Focus to Finish: Kilgore College's Journey in Implementing 8-Week Course Scheduling

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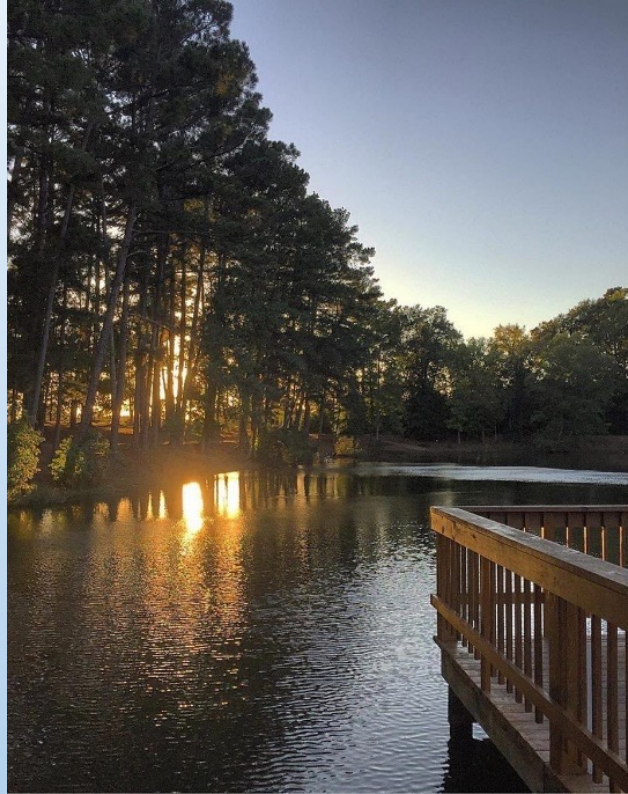**Dr. Tracy Skopek, Vice President of Instruction & CAO**

About Kilgore College

- Locations:
  - Main Campus: Kilgore
  - KC-Longview Campus
- Enrollment: 6,875 (credit + non-credit)
- Average age: 22
  - Traditional (22 & Under): 73%
  - Non-traditional: (23 & Older): 27%
- Enrollment Status:
  - Full-time: 39%
  - Part-time: 61%
- Transitioned to 8-week semesters in 2019

KC Location

- **East Texas Piney Woods**

- **Gregg County**

- **Kilgore Campus and KC-Longview**

- **Kilgore is 120 miles east of Dallas (Texas),**
  60 miles west of Shreveport (La.) and
  10 miles southwest of Longview (Texas), a city of 90,000.
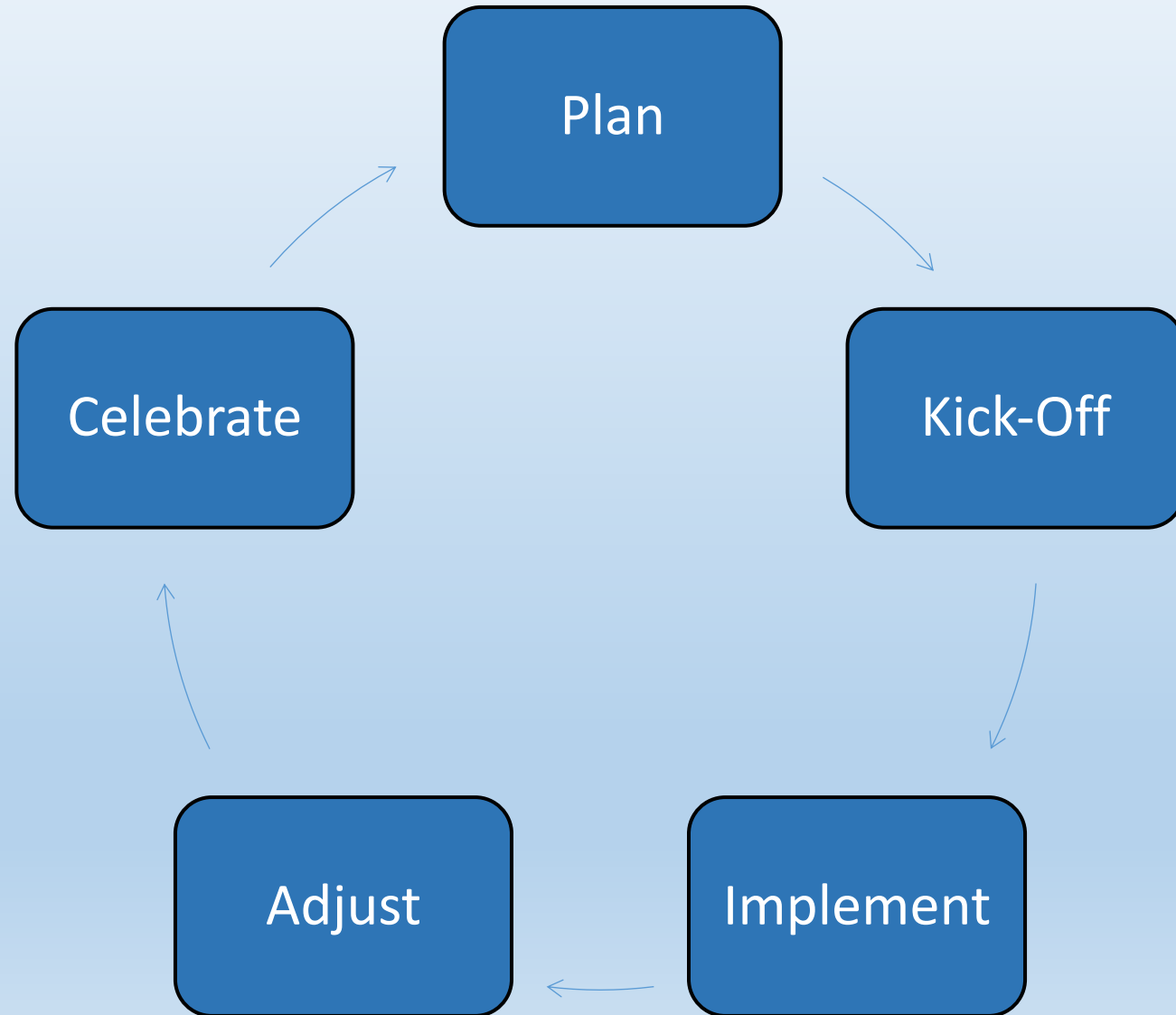
FOCUS TO FINISH

