied on this email are the content experts and have been working toward [outcome] for some time. I look forward to collectively brainstorming on what [focus of working group] at [College Name] can be like in the future.

[Short description of the team's leadership and role in project.] We are inviting you to become members of this team, which would consist of the following members, if you all choose to participate:

- [List of all individuals included on the email and invited to join, along with their titles.]

I would like to hold a kickoff meeting on [date] in [location] from [time] (lunch will be served).

Please confirm your willingness to serve on this work-team as well as your availability for the kickoff meeting on [date]. We do have an aggressive timeline to follow to make substantive changes to [outcome] by [date], but we must adhere to this timeframe in order to meet the requirements of the grant.

To get everyone engaged, I encourage you to review what other institutions are doing. While some of you may be familiar with what other institutions do, I have been reviewing interventions that peer institutions have implemented, including [programs/schools undertaking similar change initiatives with brief sentence linking them to potential focus of the work group]. I encourage you to review this information prior to the meeting on [date of meeting].

I would be happy to answer any questions, should you have any. I look forward to working on this exciting project.

Thanks,

[Key Administrator]

9 | Meeting Agenda Example

[Name] Work Team

[Date]

[Time]

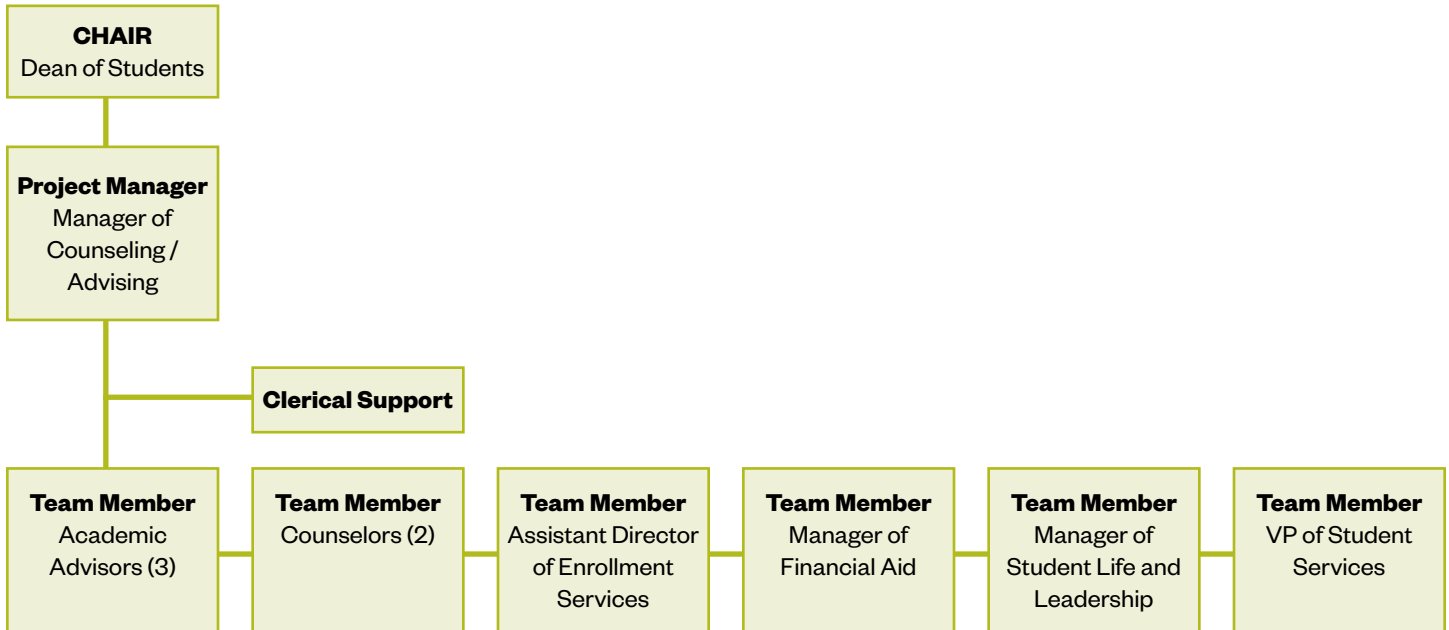
[Location]

