

DegreeCheck keeps students on track

Nancy Hager and Linda Benevides, graduation analysts, tested the accuracy of DegreeCheck in September.

DegreeCheck, a Web-based product from SunGardHE, will allow JCCC students and counselors to complete an automated degree or certificate evaluation to determine whether students are on track for graduation. The program is being piloted at JCCC by counselors in fall 2009 with full implementation in fall 2010.

DegreeCheck matches a student's academic progress against degree requirements in the college catalog and then generates a report indicating which requirements have been fulfilled and which remain toward completion of a goal or certificate.

DegreeCheck has two other ingenious features – a “planner” so students and counselors can plot future class enrollment and a “what if” scenario so students can see how credits may apply to various degrees or certificates in case they want to change majors.

“This should be a useful tool that gives students and counselors good, accurate information,” said Debbie Young, degree audit coordinator. “And one of the biggest benefits is that students can do the audit themselves.”

Behind the scenes from May to August 2009, Young “scribed” requirements for JCCC's 112 certificates and 55 degrees, using Banner's programming language and syntax. New certificate programs and classes will require continued modification. In September, Young and graduation analysts Linda Benevides and Nancy Hager tested DegreeCheck for accuracy and consistency, and 14 counselors began using the system with students in October.

“DegreeCheck will save counselors a huge amount of time,” said Amy Warner, counselor on the DegreeCheck implementation team.

In the past counselors filled out forms by hand, marking which classes were completed and which were still needed. In some cases where one class can count toward several

categories, the process was particularly time consuming.

“The software is intuitive and knows where to place classes. It saves us time,” Warner said.

The SunGardHE brand name for its product is DegreeWorks, but JCCC gave it the more descriptive name DegreeCheck. For students, DegreeCheck will:

- Provide real-time advice; information is refreshed each night so any changes about grades or classes added or dropped will appear the next day.
- Allow direct access to multiple related services and advice through hyperlinks to catalog information, class schedules, transcripts and FAQs.
- Promise a secured site. Counselors, the registrar and graduation analysts will have varying levels of access to an account.
- Provide a snapshot of academic history, courses in progress and those planned.

DegreeCheck is not an official audit. Students will still need to fill out an application for graduation.

“Implementing DegreeCheck has been a large collaborative project involving records, information services, enrollment management and counseling services that will ultimately benefit the student,” said MargE Shelley, assistant dean, enrollment management. **Im**



Debbie Young, degree audit coordinator, “scribed” requirements for JCCC's 112 certificates and 55 degrees into Banner's program.