Learn more, earn more with EIGHT-WEEK CLASSES KC!

- Avoid the burnout most students get with long semesters.
- Avoid feeling overwhelmed with fewer courses to take at the same time.
- Avoid juggling multiple assignments and deadlines.
- It's a good fit for everyone! (Including overachievers, working students and students struggling academically)

KC Road to Success

Planning: Organizational Team

- Create robust organizational team
  - All stakeholders represented
    - Marketing
    - Staff
    - Registrar
    - Financial Aid
    - Counseling/Advising
    - Faculty
    - Administration
  - Create timeline for benchmarks and completion

Planning: Working Groups

- Task Forces/Working Groups within the larger organizational team
  - Course Development
    - Created/Streamlined KC LMS orientation course
    - Standardized LMS course shell
    - More emphasis on starting courses on time
  - Student Services
    - New Student Orientation revamped to an online process
    - Adjustments to course dates, times, and types in data management system
    - Registration events revamped (from "late and early" to "Ranger Registration")
    - Campus calendar adjustments
  - Policies, Procedures and Processes
    - Revamped KC attendance policy with added flexibility
    - Clarified and added flexibility to guidelines for offering grades of "Incomplete"
    - Revamped faculty office hours requirements
  - Marketing
    - Focus to Finish
      - Cruise for Success (success points for prizes)
    - Consistent, Clear Messaging (fliers, town halls, press releases, media)

RANGER REGISTRATION AUGUST 11TH & 12TH AT RANDOLPH C. WATSON LIBRARY AND ONLINE AT KILGORE.EDU

Planning: Consistent Team and Working Group Meetings

- No lost momentum
- Organizational teams and working groups met every other week.
- Working groups reported out at organizational team meetings for feedback.
- Regular days and times

Planning: Student Input

- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Shared at our 2019 Data Summit

(What do you need from KC
to be successful?)

Planning: Examined and Incorporated Data

- Data from other 8-week institutions
- KC Student Success Data-Not Including Dual Credit (A,B,C)
  - Fall 2018 (16-week model) = 76%
    Spring 2018 (16-week model) = 78%
  - Fall 2019 (8-week model) = 81%
    Spring 2019 (8-week model) = 82%
  - Fall 2020 (8-week model) = 80%
    Spring 2020 (8-week model) = 83%
- 2019 KC Data Summit
  - Faculty Panel
  - Course Improvement Plans
  - Student Feedback

I ♥ DATA

Planning: Faculty/Department Level

- Don't water down courses. Boil them down-to the essentials.
  - Student Learning Outcomes and Core Objectives
  - "Let it Go!"