AGENDA

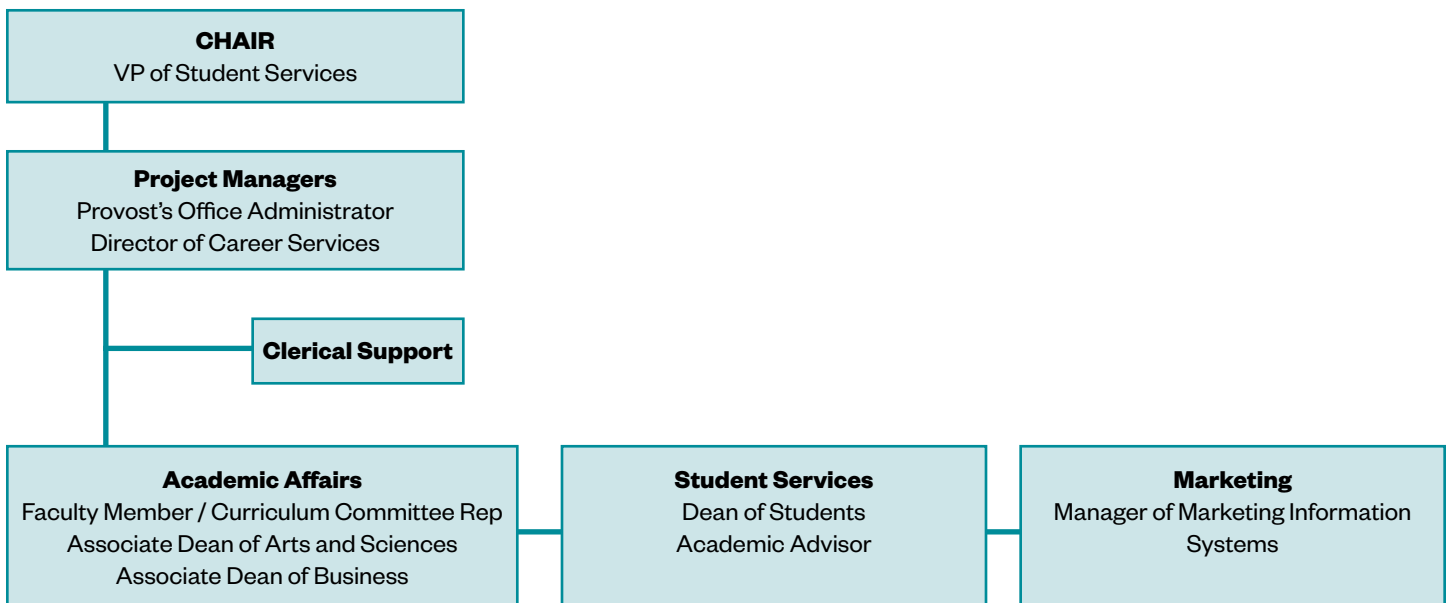
1. Welcome and introductions
2. Review of past meeting minutes
3. Report back on action items from last meeting
 - a. ABC—[name of team member responsible]
 - b. XYZ—[name of team member responsible]
4. Overall work team update
5. Other work team update [if project divided between teams]
6. Institutional project update
7. Project time tracker forms [Remind team members to submit if tracking time and effort on project.]
8. Next steps [Identify action items for next meeting.]
9. Future meeting dates and time
 - a. Next meeting: [date, time, location]
10. Other
11. Adjourn

10 | Organization Charts for Macomb's Work Teams

Orientation Work Team



Information Review Work Team



11 | Old vs. New Entry Process Guide

Old Entry Process Guide: “7 Easy Steps”

