MOVING FROM COURSE SELECTION TO DEGREE COMPLETION:
CREATING A GUIDE TO REDESIGN ACADEMIC ADVISING

by

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ABSTRACT

Community colleges must constantly work to improve student persistence, retention, and completion rates as data on these variables reflects less than stellar performance. Community colleges admit many students but less than 36% of them graduate within six years (Jenkins, 2011). Low student success rates caused community colleges to implement different strategies to positively influence student persistence, retention, and completion. Some of these strategies are promising, specifically the Guided Pathways model (Bailey, Smith-Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015), which helps students enter a career pathway, stay on that pathway, and ensure completion.

Academic advising is a crucial element of Guided Pathways; academic advisors help students enter and stay on career pathways and provide close monitoring of the students' academic progress. Current academic advising services at most community colleges act as an extension of the registration office, providing short-term and prescriptive information to students for term-to-term registration purposes. This model originated in the early days of community colleges; their academic advising and counseling services followed the K-12 model with little attention to individualized student needs or advice for course selection.

The product created for this dissertation disassembles the existing registration model of academic advising and presents ways to assess and redesign academic advising services to improve student success outcomes. The guide provides readers with assessment exercises and implementation practices, including activities and checklists.

Key Words: academic advising, student success, community colleges

DEDICATION

The dissertation is dedicated to all community college students and the academic advisors who help them achieve their dreams.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction: Community College Completion

Less than 36% of first-time students enrolled at a United States community college

earned a credential within six-years from the two-year school or any other four-year institution

(CCRC, 2011). In Michigan, only 12% of students who first enrolled at a community college in

2013 graduated with an associate's degree in two years and only 22% graduated after three years

(MI School Data, 2017). Completion rates are even lower for students who are high-risk (e.g.,

students of color, of low socioeconomic status, and first-generation college attendees).

Bailey, Jenkins, and Leinbach (2005) utilized data from the National Education Longitudinal

Study of 1988 (NELS:88) to track a nationally representative sample of students who attended

eighth grade in 1988. They surveyed a sample of the respondents in 1990, 1992, 1994, and 2000

and found that more than 50% of first-generation students and those from the lowest two

socioeconomic groups, enrolled in community colleges (Bailey et al., 2005). The NELS:88

revealed that nearly 60% of the tracked group of community college students required remedial

coursework. For students of color, the percentage increased to 75% (Bailey et al., 2005). Degree

completion rates for the NELS:88 group varied by institution and student type. Outcomes for

community college students varied by race; 50% of White students completed a credential or

transferred to a university by the year 2000, but only 27% of Black students and 37% of Hispanic

students experienced similar success. Completion rates were below 40% for students with the

lowest socioeconomic status (SES) and those who were first-generation college-goers (Bailey et

al., 2005).

Background: How Did Community Colleges Get Here?

Community college purpose. The development of community colleges occurred within the broader context of the growth of secondary and higher education in the United States, especially during the 20th century. Secondary and higher education enrollment grew quickly in the early 1900s. As high school graduation rates increased, a steadily increasing number of students entered higher education (Cohen, Brower, & Kisker, 2014).

Social forces in the 20th century influenced higher education for three reasons: (a) the need for training to operate America's expanding industries; (b) the drive for social equality; and (c) the need for extended custodial care for the young (Cohen & Brawer, 1989). The creation of community colleges provided an opportunity for Americans to receive training to support industry, which increased employment opportunities for women and people of color and supported working parents.

Unlike four-year schools, community colleges democratized higher education by using an open-access admission model. For the first time in U.S. history, any student could enter higher education regardless of their academic abilities. Open-access and democratic higher education for Americans allowed students to register for school with little advance commitment and enroll in classes without specific plans for degree completion. Access to education fueled student enrollment at community colleges during the 1990s with nation-wide increases of 63% (Kane & Rouse, 1999). Four-year colleges also experienced enrollment growth during this period. By 1995, "the proportion of 18 to 24-year-olds enrolled in college grew by more than one-third, from 26 to 36 percent…half of this increase in enrollment was absorbed at community colleges" (Kane & Rouse, 1999, p. 63).

Several factors influenced community college enrollment between the years 2000 and 2010: (a) older students' participation; (b) availability of financial aid; (c) redefinition of students and courses; and (d) higher attendance by women, minorities, and less academically prepared students (Cohen et al., 2014). Community colleges recruited students from segments of the population that had not previously attended college. First-generation college students of low SES and students of color helped community colleges experience a 37% enrollment increase in 1997 (Cohen et al., 2014). Cohen et al. (2014) explained, "Community colleges were enrolling 46% of minority students, up from 20% in 1976" (p. 58).

