

North Iowa Area Community College
Professional Development Program for Community College Counselors
A Plan for Continual Quality Improvement
5-11-2009

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Desired Program Impact:

Through active participation in the program, NIACC counselors will educate and support students in academic, career, and personal areas by facilitating the discovery and achievement of each individual's potential.

Program Vision:

Create an on-going, proactive program of professional growth and development for Community College counselors. This includes programs, events and activities, addressing the following areas:

- **Counseling Methodology and Student Interactions**
- **Standards and Practices for Community College Counselors**
- **College Service**
- **Personal Growth**

Program Features:

Orientation and Support
Mentoring
Sharing Successes
Individual Flexibility
Institutional Focus

Program Goals:

1. Provide an opportunity for counselors to tailor the program to their individual needs.
2. To promote professional standards and ethical conduct as outlined by the ACA (American Counseling Association).
3. To foster leadership development.
4. To enhance communications among professionals and strengthen college, community, and statewide support groups.
5. To forge a strong connection between counselors and faculty.
6. To develop or enhance counseling and advising skills, facilitate better student learning.
7. To respond proactively to societal changes and strengthen our ability to be change agents.
8. To strive for balanced, productive and fulfilling lives.

Values:

- Human Development
- Lifelong Learning
- Counseling as a Profession
- College Involvement
- Building Community

The NIACC Professional Development Program recognizes that a counselor's professional development is a dynamic process extending from initial preparation over the course of an entire career. Professional counselors are responsible for planning and pursuing their ongoing learning, for reflecting with colleagues on their practice, and for contributing to the profession's knowledge base. Our institution is responsible for investing in the growth of knowledge for individual counselors and the profession as a whole, and for establishing policies, resources, and organizational structures that guarantee continuous learning opportunities for counselors.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

All aspects of this plan will be in place when approval for a new evaluation process is received.

HIRING**Practices:**

College hiring practices will ensure the following credentials for fulltime and part-time counselors.

1. Counselors have attained a master's degree from an accredited program in either Counseling or Student Personnel with Counseling.
2. All hiring is in compliance with the faculty accreditation standards of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of College and Schools.
3. At the discretion of the Vice President for Student Services or appointed designee, a candidate who has not attained the minimum hiring requirements specified in Iowa Code may be hired on provisional status. Those hired on provisional status must have attained the minimum hiring requirements within the time frame set by the Vice President for Student Services, before the contract can be renewed.

Record Keeping:

The college's Human Resources office will maintain records related to the hiring process, specifically

1. Records documenting actions related to hiring new counselors in accordance with state and federal laws.
2. Records documenting a counselor is making progress toward or has met minimum hiring standards specified in Iowa Code.

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION FOR NEW COUNSELORS

NIACC Minimum Identified Counselor Competencies:

The college will ascertain that new fulltime counselors have met the following competencies:

- **Student Learning** The counselor understands how students learn, and provides learning opportunities that support their intellectual, career, and social development.
- **Diverse Learners** The counselor understands how students differ in their approaches to learning, both individually and culturally, and creates instructional opportunities that are equitable and adaptable to diverse learners.
- **Academic Planning** The counselor assists the student in planning out their academic courses and providing information to help foster student success.
- **Career Guidance** The counselor will be aware of a variety of career guidance approaches and will assist a student in accessing the career resources.
- **Transfer Planning** The counselor will keep abreast of all Iowa transfer colleges and universities to provide an understanding of how credits transfer within the state. The counselor will be knowledgeable of articulation agreements that NIACC has formed.
- **Counseling Services** The counselor understands student development concepts and uses appropriate assessments and counseling techniques to provide academic, career, and personal counseling.
- **Crisis Intervention** The counselor understands the dynamics of a crisis situation and helps meet the concerns of all involved by working closely with students, staff, administration and community agencies.
- **Communication** The counselor uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques, and other forms of symbolic representation, to foster active inquiry and collaboration, and support interaction in educational settings.
- **Assessment** The counselor understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate student learning.
- **Professional Development** The counselor continually reflects on and assesses the effects of his or her choices and actions on others, and actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally by maintaining professional competency.
- **Collaboration, Ethics, and Relationships** The counselor fosters professional relationships with students, colleagues, and the community to support learning.
- **Technology** The counselor uses appropriate technology in the planning, delivery, and assessment needs of students.
- **Community College** The counselor understands the mission and history of community colleges and the structure and scope of the North Iowa Area Community College.
- **Contribution to the College** The counselor contributes to the institution through active participation in departmental and institutional tasks.

Orientation

To forge a strong connection between new counselors and the college, the college will provide orientation activities as listed below.

1. Monthly participation in Counselor meetings.
2. Meetings throughout the year to cover other NIACC policies and concerns with Human Resources Director.
3. Required participation at a progress meeting at mid-term in both fall and spring semester.

Mentorship Program

In order provide continuing support to new NIACC counselors, they will be assigned to a veteran mentor to help acclimate them to NIACC culture, divisional needs, and the NIACC approach to quality counseling and student learning.

The Quality Counselor Plan serves as the bridge between where prospective and experienced counselors are now and where they will need to be, to meet the challenges of guiding all students in achieving higher standards of learning and development.

Practices:

Ascertaining that new fulltime counselors have attained the competencies listed above will be achieved by the following:

- All new counselors will be required to shadow each of the other counselors prior to beginning duties.
- All new counselors will be required to explore each area of the Student Services Division prior to beginning duties.
- All new counselors will be required to attend and successfully complete a course in the history and mission of the community college before the end of the counselor's probationary period.
- On being hired, the new fulltime counselor will work with the Director of Counseling or the Vice President for Student Services to develop a personal professional plan, which ensures new counselors have attained the competencies listed above.
 - Competencies may be attained through prior education, prior experience, and/or the successful completion of activities as outlined in the Appendix.
 - All competencies must be attained before the end of the counselor's probationary period.