Admission & Registration—7 Easy Steps

Step 1—Admission

- Apply online at www.macomb.edu or complete an Application for Admission and submit to the Enrollment Office in G Building at South or Center Campus.
- Submit final high school transcript (current high school students may apply without final transcripts).
- (Optional) Submit transcripts from all colleges previously attended.
- (Optional) Attend a “Getting Started at Macomb” workshop.
- For questions regarding the admissions process, please contact the Enrollment Office or visit www.macomb.edu

Step 2—Financial Aid

This step may be optional

- Students are encouraged to file for financial aid to help with educational expenses.
- The college participates in a variety of financial aid programs including scholarships, grants, loans, and employment opportunities.
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This can be completed online at www.fafsa.gov. Macomb’s School Code: 008906
- Please contact the Financial Aid Office at finaid@macomb.edu for further information regarding the application process and eligibility requirements or visit www.macomb.edu

Step 3—Photo I.D.

- All new students are required to have a Macomb OneCard Student I.D.
- Following application for admission, go to the Student Life & Leadership Office to have your photo taken (a valid driver’s license/state I.D. is required). Offices are located in G110 at Center Campus, and K251 at South Campus.
- The Placement office will confirm your photo has been taken prior to checking you in for placement testing. You must have your photo taken PRIOR to your placement test.

Step 4—Placement Testing

- Most new students to Macomb will be required to complete placement testing in mathematics, reading and English (writing).
- Results will be utilized to recommend courses appropriate for the student’s skill level.
- Students are encouraged to do some preparation prior to testing.
- The Placement Testing office can provide test information and links to Internet practice tests and other resources.
- Some students may be exempt—please consult the Schedule of Classes. Testing will take approximately two and one-half hours.

Step 5—New Student Orientation/Course Planning Session

- Following placement testing you must visit the Counseling & Academic Advising Office for your New Student Orientation options.
 - Option 1 New-Student Orientation Online, you must have a minimum reading placement score of 60 or higher

on the COMPASS Test or 38 or higher on the Asset Test. You will need to attend a Course Planning Session on campus following the completion of your online orientation.

- Option 2 New-Student Orientation On-Campus, you will meet with professional staff that will help you become familiar with the college, interpret your placement testing scores, discuss the registration process, and assist with the selection of courses for your first year.
- A list of orientation sessions for students with special needs or for those who do not meet the minimum COMPASS scores required to complete the New Student Orientation Online can be obtained in the Counseling & Academic Advising Office or online at www.macomb.edu (search Orientation).
- Please consult the Schedule of Classes for additional information.

Step 6—Register for Classes

- Following orientation, students are ready to register for classes.
- Students can register online by using WebAdvisor on our website at www.macomb.edu, click on WebAdvisor Login. Tutorials on how to use WebAdvisor and Search for Sections are available on www.macomb.edu keyword search: Tutorials.
- Registration Statements are available on WebAdvisor. They will also be available at the Enrollment Office upon request with proper photo I.D.
- This registration option allows students to add or drop courses and obtain account balances.
- On-campus Registration allows registration in person and is only offered a few days before the beginning of classes each term.

Step 7—Pay Tuition and Fees

- Your tuition and fees can be paid at the time of registration or by the payment due date.
- We accept cash, checks, money orders, MasterCard, Visa, and Discover in person and MasterCard, Visa, Discover, and checks on WebAdvisor.
- Cashier’s office is located at South Campus in G building, room 302; and Center Campus in G building, room 131. Drop boxes are located at the Cashier’s offices during regular business hours.
- Sponsored Billing Authorization forms must be mailed or faxed to the Financial Services office prior to payment due date.

Other Things to Consider—Tuition, Fees, and Books

- Please pay particular attention to the due date for tuition and fees.
- Failure to pay by the established date may result in classes being dropped, and you will have to register again.
- The first term you register for a credit class, a Macomb OneCard will be sent to you by mail. Use the card to visit www.MacombOneCard.com and activate a refund preference.
- Books, supplies and other materials can be purchased through the bookstore or online. Please bring a printout of your class schedule at the time of purchase. Be certain to retain purchase receipts in the event items need to be exchanged or returned.