Contributing factors to low completion rates. Many of the democratizing benefits of the community college open-access mission also led to low rates of student success (Goldrick-Rab, 2010). Bailey, Smith-Jaggars, and Jenkins (2015) summarized the challenge and stated,

> Our observation was that despite an expansive reform movement built on the dedicated participation of thousands of faculty, administrators, policymakers, state education officials, researchers, and others, there is little evidence that the nation is moving toward a widespread and significant improvement in the outcomes of community college students. (p. vii)

Access alone was insufficient for students to obtain the benefits of a college education. Low persistence rates (term-to-term enrollment) and retention rates (fall-to-fall) contribute to low completion rates (Bloom, Habley, & Robbins, 2012). Bloom et al. (2012) described characteristics of schools and students that support the importance of the relationship between institutional "conditions and properties and student success" (p. 33). Community colleges are often the entry point for students from low-income families, students of color, first-generation college attendees, and academically unprepared students. "Starting college is difficult for most students, but for those students identified as at-risk for failing out are even more challenged"

(Connelly, Flynn, Jemmott, & Oestreicher, 2017, p. 1). At-risk students are the least likely to remain enrolled through degree completion (Connelly et al., 2017).

Multiple contributing factors influence low completion rates; the most prominent is part-time enrollment status versus full-time enrollment status. In a pivotal study on enrollment status, Crosta (2014) collected data from 14,429 community college students from five community colleges in one state. The sample contained first-time in any college (FTIAC) students who intended to earn a credential or transfer to a four-year college. Crosta (2014) created two cohorts and followed them for 6 years. The students exhibited multiple, chaotic enrollment patterns. Students who persisted to earning a credential or transferring to a four-year school were students who enrolled full-time (12 credit hours or more) and attended college continually (Crosta, 2014).

Crosta (2014) suggested multiple reasons why students failed to maintain full-time enrollment status (e.g., employment). According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) (2016), data regarding employment and enrollment of a 2011-2012 cohort revealed that the largest student groups were students who attended part-time and worked part-time. Crosta (2014) learned that term-to-term persistence and full-time enrollment were two variables that lead students to completion.

Table 1: Employment and Enrollment

EMPLOYMENT AND ENROLLMENT STATUS	PERCENTAGE
Full-time students employed full time	22
Full-time students employed part-time	40
Part-time students employed full time	41
Part-time students employed part-time	32

("American Association of Community Colleges," 2016)

However, Juszkiewicz (2016) noted that increases in part-time enrollment affected completion. Table 2 shows the 6-year outcomes for students who started at a public community college based on enrollment patterns.

Table 2: Enrollment and Completion

Enrollment Type	Not Enrolled	Still Enrolled	Completed at Different Two-Year College	Completed at Four-Year College	Completed at Starting College
All Students	45.3%	16.6%	3.2%	9%	26.0%
Mixed Enrollment	42.6	22.3	3.6	9.7	21.8
Exclusively Full-Time	41.8	3.6	2.6	10.2	41.8
Exclusively Part-Time	73.2	8.5	1.2	0.7	16.45

(Juszkiewicz, 2016).

According to Juszkiewicz (2016), students enrolled exclusively part-time had the lowest rates of completion at the college where they started or at any other college. Another prominent contributing factor is college readiness of incoming students. Defining college readiness is challenging. Conley (2007), in a report for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, provided an operational definition of college readiness as the "level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing general education course" (p. 5).

According to Bailey and Smith-Jaggars (2016), approximately two-thirds of students who enter a community college each year are academically unprepared to take college-level courses; therefore, they must take remedial courses before taking college-level courses. Remediation can take some students over a year of continuous enrollment. Most students who require remediation are low income and/or minority students (i.e., already at high-risk). Bailey and Smith-Jaggars (2016) reported, "the likelihood is quite low that they will ever complete a college-level course in that subject area" (p. 1).

Background: What Do the Education Experts Say?

Defining student success. "Student success is one of the hottest higher education buzzwords in the public media discourse and among enrollment management professionals" (Henry, Seifert, & Peregrina-Kretz, 2014, p. 151). Defining student success is a complex and challenging task as educators, policy-makers, students, and academic leaders have different definitions. Henry et al. (2014) provided the top definitions for student success by a group (see Table 3).

Table 3: Top Definitions of Student Success

FACULTY	SENIOR ADMINISTRATORS	STAFF	STUDENTS
1. Mastering Academic Content 2. Retention and Graduation 3. Personal Success	1. Retention and Graduation 2. Holistic Success 3. Academic Success	1. Personal Success 2. Holistic Success 3. Engaging Students	1. Personal Success 2. Academic Success 3. Sense of Belonging

(Henry et al., 2014)

There are three common terms within the constructs of student success: retention, attrition, and persistence. Researchers can define and measure student success as college completion and degree attainment (Bloom et al., 2012). There are many other definitions. However, for purposes of this product dissertation, the definition of student success will follow Bloom et al. (2012) (i.e., college completion and degree attainment).

