

Thiel College
FUNDED FEDERAL STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS (Title III) PROPOSAL
Starting Date of 10-1-06
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Thiel College Title III

A. COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Description of the Institutional Planning Process

Over the past five years, significant participatory work in strategic planning has been conducted by a broad cross-section of the campus community. A strategic plan that maps a course of action for the College was collaboratively crafted by faculty, administrative staff, students, and trustees. Both the current academic and co-curricular programs were reviewed and prioritized; new programs were assessed and changes were implemented; a task force to implement the strategic planning initiatives was impaneled; and new mission and vision statements were crafted. A cabinet level position, Vice President for Planning and Facilities, was created, formalizing the College's continuing commitment to the strategic and operational planning processes.

Thiel College President and CEO Dr. Lance A. Masters commissioned a special team to study the first year initiatives and to make recommendations on the first year, advising and orientation. This effort was undertaken in partnership with The Policy Center on the First Year of College, Brevard, NC. The report generated by the First Year Team resulted in a letter from Executive Director of the Policy Center, Dr. John Gardner, which stated, "In all my years of reading campus studies related to the interrelated matters of the first year, enrollment management, and retention, this is absolutely one of the best, most comprehensive, fair, level headed, straight talking reports I have read."

The outcome of this entire strategic planning process was a commitment to find ways to strengthen enrollment, revenue, quality, and reputation; to establish the "best fit" among educational mission, the ability of the campus to deliver on that mission and provide what is

needed and feasible in the external market—all on a continuing basis; to identify the institution’s distinctive niche and market position to further develop and promote competitive advantage; to balance priorities, goals, and the allocation of scarce resources, building consensus, and achieving collaboration; creating results-oriented campus teams among key constituents; to identify the most important external trends and their impact on the campus; and to build a solid foundation on which continuous quality improvement can be made to work.

Thiel College’s Title III proposal is in direct response to the information gathered and addresses areas that were highlighted in the Institutional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis, Academic Program Review, Support Program Prioritization and Review, the Implementing the Strategic Model task force, and the First Year reports, as well as Thiel’s National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and our Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). Members of the Title III committee were key players in the five-year review and planning process. They served as task force leaders, reviewers, program evaluators, and committee chairs. The work of all of these committees provided a comprehensive self-examination that became the basis for our Title III grant and action plan.

Strengths of the Academic Program

1. The integrative requirement and its potential for learning communities highlights our commitment to diversity. Academically, students are immediately exposed, through the College’s integrated core curriculum, to our community’s commitment to diversity, which is at the heart of the Thiel academic experience. Team-taught required courses such as *History of Western Humanities*, an interdisciplinary chronological exposition of Western culture and civilization from antiquity through contemporary historical periods, and *Science and Our Global*

Heritage, a multi-disciplinary course that examines ways the rich natural and cultural heritage of the globe can be sustained, underscore for our students this commitment.

2. Committed Faculty. The primary responsibility of the Thiel College faculty has always been student-centered learning. The student- to-faculty ratio is 16:1. Most faculty carry teaching responsibilities which equal 12 credit hours per semester. Additionally, faculty serve as both academic advisors and advisors for a variety of academic and co-curricular organizations, are members of standing shared-governance and faculty committees, are represented on many Trustee committees, and are active in the larger community in many and varied capacities. Despite limited resources for faculty development, Thiel’s faculty members have been actively and deeply engaged in professional and scholarly activities. For example, members of the art department exhibit their work regionally and nationally and serve as jurors for competitive exhibits; many of our science faculty conduct research and deliver papers, some at the international level; social sciences and humanities faculty are engaged in authoring books and papers on a wide variety of topics, reviewing and editing works of others, and serving as presenters and panelists at conferences in their areas of expertise. Turnover remains small; approximately 80% of the faculty, including both full- and part-time, has been associated with the College for seven years or longer.

3. Investment in technology. The College has invested heavily in providing computer and wireless technology in classrooms, residence halls, and other public spaces on the campus. Two years ago Thiel instituted the Notebook Initiative. This program provides all full time students with a laptop computer thereby insuring that every student has access to the same type and level of technology regardless of family income. This was done simultaneously with renovations to the academic building and residence halls. The campus was equipped with wireless technology

and one third of the College's classrooms were outfitted with smart technology including DVD and VHS players, computers, sound system, projector and screen.

Currently the College is in the midst of a grant-funded major conversion of its entire administrative system. The new system is designed to allow for on-line course selection, integrated admission, records, and financial services programs and is intended to allow for a more personalized, comprehensive approach to student information.

Strengths in Financial Stability

1. Our strategic plan calls for us to be good stewards of the College's resources, to develop new revenue sources and to create greater operating efficiencies. Advancement in these areas includes the implementation of a new financial and managerial accounting framework to provide useful and timely financial data as well as an intensive effort to collect balances owed. Considerable progress has been made in fiscal management and current receivables are significantly lower than last year. The annual operating budget is communicated in detail to the entire faculty and staff through open forums with PowerPoint presentations, questions and answers.

Strengths in Institutional Management

1. The Administrative Team represents a broad spectrum of campus constituencies. The seven members of the President's Cabinet are committed to working collaboratively to provide quality leadership and promote a collegial approach to problem solving and resource allocation. The Administrative Team has actively participated in all levels of the strategic planning process. They have served as co-chairs of all of the task forces and standing committees.

The leadership team has been innovative in targeting areas for growth. During the tenure of President Masters, several distinctive programs have been established including Environmental Chemistry, Juvenile and Family Justice, E-Commerce and Web Development. The members of the biology and psychology departments are currently developing an innovative Neuroscience program with both corporate and health care partners. The recent hire of the Dean of Educational Outreach is tangible evidence of the administration's commitment to seek out new and targeted areas for growth, both for traditional and nontraditional students, as called for in the Strategic Plan.

WEAKNESSES/SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS IN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

1. Dependence upon a prescriptive advising model is too high. Historically, advising at Thiel College has always come under the purview of the faculty, with each department responsible for students in their major. Two years ago the College made the decision that first year students would be paired with a First Year Instructor (FY) as part of their learning community and then redirected to a professor within their major at the end of the second semester. At Thiel, advising is essentially an intuitive process with the College providing little substantive training. Faculty in general express a genuine desire to meet the growing needs of students; but the reality of 12 hour teaching loads, uneven advisee loads and insufficient support for advising all contribute to an advising process that is too often focused on facilitating course selection. The prescriptive form of advising is simply inadequate to meet the needs of today's students, especially at an institution such as Thiel, with 51% of the students being first generation college students and a broad distribution of students with varying levels of ability and preparedness. Further, evaluation of advising performance and advising load may be included in the annual self report but there is no formal emphasis on this aspect of performance.

Faculty and staff described different approaches to academic advising; which appear to be based upon divergent philosophies of advising. Course selection seems to be universally acknowledged as an advising activity but career counseling and discernment may or may not have been seen as the responsibility of the academic advisors. Some advisors place more responsibility on the student to outline personal goals, select courses and pursue internship opportunities, while others envision shared responsibilities between advisor and advisee and offer more detailed scheduling advice, frequent referrals and follow-up and specific recommendations for career planning. The Strategic Planning Process agreed with the faculty assessment stating “the college has a failure to consistently and adequately equip students to make responsible and meaningful life choices that impact their undergraduate and post graduate success.”

As Vincent Tinto, a noted expert in the area of advising and student issues, states, “Effective retention programs have come to understand that academic advising is the very core of successful institutional efforts to educate and retain students.” John Gardner further confirmed, “The 2002 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data reveal that students reporting the highest degree of satisfaction with the quality of their academic advisement were most likely to demonstrate the highest levels of student engagement. Since high levels of student engagement (involvement) have been found to be empirically associated with higher rates of student retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1993; Astin, 1993), the strong relationship between level of student engagement and quality of academic advisement revealed in the latest NSSE research may be interpreted as providing additional evidence of an empirical link between academic advisement and student retention.”

