The College has utilized teams to work on the Title III Student Engagement through Informed Support (SEIS) project. Those teams design, plan, assess and improve the project components. Now teams will decide what the Virtual Learning Commons (VLC) will look like in the new MySCCC portal, what our faculty advising and early alert systems will look like, and just how many mini-online tutorials we will have.

So far, the teams have:

• Created a VLC that provides connections to important support services, located in the MySCCC portal.
• Created and assessed the new system of 24/7 online academic support.
• Produced and collected hundreds of course-appropriate mini online tutorials (learning objects) now available to students and instructors.
• Approved course-related material as academic support in each learning area through the cooperation of instructors and their departments.
• Created online learning areas for: Biology, College Seminar, Communications, Math, Psychology and Reading.
• Planned new learning areas for pilot in Fall 2013 for Philosophy, Spanish and English.
• Streamlined the process of enrollment and admission to improve workflow and achieve a shorter wait time for students.
• Began installation/integration of a college-wide remote appointment-making system.
• Created an online professional development workshop series that keeps the college community up-to-date with national advising best-practices.
• Created a new listing of College resources in an advising handbook, so that anyone at Suffolk can help students in their navigation of the college experience.
• Began development of a faculty advising system that will help increase the connections between students and faculty—a proven tool for increasing engagement, success, retention and persistence.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
Page 2  Aligning online and onsite academic support to reach students.
Page 3  Faculty Advising: “You’re already doing it!” How can we coordinate it, and assess it to make it better? Does faculty advising have objectives and student learning outcomes?
ALIGNING ONLINE AND ONSITE SUPPORT TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS

One of our goals is to ensure that all students are connected to the specific kinds of academic support they need. We will find out if we are reaching them through continuous assessment.

There are few institutions that can offer this level of academic support. With the new VLC and two new writing centers at the Eastern and Michael J. Grant Campuses, we now have the capacity to offer academic support to all students, with either in-person tutoring in the daytime, or late-night study with Learning objects. The VLC also connects students to information about all on-campus academic learning centers.

The learning objects library will be expanded by mini-grants to include:

- Learning objects that support additional courses not yet covered by the VLC.
- Information on possible majors, programs, or fields of specialty.
- An introduction on how to seek academic support at the College.
- Learning objects that help students understand the value of a Liberal Arts education.

For more information on how to apply for a Title III SEIS Mini-grant, email Muriel Lanier at laniern@sunysuffolk.edu or call 631.851.6369.

STUDENTS AND FACULTY LEARN AND WIN IN THE VLC

Early results seem to indicate that Virtual Learning Commons users have 20% better learning outcomes. As the numbers of learning objects aligned with courses in the VLC increase, students have a better chance of finding what they are looking for, and finding engagement and success. As students learned how to navigate the VLC in Fall 2012, they had a chance to win $50 worth of iTunes. Seen here is Dr. Marlene DuBois, Title III Coordinator, Juan Garlitos, winner of the VLC Treasure Hunt, and Dr. James Sherwood, Executive Dean, Ammerman Campus. As faculty members learn the skills to create learning objects for students through a mini-grant program this spring, they can win $500. Proposals are due in the Title III office by March 29th.

WHY IS THIS MAN SMILING?

Does he even work here? “I.T. Genie” began to show up in the beginning of the Spring 2013 semester, appearing in the strangest places, and has been incessantly solving problems, making helpful suggestions, and generally being very nice. If someone doesn’t speak to him soon, he will end up joining way too many committees.

One of the goals of the Title III SEIS project was to boost Suffolk’s foundation in technology. Through the grant, we have been fortunate to be able to hire a portal developer to build and maintain the VLC and to benefit from additional technology support personnel on campus.

However, this “I.T. Genie” does not seem to be on the payroll. At least no one can find him in Banner. Then again, many at the College would agree that when one is not found in Banner, one has a much better shot at a normal life.

Can I.T. Genie help us improve academic support? Perhaps. Faculty can now apply for $500 Title III mini-grants to learn how to make learning objects and help support learning.
FACULTY ADVISING:  
YOU’RE ALREADY DOING IT!

Do these tasks sound familiar?

• Engaging students in thinking about how their curriculum is the foundation of an education.

• Engaging students in thinking about how their educational plan connects to their life goals.

• Motivating students to improve their academic performance for success in meeting academic goals.

• Pointing students toward the myriad of other College resources to ensure the best chance for their success.

• Providing connections to networks of professionals outside of Suffolk for programs and jobs.

• Writing letters of recommendation for student scholarships, advanced programs and jobs.

We tend to think of helping students with a SAIN report as “advising,” but it’s much more. To learn more, see MySCCC > VLC > For Instructors > Advising as Teaching and Learning.

THE RACE TO SUCCEED

Title III Student Engagement through Informed Support helps accomplish some of the College’s key goals. All of the project components of the grant have a direct connection to the College’s newly approved 16 Measurable Institutional Objectives (MIOs). These MIOs will help guide the College’s Strategic Plan for the next five years. This means that Title III SEIS will not only help students succeed, it will also help the College succeed.

We’re all in this together. The College has promised to institutionalize the programs within the Title III project. Once our assessments show that the programs actually work the way we wanted them to, we’ll see an electronically enabled enrollment and admissions process, a reorganized and improved faculty academic advising system, an early warning-student intervention system, a repository of online learning objects for 20 high enrollment gateway courses, and a unified system of on-line and in-person student support resources in a Virtual Learning Commons.

Let’s all work together!

The good news is that the project has a great deal of self-determination in deciding how things develop on the ground. The project has achieved all of its major objectives, and has had great feedback from its external evaluator, Dr. Katherine German. See the Title III SEIS website for more information on the projects and the periodic evaluations:

http://department.sunysuffolk.edu/TitleII-ASEIS/index_7387.asp