Student success models. Two student success models provide the basis for this product dissertation: Tinto's integration framework and the Guided Pathways model. Both models improve student success. Tinto (1987) addressed student success by trying to better understand attrition in his book, "Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition" and found that the quality of faculty-student interaction and students' integration into the school affect student persistence. The causes of departure are either at the individual level or the institutional level. Tinto (2012) updated this theory in the book "Completing College: Rethinking

Institutional Action" and identified the individual and institutional conditions necessary to help students succeed. The conditions are expectations, support, assessment/feedback, and involvement. Tinto (2012) stressed an expansion of *involvement,* which is "the most important condition for student success" (p. 7).

Tinto's theory of academic and social integration aligns with student persistence in four-year institutions and researchers assumed it was inapplicable to two-year and commuter institutions. Karp, Hughes, and O'Gara (2010) studied *involvement* and its application to community college students at two urban community colleges in the Northeast. Involvement and integration into the institution were essential to student persistence at the community college level (Karp et al., 2010). Mutter (1992) sent student involvement questionnaires to 766 students at a large community college; 521 of which were persisting students (enrolled term-to-term) and 245 were non-persisting students (inconsistent enrollment). Persisting students had greater academic integration, support, and encouragement from others (Mutter, 1992).

The next model for this product dissertation is the Guided Pathways model (Jenkins, 2014). Guided Pathways "redesigns academic programs and support services to create more clearly structured and educationally coherent program pathways to student end goals, with built-in progress monitoring, feedback and support at each step along the way" (Jenkins, 2014, p. 1). The design principles of Guided Pathways come from a variety of fields, such as behavioral, organizational, and cognitive science and higher education research (Jenkins, 2014).

Bailey et al. (2015) outlined the Guided Pathways model and observed that although there was an expansive movement by educators to improve student success outcomes, minimal improvements were evident. Jenkins, Bailey, and Smith-Jaggars (2015) responded to the changing focus of community colleges from access to success. Guided Pathways reflects that

easy access to education is often poorly equipped to facilitate completion. Most community colleges offer a variety of academic majors, programs, and modalities, but provide little guidance and support for student success (Jenkins et al., 2015).

The paths into and through community college are unclear, which makes it difficult for students to identify their end goals. The Guided Pathways model uses the student's end goal as the primary driver to maneuver through the institution. Clearly identified pathways, called meta-*majors*, reduce the number of choices available to students and outline credential attainment in a major. Student tracking and support are two features of the Guided Pathways model that will be the focus of this product dissertation.

In their working paper, "Get with the Program…and Finish It: Building Guided Pathways to Accelerate Student Completion Program," Jenkins and Woo-Cho (2012) explained the advising role in the Guided Pathways model.

> Advising is being redesigned to ensure that students are making progress based on academic and nonacademic milestones, such as completing an internship or learning project, applying for transfer, or updating a resume. Close cooperation between professional advisors and faculty ensures a smooth transition from initial general advising to advising in a program. (Jenkins & Woo-Cho, 2012, p. 3)

Overview: How Can a New Advising Model Improve Student Success?

This product dissertation will create a guide for community colleges to use when considering a redesign of academic advising. Using Tinto's integration concept and Guided Pathways as frameworks for a redesign, this guide includes ways for academic advising to become a crucial part of improving student success. The academic advisor will act as the student's primary point of contact for career guidance, academic planning, transfer planning, intervention, tracking, and completion. At the core of the academic advising redesign is relationship building using *intrusive academic advising* (Abdul-Alim, 2012). Intrusive academic

advising is a best practice in higher education that builds relationships with students and connects their personal strengths with their academic and life goals (Abdul-Alim, 2012).

A vital part of the redesign is the early introduction of career concepts and selection of a major. Academic advisors will guide students through the decision-making process by reviewing career options "hierarchically" (Jenkins & Woo-Cho, 2012, p. 8). They will expose students to career groups (meta-majors) to help them focus on smaller sets of career options. Another critical part of a redesign is communication with students at strategic and intentional points during the student's lifecycle at the community college. This author will use the terms *student lifecycle* and *touch points* to describe opportunities for academic advisors to conduct outreach to students. Table 4 provides terms and definitions that appear in this dissertation.

