Staff and faculty at Greenfield Community College recognize that college is more than coursework and exams and know that academic advising plays a crucial role in students’ college experiences. Now, thanks to funds provided by a five-year federal grant, GCC’s advising program is even more effective at helping students achieve their academic and career goals. The Title III Part A U.S. Department of Education grant helped enhance academic advising at GCC by providing a new, web-based computer system for accessing student records, expanding professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, and creating new ways for advisors to engage with students. With funds from the grant, GCC developed Banner Self-Service, a user-friendly web-based system for accessing student records and more easily tracking how students are progressing with their degree requirements. Banner allows students and faculty to plan their academic programs and more easily track how students are progressing with their degree requirements.

In addition to providing a more efficient system for accessing student records, the grant impacted the culture of advising at GCC, expanding the perception of advising to include more than simply helping students register for courses. In their 2009 evaluation of the grant, Market Street Research, Inc., reported that advisors spend much less time with their advisees going through the paperwork or processes required for registration. With much of the labor involved in these processes shifted to quick, streamlined electronic systems, more time is freed up to talk with students about their interests, issues academic goals, career goals and options, and personal issues that may affect their work at GCC. “Such ‘big picture’ conversations are more satisfying for both students and advisors,” the 2009 evaluation said. “My expectation of myself is higher than what it’s been in the past. I don’t have as many moments when there’s a student at the door and I’m thinking, ‘Oh god, I don’t have time for this.’ Now I welcome the moments when students come to the desk.”

Key to the success of the grant were the work of the grant’s staff, a steering committee, and a pilot group of advisors called the “A-Team.” The grant’s staff included administrators and specialists in advising and technology. The steering committee included faculty, staff, and students who met regularly and provided advice and support to the professional staff working on the project. The A-Team was the self-named group of advisors of primary liberal arts students who accepted the invitation to participate in the Title III pilot group. They formed 15 special interest groups to work on projects they identified and designed to improve advising opportunities for all GCC students. The A-Team’s projects included an advising website with early progress reports, an advisor development manual, peer advising and family orientation. Reflecting on the impact of the grant, GCC President Bob Pura said, “What started out as a desire to simplify got much more complicated. Our college culture has been changed for the better and our students’ experiences for all GCC students. The A-Team’s projects included an advising web page, early progress reports, an advisor development manual, peer advising and family orientation. Reflecting on the impact of the grant, GCC President Bob Pura said, “What started out as a desire to simplify got much more complicated. Our college culture has been changed for the better and our students’ experiences for all GCC students.”

For more information about the Title III Grant at GCC, visit the GCC Foundation, free and open to the public. Visit gcc.mass.edu/alumni

### Upcoming Events

**Choose a Calling, Not a Career... Careers in Science/Engineering**

- **Tuesday, October 13, 12:30 p.m.**
- North 332, Main Campus

**Financial Aid: What it is, how to get it, and what to do with it!**

- **Wednesday, October 14, 11-12 Noon**
- North 332, Main Campus

**Thank You to Our Pacesetter Businesses for Supporting GCC!**
Anonymous • Bank of Western Massachusetts • Champion Business Company • Entergy Corporation • Ford Lincoln Mercury of Greenfield • Greenfield Savings Bank • The Recorder • The Sandi Companies • Small Corp • Subway of North Greenfield • and Mary Mitchell

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**NEW! WEEKLY CAMPUS TOURS**

**Tuesday, 9 a.m. & Wednesday, 3 p.m.**

For further information, call 413-775-1288

**FALL TRANSFER FAIR**

October 13, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
East Building, Main Campus

Over 52 transfer representatives from public, private, and select colleges and universities will be on campus to meet with students and discuss the process of transitioning to a four-year institution. Questions, call 413-775-1287. No appointment necessary.