Record Keeping:

1. Records documenting professional development activities will be submitted by the counselor to the Director of Counseling and maintained in the Human Resources office.
2. The Human Resources office will provide annual progress summaries, documenting the attainment of the required competencies, to the new counselor, the Director, and the Vice President for Student Services.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (for all counselors past the probationary period)

NIACC'S Professional Development Program will ensure quality preparation and career-long development of counselors and others whose competence, expectations and actions influence the teaching and learning environment. The components of a high quality professional development plan include rigorous and relevant content, approved objectives, sound implementation strategies, organizational support, and counselor reflection. A substantial portion of each Quality Counselor Plan should include activities promoting collegial learning, working together with colleagues to take advantage of synergistic relationships.

Definitions of Professional Growth Areas:

Counseling Methodology and Student Interactions -- this area deals with the identified competencies and focuses on the counselor as being an important factor influencing student development. Quality Counselor Plan activities should enhance / improve the counselor's:

- Commitment to students and learning processes
- Management and monitoring of the student learning environment
- Development and utilization of counseling strategies and technology
- Preparation, delivery and evaluation of academic advising, transfer relations, career guidance, and personal counseling

Standards and Practices for Community College Counselors -- this area focuses on the counselor's knowledge of content and skills associated with the "Standards of Practice for Iowa Community College Counseling". Quality Counselor Plan activities should develop further expertise in meeting core functions of a counseling program.

College Service -- this area focuses on collegial and organizational improvement, and is necessary for the full realization of potential of the institution, its people and community to develop and excel. Quality Counselor Plan activities reflect the counselor's involvement in the learning community and could result in:

- Increased student enrollment
- Improvement of new counselors
- Development of effective leaders
- Effective college operation
- Development of partnerships with agencies and entities in the community which positively impact students

Personal Growth -- this area respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of counselors. Quality Counselor Plan activities promote continuous inquiry and improvement of individuals embedded in the daily life in and outside the college and reflects the following:

- Promotion of professional standards and ethical conduct
- Service in professional organizations
- Community involvement
- Self-development
- Life enhancement

Pre-Approved Professional Growth Activities:

Appendix contains a list of activities approved by the Continuing Professional

APPENDIX

Continuing Professional Development for Counselors Past the Probationary Period

College Initiated and Sponsored Activities

This list identified in advance with focus on specific College needs for the year. Any of the activities on this list could apply to one or more than one of the four areas of professional development.

Counseling Methodology/ Student Interactions	Standards/ Practices for CC counselors	College Service	Personal Growth
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Assessment Project for Student Services or Department Plan
 Technology Skill Development
 Discipline Certification
 CEU's
 Professional Certification
 Conferences – Participation and/or Presentation
 Workshops
 College Credit
 Technical Updates
 Internships
 Workplace Competency Validation
 Sabbatical
 Industry Experience
 Service In Professional Organizations
 Contributions to College Committees
 Mentoring Program Participation
 Partnership Development & Implementation
 License Requirements
 Student Recruitment Activities
 Student Retention Activities
 Leadership Development
 Ethics Development
 Service Learning Projects with Students
 Participation as Peer Reviewer for Arts and Science Division Assessment Plan Review
 Participant in Career Program Review Process – as Program Reviewer or Peer Reviewer
 Presentation to Peers in the Department

Appendix

Quality Counselor Plan
(Continuing Professional- Part 1)

Name: _____ Division: _____
(Counselor)

Date: _____
(Period of Plan)

What do I want To Learn	What will I do to achieve it	How will I know I have succeeded	What resources/support will I need	Target Date for completion
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Counseling Methodology and Student Interactions**Prior Year's Objective:**

Documentation: (Mark those which apply) _____ Student Evaluation,
_____ Self-evaluation, _____ Peer Evaluation, _____ Supervisor Evaluation,
_____ Portfolio, _____ Other (describe) _____

Proposed:**Standards and Practices for Community College Counselors****Prior Year's Objective:**

Documentation: (Mark those which apply) _____ Student Evaluation,
_____ Self-evaluation, _____ Peer Evaluation, _____ Supervisor Evaluation,
_____ Portfolio, _____ Other (describe) _____

Proposed:**College Service****Prior Year's Objective:**

Documentation: (Mark those which apply) _____ Student Evaluation,
_____ Self-evaluation, _____ Peer Evaluation, _____ Supervisor Evaluation,
_____ Portfolio, _____ Other (describe) _____

Proposed:**Personal/Other Growth****Prior Year's Objective:**

Documentation: (Mark those which apply) _____ Student Evaluation,
_____ Self-evaluation, _____ Peer Evaluation, _____ Supervisor Evaluation,
_____ Portfolio, _____ Other (describe) _____

Proposed:

Appendix**Quality Counselor Plan**
(Continuing Professional –Part 2)Name: _____ Division: _____
(Librarian)Date: _____
(Period of Plan)**Counseling Methodology and Student Interactions**

Reflection on Prior Year:

Goals for Next Year:

Standards and Practices for Community College Counselors

Reflection on Prior Year:

Goals for Next Year:

College Service

Reflection on Prior Year:

Goals for Next Year:

Personal/Other Growth

Reflection on Prior Year:

Goals for Next Year:

Appendix

NIACC Minimum Counseling Competencies for Counselors

New counselors (hired after July 1, 2003) will provide evidence of successful completion of activities in counseling competencies in the areas listed within the probationary period, not to exceed five years. Note: Prior experience and/or certifications may be used to meet competencies at the discretion of the Director of Counseling and Vice President for Student Services.

It is understood that all counselors will continue to improve their counseling competencies through continuing professional development.