Table 4: Terms and Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Advisee	The student receiving advice and interacting with the advisor
Attrition	Student stop out
Completion	Credential or associate degree attainment
First-Generation Students	Students with parents who have not attended or graduated from a college
Four-Year College	Higher education institution offering bachelor's degrees and higher
FTIAC	First time in any college
Full-time enrollment	12 or more credit hours per term
High-Risk Students	Students of color, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, first-generation students, and students with low academic preparation
Student Lifecycle	The total student time of a student from prospect, to enrollee, to graduate
Loss Points	Moments on the student lifecycle in which college policy, process, or personnel caused a student to stop out
Part-Time Enrollment	Less than 12 credit hours per term
Persistence	Term-to-term enrollment
Retention	Fall term-to-fall term enrollment
Student Success	Certificate or degree attainment or successful transfer to a four-year college
Touch points	Opportunities for the college to positively engage with students
Two-Year College	Community College; certificate and associate-degree granting institutions; some offer occupational bachelor's degrees

Conclusion

Chapter 1 included an overview of reasons for low completion rates of community college students and two student success models that may improve student outcomes. One of the many challenges that community colleges face in improving student success is defining what student success means. Student success interventions across the United States are not uniform. Tinto's integration and retention theory (Tinto, 2012) and the Guided Pathways model (Bailey et al., 2015) may improve student success; therefore, these are the foundation for the new academic advising model proposed in this product dissertation.

As Tinto (1987) wrote, the two conditions of student success are institutional integration and social integration. Social integration occurs when relationships form outside of the classroom (Tinto, 1987). Community college students, especially those who commute to campus, often miss this opportunity to develop relationships outside of the classroom and are unaware of how to become more involved on campus. In Guided Pathways, student tracking and strong academic advising improve student success (Bailey et al., 2015). In the academic advising model proposed in this product dissertation, academic advisors will provide structured and meaningful advising through relationship building and intentional outreach to students. As colleges struggle to improve student success outcomes, an academic advising redesign may improve persistence and retention. This dissertation product may benefit community college leaders as they decide how best to implement recommendations for advising reform.

Chapter 2 is a literature review of student success initiatives, the history and purpose of academic advising, and an analysis of academic advising models. Chapter 3 includes details of the process of creating the dissertation product guide to assist educational leaders as they redesign academic advising services. The guide (Chapter 4) is a stand-alone resource for readers.

Page numbering is specific to the guide and it includes a table of contents to allow for a quick review of each component and section. Following the guide, Chapter 5 includes considerations for the use of the guide and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Faculty, legislators, and college administrators identified improving student success and degree completion as critical needs in higher education (American Federation of Teachers, 2011). Enrollment in community colleges increased in the early 2000s but completion data brought a negative image to community colleges (Bailey, 2017). In response to the low completion rates, faculty, educators, policymakers, and foundations called for increased efforts to improve college degree and certificate completion rates (i.e., what the Obama administration called the completion agenda). In response, the Lumina Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation created programs to increase college completion (Bailey, 2017).

Many researchers studied college degree completion, but most focused on university practices and their impact on graduation and persistence rates (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2000). Few studies explored issues of retention and persistence for community college students. As the largest portal to post-secondary education, improving retention rates and degree completion among community college students is crucial to the continued economic and educational prosperity of the United States (Wells, 2008).

An essential step to improving student persistence and degree completion in community colleges is to understand the reasons for student attrition. Edwards (2009) found that attrition was not a result of academic challenges; it often resulted from social and environmental factors.

A 2004 American College Testing (ACT) policy brief cited *academic confidence* and *achievement motivation* as the most substantial influencers of college grade point average (Letkowski, Robbins, & Noeth, 2004). O'Keefe (2013) suggested that developing a sense of belonging is critical to retention and student success.

Classroom and academic experiences positively affect persistence and degree completion. However, O'Keefe (2013) found that nonacademic support services create a sense of belonging, improve motivation, and build academic confidence; these factors are equally important as classroom and academic experiences. Karp (2011) explained that four mechanisms of non-academic student support improve student outcomes and success: "(1) creating social relationships; (2) clarifying aspirations and enhancing commitment; (3) developing college know-how; and (4) addressing conflicting demands of work, family, and college" (Karp, 2011, p. 2). This chapter includes literature on student success initiatives and non-academic student support mechanisms that affect student outcomes.

Student Success Initiatives

The United States ranked 12th in the world for college degree attainment among 25 to 34-year-olds in 2010; a significant decline from 1990 when the United States ranked first (OECD, 2010). This drop prompted then President Barack Obama to introduce the College Completion Goal of 2010 to regain the ranking of having the highest proportion of college graduates by 2020 (White House, 2010). The College Completion Goal spurred approximately 13 new national initiatives for student success and degree attainment (AACC, 2016).

None of these student success initiatives were comprehensive enough to account for all the variables that influence student success and attrition in college. Morrison and Silverman (2012) reviewed multiple theories of retention and student success and found, "No single

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intervention strategy will adequately prevent all student students from departing college" (p. 79).

A significant challenge to improving student success is defining what it is and how to measure it.

According to Hagedorn (2012), "There is little agreement on the appropriate measure of a

standard formula for the measure of college student retention, regardless of institutional type" (p.

