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Update on “Test and Learn” for Artificial Intelligence and Automation College and Career Counseling

What?

In April 2021, the Curriculum Review Advisory Committee approved a technology proposal to enhance our ability to differentiate college and career planning for the 19th Wave (Class of 2022). Based on student archetypes that emerged from design thinking exercises, the College and Career Counseling office formed a theory that modernization efforts could help us reach hard-to-reach students (Table 1). Because we prioritized reaching our modernization goals over the summer, each element of the technology proposal is now live.

That said, direct service support from staff members to students remains constant. Members of the College and Career Counseling office will still provide knowledge and support through: one-on-one and small group guidance; workshops and office hours; video conferencing, emails, phone calls, and texts; lessons in Advisory, assemblies and wave meetings; and parent and family meetings.

So what?

We are seeing early signs that the technology “test and learn” is working.

While usage of the AI-powered bot, “Watson,” is lower than expected, the collection of the five modernization efforts, together, seem to be yielding the desired outcome: students in the 19th Wave plan to pursue the full range of pathways we currently support, signalling a more inclusive approach to college and career counseling.

Now what?

Are we ready to invite more students to learn about, and engage with, our new approach to college and career planning?



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Table 1. Five substantive shifts, enabled by technology, have occurred in our approach to college and career counseling, dramatically reducing “time to value” for a wider range of students.

| Modernization Area | “Before” | “After” |
|--|---|---|
| <p>1. Value Proposition</p> <p>Enhanced messaging is designed to reach a wider continuum of students, including those interested in pathways other than college</p> | <p>Students were reluctant to express interest in pathways other than college, picking up on college-focused messages along these lines:</p> <p>Become eligible and competitive for college</p> <p>Increase your eligibility for UC and CSU</p> <p>Pick activities that match your career interests</p> <p>Everyone joins CAP</p> | <p>Developed new ways to describe how the CCC can help students, based on personas that emerged from design thinking:</p> <p>“Advice that fits your life”</p> <p>“Access judgment-free support, no matter what’s going on”</p> <p>“Share information with anyone you know”</p> <p>“Choose what’s right for you”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community college ● Four-year college or university ● Military enlistment ● Job program ● Current job or job offer ● Trade program or apprenticeship ● Gap year <p>“Opt-in to CAP”</p> <p>“Getting started is easy”</p> <p>“Support that’s built for you”</p> <p>“If you want to get a job, prepare for a career, or go to college, we can help you find a way”</p> |



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| <p>2. Content Distribution Model</p> <p>The new College and Career Counseling website is live and can be accessed through the student portal or by visiting:</p> <p>www.tinyurl.com/mwa-ccc</p> | <p>The College and Career Counseling (CCC) office creates content →</p> <p>The content is shared with Advisors →</p> <p>The content is shared with students and families according to pre-scheduled dates on the advisory calendar, taking weeks to months to deliver</p> | <p>The College and Career Counseling (CCC) office creates content →</p> <p>The content can be directly accessed by students and families, without needing to go through advisors, dramatically shortening the “time to value”</p> |
| <p>3. Online Appointment System</p> <p>Students and families are able to self-schedule appointments as early as same-day or next-day by visiting:</p> <p>www.calendly.com/mwa-ccc</p> | <p>When ready, a student requests a pass from the CCC →</p> <p>The CCC writes a hall pass and delivers it to a teacher →</p> <p>The teacher gives the hall pass to the student</p> | <p>When ready, a student books a one-on-one appointment online, as early as same-day or next-day →</p> <p>An SMS reminder to the student reduces no-shows</p> |
| <p>4. Email Automation</p> <p>Email automation has increased the volume of communication for retained students and their families</p> | <p>CCC determines credit standing →</p> <p>Credit standing is captured on a spreadsheet →</p> <p>Spreadsheet is mail merged to a PDF →</p> <p>PDF is given to advisors → Advisors give credit standing report to students and families →</p> <p>Students receive a hall pass from Academic Advising</p> | <p>CCC determines a student’s credit standing →</p> <p>Credit standing is captured on a spreadsheet →</p> <p>A push notification goes directly to the student and their family members at that moment with the credit standing information and link to book appointment</p> |



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| | <p>Coordinator to discuss retention →</p> <p>Families receive call-backs from Academic Advising Coordinator until a retention conversation is scheduled</p> | |
| <p>5. AI-powered Chatbot</p> <p>Gives answers, on-demand, for <i>recall of facts</i> (“when is the FAFSA due”), <i>step-by-step guidance</i> (“how do I request a letter of recommendation”), and <i>appointment scheduling</i> (“can I meet with Mr. Molina?”)</p> | <p>Student asks their advisor a question →</p> <p>They are told to email someone from the CCC →</p> <p>They are sometimes redirected, “actually you need to meet with someone else” →</p> <p>Student receives an answer</p> | <p>Students text a question to Watson →</p> <p>Watson replies immediately with a website link or appointment link</p> |