Middlesex Community College
Business Process Review
of
Enrollment Services

First Draft Report: November 19, 2014
Final Report: December 10, 2014
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Introduction

The focus of this document is regarding the results of Business Process Reviews conducted at Middlesex Community College during September-October 2014. Comments and observations regarding existing practices and recommendations for future consideration are included for the student service areas at MCC.

The highlights of this document include:

- Participants in the Business Process Review sessions
- Observation of processes, systems and tools currently used
- General assumptions used in recommendations
- Processes, based on best practices, to consider in the recommendations

Participants in the Business Process Reviews

CampusWorks facilitated Business Process Review sessions during September 15-18, 2014 and September 29-October 2, 2014. The following table identifies the participants who engaged in the BPR discussions and the areas represented:

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<td>Phil Sisson</td>
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<td>Kathleen Sweeney</td>
<td>Dean, STEM</td>
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<td>Laiman Wong</td>
<td>Graphic Designer</td>
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<td>Helen Wang</td>
<td>Programmer</td>
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**Recruiting**
September 29, 9:00 - 4:00 LF Court
- Ann Marie Dodge  
  Admin Asst I
- Duangjai Chantaprasert  
  Admin Asst I
- Fay Hourihan  
  Admin Asst I
- Jillian Freitas-Haley  
  Director, Admissions
- Marilynn Gallagan  
  Dean, Admissions
- John Giblin  
  Programmer
- Paula Pitcher  
  Vice President

**Admissions and Placement**
September 30, 9:00 - 4:00 LF Court
- Duangjai Chantaprasert  
  Admin Asst I
- Nick Cody  
  Admin Asst I
- Hourihan Fay  
  Admin Asst I
- Jillian Freitas-Haley  
  Director of Admissions
- Kathrina Gaffron  
  Testing Specialist
- Marilynn Gallagan  
  Dean, Admissions
- Bud Hall  
  Programmer
- Judith Bonczar  
  Admin Asst I
- William Kelleher  
  Testing Specialist
- Anatoly Levin  
  Testing Coordinator
- Mary Foley  
  Admin Asst I
- Audrey Nahabedian  
  Dean, Enrollment Management
- Paula Pitcher  
  Vice President

**Academic Advising**
October 2, 9:00 to 1:30 LC 302
- Clea Andreadis  
  Associate Provost
- Kaitlynn Arvidson  
  Academic/Career Counselor
- Pat Bruno  
  Associate Dean
- Ivette Caletz  
  Academic/Veterans Counselor
- Marilynn Gallagan  
  Dean, Admissions
- John Giblin  
  Programmer
- Rob Kaulfuss  
  Professor, Economics
- Diane Malley-Parcella  
  Academic/Transfer Counselor
- Cathy McCarron  
  Department Chair, English
- Alissa Mendes  
  Coordinator of Advising
- Audrey Nahabedian  
  Dean, Enrollment Management
- Christopher Parcella  
  Admin Asst I
- Lynda Pintrich  
  Department Chair, Criminal Justice
- Paula Pitcher  
  Vice President
- Adrienne Ray  
  Academic Counselor
Executive Summary

The staff and faculty of Middlesex Community College are dedicated to the success of their students. Harboring a powerful system like Banner with the desire to help students in any and all ways has produced an organization with genuine desire and intent. Unfortunately this has also led to processes that have become cumbersome, outdated, and often rich with paper-driven procedures, as evidenced in the Current Processes/Observations section of this report. Positive opportunities for both aligning and streamlining business processes within the enrollment area to maximize efficiencies, reduce paper-dependencies, and embrace technologies were the purpose of the review.

Within all of the student service areas, the MCC student is the center of the universe. Encouraging staff and faculty to enable their students to embrace the era of student self-service is critical – finding a new balance of personal contact and service while promoting students to be independent thinkers and decisions makers will be the biggest challenge. Providing students, staff, and faculty with recommendations based on best practices in higher education, coupled with the tools and processes designed to successfully guide implementation, is the basis of the Best Practices/Recommendations in the second section of this report.