New Entry Process Guide: “Easy Start 1-2-3”

How to Get Started:

Macomb Easy Start 1-2-3

*PLEASE NOTE: Starting at Macomb is easy, but it will take more than one day to complete these steps

1 Discover Online (at your own pace)

You can always AskAnAdvisor (email/call/visit) if you have any questions during this step.

Complete an Application

- Apply online at www.macomb.edu or complete an application for admission and submit to the Enrollment Office located in Building G at either campus.
- Please request an official transcript from all colleges previously attended be sent to the Enrollment Office at Macomb Community College.

Apply for Financial Aid

- Complete the online Free Application for Federal Student Aid at www.fafsa.gov. Macomb's School code: 008905.
- The college participates in a variety of financial aid programs including scholarships, grants, loans, and employment opportunities. For more information, please visit Macomb's Financial Aid website at www.macomb.edu/financialaid.

Participate in New Student Orientation

- All students must complete online orientation and cannot do so until the Macomb ID number is issued to the student via their admission letter. It is self-paced and can be completed from any computer with internet access. It will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete. Visit www.macomb.edu/nso.
- Computers are available in the Student Services Labs located at Center Campus in Building H Room 108 and South Campus Building H Room 219. Visit Macomb's website for hours of operation (keyword search: student resources).

Prepare for the Placement Test

- Students are strongly encouraged to prepare prior to placement testing. For sample test questions, practice tests, or more information, visit www.macomb.edu (keyword search: COMPASS Resources)
- The Placement Test is not a pass/fail test, although results in writing, reading or math may impact the courses in which you can enroll.

2 Connect On-Campus (approximately a half-day to complete the following)

PLEASE NOTE: A valid driver's license/state I.D. is required

Meet with an Academic Advisor for "Starting at Macomb"

- Visit Counseling & Academic Advising located in Building H at either campus.

Obtain a Macomb OneCard

- Go to the Macomb OneCard Office to have your photo taken for your Macomb OneCard (student ID). Offices are located at Center Campus Building G Room 110 or South Campus Building K Room 251. Card will arrive by mail two weeks after you register for your first classes.

Take the Placement Test

- Testing is on campus and given on a walk-in basis. It will take approximately two hours to complete. Placement Testing is located at Center Campus Building H Room 113 or South Campus Building H Room 217. Testing is on campus and given on a walk-in basis. It will take approximately two hours to complete.
- Results in writing, reading or math may impact the courses in which you can enroll.

Participate in a Course Planning Session

- Following placement testing, meet with a counselor to discuss your placement test results and determine your class options. Go to Center Campus Building H Room 103 or South Campus Building H Room 316.

3 Advance at Macomb Online or On-Campus (Could be completed directly after step 2)

Register for Classes

- Students can register online through WebAdvisor at www.macomb.edu by clicking on the WebAdvisor Login button. Tutorials on how to use WebAdvisor and how to Search for Sections are available on www.macomb.edu (keyword search: WebAdvisor tutorial).
- Be sure to carefully review Terms & Conditions which you agree to at the time of registration. (www.macomb.edu/termsconditions)

Pay for Classes

- Tuition and fees must be paid at the time of registration or by the payment due date. General Payment Information is available on www.macomb.edu (keyword search: payment)
- Pay online using Check, MasterCard, Visa, or Discover
- Pay in-person using cash, check, money order, MasterCard, Visa, or Discover at the Cashier's office located at Center Campus Building G Room 131 or South Campus Building G Room 302.
- Sponsored Billing authorizations can be submitted to Cashier's Office, faxed to Financial Services office at 586.445.7020, or e-mailed to regpay@macomb.edu

Acquire Books and Supplies

- Books, supplies, and other materials can be purchased or rented through the college bookstore or on our website. Bookstores are located at Center Campus Building P or South Campus Building K.
- Please bring picture ID and a WebAdvisor printout of your class schedule noted as "My Class Schedule/Registration Statement" with you to the bookstore.

