Enhancements to Advising

In 2015, focus groups emphasized that advising on our campus was significantly under-resourced and not meeting the needs of our students. To promote student success, we realized it was critical to enhance advising so students, along with their staff and faculty advisors, have the tools they need to succeed. Students were looking for more opportunities to connect with their advisors and improved resources to support them in selecting courses to help them on their path to a degree. Advisors wanted to feel better equipped to advise students and needed additional advising staff to serve our sizable student population. Students, faculty, and staff all required enhanced technology to effectively facilitate success. In May 2016, our plan for implementation included hiring new advisors, offering advanced training to SJSU faculty and staff, and providing updated technology that would support the achievement of academic and professional goals.

More Opportunities to Connect

San José State hired 20 new advisors (with a plan to recruit 10 more in 2017-18), bringing the ratio to one staff advisor for every 476 students and one faculty advisor for every 503 students, an overall ratio of one advisor for every 245 students.

The colleges created a set of common advising goals to ensure quality and consistency in student experiences. Student Success centers are collaborating to engage students in proactive educational planning, to track academic progress and more readily identify students in need, and to support at-risk students to surmount obstacles.

Enrollment Services is revising the processes of evaluating transfer credit, test credit and graduation applications while increasing enrollment access to the courses students need to fulfill their degree requirements.

GradesFirst is now used at numerous success centers across campus for scheduling and tracking advising, tutoring and mid-semester grades checks.

For those not involved in the GradesFirst mid-semester check, faculty can refer students for academic support through the Spartan Connect program.

We launched a comprehensive advisor professional development program with four, half-day sessions per semester. These sessions included topics on degree requirements and university processes, inclusive advising, university resources and communication strategies.
Enhancing Technology to Support Advising

In fall 2017, approximately 33,000 students enrolled in classes at SJSU. Of these students, 4,559 are incoming freshmen and 4,491 are transfer students. These increasing numbers highlight the critical need for SJSU to engage technology in supporting students.

As a leading university in Silicon Valley, SJSU will benefit from technology that provides academic and graduation resources for students. SJSU launched My Graduation Pathway to Success (MyGPS - www.sjsu.edu/mygps). MyGPS is a suite of technology planning tools for students. With MyGPS, students can see clear four-year or two-year paths to graduation and find the class sections that best fit their schedules. Lastly, to further provide students with the resources they need, SJSU re-designed the Advising Hub and created advising videos and pre-orientation Canvas sites for new freshman and transfer students.

Conclusion

SJSU defines our success by the achievements of our students. Advisors provide an intimate line of communication for students’ academic and personal needs and have a positive impact on their achievement. University advising enhances campus relationships among SJSU students, faculty, staff, and administrators and reflects an institutional desire to provide academic excellence and personalized education to our students.