

# When the Kitchen Sink Still isn't Enough: Perfecting the Project Management Pivot

*Norwalk Community College*



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# Today's Path

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## 1. Context

- College
- Grant
- Design-thinking approach

## 2. In Action

- Kiosk system
- Student Ambassadors
- MyPATH

## 3. Reflections

- Staffing model
- Detours and pitfalls along the way
- Lessons learned



# Norwalk Community College



Founded in 1961 as the first public, two-year college in Connecticut

- Over 50 Associates Degree and over 20 Certificate programs

Serves approximately **5,000 credit students** and an annual enrollment of more than **12,000** with non-credit students

- 34% full-time, 66% part-time
- **40%** identify as **Hispanic**
- **59%** of undergraduates are **first-generation students**
- **62%** identify as **non-White**
- Largest ESL program in the state, with students from over 62 countries & speaking 40 languages





# NCC Continued...

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## College Community

- 49% of new incoming students identify as Hispanic
- County's economic & educational disparity
- Varied levels of academic & social-emotional preparation across students
- Multi-identity student population
- Experienced faculty

## External Resources

- Declining enrollment
- Limited financial & human resources
- Increasing state- & federal-level mandates

# Title V: Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions

## *Norwalk Community College (2016-2021)*

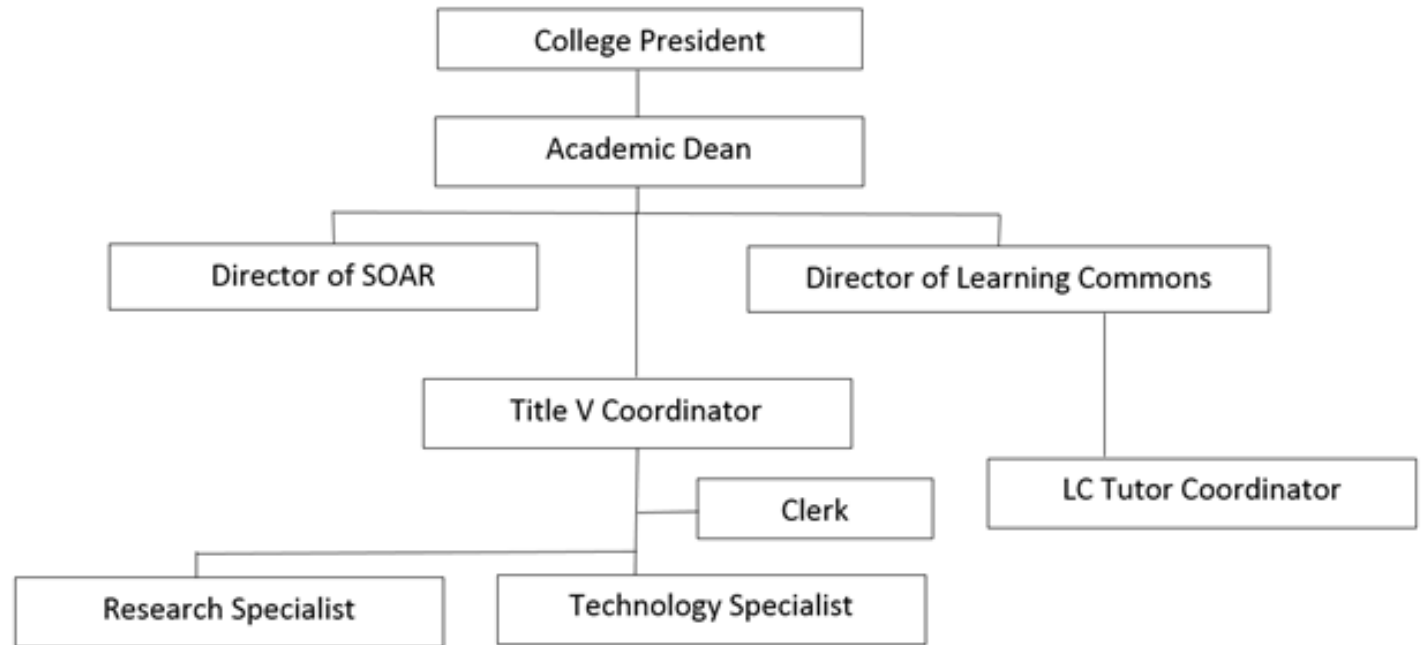
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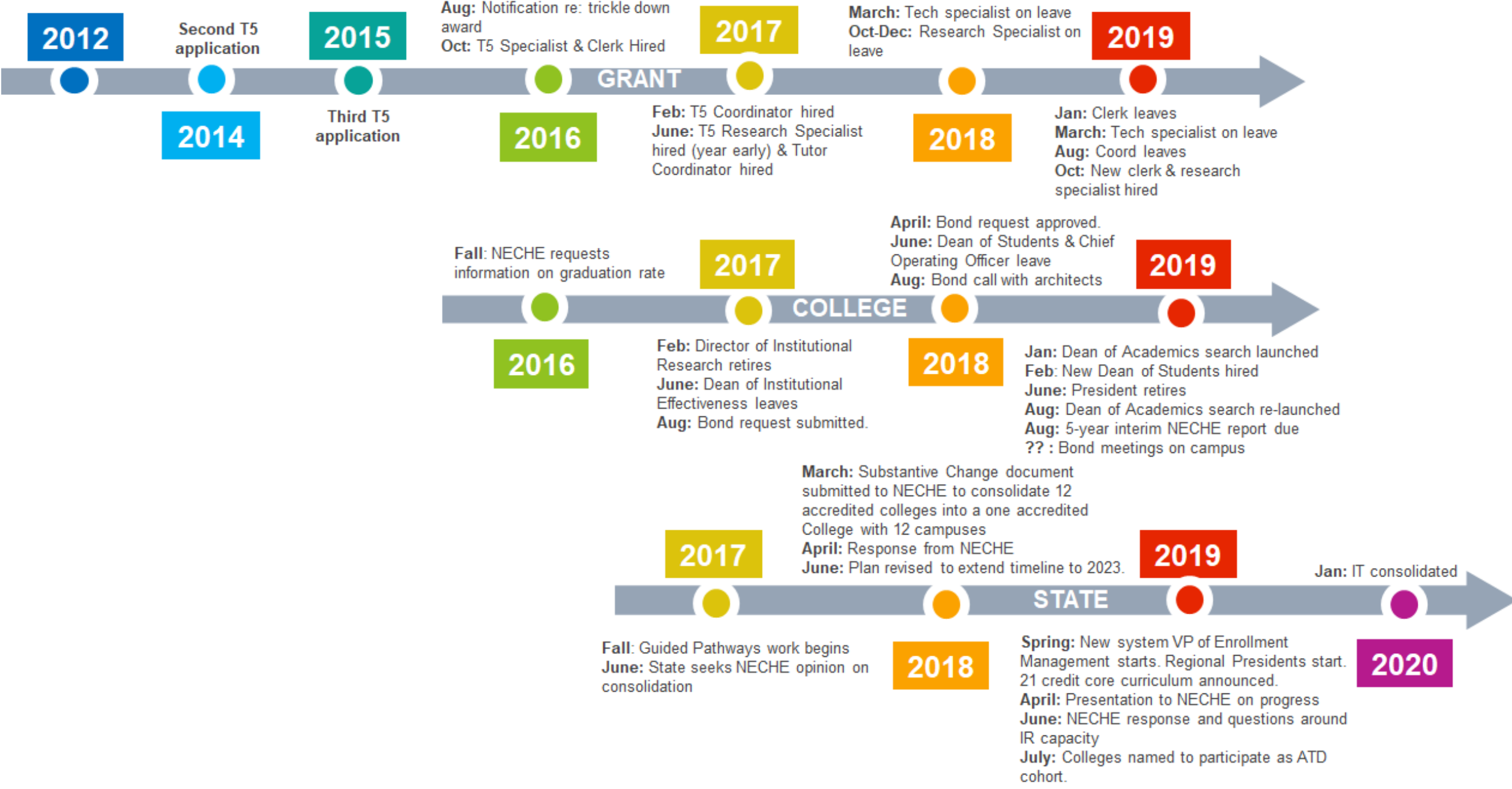
- Increase the success of students through improved student services, dynamic instruction, and enhanced academic support.
  - By Fall 2021, across all students:
    - (1) Increase student achievement by 13%,
    - (2) Increase retention by 10%,
    - (3) Increase graduation by 7%
- **Three major areas:**
  - Student Orientation, Advising, and Retention (SOAR)
  - Success in gateway courses
  - Learning Commons