Presented later in this report, the Best Practices/Recommendations section includes:

- Promoting online self-service for students throughout all areas
- Aligning terminology to assist applicants and students in navigating processes
- Utilizing videos to efficiently explain information and processes, all through a familiar delivery method
- Recommending implementation of a campuses-wide document imaging system, to enhance communication and information in numerous ways
- Enhancing the Student Portal, to promote better and faster communication between students and staff/faculty
- Investigating services like TranscriptsOnDemand and GoToCollegeFairs.com for faster student services
Current Processes and Observations

Student Life Cycle - Degree Seeking Student

The first step of the Business Process Review by CampusWorks is to review and understand current processes utilized in each area. The following observations were noted during each of the BPRs, as offered by participants in each session.

Recruitment and Admissions

- **Recruitment activities.** The Admissions office, in conjunction with the college’s marketing department, generate interest and awareness of academic offerings through various methods, including:
  - Driving inquiries and applicants to the college’s website
  - Establishing and maintaining relationships with area High School guidance counselors
  - Participating in events at local area high schools
  - Using college advertising and messaging via social media
  - Hosting open houses and information sessions directed at both general and selective academic programs
  - Providing campus tours and campus virtual tours to inquiries and applicants

- **Admissions activities.** Currently, admission to the non-selective academic programs is open door, with no application fee. In many cases, because the entry barriers are very low, the first step taken by an interested potential student is to apply to the college. Cultivation of most potential students begins with this application. Strategies used to move applicants toward enrollment include:
  - Contacting applicants through emails, personal phone calls, and robocalls until applicant enrolls or until designated start term has passed
  - One Admission personnel is assigned to the applicant until enrollment occurs, however, any Admissions personnel may assist a student.

- **Methods of Application.** There are several ways that an applicant may apply:
  - Paper application from Admissions. Although it is not encouraged, students submitting a paper application can declare no major.
    - required for Dual Enrollment Academy
    - required for international
    - required for most selective programs; all health and some non-health programs depending upon admission requirements
• If applicant has applied to selective program and is not admitted, in many cases applicant must complete another application for general admission or to reapply for another start term
  o Online application on MCC website
    ▪ use for degree-seeking
  o Quick Registration Form
  o Phone: QuickAdmit process with information entered by EC staff
    ▪ all entered as undeclared major/evening students only
    ▪ if degree seeking, required to submit paper or online application
  o Paper registration form via Credit Registration Form in Advising Schedule booklet (not an application; students with a UN major)
  o Paper registration form via Credit & Non-Credit Registration Form in Corporate and Community Education & Training Schedule booklet
• Estimate 50% submit paper applications
• Access to student portal occurs when applicant is admitted
• Access to DegreeWorks occurs when applicant is admitted
• At Lowell, Admissions office is located on third floor; at Bedford, Admissions office is located on first floor but behind FA and SIC; neither is optimal access for inquiries
• Mobile application for applying is not available
• Enrollment Planning and ROI. Currently, new student enrollment goals are developed based on trend data and limited external scan information, with little academic involvement.
  o Admissions No reporting of inquiries to applicants, nor any historical comparisons
  o Recent purchased leads that have been prospected are not considered providing adequate ROI
  o Each event is evaluated for estimated ROI to determine if it should continue or be repeated
  o MCC has recently appointed an Enrollment Planning committee to oversee and share information

Placement Testing
• All degree-seeking, non-degree and HS dual-enrollment students must complete placement testing Accuplacer for appropriate placement in English and math courses, and TEAS for health programs
  o Students who have completed a college-level English and/or Math class are exempted from placement testing in those areas
• Applicants can schedule placement testing online, or by phone through Enrollment Communications or in person at Student Information Centers.
• Testing office administers Accuplacer off-campus at high schools, the Charter School, and employer locations.
• Testing office administers various tests beyond Accuplacer and TEAS, such as A&P Exam, ELL placement and challenge exams. However, TEAS is only used in the Nursing program admission process.
• New and transfer students must attend Getting Started Orientation to register
• Test scores and relevancy to student performance are reviewed with the student by the Testing administrator and academic advisor.
• Applicants may use Ramp-Up math program modules to progress into college-level math; faculty and staff have difficulty in explaining the Ramp Up progression and appropriate registration procedures to students.