2. The failure rate in several high-enrollment introductory level courses is too high.

Students failing, or failing to earn higher than a 1.0 (D) is too high in many courses. These unsatisfactory grades are clustered in introductory level courses. For some students, poor performance is linked to inappropriate course selection and inadequate advising. For others, the issue is one of weak preparation, low personal commitment to success or career direction, an inability to adjust to the college environment and insufficient academic support. There is currently no process in place at Thiel College to ensure that students will receive the levels of academic support early enough in the semester to avert academic difficulties.

Table identifying Introductory Course Unsatisfactory Grade Attainment

Semester	Dept	Cat	Name	D	D+	D-	F	Drop	Total Taking Class	Percentage
Fall 2005	Eng	111	Oral & Written Expression I (OWE)	23	2	3	24	18	363	19.3%
	Eng	112	OWE II	6	0	0	2	6	57	10.5%
	INDS	10	Western Humanities I	23	8	13	33	16	428	21.7%
	Math	11	Intro to Algebra	5	0	5	25	9	109	40.4%
	Math	101	Cultural Approach to Math	2	0	0	4	0	48	12.5%
Spring 2006	Eng	111	OWE I	5	1	3	13	3	94	26.6%
	Eng	112	OWE II	19	0	0	20	11	315	15.9%
	INDS	20	Western Humanities II	32	7	2	29	6	369	20.1%
	Math	107	College Algebra	18	2	0	23	10	151	35.1%

The percentage of failure is complicated by the fact that more than 30% of the students failed more than one introductory course. This resulted in more than 22% of the class not achieving significant academic progress as detailed in the following table:

Period	Academic Probation	Suspension	Percentage of Class
Fall 2005-First Year Enrollment-427	73	22	22.25%
Spring 2006-First Year Enrollment-354	46	30	21.47%

3. Emphasis on transitioning and engaging pedagogies in the undergraduate Thiel experience is too low. Our strategic plan identified the need for a more comprehensive thematic, multi-year structure that aligns with student development throughout the college experience. The report stated that we must not only concentrate on the transition to college but must balance the needs and expectations of students as they move through the experience and transition into further education or the workforce. Students state they would welcome more guidance in the area of career planning, internships and summer jobs, determination of personal strengths and weaknesses, and identification of clear linkages between their major and life after Thiel. The results of annual Student Satisfaction Inventories conducted on campus suggest that students are not satisfied with the adequacy of services available to help with career decisions. The study also found that the Career Center is not in the best location, which may account for the fact that few students in the focus groups reported using these services. The Career Center 2003 Statistical Report indicates that 64.3% of total graduates are employed in full-time positions in their major and an additional 16% are enrolled in advanced degree programs. This leaves 20% of our graduates in other categories.

The Faculty Survey of Engagement confirmed the lack of engaging pedagogies used in the classroom. The report showed less than 10% of the courses at Thiel used small group work, presentations or other engaging pedagogies. More than 78% of the faculty lecture more than 40% of the time in their classes. The Support Program Prioritization Review and Task Force

(TF) confirmed this gap between available campus technologies and the effective use of that technology in the classroom. It also provided evidence for a campus-wide need for training opportunities. Furthermore, the study revealed that faculty and students are not maximizing technology for learning.

Weakness/Problems of Institutional Management

The College's persistence and graduation rates are too low. As stated in its Strategic Plan, the College has been urged to immediately design and implement a “comprehensive, research-based student retention plan” that will realistically address the incidence of student departure and resulting contribution margin loss. The First Year Team is not confident that essential student services such as advising, registration and financial services can meet the needs and expectations of a diverse cohort of 400 to 500 first-year students while providing the continuing support necessary to re-enrolling students at current levels of staffing and program design.

Our studies indicate that our attrition is bimodal in that many higher and lower performing students are leaving after the first year. When students leave, they are likely do so because they are not fully engaged by and integrated into the Thiel community. They have not made strong enough connections with faculty, major, friends, an advisor, coach, etc. Tinto suggests that external factors, such as finances, are not the real reasons for student departure; rather “experiences on campus are, for most students, paramount to the process of persistence” (Tinto, 1993, p. 128). Furthermore, the external factors, especially considerations about cost, are usually “subsumed in the process of college entry” (p. 129). So, if we follow Tinto's theory, some departing students are not leaving because they cannot afford the tuition; they made that decision when they enrolled. Perhaps they are deciding to leave because there aren't enough reasons to continue to make the financial investment or sacrifice.

The tables below illustrate the current situation:

First-to-Second Year Persistence

Cohort Entering in Year...	Cohort Head Count – FT	# FY Persisting to 2 nd Year	% Persisting to 2nd Year
2000	339	245	72.0
2001	388	247	64.0
2002	404	243	60.0
2003	349	217	62.1
2004	369	254	68.8
Mean	370	241	65.38

Six Year Graduation Rates

Cohort Entering	4 yr	5 yr	6 yr
1997	22.0	31.0	33.0
1998	22.0	30.0	31.0
1999	31.0	41.0	42.16
2000	41.0	49.56	
2001	30.93		

Thiel College has been, and continues to be deeply concerned about low first-to-second year persistence and its negative contribution to four, five and six-year graduation rates. This issue has been raised in every College task force and standing committee report including the Strategic Planning Final Report, Implementation of the Model Task Force Report and the Support Program Review and Prioritization Task Force Final Report. While it is true that dramatic differences in student persistence can be found at more selective institutions (where entering students have both higher SAT scores and high school GPAs), it is important to note that institutions with comparable entering student profiles are also doing better than Thiel (Education Trust and Center for Institutional Data Exchange). In fact, in a recent query of the Education Trust database, Thiel placed at the bottom of the list in a comparison of 6-year graduation rates among 15 most similar institutions.

Weakness/Problems in the Area of Fiscal Stability

The College’s contribution margin is too low - If the college graduated a higher fraction of incoming students, it would realize tremendous economies of scale and financial efficiencies. Current classroom loads in upper-division programs are financially inefficient as well as often constituting class sizes that are sub-optimal for shared learning experiences. Poor persistence requires the college to expend significant efforts and resources in recruiting larger incoming classes than would otherwise be desirable.

The Implementation of the Model Task Force summarized the financial impact of poor persistence rates:

“Using current persistence data to predict enrollment outcomes, the College could assume that it would lose 136 students from the freshmen to sophomore year from an incoming cohort of 400 (60% persistence rate). Furthermore, an additional 54 students would be lost during the sophomore to junior year transition and another 21 between the junior and senior year. An exercise which demonstrates contribution margin lost is outlined below. Contribution margin is defined as the difference between revenue per student and the variable costs. The average contribution margin per student per year is estimated to be \$15,000. (In this example recruitment costs are not considered, nor is an expected retention rate indicated.)

136 students persisting one year X 3 years lost @ \$15,000	= \$6,120,000
54 students persisting two years X 2 years lost @ \$15,000	= \$1,620,000
21 students persisting three years X 1 year lost @ \$15,000	= \$ 315,000
Total Lost Contribution per Cohort	\$ 8,055,000”

Institutionalizing Practices and Improvements-Organizational and procedural changes are not undertaken lightly at Thiel College, so it is expected that the significant changes which the Title III grant helps implement will be institutionalized by the end of the funding period. Because the grant will facilitate a realignment of responsibilities for the advising process, it was important to have institutional commitment to the proposed activities from the onset. The Dean and Associate Dean of Student Engagement as well as the Vice President for Planning and Facilities and the Vice President for Auxiliary Enterprises and Chief Technology Officer were instrumental in the vision of the project. The President and the Vice President for Academic

Affairs support the project and will work collaboratively with all stakeholders in the course of the grant to ensure the success of implementation and the smooth transition to full institutionalization.

