

DCCCD Retention Best Practice Submission Form

Across the district there are many successful practices that contribute to the retention of students. As the district begins to develop a greater emphasis on its retention strategy, all locations are asked to identify and submit information about successful retention programs and activities. Please complete the following information on selected practices.

College/Location: **Richland College, School of Humanities, Fine and Performing Arts**

The Retention Best Practice is primarily supported by what college/location area:

Instruction X Student Services Administrative

Combination of areas: (Please list)

Contact Person: **Dr. Sherry Dean, Executive Dean, 972-238-6251**

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Retention Best Practice Title: **Dedicated Music Major Student Advising**

Retention Best Practice Area of Focus:

Math STEM Honors College Other Music

Retention Best Practice Executive Summary: approximately 50 words (Please use additional pages for a detailed description)

Beginning fall semester 2006, all incoming freshmen music majors are being advised by full-time music faculty. Due to the complexity of the Music Field of Study degree, there is a need to meet one-on-one with prospective music majors to explain the scope of the program. Access to Datatel for the Associate Dean of Performing Arts and the Director of Instrumental Music provides the ability to access student records, monitor class availability, and register students for appropriate courses in both the music major track and core courses. The Field of Study degree in Music is unique, in that students must be placed in the correct courses during their first semester in order to stay on track to complete the curriculum in two years. Misadvised students can potentially lose an entire year if placed on the incorrect level of music major requirements. Every effort is made to assess the level of musical competency during the initial advising session with the music advisor. This is a difficult task, even for seasoned music professionals, and cannot be accomplished by general advisors.

As we refine the advising program for music majors, the faculty plans to standardize placement exams for the Music Theory sequence, formalize auditions for music ensembles, and work to place students in the correct level of private music study.

As each student moves through the music major curriculum, they meet with their advisor prior to pre-registration for the next semester. During this session, the faculty member assesses student progress in the current semester, addresses any problems, and plans the appropriate courses for the upcoming term. Music majors are divided equally between

the two advisors with vocalists and string players being advised by the Associate Dean of Performing Arts and instrumentalists and guitarists meeting with the Director of Instrumental Music.

Please describe the evaluation measures utilized to support this initiative as a best practice.

We are assessing process validity and improvement by surveying students regarding their perception of the system beginning semester 2008. Based on individual student feedback and faculty observations, the program will be further modified to positively impact the music major student population.

Provide a summary of the results, including data (such as trend lines over time) to show how it impacted retention and is a best practice.

Current anecdotal evidence indicates that this personalized advising has increased student satisfaction and success. A long history of music students being enrolled in wrong classes via the at-large registration process has virtually disappeared. Current music major students are on track for program completion and are in classes that will allow for seamless transfer to area four-year institutions. Faculty/student interactions have increased in both number and quality as majors are quick to ask for assistance when needed.

What would be needed to replicate the practice at other DCCCD colleges?

- Dedicated faculty and staff who are trained to register and advise students.

Cost to implement this practice (financial and human):

The costs of implementation are minimal.