81). Additionally, researchers and educators struggle to understand the vast array of information

available on the topic of student retention and success (Morrison & Silverman, 2012). Table 5

includes some student success initiatives.

Table 5: Student Success Initiatives

INITIATIVES	AUTHOR/RESEARCHER	HIGHLIGHTS
Accelerated Study of Associate Programs (ASAP)	City University of New York (CUNY) (ASAP, n.d.)	• Assists students to graduate with an associate's degree in three years by providing intensive assistance in financial needs, academic needs, personal support, and comprehensive and personalized advising
College Learning Effectiveness Inventory (CLEI)	Eunhee Kim Fred Newton Ronald Downey Steven Benton (Kim, Newton, Downey, & Benton, 2010)	• Assessment tool to identify personal variables important to college student success • Identifies six (6) underlying factors: Academic self-efficacy, organization, and attention to study, stress and time press, involvement with college activity, emotional satisfaction, and class communication
Tinto's Retention Model	Vincent Tinto (Tinto, 2012)	• Proposes that students, specifically in the early years, require institutional actions that set high expectations, provide structured academic, financial, social support, provide frequent assessment of performance, and promote active involvement with students and faculty
Guttman Community College	(Guttman Community College, n.d.)	• The college developed a comprehensive design that combines enhanced advising, expanded services to help students choose majors, significant instructional reform, and profound curricular redesign and simplification • Students take a common first-year curriculum and choose from a small selection of programs their second year • Curriculum was designed based on an analysis of the needs of the local labor market

INITIATIVES	AUTHOR/RESEARCHER	HIGHLIGHTS
Guided Pathways	Community College Research Center ("Complete College America," 2012)	• Reduces choices for students to create structured paths to completion built around simplified, well-organized, and easy-to-understand college-level programs of study • Four practice areas; (1) clarifying curricular paths, (2) helping students get on a path, (3) keeping students on a path, and (4) ensuring learning

A common element in various models is the intentional and structured support for

students in social environments (Edwards, 2009). There is also similarity in the curricular and

academic characteristics of the models (e.g., early aligning of majors with careers and

simplifying the degree completion process). Of these initiatives, this author selected Tinto's

integration framework and Guided Pathways to inform the creation of an academic advising

model, which appears in Chapter 4.

Tinto's Integration Framework

Tinto's (1993) integration framework is a theory that suggests students who integrate into

a college and develop connections with individuals at the college are more likely to persist than

students who do not integrate into college life or establish connections with others. Tinto (1993)

explained that integration into college can be academic, social, or both. Students must integrate

in both ways to increase their chances of persistence; however, they need not be equally

integrated in both. Academic integration occurs when students become attached to the

intellectual life of the college; social integration occurs when students create relationships

outside of the classroom (Tinto, 1993). There are both formal and informal systems within an

institution that encourage integration and persistence.

Although researchers often use them interchangeably, *integration* and *engagement* differ

in at least one important way. Tinto (1993) referred to integration as "the degree in which a

person integrates the values and norms of a community into his or her own value system" (p. 160). Engagement implies no such internalization, but rather refers to the "interactions to those values and norms and the individuals who share them" (Tinto, 1993, p. 160). Tinto's integration framework ushered in the "age of involvement" (Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in Higher Education, 1984, p. 1). This theory, supported by findings from multiple researchers, reinforced the importance of student connection and involvement to student outcomes, including student persistence and completion (Astin, 1975, 1984; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Terenzini, Lorang, & Pascarella, 1981).

Data supporting Tinto's integration framework resulted from a study of student attrition, which included the significant elements of Tinto's (1975) student integration model and Bean's (1982, 1983) industrial model of student attrition (Adams, Marks, & Allen, 2000). Adams et al. (2000) determined, that based on the number of hypotheses validated, Tinto's student integration model was more robust than the student attrition model.

> Seventy percent of student integration model hypotheses were validated as compared to 40 percent of the student attrition model hypotheses. At the same time, the student attrition model accounted for more variance in student intent to persist (60 percent vs. 36 percent) and persistence (44 percent vs. 38 percent), a finding these researchers attributed to parental and peer encouragement and support, and finances. (Adams et al., 2000, p. 5)

According to Tinto (2006), educators no longer suggest students break away from past communities to be successful in the higher education community. Educators now know that remaining connected to past communities is essential to students' persistence and success in college. Balancing and blending past communities with new college communities enhances student well-being and maturation (Tinto, 2006). Many researchers believed Tinto's integration framework was unachievable at community colleges because one of the cornerstones of the framework, social integration, was specific to residential students (Karp et al., 2010). Many

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community college students work full-time, have obligations outside of the classroom, and do not live on campus.