Transfer Credit & Equivalencies

• Transfer courses are applied to the student record only when official transcript is received.
• No hold is placed on record if transcript is outstanding
  o Notes pertaining to credits accepted, date reviewed and reviewer are entered on the official copy.
  o Transcripts are not scanned due to the lack of document imaging system; a pilot process for scanning transcripts is currently in place, however not within a document imaging system.
  o Evening/weekend/online students – Enrollment Communications asks about prerequisites and allows student to register based on what the student says he/she has taken.
• Course substitutions are approved in academic area and updated in DegreeWorks
• Transfer credit received in various ways.
  o Admissions evaluation of transcript
  o Advising evaluation of transcript
  o Enrollment Specialist receives transcript through interoffice/US mail
  o Electronic transcripts received are printed and directed to Enrollment Specialist for evaluation
  o Military transcript, evaluated by Associate Dean or Veterans advisor
  o HS articulation agreement, based on courses taken for credit at MCC
Credit for Prior Learning (Life Experience), where certificates, portfolios, challenge exams, licenses, credentials are evaluated as equivalent to credit by academic area

- CLEP/DANTES/ACE exams: equivalency evaluated by Enrollment Specialist
- CED Center for Education Documentation, evaluating foreign transcripts: equivalency evaluated by Enrollment Specialist
- AP Advanced Placement scores evaluated by Enrollment Specialist

Degree Audit

- New academic programs, courses and changes are authorized through the MCC Curriculum Committee with FSA approval.
- Enrollment Management/Registrar is responsible for updating programs, course descriptions, and prerequisite descriptions in catalog and Banner.
- Faculty is currently using Acalog as the primary source.
- Institutional Research Dean has been historically responsible for setting up DegreeWorks scribes; this responsibility is now also undertaken and shared with Associate Registrar as partners.
- DegreeWorks is assigned when an admit code is assigned.
  - Can see what-ifs
  - What-ifs not necessarily current year
  - Student cannot change their programs online
- Getting Started Orientation – where student learns of DegreeWorks from advisors in group session.

Academic Advising

- Recent organization change from Enrollment to Academic area.
- Current/historical policy requires all continuing day students to meet with an advisor to determine appropriate sections and receive PIN# to register.
- New and Transfer students must attend Getting Started Orientation to register; at orientation, students are registered by advisors and staff from the Student Information Centers.

Registration

- New and Transfer day students must attend Getting Started Session to register first time.
- New students need to have placement testing completed to determine courses to take.
Transfer students may need to take placement test if English or math courses are not transferable

- Registration cycle:
  - Priority registration for returning students takes place in April for Fall, and November for Spring
  - General returning registration continues through the first week of classes each semester; new and transfer students register in June for Fall, and in December for Spring
  - Online, evening and weekend can register once registration is open for the semester

- Use three-part NCR registration form: 1-regISTRATION/2-advising/3-student; needs advisor and student signatures; updates demographic information; once signed off by advisor, student can register online if has PIN# or by phone with EC if has PIN# or in the Student Information Center.

- Evening/weekend/online students can register online, by phone or in person
  - No PIN# required
  - May also be Quick/Admit and register by phone through Enrollment Communications

- Non-credit students register via phone through the Student Information Center.

- Batch registration for Business/industry sections.

- Batch registration for Health program students, done by cohort.

- Registration for off-term courses is manual.

- Registration Advising Schedule is paper printed each semester for credit and non-credit; credit copy is 90+ pages including advertising and announcements throughout document and includes course descriptions.

- Currently, 29 active holds may prevent registration.

- When a course is cancelled, the cancellation process is conducted in collaboration with the registrar’s office; Enrollment Communication staff adjusts the student schedules and contacts the student via phone or email.

**Grading & Academic Standing**

- Faculty have option to submit mid-term grades for deficiencies only; put directly into Middlenet; student is sent letter from Access database.

- Faculty post final grades via Middlenet; Registrar runs report to identify missing grades and works with Deans to contact faculty.
Math Department runs process to review RampUp courses via file loaded from Pearson.

Faculty can authorize administrative withdrawal during the semester by sending an email to the Registrar or at the end of the semester by submitting a final grade of W.

Registrar is responsible for documenting Fresh Start amnesty once it has been approved by Associate Provost.

Dean’s list standing is determined each semester for full-time students, and by accumulated hours for part-time students.

- Recognition of achieving Dean’s list is made via email to students from the President and Provost

Academic standing issues of academic warning, probation and suspension are reviewed each semester; Banner is automatically updated with status and academic affairs sends letters to students.