Kick Off (Build Momentum)

- Celebrate – Make it fun/exciting for students and employees

- Communicate Often – Keep it the main focus for everyone

- Share Successes and Failures – Everyone learns from both

- Next Steps – make adjustments as needed, keep moving forward

Implementation

- Make it happen
- Adjust
- Be Flexible
- Intensive Support
- Embedded Advisors

Shaping the Culture
and Impacting the Process:
Data

- Data from other 8-week institutions
- Our Data
- College-Wide Data Summits

I ❤ DATA

Shaping the Culture
and Impacting the Process:
Strong Planning

- Organizational Team
- Specialized Working Groups
- Planned for an academic year
- Continued to plan improvements after implementation

Shaping the Culture and Impacting the Process: Celebratory Atmosphere

- Kick-Off celebration

- Cruise for Success celebration

- Student Success Data celebration

(Not a dreaded "initiative," but an exciting strategy.)

Shaping the Culture
and Impacting the Process:
Attitude

- Opportunity to be innovative
- Differentiated us from other institutions
- Radical Hospitality
- Kept the Focus on Student Success

Shaping the Culture and Impacting the Process: Understanding Change Fatigue

- Not changing for the sake of changing
- Not just another initiative
- Attitude of celebration and innovation
- Kept the focus on student success
- Did I mention data?

KC Successes:
Getting Stakeholders on Board

- We did it!
  - The "train left the station."
  - Everyone came on board.
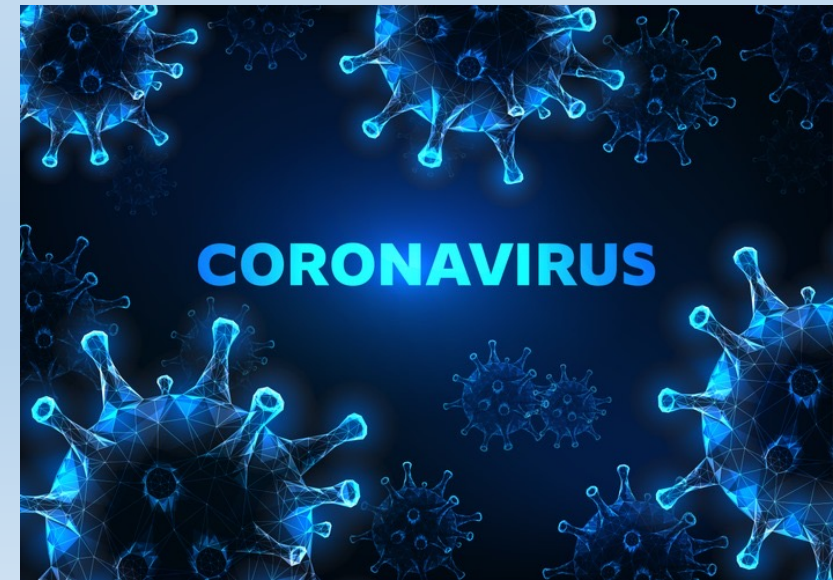 - It's hard to argue with data.

KC Successes:
Co-requisite model

- This was the perfect schedule.
  - 3-hour college-level ENGL or MATH
  - 3-hour co-requisite developmental support course
    - 6 hours per 8-weeks

KC Successes:
Adjusting to COVID-19
Remote Protocol

- Started fresh with a new 8-week term when we went remote

- Intensive supports and attitude of flexibility established

- Faculty and students managing fewer classes at one time

KC Successes: Comprehensive Transition

- Moved all courses to 8 week schedule
  - "Pulled off the Band-Aid"
  - Exception (courses that couldn't transition because of accreditation requirements-e.g. Nursing with clinicals)

Lessons Learned

- Don't register for pre-requisite courses within same 16 weeks
  Example: ENGL 1301 in 1st 8 week and ENGL 1302 in 2nd 8 week

- Financial aid does not allow a student to retake a course 2nd 8 weeks that was failed 1st 8 weeks

- Avoid a mixture of 8 and 16 week courses as much as possible

- For full time students, four classes works best – two 1st 8 weeks and two 2nd 8 weeks

- Students who self-register should be limited to five classes (15 to 17 hours)

Lessons Learned Continued

- Hybrid Courses will increase

- STEM Courses are challenging in 8 weeks

- Students with Financial Aid can't wait to purchase course materials

- Everything happens more often – State reporting, attendance verification, entry points, payment deadlines, etc.

QUESTIONS?