Karp et al. (2010) researched this assumption and found it to be false by studying Tinto's integration framework at two large urban community colleges without residence halls. The researchers interviewed students at two different times during the study. After the first round of interviews, many students reported a sense of belonging on campus; these students persisted to their second year (Karp et al., 2010). Of this sample, 70% reported feeling a sense of belonging on campus; the remainder of the sample indicated no attachment to the institution (Karp et al., 2010). After the second interview, of those who reported feeling integrated with the college, 90% persisted to the second year of college; only 66% of students who were not integrated persisted to the second year. Non-residential community colleges can attain higher persistence rates to the second year if their students achieve integration and attachments during the first year (Karp et al., 2010).

Guided Pathways

State policy leaders in education work to increase postsecondary graduation rates, reduce time to completion, reduce college debt, and prepare students for employment. Despite these goals, only 50% of students pursuing a bachelor's degree graduate within 6 years; 35% graduate with a bachelor's degree in 4 years. Among community college students, less than 25% graduate with an associate degree within 3 years and 10% do so in 2 years (Complete College America [CCA], 2012).

Guided Pathways, initially designed by the Community College Research Center (CCRC) through a grant from the Lumina Foundation and initiated by the AACC in the Pathways Project, is a model to reduce the complex array of choices of the student experience at community

colleges that contribute to attrition. The model has four main practice areas: (a) mapping

pathways to students end goals; (b) helping students choose and enter a program pathway; (c)

keeping students on a path; and (d) ensuring that students learn (Jenkins, Lahr, & Fink, 2017).

Colleges in the AACC Pathways Project used these practice areas as guides to create

specific projects and programs. Colleges clearly map out every major and program, specifying

which courses students should take and in what sequence, then highlight courses that are critical

to success and specify *co-curricular* requirements (Jenkins et al., 2017). Next, colleges introduce

new students to the college experience by exploring career and college options, choosing a

program of study or meta-major, and developing program plans. Advisors monitor every

student's program and track student progress toward program completion. Finally, faculty ensure

student learning using assessment techniques to identify whether students mastered learning

outcomes during a program (Jenkins et al., 2017). Within the four main practice areas of the

Guided Pathways for Success (GPS) model, there are 11 essential components:

1. Whole programs of student;

2. Informed choice;

3. No wasted credits;

4. Default programs;

5. Intrusive, on-time advising;

6. 15 to finish;

7. Block schedules;

8. Clear progress to guaranteed courses;

9. End-to-end design;

10. Milestone courses;

11. Workforce connection (CCA, 2012, p. 5)

GPS was successful at participating colleges. Florida State University (FSU) reduced the number of students graduating with excess credits by 50% and increased graduation rates for all students by 12% (CCA, 2012). At Tennessee Technology Centers (TTC), 75% of students graduated on time, and job placement rates increased to 80%. Georgia State University (GSU) increased graduation rates by 20%, and the City University of New York (CUNY) doubled graduation rates, which are now three times higher than the national average for urban community colleges (CCA, 2012).

The positive impact of GPS generated legislative activity. Six state legislatures considered creating Guided Pathways legislation, introduced ten Guided Pathways bills, enacted two Guided Pathways bills and two bills are pending (Education Commission of the States, 2017). The CCRC published a report of early insights from the AACC Pathways schools regarding how the 30 colleges implemented various GPS models (Jenkins et al., 2017). The report included a summary of the implementation and scale using surveys and interviews for data collection. The table below represents a summary of the findings on scale in alignment with the four practice areas.

Table 6: Practice Area Summary and Adoption to Scale

Practice Area	At Scale	Scaling in Progress	Planning to Scale	Not Systematic or Not Occurring
Mapping Pathways to Student End Goals	20%	27%	43%	10%
Helping Students Choose and Enter a Program	7%	53%	30%	10%
Keeping Students on Path	0	33%	40%	27%
Ensuring Students are Learning	60%	20%	17%	3%

(Complete College America, 2009)

The data from the 30 participating colleges shows that scaling a GPS model is complex and challenging. The initial college participants reported that implementing the model to scale involved a cross-functional team of staff and faculty and a commitment by college leadership to support the project by supplying the necessary resources (CCA, 2009).

History and Purpose of Academic Advising

Academic advising is an integral part of the higher education framework. According to Cook (2009), "The development of academic advising parallels the history of higher education and reflects decades of student personnel work" (p. 18). Cook (2009) outlined the history of academic advising beginning with the 16th century and continuing into the 21st century (e.g., college presidents and faculty were originally responsible for advising students on extracurricular activities, academics, and morals). The faculty were parental substitutes, responsible for ensuring the intellectual, physical, and spiritual health of their students. Higher education enrollment was originally almost exclusively white males whose families had the financial resources to send their sons to a residential college. Faculty who advised them were from similar socioeconomic backgrounds (Cook, 2009). During the mid-1800s, women began to enroll in higher education, requiring a *dean of women* to oversee female students. These administrators enforced strict college and dormitory rules but often ignored academics. These positions provided the foundation for academic advising (Cook, 2009).