The improvements to advising and academic support services that Thiel College identifies in this proposal will require that faculty and staff rethink traditional roles and practices to forge more collaborative working relationships. The College recognizes that broad and sustained support for the proposed activities will require serious examination of both the advising workload and the current process for evaluating and recognizing advising. It is expected that a result of this examination will be a clarification of the expectations and responsibilities for advising and an acknowledgement that advising is teaching. The grant allows the College the opportunity to bridge the gap between the expectation for advising excellence and the support for faculty and staff to be excellent advisors.

At the outset of the grant, four new positions (Director of the Advising Center (Title III Director), two Advising Coordinators and a Curricular Designer) would be fully funded by the grant. An additional Advising Coordinator will be paid for from College funds, as this position is a realignment of responsibilities. In year three the College will assume 25% of all salary and fringe benefits for all four positions, in year four; 50%, and in year five; 75%. The College will prepare to assume full responsibility for these positions by following procedures for securing budgetary enhancements while the grant is still active.

Because the Title III project is a direct result of five years of strategic planning and self analysis and will be able to show measurable progress on the objectives met under the proposal, it is reasonable to expect that Cabinet will recommend the requested budgetary support through the board approved budgetary process. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Jeffrey

Welsh and President Masters as well as the entire cabinet recognize the need for continued staff and faculty development on advisement issues and on emerging pedagogies. The Title III grant will provide on-campus training opportunities to aid in our transition to developmental advising as well as to make informed decisions about the implementation of electronic learning portfolios within the broad range of the undergraduate experience. This level of training will not be necessary after the five year funding period as faculty and staff will have developed a level of expertise and can serve as a resource to new faculty and staff in a Train the Trainer model. The College is committed to providing necessary funds to keep current with emerging trends and will allocate budget funds for such professional development.

The College is also exercising the option to raise endowment funds in year five that will be matched in accordance with federal guidelines. This endowment is further proof of the College intention to institutionalize the program. The endowment will provide a portion of the funds to continue the Activity post the grant.

After grant funding is concluded, it is the College's intention to incorporate the cost of the electronic portfolio into the technology fee levied against each student's account annually. The College believes the increase to the student fee (approximately \$35) will be well justified by the value of the portfolio to students in enhancing advising, academic and career planning, and learning. The cost of maintaining the proposed improvements to the advising center will be assumed by the College's capital budget.

Title III Activity
Focus on creating a comprehensive learning experience by strengthening the Advising Process to be more responsive to the developmental, discernment and career needs of students through an integrated, supportive and challenging learning community.

Methods utilized to achieve the Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental Advising • Faculty Development • Curricular Redesign • Intervention Teams • Collaborative, inclusive, student centered approaches to institutional issues.

Institutional Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased first to second year persistence from 65.38% to 74% • Increased our five year average graduation rate from 38% to 46% • Increase awareness of engaging pedagogies by providing development opportunities to 75% of the faculty • Impact the delivery of 33% of the courses through curricular design, e-portfolio and engaging pedagogies.

Key Activity Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase retention and graduation rates. • Increase the number of faculty prepared to deliver developmental advising services. • Reduce the percent of students on academic probation, initially concentrating on first year students then broadening to include students at all levels. • Implement electronic portfolios to support strategic thinking and align the advising and academic experience. • Decrease the percentage of students with an undeclared major in the second year of college. • Increase compliance with Council on Advising (CAS) and NACADA standards and guidelines. • Increase student satisfaction with advising. • Increase the number of courses utilizing engaging pedagogies.

B. Activity Objectives

2006-2007 Annual Performance Objectives

Activity	Objectives	Measurable Outcomes
Focus on creating a comprehensive learning experience by strengthening the Advising Process to be more responsive to the developmental, discernment and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize the advising process utilizing the developmental approach with defined responsibilities, goals, objectives, reward system and evaluation method. • Introduce cross training by the selection of the intervention team and the integration of services in the Advising Center • Provide two on-campus topical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council on Advising Standards (CAS) and NACADA data on the Advising Process • NSSE and FSSE scores on faculty and student engagement • Number of cross trained faculty and staff (10) • Number of students,

<p>career needs of students through an integrated, supportive and challenging learning community.</p>	<p>advisor trainings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase supplemental service to 100% for first year students with a team approach to advising. • Provide curricular design training with a focus on the core and the First Year • Train first year advisors on personal inventories and their applications • Provide discernment tools to undecided students. • Increase number of faculty trained in developmental advising by sending eight to a national training conference. • Increase faculty and staff understanding of first year student learning/advising by attendance at first year conference • Utilize Council on Advising Standards and NACADA for baseline data to evaluate the advising program and the NSSE and FSSE data to evaluate engagement. • Three new first year faculty advisors will be recruited. • Advising team and intervention teams will be established. 	<p>faculty and staff utilizing the Advising Center (baseline)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of on campus training opportunities (12) • Number of students and faculty utilizing each type of service the Advising Center provides; including financial, career, wellness advising as well as the intervention team support (baseline) • Number of faculty trained by and who work in conjunction with the curriculum designer (seven) • Number of courses impacted by redesign, and student performance in those courses (10 courses) • Number of faculty trained in developmental advising (20) • Number of faculty participating in the First Year (20)
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2007-2008 Annual Performance Objectives

Activity	Objectives	Measurable Outcomes
<p>Focus on creating a comprehensive learning experience by strengthening the Advising Process to be more responsive to the developmental, discernment and career needs of students through an integrated,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase advising resources and services including but not limited to career, financial, personal inventories in addition to the one on one relationship with faculty • Increase to 100% first year students on academic probation participation with the new intervention team. • Increase support for first year students by the development of web resources and a interactive, targeted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students, faculty and staff utilizing the Advising Center (inc 15 %) • Number and type of service they utilize within the center (inc 10 %) • Decrease in the number of students on academic probation (5%) • Increase in the number of

<p>supportive and challenging learning community.</p>	<p>website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the first six weeks of class 100% of first year students will meet with an advisor. • Provide discernment tools to undecided students. • Provide curricular design training focused on the 100 level courses • Increase the number of contacts a first year student has with an advisor from 3 to 5. • Two on-campus topical advising sessions will be held. • Three new first year advisors will be recruited. • Increase number of faculty trained in developmental advising by sending 8 to a national training conference. • Utilize Council on Advising Standards and the NACADA survey to evaluate the advising program. • Utilize the FSSE and NSSE programs to evaluate student and faculty engagement • Increase topical programs for students by hosting one program per month in the Advising Center targeting the undecided student • Train and work cooperatively with advising teams. 	<p>students who successfully complete their individual assessment plan. (inc 10%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in the failure withdraw rate in 100 level courses. (15%) • Increase in the number of courses where active learning is utilized. (10) • Increase in the number of student contacts with advisor (from 3 to 5) • Decrease the number of undecided students entering 2nd year (15%) • Increase in the number of advisors trained in developmental advising (10) • Increase in student satisfaction with the advising process (4%) • Increase in NSSE and FSSE scores for engagement • Increase in the first to second year persistence. (1.5%) • Number of faculty that have participated on an advising team (doubled)
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2008-2009 Annual Performance Measures

Activity	Annual Objective	Measurable Outcome
<p>Focus on creating a comprehensive learning experience by strengthening the Advising Process to be more responsive to the developmental, discernment and career needs of students through an integrated,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly topical programs held in the center for students and advisors. • Increase student awareness of major and career links by a variety of methods including testing instruments, personal inventories and personal interactions. • Increase faculty awareness of the benefits of experiential learning through targeted seminars and other on campus learning opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students utilizing the Advising Center (inc. 15%) • Number of students participating in an experiential educational experience (inc. 10%) • Number of students paired with an alumni in a mentor