Registrar is responsible for running incomplete prerequisite report after grades are posted.

- Student sections are reviewed and modified to drop section for which prerequisite is not met and to register in section of incomplete prerequisite
- Send notification of schedule change
- Students in health programs are reviewed and notified by appropriate department

Section/faculty evaluations

- Full time faculty evaluations are completed according to UWashington model (used by all MA community colleges)
- Part-time faculty evaluation lists are created using Banner
- Online & flexible study courses are created using data from an Access database
- Extensive reporting is done using evaluation data

Student transcripts are issued via Enrollment Communications department and the Student Information Centers.

Degree Completion/Graduation

- No graduation fee is charged
- Students can print graduation application online, must complete it manually and submit to the Registrar’s office
- Degree completion review process:
  - Enrollment Communications manually inputs graduation application into Banner
  - Enrollment Specialist reviews DegreeWorks for complete/pending/missing and confirms information for diploma and commencement
- Enrollment Specialist notifies Enrollment Communications of status
- Enrollment Communication sends letter to student and copy to Enrollment Specialist
- Completed packets are filed by Enrollment Specialist
- Graduation ACCESS database from Banner is utilized by Registrar and Enrollment Communications for running reports of students in pending status, to confirm after grades are posted; this database is also used to run commencement and marketing reports
- Student survey questions appear on graduation application; results are compiled manually
- No notification is sent to student when degree completion occurs
- Follow-up survey conducted one year later by Institutional Research via paper; online surveys will be used beginning in 2015
- Commencement activities are managed by Registrar and Enrollment Communications
  - Commencement program line of march
  - Graduation speaker cards
  - Diplomas
  - Photographers list of graduates
  - Newspapers lists of graduates
  - Graduate information used in Trustees’ Report

Transcript Processing

- Requests are received and processed by the Student Information Centers and Enrollment Communications
- Request for official must be made by paper or fax
- Less than 20% are maintained on microfilm (from 1970-1988) and not in Banner; upon request, these student records are manually printed in Enrollment Communications via a microfiche machine
- Charge $2 per transaction; tally sheets are completed by Enrollment Communications and the Student Information Centers and forwarded to accounting

Academic Scheduling

- Development of Course Schedule
  - Preference sheets for semester sections are sent to full time faculty from Assistant Deans and Deans; seniority list is received from Human Resources
  - Availability forms are sent to part-time faculty from Assistant Deans and Deans
    - Contract issue with pattern of 2 courses taught by part-time faculty
- Part-time faculty teaching more than 3 courses must be reviewed
  - Rollover schedule is produced by registrar on spreadsheet, including number of seats per section that ran, cancelled courses and room assignments. Registrar meets with Department chairs to discuss, analyze, and determine:
    - Sections needed
    - Comparison to preference sheets
    - Room assignments
    - Changes are updated in red on spreadsheet
  - Registrar is responsible for checking courses and assignments
    - if there is an issue, contact Dean or Assistant Dean
    - Put sections in Banner
    - Put through R25
    - Send adjustments back to Dean or Assistant Dean via spreadsheet
  - Authorize printing of schedule and send copy to marketing for posting PDF to website
- Schedule is currently built by semester
Best Practices and Recommendations

Administrative Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on best practices utilized by colleges and universities, as observed and implemented at other CampusWorks clients. These recommendations, referred to as the TO-BE model by CampusWorks, are tailored specifically for Middlesex Community College, and are intended to provide guidance to streamlining the processes, resulting in more consistent and responsive experiences for MCC students.

1. Clarify student classifications. On the MCC website and throughout the college, student designations of Day and Evening are used to direct applicants/students based on “when they are planning to take classes during the day” instead of categories which will inform them of next steps to be taken and/or with whom they should speak. Helpful clarification for students to determine how/where/who they should interact with to conduct business at MCC should be posed as clarifying questions in the student’s perspective:
   - Degree-seeking – I want to pursue an associate’s degree at MCC and/or a program that will transfer to a 4 year college or university
     - High school – I am currently in high school
     - International – I am an international student and plan to attend on an I-20
     - Returning – I have attended MCC before
     - Transfer – I have attended another college or university, and may have courses that may transfer to MCC
     - All other students would then be general degree-seeking students, pursuing either an open-door or selective academic program
   - Guest – I am attending another college or university, but want to take a class at MCC to transfer back to my institution
   - Non-degree seeking – I want to just take one course at MCC without pursuing a degree program

Adding these clarifying questions will allow Marketing and Recruiting to direct efforts and resources to specific groups based on these initial categories, as well as help Advising to direct services to all degree-seeking students, not just those attending in day classes.