# Organizational Chart

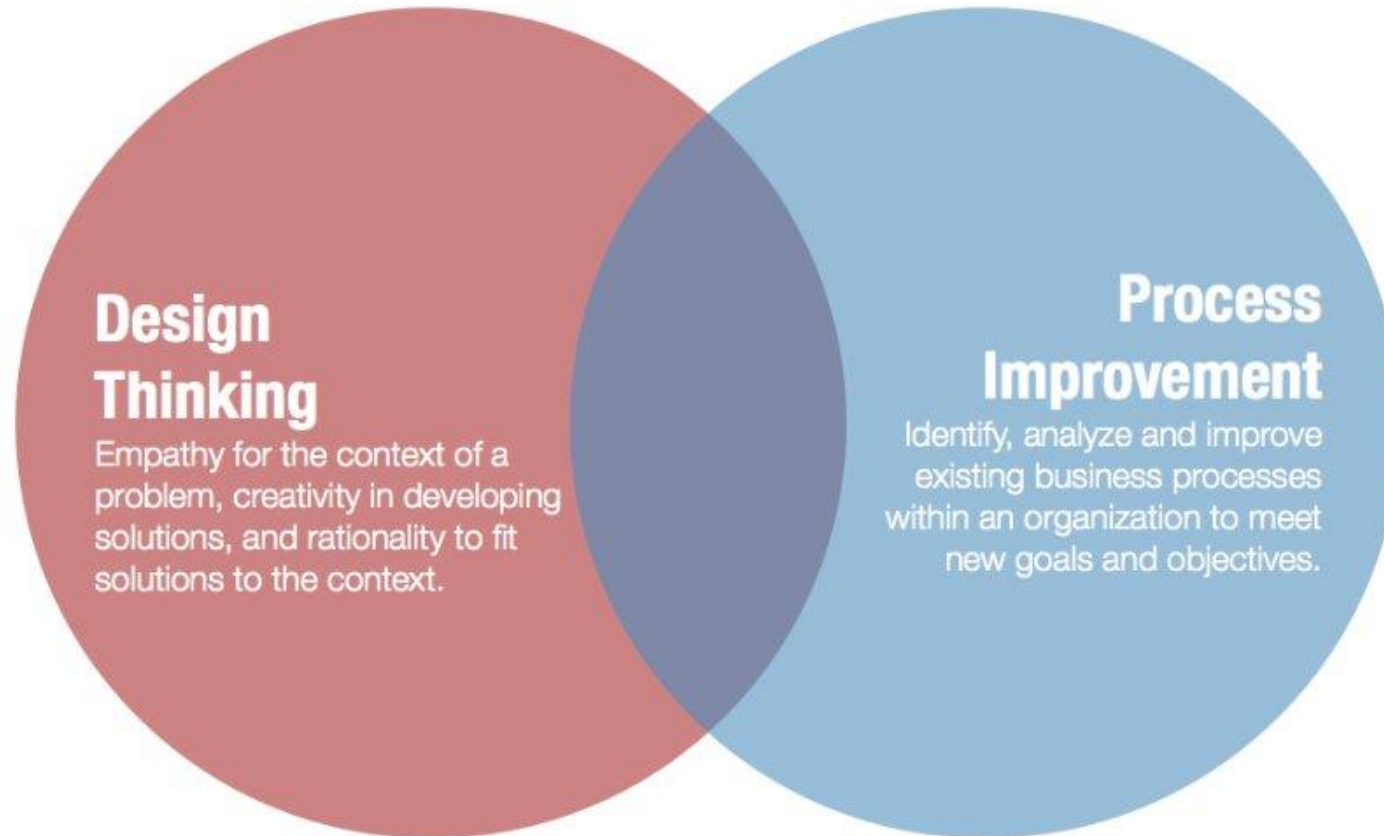






# Design Thinking + Process

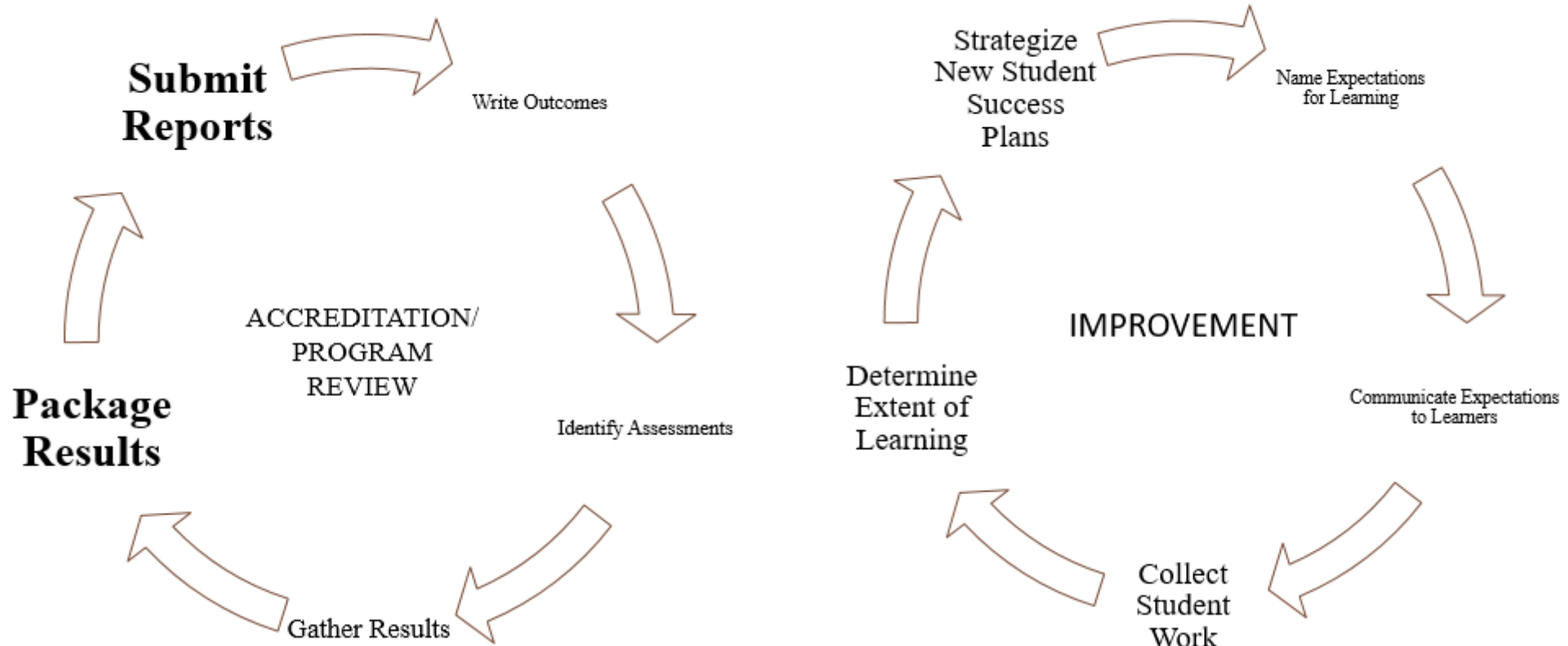
Merging customer empathy with process-centric tools



<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140722152146-127032-the-dynamic-duo-of-design-thinking-process-improvement>



# Reporting vs Continuous Improvement



Credit: Natasha Jankowski, Director, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment



# Kiosk System

- 14 Stationary capture points
- Portable kiosks at campus events
- Replaced paper sign-in systems
- Telling the story
- Kiosk choice construction





# On-Site Registration

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(NIGHT BEFORE CLASSES  
STARTED SPRING 2020)

			Faculty Advisor				Counselors and Student Retention Specialists				
	Total Attended	Total 2018 same week	Continuing Good Standing	New	Readmit	Unknown ID	Continuing Probation/Suspension/SAP	New	Transfer	Readmit	Unknown ID
<b>Week of August 5th, 2019</b>											
8/6 PAW	23	20									
8/6 Open Advising	83	70	27	6	1	5	22	3	10	1	8
8/7 Open Advising	64	65	24	5	3	3	13	3	11	1	1
8/7 PAW	25	21									
8/10 Super Saturday	92	N/A	26	12	8	6	12	10	6	3	6
ESL Kiosk	63	N/A									
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>Faculty Total: 126</b>				<b>Counselor/SRS Total: 110</b>				

## On-Site Registration



# Pivot... Student Ambassadors

- Navigating the "next big idea" from campus visits & conferences
- From co-planning to team planning
- Staffing
  - Leveraging resources
  - Ownership vs shared vision
- Continuous improvement & design process
  - Plan – Act – Do – Study – Repeat
  - Student voice
- Challenges