<p>supportive and challenging learning community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop credit bearing experiential education course for students planning internships, study abroad, or field experience • Provide Curricular Design training focuses on 200 level courses • Intervention team and student success stories present success stories both on campus and at the Students in Transition Conference. • Increase the contacts upper-class student have with advisors from 2 to 4 per year. • Maintain intervention strategy for first year students on academic probation while expanding the program to include upperclassmen. • Increase student access to graduate school resources. • Increase recognition of the value of advising through an award system • Utilize Council on Advising Standards and the NACADA survey to evaluate the advising program. • Utilize the FSSE and NSSE programs to evaluate student and faculty engagement • Train and work cooperatively with advising teams. 	<p>relationship (baseline)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the success rate in 200 level courses (12%) • Decrease in the number of undecided students entering their second year (10%). • Increase in the persistence rate of students (2.5%) • Increase in the number of contacts students have with advisors • Awards given to faculty and staff for advising • Increase in NACADA, CAS, NSSE and FSSE scores. • Number of faculty that have participated on an advising team (20) • Inc. number of students who make satisfactory academic progress (10%) • Percentage of students released from intervention techniques
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2009-2010 Annual Performance Measures

Activity	Annual Objective	Measurable Outcome
<p>Focus on creating a comprehensive learning experience by strengthening the Advising Process to be more responsive to the developmental, discernment and career needs of students through an integrated, supportive and challenging learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly topical programs held in the center for students and advisors. • Trained faculty advisors serve as mentors to new faculty members • Increase student awareness of vocational choices • Increase student interaction with successful alumni who will act as a career advisor/mentor by the continuation of the e-mentor program. • Offer experiential education course for students planning internships, study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students utilizing the Advising Center (inc 15%) • Number of students participating in an experiential educational experience (inc 5%) • Number of students paired with an alumni in a mentor relationship (inc. 15%)

community.	<p>abroad, or field experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Curricular Design training focuses on upper level courses • Successful students serve as peer mentors to students in the intervention process • Increase the opportunities for faculty, staff and student learning • Increase student access to graduate school resources. • Increase recognition of the value of advising through an award system • Utilize Council on Advising Standards and the NACADA survey to evaluate the advising program. • Utilize the FSSE and NSSE programs to evaluate student and faculty engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the success rate in 200 level courses (inc 5%) • Increase in the persistence rate of students (3%) • Increase in the number of contacts students have with advisors • Decrease the number of undecided students entering 2nd year. (5%) • Awards given to faculty and staff for advising • Increase in NACADA, CAS, NSSE and FSSE scores. • Number of students who make satisfactory academic progress (inc. 4%) • Percentage of students released from intervention techniques (inc. 4%)
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2010-2011 Annual Performance Measures

Activity	Annual Objective	Measurable Outcome
Focus on creating a comprehensive learning experience by strengthening the Advising Process to be more responsive to the developmental, discernment and career needs of students through an integrated, supportive and challenging learning community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly topical programs held in the center for students and advisors. • Trained faculty advisors serve as mentors to new faculty members • Increase student awareness of vocational choices • Increase student interaction with successful alumni who will act as a career advisor/mentor by the continuation of the e-mentor program. • Offer experiential education 1 credit course for students planning internships, study abroad, or field experience • Provide Curricular Design training focuses on upper level courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students utilizing the Advising Center (80% of students) • Number of students participating in an experiential educational experience (20% of students) • Number of students paired with an alumni in a mentor relationship (inc 4%) • Increase in the success rate in upper level courses (5%)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful students serve as peer mentors to students in the intervention process • Increase the opportunities for faculty, staff and student learning • Increase student access to graduate school resources. • Increase recognition of the value of advising through an award system • Utilize Council on Advising Standards and the NACADA survey to evaluate the advising program. • Utilize the FSSE and NSSE programs to evaluate student and faculty engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the persistence rate of students first to second year(to 74%) • Maintain in the number of contacts students have with advisors • Awards given to faculty and staff for advising • Decrease the number of undecided students. • Increase in NACADA, CAS, NSSE and FSSE scores. • Number of students who make satisfactory academic progress • Percentage of students released from intervention techniques
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The extent to which the objectives for each activity are directly related to the problems to be solved and to the goals of the comprehensive development plan. -The activity objectives are responsive to the weakness/problems in the academic program as outlined and discussed in the CDP, and directly correlate with institutional goals and objectives to improve advising and academic support services as stated in the College’s Strategic Plan and Mission Statement. The underlying causes of the problems outlined in the CDP are fragmentation of services available to supported students and inadequate communication among campus entities. The proposed activity has been designed to effect systematic change by developing a student centered advising program still delivered primarily by faculty but substantially strengthened through a collaborative relationship between Student Engagement and Academic Affairs. By more intimately connecting advising support to academic support services, the College will be

operationally better prepared to respond to the needs of both faculty and students on the issues of advisement and academic support.

In response to Thiel's failure to consistently and adequately equip students to make responsible and meaningful life choices that impact their undergraduate and postgraduate success, the Thiel community proposes the creation of a developmental advising system with an emphasis on vocational discernment. Evidence of the need for attention to this problem can be found in the results of the Student Satisfaction Inventory in which the gap between importance and satisfaction for financial and career counseling was among the highest of all indicators. Even in the high satisfaction area of academic advising, students expressed concern about the inconsistency in the quality of advising and a need for a more personal relationship with advisors. The low percentage of students taking advantage of the services that are available coupled with the low participation in internship and service-learning opportunities suggest a need to re-envision the way in which Thiel facilitates vocational development.

In order to address this concern and meet the objectives of the activity will create an advising and academic support system measurably successful by its positive impact on personal growth and academic success, student satisfaction with advising, student satisfaction with the educational experience and persistence to the bachelor's degree. In removing the barriers between faculty and professional staff, the activity will facilitate a continuous improvement loop linking advising, academic coursework, and academic support. The incorporation of technology, particularly through the systematic implementation of electronic learning portfolios will be a critical tool for linking all components of the undergraduate experience at Thiel College.

C. Implementation Strategy-The Thiel College community, through the strategic planning process, recognized that traditionally drawn lines between Student Engagement and Academic

Affairs compartmentalize rather than integrate services to students. The Vice Presidents of both areas, with their respective staffs and the Title III grant committee, collaborated to design the proposed Activity. The Activity will address the weaknesses that were identified in the comprehensive development plan and will fulfill the institutional goal identified in both the College's strategic plan and in the CDP:

Focus on creating a comprehensive learning experience by strengthening the Advising Process to be more responsive to the developmental, discernment and career needs of students through an integrated, supportive and challenging learning community.

In order to implement the activity successfully, the College will utilize a developmental advising model that approaches student issues in a holistic fashion. Advisors will work with students to connect abstract academic ideas with the students' personal core values. Emphasis will be placed on the personal relationship between advisees and advisors. Advising will be institutionally acknowledged as teaching and all participants in the process will be recognized as co-educators.

The first step in implementing the Activity will be to establish a new administrative unit within both the Academic and Student Engagement divisions that will be known as the Advising Team. The Title III Director will assume the role of Director of the Advising Center.

The Advising team will coordinate advising support and academic services as complementary parts of one system. Emphasis will be given to strengthening connections between the activities of the first year (e.g. orientation, First Year seminar, first year advising) and to increasing the responsiveness of advising and academic support to students opening the door to exploration of life's purpose and service as opposed to the limited perspective of career,

money orientation and success. The Advising team staff will be guided by an integrated mission that emphasizes teamwork and collaboration as the defining characteristics of its structure.

Under the grant, Advising Coordinators will be assigned to the areas of Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. Two of these positions are being created through funds from the grant; one is being assumed by the College. The Coordinators will carry their own advising loads, and will also be available to all students within their area who have special advising needs; which includes conditionally admitted students and students on academic probation. In addition to having the appropriate training and expertise as advisors, the Advising Coordinators will have academic backgrounds and experience that will make them a good fit in their assigned area.