2. Embrace and promote student self-service in all areas. In today’s world, students live in the world of smart phones and tablets, where daily communication and transactions occur easily. MCC staff and faculty, with the supporting tools of Banner, enhanced website and student portal functionality, and innovate videos, have the opportunity to
enable students to have a more self-directed experience by expanding the uses of these tools. Examples of more self-directed activities include:

- Intuitive online/mobile admissions inquiry and application form, where questions are prompted to the applicant based on how he/she answers a sequence of questions
- Instructional, yet innovative and engaging, videos which provide guidance to students on activities, such as:
  - How to plan and successfully follow their academic plan
  - How to register online for course sections based on their academic plan
  - How and where to conduct business, such as needing a course waiver, applying for financial aid or making a payment

3. Purchase and incorporate document imaging college-wide. Without document imaging, processes involving collection, copying, and maintaining paper documents become overwhelming and burdensome. Best practices of allowing the applicants/students to electronically file “paperwork” to the imaging system directly via student portal is optimal, promoting an improved student experience by allowing college-wide departments to view documents online in real time, while also improving efficiency by allowing the applicant/student to upload documents electronically instead of submitting paperwork.

4. Design and implement working dashboards to organize work. Optimal office efficiency is driven by knowing what work needs to be done, and by knowledge of progress achieved verses goals. In all areas, having simple dashboards that highlight progress and areas needing attention would be valuable for both staff and executives.

5. Consolidate Enrollment Communications and Student Information Center departments. Many of the processes and services performed by these two areas offer direct assistance to students, and in many cases, overlap in responsibility and required knowledge base. Combining these departments under one manager would assure improved consistency and reduce redundancy, thus positively impacting overall services to students. In addition, physically relocating these departments into a Welcome Center environment that provides an easy and friendly reception on each campus is recommended and best practice.

6. Rename and promote the student portal as a primary communication vehicle. Many of today’s students are technology-driven, and providing them with a contemporary, intuitive, and informative student portal with a single sign-on is a natural outreach to students. Allowing applicants and students to gain information, transact business such as uploading documents, and communicating with staff and faculty through the portal are best and recommended practices.
Student Life Cycle – Degree Seeking Student

The following section identifies various recommendations, and is outlined according to phases within the student life cycle of a degree seeking prospect/student. This map depicts this cycle, as optimally envisioned at Middlesex Community College:

Middlesex Community College Degree Seeking Student Life Cycle - Overview

Recruitment & Admissions

1. **Build interactive and intuitive steps to inquiring and applying to MCC.** Currently on the MCC website, an interested candidate can request information by first determining whether they want information about credit or non-credit courses and then completing a long form with many personal questions or by applying online or completing a paper application. Since MCC has an open-access admissions policy, often the first contact is...
when the candidate completes the application. Based on this trend, the best practices applicable to MCC include:

- Consolidate inquiry and admissions form, asking cascading questions
- If possible, have them set up an account with sign-on and password
  - If account is not possible, determine and design minimal questions based on information needed by MCC to establish inquiry record
  - Selection first: I am ready to apply now or I need more information
    - If apply, go to online application
    - If need info, ask minimal questions:
      - Last and first name
      - Method of contact desired: phone, email, text, appointment
      - Degree-seeking or not
        - If not, ask if guest/visiting or not
      - Area of academic interest
      - Month and day of birth
- Assure inquiry and application form is available via all mobile devices

2. **Expand use of mobile devices** (IPADS, tablets) at counter and events, to allow inquiries to input their information if they do not have their phone or device with them.

3. **Develop online college fairs** to promote online learning opportunities and for inquiry convenience to obtain information about MCC.

4. **Investigate service by gotocollegefairs.com when service expands into Massachusetts.** This service allows high school students to provide and authorize demographic information to be released to colleges after registering and attending a college fair registered with this service. The benefits of this service is that the student is completing their information once electronically (instead of completing cards at each table at the event), which can then be automatically uploaded into the college’s system.