Complete the Introduction to ANGEL

- ANGEL is Macomb's Learning Management System that provides web access to your grades, course syllabus, and materials.
- Visit <https://macomb.angellearning.com> for login information.
- Complete the Introduction to ANGEL for on-ground classes.
- Complete the Introduction to Online Learning for online classes. (keyword search: online learning)

12 | Old Academic Catalog vs. New Academic Catalog

Old Catalog

EDUCATION: PARAPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

South and Center Campuses

The Education-Paraprofessional Education program provides students with the basic competencies, knowledge, and skills requisite to seek employment in local school districts as educational paraprofessionals. Principles of learning, human growth and development, and instructional strategies for working with special needs students are included. The practicum component gives students the opportunity to directly apply classroom theory in a K-12 educational environment.

To participate in the practicum students must have a criminal background check and physical including a TB test. Student health care is not provided by the college or practicum site.

Students interested in combining the goal of an Associate Degree with further study to become teachers are encouraged to work closely with an academic advisor or counselor to plan their courses. Teacher education programs are highly selective. Academic performance at Macomb (GPA) will be a significant factor in admission to a university program.

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS (Minimum 62 Semester Hours)

A. Career Preparation and Related Courses

COURSE	COURSE NAME	SUGGESTED SEQUENCE	SEM HRS
EDUC-1010	Paraprofessional Theory & Practice	X	4.0
AND			
ENGL-1180	Communications 1	X	4.0
OR			
ENGL-1210	Composition 1	X	3.0
AND			
PSYC-1010	Introductory Psychology	X	4.0
MATH-1280	Mathematics for Education 1 ¹	X	4.0
AND			
ENGL-1190	Communications 2	X	4.0
OR			
ENGL-1220	Composition 2	X	3.0
AND			
PHED-2070	Wellness-Focus Prevention, Intervention, Treatment of Disease, Illness & Injury	X	3.0
PSYC-2210	Child Growth & Development	X	3.0
ECHS-1580	School-Age Care	X	3.0
ENGL-2640	Children's Literature	X	3.0
SPCH-1060	Speech Communication	X	3.0
ECHS-1520	The Exceptional Child	X	3.0
HUMN-1700	Comparative Religions	X	3.0
AND			
PSYC-2310	Educational Psychology	X	3.0
OR			
POLS-1000	Introduction to American Politics	X	4.0
OR			
SOCY-1010	Principles of Sociology	X	4.0
			42.0-44.0

¹ MATH-1000 is a prerequisite for MATH-1280 but may be waived if student has a college mathematics course comparable to MATH-1000 or equivalent high school college prep course or an acceptable score on a placement exam.

B. Arts and Sciences Componentmin 18 sem hrs Refer to Degree & Certificate section online.

- Group I requirement is met by successfully completing ENGL-1180 or ENGL-1210
- Group II requirement is met by successfully completing MATH-1280
- Group III requirement is met by successfully completing PSYC-1010
- Group IV requirement is met by successfully completing HUMN-1700 or ENGL-2640
- Group V requirement is met by successfully completing PHED-2070

C. Elective Courses 18-20 sem hrs Suggested Elective Courses

In programs where the combination of required Career Preparation and related courses and Arts and Sciences courses do not equal a minimum of 62 semester hours, an academic advisor, counselor, or program advisor will aid in the selection of appropriate elective courses.

COURSE	COURSE TITLE	SEM HRS
BIOL-1000	General Biology 1	4.0
ECHS-1100	Early Childhood Development	4.0
HIST-####	any History course	3.0-4.0
MATH-1290	Mathematics for Education 2	3.0

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

New Catalog

Programs

ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN EDUCATION: PARAPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Career preparation and related courses (require successful completion of a minimum of 62 credit hours)
 To create an individualized program plan, go to www.macombedu and log-in to WebAdvisor > Current Students > Academic Profile > My Program Plan

CORE COURSES: COMMON DEGREE CORE REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN EDUCATION: PARAPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION					
OPTIONAL SEMESTER	COURSE	COURSE TITLE	PREREQUISITE	COREQUISITE	CREDIT HOURS
SEMESTER 1					
-	EDUC-1010	Paraprofessional Theory & Practice	-	-	4.0
SEMESTER 2					
-	ECHS-1580	School-Age Care	-	-	3.0
SEMESTER 4					
-	ECHS-1520	The Exceptional Child	ECHS-1100 or PSYC-2210 or permission of program coordinator	-	3.0
					10.0