# The path re-imagined... MyPATH

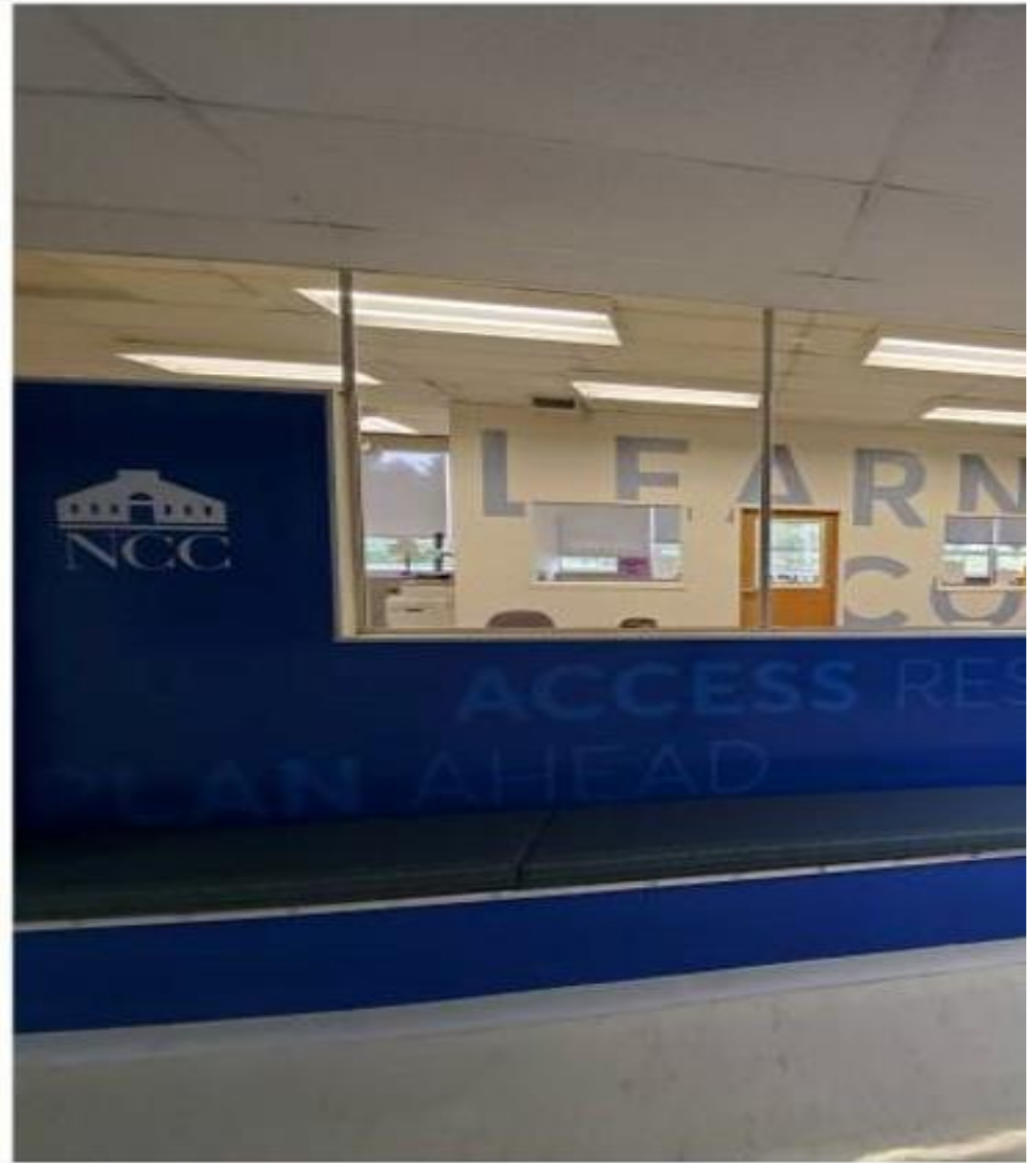
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- Returning to the grant & college context
- Making change palatable
- "If you want to go fast... If you want to go far..."
- Little things make a big difference
  
- Students “found a home where success is valued by the people around them & is a centrally visible part of life on campus.”
  
- Challenges











Shifting the  
culture &  
institutionalizing  
the work

*"One of life's most important assets [is]  
the time to pause, reflect, and  
engage in meaningful conversation."*

*World Economic Forum (Klaus Schwab)*

# Reflections on staffing model & grant integration...

- Social Work + Higher Ed + Technology + Institutional Relationships
- Key qualities of each position
- Importance of cross training & safe spaces
- Value of floater & institutional effectiveness roles

*“What did we do that was specifically for the grant that wasn’t for students?”*

*-NCC staff member*

*“We need leaders who are emotionally intelligent, and able to model and champion co-operative working. They’ll coach, rather than command; they’ll be driven by empathy, not ego.”*  
*-Klaus Schwab, WEF*



# Pitfalls & detours along the way



# Practical Lessons Learned

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- Control the pieces you can
- Be open-minded that the questions being asked may not be the right questions – it's just part of the process
- Liberate & define the data!
- Research design
- Collaboration & cross training
  - As systems change make sure databases reflect these changes

# Broader Lessons Learned

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- Balance tension between systems change & disruptive change
- Engage a range of stakeholders from protectors of the status quo to early adopters/champions
- Anchor in core values & objectives
  - Creating community
- Cultivate passion & problem solving across the board





Questions?

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