5. **Enhance and promote online application.** Currently MCC allows an applicant to apply via an online application, paper application, or by phone as a service provided through the Call Center. Best practices encourage applicants to submit their application via the website, which creates an account on the student portal where the student may receive information and submit documents. At MCC, the following recommendations will expand the online application process:

   - Narrow pathways to apply at MCC to online (preferred) and paper application only
     - Discontinue Quick Admit; encourage applicants to complete the application online and engage with chat assistance if needed
     - Discontinue publishing Quick Registration form in any college publication
- Develop online application and tracking for
  - International applicants
  - Applicants to selected programs
  - Dual Academy Applicants
- Promote online applying to move towards goal of 90% as best practice
  - Utilize and record (on Banner) preference questions that will help to identify planning for scheduling and enrollment projections:
    - Preferred location to attend
    - Preferred full time or part-time enrollment
    - Preferred day, evening, and/or online courses
    - Anticipated full time, part-time, or not employed

6. **Create and communicate access to student portal at the time of application.** Best practice of connecting with applicants and encouraging them to become part of the college community should occur at the time of application, instead of at the time of acceptance. This change will also allow the applicant to see his/her student portal with valuable information online sooner, such as missing items needed for admission and financial aid, and upload documents through the portal as well.

7. **Develop and employ automated cultivation process using communication management functionality.** Most effective cultivation methods used in higher education are based on student interests and responses.
   - Develop and employ a system-driven tracking plan using Communications Management, which will identify required missing items, post items to the student portal, and will systematically remind applicants of the items needed
     - Build in student response actions which identify interest or disinterest in continuing process (having them “raise their hand” to know that they are still interested in MCC)
     - Customize messages based on specific student interests and timelines related to those interests

**Placement Testing**

1. **Establish a Testing Committee charged with strengthening processes to assure and improve student success.** All degree-seeking, non-degree seeking, and high school dual applicants are currently required to complete placement tests to determine appropriate math and English courses in which to enroll. The cutoff scores used in these scenarios are most effectively based on demonstrated correlations between testing score results and successful course grades. Best practice used to manage this process is a college-wide committee, represented by academic, administrative, and research personnel who
review and confirm testing parameters based on documented studies, usually conducted by institutional research. Clear communication to students regarding the standards expected and their testing results is optimal practice. Additional services needed, such as tutoring and other intervention steps, should also be reviewed and recommended by the Testing Committee, to assure anticipated student success.

2. **Review policy on number of retakes allowed and cutoff scores.** Best practice is to regularly evaluate the allowed number and frequency of retakes, support services offered and completed between retakes, and cutoff scores based on performance.

**Transfer Credit & Equivalencies**

1. **Assure evaluation of transfer course work occurs during admission process, or at the latest, during first semester of enrollment.** To assure that enrollment in appropriate courses occurs, the evaluation of transfer credit should be optimally completed as early as possible. Use of evaluating unofficial transcripts is common practice, provided tracking for the official transcript is reliable. Recommendations for transfer evaluations include:
   - Identify and track prior course work taken by a student as a missing item, displaying on the student portal
   - Evaluate transfer credit in admissions via the transfer equivalency library on Banner
   - When necessary, utilize unofficial transcript for initial evaluation, with automated follow-up for official copy
     - Input transfer equivalencies as pending transfer credit
     - Update to actual transfer credit upon receipt of official transcript
     - Place registration hold on student when requesting official transcript, and automatically remove when all official transcripts have been received; allow only first semester of registration without official copy
     - Build reminder systems using communication management to remind student of missing item (official transcript) via student portal and student’s preferred method of communication

2. **Establish single ownership of transfer equivalency library on Banner and single authorized evaluators based on transfer work type.** In best practice, the ownership of the library of courses from outside institutions considered as equivalents to MCC courses are maintained by the registrar. Determination of equivalencies should be authorized by:
   - Transfer courses: enrollment specialist and academic department if needed
   - Special Exams (CLEP/DANTES): enrollment specialist
   - CED International Transcripts: enrollment specialist
o Military courses: associate dean
o Credit for Prior Learning: director

Course equivalencies should be added to the transfer equivalency library by the registrar, and communicated to admissions and advising.