The Advising Center will operate in a developmental advising model that will move students from positions of dependence to positions of autonomy during their undergraduate experience. We will accomplish this by implementing the following strategies: establishing an understanding of the unique talents and aptitudes of the advisee; develop a sense of incorporation into and responsibility to the community and coming to understand societal and global issues; develop a vision for oneself and one's role in community/society; develop a strategy for giving back to the community.

The advising experience at Thiel will be supported by an e-portfolio approach to advising. This will aid in documentation of progress, shift responsibility from advisor to advisee, and focus attention on relevant issues and choices.

In order to facilitate this process significant faculty development will have to occur. The Advising Coordinators will lead an Advising Group within each area they are assigned. Advising group members (at least one faculty member from each discipline within the college)

will be selected by the Vice President of Academic Affairs in consultation with the department chairs. A monthly meeting of the Groups in each area will be structured to focus on a particular aspect or topic relevant to faculty advising. In addition to their value in providing professional development, the monthly meetings will give participants the opportunity to share their own advising experiences and to learn from each other. Department chairs will have an open invitation to participate in these meetings.

The Advising Group members will help develop topics for professional development sessions on advising and academic support that the Advising Coordinators, faculty members and guest presenters will periodically offer to all faculty and staff advisors. Team members may also suggest topics for open sessions for students, organized by class year, that will take place once a semester to deal with advising and support issues unique to each particular class year. The Advising Coordinators, faculty or Student Engagement staff will present these sessions.

Each year a new cadre of faculty will be selected to participate as Advising Group Members. After five years, more than 80% of all the members of the faculty should have served on a Group at least once. After that the plan is to rotate membership on the Advising Group so that each faculty member who advises students is a member of a group at least once every five years. This rotation plan will help ensure: 1) that faculty advisors periodically focus on issues of advising within the collegial framework of an Advising Group; and 2) that faculty advising skills will be refreshed/updated at least once every five years through the professional development that is afforded in the monthly group meeting.

Responsible Personnel	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Advising Center Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hire staff -Select faculty with VPAA for advising teams -Assist in redesign of physical space -Attend training conferences -Develop and deliver training for advisors -Assist in the collection of assessment data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Select faculty with VPAA for advising teams -Attend training conferences -Deliver training for advisors -Assist in the collection of assessment data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Select faculty with VPAA for advising teams -Attend training conferences -Deliver training for advisors -Assist in the collection of assessment data -Assist in the redesign of classroom space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Select faculty with VPAA for advising teams -Attend training conferences -Deliver training for advisors -Assist in the collection of assessment data -Assist in the redesign of classroom space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Select faculty with VPAA for advising teams -Attend training conferences -Deliver training for advisors -Assist in the collection of assessment data
Advising Counselors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Form Advising Groups -Organize faculty development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Host monthly training on advising -Coordinate and facilitate meeting of advising teams -Advise students -Present programs for discernment -Provide testing and academic counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Host monthly training on advising -Coordinate and facilitate meeting of advising teams -Advise students -Present programs for discernment -Provide testing and academic counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Host monthly training on advising -Coordinate and facilitate meeting of advising teams -Advise students -Present programs for discernment -Provide testing and academic counseling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Host monthly training on advising -Coordinate and facilitate meeting of advising teams -Advise students -Present programs for discernment -Provide testing and academic counseling

Focus on Transitioning -Because success in the first year is one of the predictors of a student's likelihood of persisting to graduation, a Thiel College Title III grant will place special emphasis on utilizing the strengthened advising process to promote and facilitate more meaningful connections between experiences that are unique to the first year.

In addition to working closely with the Advising Group in their respective areas, the advising coordinators will also work closely with the Co-Directors of the First Year (currently existing as one faculty and one staff position) to facilitate regular communication between first year advisors and instructors in the First Year Seminars which all students take in their first semester. The more closely a student's primary academic advisor and advising coordinator communicate about progress and or difficulties encountered by a student, the more responsive advising can be for each student.

In July 2007, the College will introduce electronic portfolios. This will be central to the College's efforts to improve academic planning and to better connect the various experiences of a Thiel undergraduate education. Students will be introduced to the electronic portfolio system in their First Year course and the system will be progressively integrated into the advising and academic program with each incoming class. By the end of the grant period, the portfolio system will be used in all class years. The introduction of this system is complimented by the conversion of the College's administrative system. The new advising module will allow for degree audit, on-line scheduling, as well as a detailed notes and comments section for advisors. Though Title III grant funds will not be used to purchase or implement degree audit software, the College is committed to having this software available for faculty and student use by July 2007. The proposed technology enhancements signal the College's belief in the value and necessity of

technology to support advisement. It is our belief that the two systems will complement each other by providing students a chronological, detailed record of their undergraduate experience.

This system will be used to show personal and academic progress as students transition through each class year. As mentioned earlier, thematic, focused programming will be provided at least once a semester for each class year. Students will be encouraged to investigate appropriate themes including ethics, leadership, global responsibility, vocation and experiential learning as called for by the Strategic Plan.

Service will be tailored for individual students and class years as students navigate through the undergraduate experience. Extensive personal inventories and discovery materials will be promoted to the student; focused especially on the undecided student. Structured programs for students, both those who are undecided and those who may be rethinking their choice of major, will be intentionally identified and implemented to encourage students to life choices that will propel them to academic and career success. The process is intended to encourage personal and passionate conviction to the specific career and life path of the students. Testing, counseling, job shadowing, internships, travel abroad and other experiential learning opportunities for all students will be facilitated and encouraged. A credit-bearing course will be developed to assist students with protocol and ways to maximize their experiential learning experience. Use of the electronic portfolio system will allow for journaling, presentation of class and/or individual projects and records of co-curricular involvement.

As students prepare to transition further by completing their undergraduate experience, the e-portfolio system will provide a basis for job searches, resumes and graduate school applications. The Advising Team will further assist students with job placements, graduate programs and vocational decisions. Since the counselors and faculty advisors will have

established a relationship with the students, they will serve as guides to assist students in their transition out of the undergraduate experience.

Responsible Personnel	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Advising Center Director	-design and implement thematic focused programming	- design and implement thematic focused programming	design and implement thematic focused programming -Develop and deliver experiential education course	design and implement thematic focused programming -Deliver experiential education course -Develop e-mentor program	design and implement thematic focused programming -Deliver experiential education course -Continue delivery of e-mentor program
Advising Counselors	-deliver thematic programming focused on the first year -introduce this approach to the campus	- deliver thematic programming focused on the first year	-continue programming for FY students -expand focus to transition to sophomore year	-continue programming -expand focus to include experiential learning opportunities	-continue programming -expand focus to include transition through the undergraduate experience

Early Intervention - The Activity will also support the implementation of an enhanced early warning system that will identify students who are in need of academic support early enough in the semester to make a difference in the level and type of intervention that can be provided. The Advising Groups will utilize a number of early warning signs including attendance in class and information from the residence life staff. Class attendance has been cited as the number one precursor to failure in class by our institutional studies and faculty observations. Auxiliary service information will also serve as warning signs. For example, if a student has missed class,

does not pick up his/her mail and has not utilized his/her food service plan, he or she would be targeted for intervention.

After a student has been flagged for intervention because of one or more early warning signs, the Director of the Advising Center will, within 48 hours, assign an appropriate team to the student. The team will be composed of an Advising Counselor, faculty advisor, and residence life director. Other staff members will be utilized as deemed necessary; including the College's nurse, mental health counselor, coach or co-curricular advisor. The team will devise an Individual Success Plan (ISP) for the student, who will sign it as a covenant between the student and the institution, and monitor the student's progress throughout the semester. If successful in achieving academic progress, the student's participation with the intervention team ends.