In 1841, Kenyon College in Ohio created the first formal academic advising role; students partnered with a faculty member who served as their advisor in their major (Cook, 2009). This model of faculty-as-advisor is still prominent in American higher education. Faculty advise students on content-specific areas as part of their teaching and research load. The move to create formal academic advising roles had not begun until 1906 when universities established

advisors to help students select courses and bridge the gap between faculty and student (Cook, 2009). As the profession of academic advising progressed in the 20th century, the purpose of academic advising changed to meet the needs of students beyond academics. The faculty-as-advisor model was still present but became more discipline-specific. Higher education administrators realized the need to expand advising beyond the major to include support for students on academic policies, course selection, selection of majors, and addressing non-academic issues (Cook, 2009).

As more professionals identified themselves as academic advisors, Lindhorst and Schulenberg (2008) noted that the higher education system struggled to define the role of an academic advisor. Challenges resulted from the location of academic advising offices and who provided academic advising. When housed in student affairs, academic advisors are either licensed counselors or professional academic advisors (Lindhorst & Schulenberg, 2008). Both counselors and advisors help students with decision-making, course selection, and degree planning. Only licensed counselors provide personal counseling. However, when housed within the academic or instructional division, advisors are usually faculty who advise and teach students in specific content areas (Lindhorst & Schulenberg, 2008). Irrespective of academic advising office location, college administrators and faculty recognized that "students need guidance on personal, moral, and intellectual matters beyond the scope of their classroom studies" (Thelin & Hirschy, 2009, p. 10).

O'Banion (1972) published an article called "An Academic Advising Model" and explained, "The purpose of academic advising is to help the student choose a program of study which will serve him in the development of his total potential" (p. 1). O'Banion (1972) created five dimensions to academic advising: (a) exploration of life goals; (b) exploration of vocation

goals; (c) exploration of program choice; (d) exploration of course choice' and (e) exploration of

scheduling options. During advising, advisor and advisee enter a "dynamic relationship" and the

advisor serves as a "teacher and guides in an interactive partnership" (O'Banion, 1972, p. 11).

The use of the word *relationship* implies a shared responsibility for the student's success. The

importance and value of the relationship between advisor and student are apparent in modern

advising models.

Academic Advising Models

There are multiple academic advising models that provide students with services and

guidance. Drake, Jordan, and Miller (2013) reviewed six models: (a) learning-centered advising;

(b) developmental academic advising; (c) motivational interviewing; (d) appreciative academic

advising; (e) strength-based academic advising; and (f) proactive academic advising. Table 7

includes key characteristics of each model.

Table 7: Academic Advising Models

MODEL	RESEARCHER (S)	HIGHLIGHTS
Learner-Centered	Based on Chickering and Gamson (Reynolds, 2013)	• Connecting learning principles that are effective in the classroom are useful in academic advising. • Promotes student learning in and out of the classroom. • Sets clear, positive, and reasonable goals.
Developmental	Winston, Ender, and Miller (Grites, 2013)	• Based on student development theories and holds a premise that advisors take a holistic approach to each student. • Advising for student success includes academic, personal, and career goals. • Advisors identify student's skills, abilities, and expectations, and use resources to achieve goals.
Motivational Interviewing	Miller and Rolnick (Hughey & Pettay, 2013)	• A collaborative, person-centered partnership between student and advisor, to elicit motivation for change, on four principles: expressing empathy, developing discrepancy, rolling with resistance, and supporting self-efficacy.

MODEL	RESEARCHER (S)	HIGHLIGHTS
Appreciative	Based on the social constructivist framework (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2013)	• Using organizational change theory, advisors seek the positive in each student to mobilize change. • Promotes unconditional positive questioning, engagement of people at individual and organizational levels, and the systematic approach to action research.
Strength-Based	Theoretical framework found in the Positive Psychology Movement (Varney, 2013) (Schreiner, 2013)	• The premise of emphasizing on one greatest talent likely leads to success rather than spending time and effort to remediate areas of weakness.
Proactive	Glennen (Varney, 2013)	• Formerly known as Intrusive Advising, Proactive advising blends academic advising and personal counseling. • Uses student retention research that suggests contact with a significant person within the institution is a crucial factor in a student's decision to stay in college (Heisserer & Parette, 2002). • Involves intentional outreach to students before academic challenges occur.

(Drake, Jordan, & Miller, 2013)

All the models share an essential foundational principle: the purpose of academic advising is to provide services to students in a college setting that helps them achieve their goals. Each model supports the idea that student choices and behaviors influence student success and that through careful and intentional practice, academic advisors can create the conditions necessary for students to succeed (Drake et al., 2013). "Academic advising has always been a part of higher education—first as the work of college faculty members, later of student affairs personnel, and finally of professional advisors" (Drake et al., 2013, p. 33). However, no model is necessarily best for improving student persistence, success, and completion. For the purposes of this product in Chapter 4, the author focuses on the prescriptive, developmental, and proactive academic advising models because of their relevance and application to the two student success initiatives that form the framework for the product.