3. **Utilize electronic workflow to manage equivalency evaluations when academic department expertise is needed.** Review of transfer courses not yet evaluated and recorded in the Banner equivalency library and which cannot be determined by the registrar should be evaluated by the appropriate academic department. This process may be efficiently handled and documented using electronic workflow initiated by the registrar and forwarded the academic department for review and approval.
Degree Audit

1. **Utilize and promote DegreeWorks academic plan as primary guidance for section selection during registration.** Enabling students to understand and follow their academic plan as presented in DegreeWorks is best practice.

2. **Move responsibility for creation and maintenance of academic plans within DegreeWorks to registrar’s office.** Currently at MCC, new and existing academic plans are maintained within the Institutional Research department, whereas degree confirmation utilizing the DegreeWorks Academic plans is authorized by the registrar’s office. Best practice is to maintain all aspects of the academic plans within the same office, for consistency and knowledge base.

Academic Advising

1. **Promote self-service guidance for course selection, using DegreeWorks.** Currently all “day students” are required to see an advisor to determine courses in which to enroll and to obtain a required PIN to register. Best practice enables students to self-select appropriate sections to register in based on the sequence identified in DegreeWorks.

2. **Eliminate using PINs as a barrier to self-service registration.** All students should be self-enabled to register without a PIN unless a unique circumstance requires the student to seek assistance from advisor or other office.

3. **Create videos to guide students on how to access, understand, and utilize DegreeWorks.** To enable students to register without the currently required advising appointments, adequate training and understanding of how and what DegreeWorks has to offer is best communicated through video segments (such as YouTube). Having videos available for multiple viewing and reviewing by students has been successfully demonstrated as best practice, both in comprehension by the students and time efficiency for both staff and students. Video examples include:
   - How to read and understand my academic plan in DegreeWorks
   - How to select appropriate courses using my academic plan in DegreeWorks
   - How to use the “what-ifs” option if I’m considering changing programs
   - How to help me determine when I need an appointment with an advisor

4. **Request, authorize and record course substitutions on Banner/DegreeWorks prior to registration, to promote successful self-registration by students.** Posting documentation of substitutions on document imaging system will also promote shared communication regarding approved substitutions.
Registration

1. **Promote self-service online registration through the student portal.** As previously discussed, best practice is to enable students to register online using their academic plan in DegreeWorks as guidance for appropriate courses in which to register.

2. **Minimize holds that prevent online registration, and utilize rules to assign and remove restrictions.** In best practice, students who have circumstances needing attention which may be resolved should be tracked through the ERP using logic and rules to assign and remove restrictions based on changes to the system record, as opposed to manually removing and adding registration holds. In addition, all holds should be clearly communicated to students via the student portal along with instructions on how the student may address the specific hold, including any self-service options.

3. **Improve and define registration priority dates to support enrollment planning.** Best practices in setting registration priority groups include considering giving early designated times to specific groups to promote earlier enrollment, such as:
   - Special enrollment dates & events for cohort and selective programs (especially those needing additional enrollment)
   - Priority registration for new students
   - Priority registration for graduating students
   - Priority registration for dean’s list students (perk)

4. **Require all non-degree (evening/weekend) students to adhere to prerequisites.** In the interest of promoting the optimal class experience for both the faculty and students, all students need to be confirmed as academically prepared for the course content as defined by course prerequisites. Best practice is to evaluate all course equivalencies via transcript or grade report prior to registration in any course requiring prerequisites, regardless of student type.

5. **Create videos to guide students on registration process.** As mentioned previously, assisting students with guidance videos is best practice in improving self-service for students and increasing efficiency for staff. Examples of registration videos include:
   - How do I register for courses/sections?
   - How do I know if I have the correct prerequisites for a course?
   - How to know if the course I’m selecting applies to my degree program?
   - What should I do if I have a registration hold on my records?

6. **Publish academic schedule online from Banner, not a static PDF copy.** Optimal student service is the ability to view the academic schedule in real-time, which is accomplished by displaying the schedule online from Banner. In addition, maintaining a dynamic schedule on the student portal and encouraging students to register online eliminate the need to print a paper schedule of classes booklet.
Grading and Academic Standing

1. **Link Banner and LMS grading.** Best practice is to expand use of the LMS to all courses, with semester-long grading occurring in the LMS electronic gradebook. Optimally, faculty should be able to identify final grades within the LMS and have them read directly into Banner without rekeying the grades.