If a student is placed on academic probation, whether they have participated in the early warning process or not, they will automatically be assigned to an Intervention Team. The team will develop an ISP for the student and require that each student meet bi-weekly through the semester with an assigned member of the group. The student's progress will be monitored and additional appropriate assistance offered including peer mentoring, supplemental instruction or writing lab assistance. Supplemental Instruction is offered through the College's Academic Success Center, and provides additional instruction for basic level courses beginning in the second week of class, and continuing three times per week throughout the entire semester. The program involves students using discussion, supplemental worksheets and practice exams. The progress will be noted in the advising notes section of the administrative system advising module which will serve as an official record of service. After one semester, for students who successfully complete their ISP and make significant progress by being removed from academic

probation, their involvement with the intervention team becomes voluntary. They may continue the relationship in a mentoring capacity but participation will not be formalized.

Students who do not successfully complete the ISP, and after a determination is made that it is viable for them to continue at Thiel, will be placed in an intrusive advising mode. Their attendance at class will be monitored, their residence life staff member will be alerted to their class schedule, and they will meet with at least one member of the Advising Group weekly for the entire semester. Academic support services will be utilized as appropriate and attendance for those monitored. This is a final opportunity for the student to show academic progress or be referred to the Academic Standing committee for suspension. If progress is made, the student will have at least a one semester transition where they must maintain improvement before their involvement with the early intervention team becomes voluntary.

By coordinating services and increasing communication, Thiel faculty and staff will be able to provide an agile, appropriate response to each individual. As a small college, Thiel has always taken pride in our community nature. Students are respected as individuals who are important members of that community. The personal relationship students will build both with the faculty and a counselor or member of the Advising Team are an important connection and an extension of each student's relationship with the College.

In order for Thiel to address the needs of students for academic and advising support, we reviewed several methods and modes of delivery. This approach, though perhaps more labor intensive than others, was chosen for the personalized attention it provided each student. Our Mission Statement, which was the first outcome of the strategic planning process, declares that "A great university education with value for a lifetime, expands knowledge, stimulates global awareness, promotes ethics and responsible service, develops leaders, and prepares students for

careers. Thiel College achieves this by engaging students where they are and showing them pathways to excellence.” The Title III Committee, the administration as well as the entire campus community views the Title III grant as an opportunity to actualize the mission statement and the strategic plan by providing each student with personalized attention, services and assistance.

Responsible Personnel	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Advising Center Director	-forms the intervention teams -provides training on intervention techniques and services -provide training on intrusive advising -utilize a campus information network with safety nets to identify students at risk	-forms the intervention teams -provides training on intervention techniques and services -provide training on intrusive advising -utilize a campus information network with safety nets to identify students at risk	-forms the intervention teams -provides training on intervention techniques and services -provide training on intrusive advising -utilize a campus information network with safety nets to identify students at risk	-forms the intervention teams -provides training on intervention techniques and services -provide training on intrusive advising -utilize a campus information network with safety nets to identify students at risk	-forms the intervention teams -provides training on intervention techniques and services -provide training on intrusive advising -utilize a campus information network with safety nets to identify students at risk
Advising Counselors	-convene intervention teams weekly -participate in trainings -serve as advisors to students in the program	-convene intervention teams weekly -participate in trainings -serve as advisors to students in the program	-convene intervention teams weekly -participate in trainings -serve as advisors to students in the program	-convene intervention teams weekly -participate in trainings -serve as advisors to students in the program	-Convene intervention teams weekly -participate in trainings -serve as advisors to students in the program

Creating an integrated, supportive and challenging learning community for students-One of the most important activities of a college is enabling student learning. Historically, the place where faculty and students came together for formal learning was in the classroom. However, the internet has changed the notions of place, time and space. Space is no longer just physical; it incorporates the virtual. New methods of teaching and learning that are based on an improved understanding of cognition have emerged as well. As a result, the concept of the classroom has expanded and evolved. The space need no longer be defined by “the class” but by “learning.”

An active, collaborative teaching and learning philosophy, as well as space and course design have been linked by numerous studies to student achievement, mastery and retention. At the turn of the 19th century, basic literacy skills included reading, writing, and calculation. *Knowing* was being able to remember and repeat. Today, *knowing* also includes critical thought, persuasive expression and solutions to complex problems. Competence is being developed in active, exploratory and social settings. This trend is based upon learning theory and research as we develop a growing understanding of the current generation of learners. It is also enabled and supported by Information Technology. Virtually all of today’s learners use the web extensively for information, communication, collaboration and socialization. Students expect to interact with information differently. William J. Mitchell, an expert on active learning asserts, “New type of learning space and the appropriate use of technology create new patterns of social and intellectual interaction.”

At the heart of this reconsideration of learning techniques is curricular reform. As programs transition to be more active, collaborative, or project based, they create emerging pedagogies that may embody exploration, experience and collaboration. In order to facilitate this

curricular transformation, faculty need to have significant development opportunities. As a portion of the activity, Thiel proposes to employ a curricular designer who will work with faculty to explore and incorporate new, emerging, active and appropriate pedagogies and technologies into the curriculum. The opportunities to create new and improved course designs will be supported by assigned time and/or faculty stipends to encourage the faculty to participate in this developmental activity.

Initially, the curriculum designer will concentrate on first year seminars. During the second year the primary focus will be 100 level courses with each subsequent year of the grant expanding the focus. This individual's responsibilities will include: coordinating and recommending to faculty and department chairs instructional strategies directed toward student achievement of course and program learning outcomes; develop learning units designed with instructional software which may be effectively used in the classroom and in distance education; creating with faculty multimedia enhanced courses; developing and implement training programs which enable faculty to integrate technology into their pedagogical practices; work closely with the academic departments to facilitate the appropriate integration of technology into the curriculum; provide opportunities for faculty and staff to participate in a program designed to aid them developing technology tools to improve instructional effectiveness; coordinate user groups to assist faculty in using instructional technologies; develop measures to assess learning outcomes of technology-enhanced instruction.

Significant technological infrastructure is currently in place, including campus-wide wireless capability. The College will also create or adapt new learning spaces to accommodate the emerging pedagogies and enhanced curriculum. The new and improved learning spaces will be designed to support multiple modes of learning including discussion, experiential, and

reflection; as well as others that will emerge. The spaces will be flexible to accommodate comfort, safety, functionality and technology. The space will be the physical manifestation of Thiel’s commitment to being student centered.

Essential Personnel	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Curricular Designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Focus on First Year Curriculum -Hold trainings focusing on e-portfolio -Work one-on-one on course design -Develop and conduct summer institute on curricular design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Focus on First Year Curriculum -Hold trainings on engaging pedagogies - Work one-on-one on course design - Develop and conduct summer institute on curricular design - Develop web presence for the Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Focus on 100 level courses -Hold trainings on engaging pedagogies -Assist in the redesign of smart classroom -Work one-on-one on course design -In association with VPAA choose faculty to receive assigned time for course design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Focus on 200 level courses - Hold trainings on engaging pedagogies -Assist in the design of experimental classroom -Co-teach course in new classroom -In association with VPAA choose faculty to receive assigned time for course design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Focus on upper level courses - Hold trainings on engaging pedagogies -Assist in the design of experimental classroom -Co-teach course in new classroom -In association with VPAA choose faculty to receive assigned time for course design

D. Key Personnel-The Vice Presidents for Student Engagement and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, recognizing the institutional significance of this program, will allot 15% of their time to working with the Project Director and the program staff to ensure the successful implementation of the program and to ensure institutionalization of this process. Their

qualifications and professional accomplishments as well as the descriptions for the proposed positions are as follows:

Vice President for Academic Affairs-Dr. W. Jeffrey Welsh

Education Ph.D. Bowling Green State University, 1982
 M.A. Bowling Green State University, 1977
 A.B. Grove City College, 1975

Professional Experience

Office of Academic Affairs, Thiel College, Greenville Pennsylvania

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, 2005-present

Indigo Educational Consultants, a Division of Indigo Associates, Hickory, North Carolina

Educational Consultant, 2004-2005

Office of Academic Affairs, Lees-McRae College, Banner Elk, North Carolina

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty, 1999-2004

Accreditation Liaison—Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges & Schools