COMMON DEGREE CORE REQUIRED ARTS AND SCIENCES COMPONENT FOR ASSOCIATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN EDUCATION: PARAPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION (MINIMUM 36 SEMESTER HOURS)

OPTIONAL SEMESTER	COURSE	COURSE TITLE	PREREQUISITE	COREQUISITE	CREDIT HOURS	
SEMESTER 1						
-	Group I requirement is met by successfully completing ENGL-1180 or ENGL-1210					-
-	ENGL-1180	Communications 1	Placement, or ENGL-0050 or EAPP-1500 with grade C- or better	-	4.0	
-	ENGL-1210	Composition 1	Placement, or ENGL-0050 or EAPP-1500 with grade C- or better	-	3.0	
-	Group III requirement is met by successfully completing PSYC-1010					-
-	PSYC-1010	Introductory Psychology	-	-	4.0	
SEMESTER 2						
-	Group II requirement is met by successfully completing MATH-1280					-
-	MATH-1280	Mathematics for Education 1 ¹	Grade C or better in MATH-1000 or an equivalent college course, or an acceptable score on a placement or prerequisite exam	-	4.0	
-	ENGL-1190	Communications 2	ENGL-1180	-	4.0	
-	ENGL-1220	Composition 2	ENGL-1210	-	3.0	
-	Group V requirement is met by successfully completing PHED-2070					-
-	PHED-2070	Wellness-Focus Prevention, Intervention, Treatment of Disease, Illness & Injury	-	-	3.0	
-	PSYC-2210	Child Growth & Development	PSYC-1010	-	3.0	

13 | Old Orientation vs. New Orientation

Old Orientation




Things you can expect to learn about today:

- Certificate and Degree requirements
- How the transfer process works
- Resources available to assist with your success here at Macomb
- How to read the Catalog & Schedule of Classes
- How to register for your classes each semester
- What your Placement results mean
- Your first semester class schedule



New Orientation



Macomb
Community College

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

Welcome

Getting Started

Counseling & Academic Advising

Placement Testing

Student Resources

Academic Assistance/Learning Centers

Library

Career Services

WebAdvisor

Financial Aid

Campus Publications

Educational Goals

Transfer

Choosing Classes

Enrollment Services

Tuition, Fees & Payment

Textbooks

Macomb OneCard

Your First Semester

Student Rights & Responsibilities

College Policies

Grading Policy


Mobility Policy

Withdrawal Policy

Student Resources

Academic Assistance/Learning Centers

Located in the library at each campus, the Academic Assistance/Learning Centers support classroom instruction with a wide range of video, audio, computer software, books, and laboratory materials. Staff is available to help students determine which resources might be best for their particular need. The centers provide an area for students to study individually or in small groups. Tutor-led study sessions are available for many subjects such as mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics.



Macomb New Student Orientation Academic Assista...

Hannah Eversole
Macomb Student

0:00 / 1:45

Student Success Seminars

These seminars are offered throughout the fall and winter semesters to assist students in developing academic skills that will support their success in class. Proven techniques are presented about a variety of topics such as time management, test anxiety, and how to take notes during a lecture. The underlying theme of the seminars is to learn to “study smarter, not harder.” The seminars are free and are offered midday and in the evening. Schedules are posted online, in the Academic Assistance/Learning Centers, and in the current schedule of classes. A limited number of sessions run during the summer.

This practitioner packet was prepared by Shanna Smith Jaggars, Jeffrey Fletcher, and Georgia West Stacey of the Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, and by Jill M. Little of Macomb Community College. Funding was provided by The Kresge Foundation.

Suggested citation: Jaggars, S. S., Fletcher, J., Stacey, G. W., & Little, J. M. (2014). *Simplifying complexity in the student experience: Appendix — Sample documents*. New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.