2. **Move administrative responsibility for section/faculty evaluations to appropriate academic departments.** It is common practice for the distribution and collection of section/faculty evaluations to take place in the academic area, where electronic results may be tabulated, reviewed, and communicated as needed.

3. **Consolidate the determination of Dean’s List candidates to one standard evaluated on hours earned.** Currently, student performance as determined as the Dean’s List is evaluated differently for a student enrolled full time (evaluated for that semester) compared to a student enrolled part-time (evaluated based on hours earned). Best practice in this area is to consistently determine academic standing based on hours.
completed combined with GPA attainment, regardless of enrollment status. In addition, acknowledging academic attainment through perks such as early registration access, recognition events, and publication in local media promote excellence achieved by students and the college.

4. **Utilize communications management to communicate good and poor academic standing.** Notifying students by mail and on the student portal are optimal practices in this area.
   - Generate official notification via paper letter generated using communication management
   - Notification to prompt student to view student portal is also recommended
   - Appeal forms and process steps should also be available on the student portal, with deadlines and how to upload appeal items through portal

**Degree Completion/Graduation**

1. **Identify students near completion of degree requirements as pending graduates,** replacing need for graduation applications. Best practice in the area includes automatically comparing academic degree plans and requirements to student records, and identifying matches within parameters (usually credit hours earned by program) to identify students close to graduating. Utilizing this process allows the college to be proactive in communicating with pending graduates, both regarding the completion of their degree program, diploma requirements, and details regarding commencement ceremonies and services.

2. **Congratulate graduates immediately upon degree completion.** Sending a letter of congratulations to students from the President acknowledging their achievement, and thanking them for being part of the college community, is an easy practice known to demonstrate incredibly good relations. Utilize communications management to produce this notification upon degree posting by the registrar each semester.
Transcript Processing

1. **Investigate transcript request and production service such as TranscriptsOnDemand.** Responding to transcript requests and producing official transcripts require time and personnel, which can be replaced by services such as TranscriptsOnDemand. Current best practices include:
   - Contracting for service to receive the transcript request and authorization to release his/her student record to the service and to the requested third party
   - Request is then sent electronically to the college to confirm no restrictive holds are on the student record
   - Transcript data is transmitted to service for production and mailing of transcripts, either by paper copy or electronically

2. **Consolidate responsibility for student record/transcript creation and generation under Registrar.** Currently, request for transcripts and the printing and mailing of said
transcripts are overseen by the Enrollment Communications department. Due to the sensitive nature of the academic record, best practice maintains this responsibility within the registrar’s office.

3. **Enter all microfilm transcripts on Banner.** Currently, many years of older student records maintained on microfilm are not contained on Banner, which sometimes promotes an issue of locating the appropriate film to service a transcript request. At a minimum, each student’s name, SSN, birthdate, and comment that the student’s record is on microfilm should be added to Banner. Optimally, former student’s entire record should be entered and maintained on Banner.

### Academic Scheduling

1. **Develop annual schedule in ERP, published on website.** To promote planning by students, best practice in academic scheduling has moved from semester-by-semester to annual schedule development and publication.

2. **Distribute faculty preference forms with preprinted information.** Currently, faculty receives blank preference forms each semester; best practice is to prepopulate each form with existing information from Banner and/or Acalog before distributing to faculty.

3. **Maintain Coordination of Academic Schedule by Registrar.** Best practice in the area of academic schedule management is appointing a primary owner to the production schedule (commonly the registrar), who is responsible for:
   - Development of the initial schedule, which is modified based on information available
   - Collecting internal and external information which may impact the academic section offerings
   - Updating initial schedule with proposed changes and additions
   - Authorizing final publication of final semester schedule and registration

4. **Publish actual room assignments one week before classes begin.** Best practice in this area is to reserve flexibility for classroom assignments to prior to the beginning of semester (as opposed to at the time the schedule is first published) to maximize opportunity for room changes based on enrollment results, reduce unnecessary administrative functions (like printing and posting room changes), and limiting confusion for students.