Office of the Dean, Firelands College, Bowling Green State University, Huron, Ohio

Associate Dean and Chief Instructional Officer, 1994-1999 Summer Dean, 1995-1999

Faculty Chair, 1991-1993

Vice President for Student Engagement-Roseanne Gill Jacobson

Education: M.Ed., Ohio University, Athens, Ohio – 1983,

 Specialization: Student Personnel Services

 B.G.S., Ohio University, Athens, Ohio – 1982

Professional Experience

Vice President for Student Engagement and Success & CSSO & Dean of Students

Thiel College, Greenville, PA, 1999-Present

Associate Dean of Student Life/Director of Residence Life

Marietta College, Marietta, OH, 1994-1999

Teaching Experience

Higher Education Practicum – Dept of Counseling-Youngstown State University, 2002-2005

Seminar in Leadership Behavior, McDonough Center for Leadership and Business

Marietta College, 1994, 1998

Organizational Leadership, McDonough Center for Leadership and Business

Marietta College, 1988-1999

College 101 for the Adult Learner, Continuing Education-Marietta College, 1988-1999

Freshman Year Experience, Critical Thinking Section-Marietta College, 1987-1988

Job Description: Institutional Researcher .5 FTE (Susan Richards)

Mission: To assist the College in the collection and analysis of evaluation data for the Title III Project.

Qualifications: Masters and experience in program design and evaluation.

Reports To: Title III Director

Responsibilities: Assist in designing and completing formative and summative evaluation processes for the Title III Project will be assisted by an external evaluator.

New positions, descriptions and qualifications

Job Description: Title III Project Director and Advising Center Coordinator

Time Commitment: 1 FTE for Director Advising Center, who is responsible for implementation of the developmental advising program at the College, overseeing faculty and staff development, and the implementation and integration of the e-portfolio system.

Mission: To achieve successful completion of the Thiel College Title III program.

Qualifications: Doctorate and experience in higher education administration, curricular development, co-curricular activities, and faculty development.

Reports To: President, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Vice President of Student Engagement

Responsibilities: Oversee, coordinate, and report on grant activities and the efforts of advising coordinators and curricular designer, report to President and Vice Presidents, Departments, faculty, staff, students, and broader College community, assume leadership in appropriate grant activities (including curricular development, faculty development), administer remaining grant activities, monitor progress, report to and confer with U.S. Department of Education, manage fiscal affairs of grant, solicit appropriate support, work with internal and external evaluators.

Job Description: Curriculum Designer

Time Commitment: 1 FTE for Curriculum Designer, who is responsible for developing and promoting instructional strategies that will facilitate student achievement and for overseeing faculty and staff development in this arena.

Mission: To enable faculty to integrate new, engaging pedagogies into curricular offerings resulting in improved retention and student success.

Qualifications: Doctorate or ABD in curriculum design, instructional development, or similar field.

Reports To: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Advising Center Director.

Responsibilities: Develop and recommend to faculty new instructional strategies to actively engage students in learning in and out of the classroom. Develop and deliver training programs to assist faculty in incorporating technology into course offerings. Develop measures to assess

learning outcomes of technology-enhanced instruction. Coordinate user groups of faculty to facilitate them in increasing instructional effectiveness. Promote the Advising Center and curricular design services through the Center's web presence and by personal and group contact with faculty. Solicit appropriate support and resources. Work with internal and external evaluators.

Job Description: Coordinators of Academic Advising

Time Commitment: 3 FTE for Title III activities (two positions paid through the grant, one an institutional commitment to the program) the Coordinators' positions are primarily focused on implementing a developmental advising system that impacts all students, overseeing an intervention process for academically struggling students and working cooperatively with faculty, staff and students on learning opportunities.

Mission: To achieve successful academic outcomes for students to increase our persistence and graduation rates.

Qualifications: Advanced degree and experience in higher education student support.

Reports To: Project Coordinator for Title III purposes

Responsibilities: Work cooperatively with college faculty and staff in the advising process, support student success through a variety of means and medium, provide targeted thematic resources for students as they transition through the undergraduate experience, target and support at risk students. Assumes a leadership role in assisting faculty in meeting the advising and support needs of students works closely with the Advising Center Director; works with the Institutional Research Office to track the overall effectiveness of intervention programs in meeting the needs of targeted students; serves on the Faculty Task Force on Advising; participates in faculty development activities relative to advising and high-need students.

E. PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The management plan is critically important to the effective and efficient implementation of the Title III project. Authority commensurate with responsibility must be placed in the Title III Director's position to ensure appropriate hiring, monitoring, and evaluation can occur. For that reason, though the Title III Director will report to two Vice Presidents, he or she will also have direct access to the President and will engage in monthly updates with the entire leadership team ensuring effective communication and appropriate authority.

Because the nature of the grant activities is closely tied to faculty and academic support for students the Title III Director must also have close ties to the academic line chart. To ensure that close tie, the Vice President for Academic Affairs has agreed to include the Title III Director in meetings with the faculty chairs and the full faculty meetings. The Vice President for Student Engagement will include the Title III Director in monthly staff meetings and other meetings as appropriate. With direct line chart accessibility to the President and working closely with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Student Engagement, the Title III Director will have appropriate authority and information to ensure a successful Title III program.

The Title III Director will schedule regular meetings with the Title III oversight committee, composed of the Academic Dean, the Dean of Students, faculty representatives, the Chief Enrollment Officer and a student representative. This committee will meet at least once per week during year one and at least twice per month during years two through five. The committee will work with the Title III Director to monitor progress and report accomplishments. The Title III Director will make monthly reports to the Administrative Team so that all Vice

Presidents will be aware of Title III activities and progress. A year end report will be provided to the President each year with copies distributed to each Vice President.

The Title III Director will have line chart oversight of the Academic Counselors and Curricular Designer to ensure timely progress is being made in accomplishing project activities and goals. The Title III Director will meet each week during year one and at least twice per month in years two through five with the staff and support personnel to review activities and progress. Thus, appropriate authority rests in the Title III Director to ensure that all project activities are completed in an effective and efficient manner.

The Title III Director, Academic Counselors and Curricular Designer will commit 100% of their time to the project. The Title III Director will be responsible for managing all project costs and purchases, reporting to the Department of Education, reporting to the President of the College, and maintaining communication with key managers and Vice Presidents at the College. All institutional research will be coordinated through the Title III Director's office and reporting of all institutional research will be the responsibility of the Title III Director. While the College has engaged in small projects to help address student academic needs, the College has never had an organized and cohesive effort from different offices to meet student academic and personal needs. The development of the Advising Center will do just that. For the program to be successful, the Advising Director will have to focus clearly on the project activities to ensure success.

F. Evaluation Plan-Thiel College has developed a detailed, comprehensive plan for both the level of attainment of the project objectives and their impact on the accomplishment of the College goals identified in the CDP.

A Project Advisory Committee for Evaluation (*PACE*) will be created to conduct the project evaluation and will work with an external evaluator to ensure the objectivity and focus of our evaluation efforts. In addition to the external evaluator, the *PACE* committee will consist of faculty members, administrators and the Institutional Research Director and will convene quarterly. At these meetings, the committee will review the performance measures scheduled for that period of time and make recommendations for the ensuing period.

