



Using Data in Guided Pathways Reform

Santa Rosa Junior College

Their Approach

Santa Rosa Junior College's Office of Institutional Research set out to create a self-service data culture across the college in order to democratize data-driven decision-making. College researchers worked with students, faculty, and staff to build a cadre of "citizen researchers." They are not data professionals, but SRJC's citizen researchers are now trained to ask questions, find data, and use data in making decisions. "Our model is grassroots because that's what fit on our campus," says KC Greaney, director of institutional research. She contrasted it with the more formal data coaching model at Bakersfield College.

What They Did

The IR staff created an interactive online tool that lets citizen researchers extract the data they need, customize reports, and create visualizations. So that researchers and other faculty, staff, and administrators can use information that is not public, the IR staff established a ticket system for requesting reports. To launch the system, IR conducted workshops for the president's cabinet, in new faculty trainings, at various committee meetings, and at Student Success Coach meetings, adapting the content to each group's needs. Following the launch, the first coordinated effort to retrieve and analyze data and then make data-driven decisions focused on diagnosing enrollment problems and finding creative solutions. Citizen researchers also worked with Student Success Coaches and faculty to design activities and curriculum to gather qualitative data about elements of the student experience at SRJC that may affect retention and success. One faculty member developed a course assignment where students studied persistence and completion rates and proposed improvements.

What They Learned

- Data can feel threatening especially in times of budget and class cuts.
- It is important to make the case for how data can support the growth and development of strong programs and services.
- Making meaning from data requires training. When faculty, staff, and students are trained on building a narrative with data, they are empowered to explore problems in ways that lead to more productive discussion and more creative solutions.

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SANTA ROSA
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Integrating Student Supports

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Their Approach

Santa Rosa Junior College built its Student Success Programs around four main goals. Students should (1) be invited and welcomed; (2) be guided and supported; (3) be engaged and empowered; and (4) succeed and complete a certificate, degree, or transfer. Student services leaders felt students were most likely to utilize college resources such as counseling, health services, and clubs, and to participate in student success programs such as Umoja, Puente, and EOPS if they built a relationship with a peer early on. So they chose a peer-led coaching model and the Starfish case management tool to create a peer connection for each student before the student steps into a classroom.

What They Did

Each new SRJC student now receives a call during the summer from a peer coach, who connects them with the SRJC app. Coaches also send a welcome newsletter, host a Welcome Day event, staff a campus Welcome Center, and schedule a 30-minute appointment with each incoming student. Coaches, who receive leadership training in the summer and meet weekly throughout the year, discuss each student's interests; recommend applicable supports, clubs, and learning communities; and help students understand why it's important to meet with a counselor. If a student hasn't seen a counselor, the coach walks them to the counseling office to schedule an appointment. Each coach is assigned to an academic "house" and works with the campuswide director of student success and a classified staff manager to identify which students in the house need high-touch, mid-touch, or low-touch peer support, including students' equity-related characteristics in their criteria. Coaches also design, organize, and lead monthly workshops on retention themes. During midterms and finals, they organize "jams" where students can get help and food and can re-energize.

What They Learned

- Building relationships is key: Students who connect early with a peer are more likely (than the district average) to complete matriculation steps and stay in school.
- Support for student coaches is critical: They learn about becoming leaders, understand their roles (as connectors, not advisors), and can debrief, problem solve, and coordinate.
- Serving as a peer coach can be life-changing: Coaches develop leadership skills, build confidence, and solidify a focus and direction in their academic careers.

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