The major purposes of the evaluation plan are: to collect reliable, timely data that will produce a valid assessment of the strategies used and the tangible results achieved; to assure that the evaluation results can be used to provide formative information to guide the project in ongoing planning and management; to identify problems or concerns and explore alternative process and solutions with members of the College community providing formative input to project management; to utilize the data collected as an evidentiary base for summative judgments and the completion of status reports at the end of each grant year and the conclusion of the Title III project; to document and disseminate outcomes, successful strategies and lessons learned regarding student learning and the use of engaging teaching methodologies, technology, and the Advising Center Services; to promote institutionalization of the outcomes achieved into the overall operations of Thiel College

Evaluation Procedures and Timeline	Major Responsibility	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
		S 1	S 2	S 1	S 2	S 1	S 2	S 1	S 2	S 1	S 2
S=Semester		S 1	S 2	S 1	S 2	S 1	S 2	S 1	S 2	S 1	S 2
Review evaluation requirements for Title III	Activity Director PACE Committee	✓									
Define and document baseline for all objectives, based upon source data	PACE Committee	✓									
Develop detailed evaluation plan and timeline for the Project Year, based upon input from all key project personnel	PACE Committee External Evaluator	✓									
Develop questionnaires for use with students, faculty, and staff	PACE Committee	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Evaluate training activities	Activity Director PACE Committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Develop focus group model for use with students and faculty/staff to obtain feedback/formative input	PACE Committee External Evaluator	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Review tangible results achieved using implementation strategies and status of objectives with key project staff	Activity Director PACE Committee External Evaluator		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Evaluation Procedures and Timeline	Major Responsibility	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
Collect objective data from source offices at the end of each semester: a) regarding student outcomes to measure against baselines and determine progress toward ultimate outcomes of increased student graduation rates, retention rates, improved success rates and b) changes in teaching methodology as measured by course syllabi and usage logs	Activity Director PACE Committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
End-of-semester Progress Reports prepared by key personnel analyzed	Activity Directors PACE Committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conduct Surveys with students, faculty, and staff	PACE Committee		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Conduct Focus Groups with students, graduates, faculty and staff	PACE Committee			✓		✓		✓		✓	
Synthesize data from all sources identified above and prepare end of year summative and formative report regarding attainment of Title III objectives for the Title III Activity Director, College President, Vice Presidents, and Board of Trustees	PACE Committee External Evaluator		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
Develop End of Project Summative Report for the College and the broader education community	External Evaluator										✓
Prepare End of Project Report for the Department of Education; include External Evaluator's Report	Project Directors										✓

The Activity will be evaluated using the Triangulated Evaluation Model. The triangulated design requires evidentiary bases to be developed from three directions: Curriculum Innovation, Student Outcomes, and Co-educator Perspectives. The activity's measurable objectives address the relationship between innovations in curriculum and advising applications and student outcomes. The evaluation plan addresses quantifiable measures, student perspectives on their experience in the curriculum and with the Center, and faculty perceptions on the implications for teaching, learning, and assessing. To facilitate this process, the activity objectives and *Performance Indicators* forms include measurable outcomes and the way in which each performance indicator will be measured.

Curriculum Innovation-The application of technology to the Thiel College curriculum will primarily be monitored and described through auditing various sources of documentation. Specifically, the evaluation questions involve direct monitoring of the integration of technology at the course and program level, the development and application of the e-Portfolio, and the implementation of new teaching methods through faculty development. The records of our progress will be summarized and synthesized by PACE in relation to baselines established for each objective. The records will also be integrated with student outcomes, faculty and student perspectives in judging at various stages, providing formative as well as summative evaluation. A wide range of document sources provide an efficient record of procedures, strategies, programs, and planning reports. The course syllabi will provide a key record of the integration of technology into course curriculum. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will make available course syllabi each semester to the PACE Committee for analysis. As a point of clarification, for the purposes of Title III, by recognizing advising as teaching we include the changes in the delivery of advising as an innovation in the curriculum. All records from the

Advising Center including usage reports, impact summaries and department summary reports will be included for review.

Student Outcomes-Student outcomes gathered from a wide range of sources will be used to judge the effectiveness. The ultimate student achievement measure is the rate of degree completion after eight semesters in a specific major. Understanding the impact of advising and curriculum changes also requires a subjective analysis of the effect of teaching and learning activities on student outcomes (interviews and focus groups) and an analysis of faculty perspectives. This analysis will be more qualitative and formative. Questionnaire data will be tabulated by the PACE Committee. Focus group discussions will be synthesized to develop student perspectives on their experiences in the curriculum, with technology innovations and through the Advising Center. The College will survey seniors and first-year graduates to address satisfaction with knowledge gained in new applications. The results will be tabulated by the PACE Committee. They will be synthesized by the Institutional Research Director in conjunction with the External Evaluator and interpreted in light of program innovations and faculty perspectives to form an enriched picture of the activity on the accomplishment of the College's CDP goals.

Questionnaires with structured and open-ended questions will be used with random samples of students to enrich the understanding of their experiences related to new aspects of teaching, learning, and assessing. The questions will change to keep abreast of what is learned about the use of advising center and new curricula and the students' experience of it. The procedure offers insight to increase the interpretation of the broader performance figures and to help make more effective, qualitative links to the College's educational practices.

Volunteer focus group interviews will be conducted with students by the PACE committee with assistance from the Institutional Researcher to gain broad insight into their

experiences with new applications. The focus group will also offer an additional means for validating and elaborating the information gained from other sources and an in-depth understanding of student perspectives.

Co-educator Perspectives-Like the approaches to student outcomes, faculty and staff members are required to evaluate relationships between advising and curriculum innovations and student achievements, their impact and in increasing and sustaining benefits. These will be analyzed in relation to student outcomes and program innovations to more adequately judge the effectiveness of the activity, as outlined in the objectives. It will be critical to understand how faculty are implementing new curriculum applications in their classes, how the use of the e-Portfolio in assessment is affecting that process, and how faculty members are making use of technology access and relating training and development. In addition to the curricular enhancements, how the increased support and new advising center have impacted the support provided for students, faculty and staff will be reviewed, discussed and disseminated.

Questionnaires offer a broad picture of perspectives. A survey will record general perceptions and specific responses regarding the use of new advising and teaching methodologies. Questionnaires will also be used as needed with the faculty development activities. An annual survey will allow for a more direct measure of the faculty's perception of the relationships of faculty development to their teaching. Questionnaire data will be tabulated and summarized. The Project Advisory Committee for Evaluation, the Institutional Researcher and the External Evaluator will review and analyze the results.

Faculty focus groups consisting of ten members will be conducted to obtain formative input. Focus group discussions will be synthesized by the PACE committee to elaborate different perspectives on new applications and student outcomes. Analysis of perspectives will

be compared with other data sources to provide a fuller and more accurate assessment of the activity impact.

Academic advisement-Students assisted by the Advising Center will be compared with those from 2005-06 in terms of academic success and retention. Proportion of deciding students who persist after the Advising Center interventions will be compared with those from 2005-06 in terms of academic success and retention as well.

Impact Assessment-If the Advising Center is effective, the anticipated results to measure success described in Activity Objectives will be reached. Overall retention rates for each year of the proposed activity will be compared with corresponding rates for the 2000 and 2005 entering cohorts. Graduation rates from the fourth and fifth years of the activity will be compared with the '05 cohort and the '00 cohort. Percentages of students earning "C" or better in each of the targeted curriculum courses will be compared with those who took the course the last year before the intervention. Questionnaires assessing student satisfaction with specific offices and the general climate will be compared with the '00 and '05 cohorts. Sensitive items regarding the campus culture from evaluations will be compared each year of the project with those items for the 2005-06 evaluation and administration.

Each summer, the Title III Director will submit an annual report, which describes to what extent goals and objectives have been reached. Once space is renovated and the Advising Center placed in a central location, all staff will be within close proximity, facilitating communication, fostering personal and professional interactions, and increasing coordination. Monthly team meetings among the Center staff will serve to share weaknesses, needs, problems, resources, and coordination. Since the Advising Center supports the "whole" student, individual student needs will also be presented at monthly meetings. During the first year of Title III funding, while

space is being constructed/renovated, these meetings of the Advising Center will take place in existing space.

The ultimate effects of a successful Advising Center will be shown in five years and beyond. If Title III support for the Center is effective, Thiel College will bring a renewed commitment to student growth and development and will be energized by an enthusiastic, student-centered environment. All efforts of the Title III Grant will be validated by increased success, retention, and graduation rates.