Prescriptive academic advising. Prescriptive academic advising is a directive-based approach; academic advisors tell students what to do and students must follow the directions (Crookston, 1972). Prescriptive advising uses a linear communication approach between advisor and advisee; the advisor is responsible for dictating instructions to the advisee. Crookston (1972) used a medical analogy to explain prescriptive advising; patients seek advice from doctors when they realize they have a medical issue in a similar way to students who seek advice from an academic advisor when they have an academic issue. The prescriptive academic advising model assumes that the work of the advisor is complete once they provide advice. Prescriptive academic advising "is based on authority, and the advisor is the doctor, and the student is the patient" (Crookston, 1972, p. 5). In this model, advisors assume students will follow the advice, which will solve the problem.

Developmental academic advising. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, academic advising evolved into a developmental, rather than transactional process due to O'Banion's (1972) five-tiered academic advising approach: (a) exploration of life goals; (b) exploration of vocational goals; (c) program choice; (d) course choice; and (e) scheduling classes. Before O'Banion's work, academic advising was simply a step in student's registration and course selection process. Winston, Ender, and Miller (1984) defined developmental academic advising as a model for the relationship between advisor and advisee. The developmental advising relationship between advisor and advisee has three major themes: advisors should (a) assess students' academic competence and readiness; (b) discuss the importance of personal college involvement; and (c) help students develop a life purpose and plan (Winston et al., 1984). According to King (2009), developmental academic advising is both a "process and an

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orientation" (para. 2). The process includes steps to move students through learning, planning, and credential attainment. Orientation is acclimation to college life and policies (King, 2009).

Intrusive/proactive academic advising. Earl (1987) coined the term *intrusive* advising in the article, "Intrusive Advising for Freshmen." Intrusive academic advising suggests that some students will not seek help, even when necessary, which necessitates assistance from a pre-assigned academic advisor. Earl (1987) described the model as "action-oriented by involving and motivating students to seek help when needed" (p. 24). "Intrusive advising utilizes the good qualities of prescriptive advising (experience, awareness of student needs, and structured programs) and developmental advising (relationship to a student's total needs)" (Varney, 2013, p. 161).

This model evolved into *proactive* advising (National Academic Advising Association [NACADA], 2012). Proactive advising requires that academic advisors engage with students, address problems as they emerge, and use an early alert system to intervene before academic issues impede student success. The author refers to this model as proactive, rather than intrusive, for the remainder of this dissertation. The proactive advising model includes three principles:

1. Academic professionals can be trained to identify first-year students who need assistance;

2. Students respond to direct contact regarding academic problems when guided help is offered;

3. Students can become successful if provided information about academic and college resources available to them (Albecker, YEAR, para. 5).

Like the developmental advising model, an integral component of the proactive model is the relationship between advisor and student. The advisor creates and maintains a relationship with the student so that interventions seem helpful to the student (Varney, 2013). The advisor-

student relationship is not a new phenomenon. Multiple researchers wrote about this including

O'Banion (1972), Earl (1987), and Garing (1993).

> The more we rely on technology in this increasingly bureaucratic world, the more we need truly interpersonal communication in conveying the feeling of belonging, of being recognized and treated as a unique individual. When students reflect on their university years, they remember people – friends, teachers, and significant others such as academic advisors who made a difference in their lives" (Rawlins & Rawlins, 2005, p. 18). Intrusive advising, according to Glennen (1975), "implies a disposition to thrust oneself into the affairs of others or to be unduly curious about another's concern." (p. 2)

In proactive advising, the advisor purposefully becomes involved with the student in both academic and holistic ways.

Need for Change

"The purpose of academic advising is to help the student choose a program of study" (O'Banion, 1972, p. 10). As higher education institutions implemented GPS, academic advisors' roles stayed the same (i.e., to help students choose a program of study). The core functions of academic advising may remain, but the roles of academic advisors must evolve as colleges transition to new ways of improving student persistence, retention, and completion. Academic advisors create academic and transfer plans, facilitate new student orientation, assist with campus resources, monitor credits, and perform outreach to students for early alert interventions. Academic advisors do all of this and more, while simultaneously building a relationship with every student they advise.

As the role of academic advisors becomes more complicated, they still face the same challenges, such as "high student-to-advisor ratios, the need to advise the majority of students in a short time frame and competing demands for student time" (Center for Community College Student Engagement [CCCSE], 2018, p. 3). Students who met with an academic advisor engage

across all CCCSE benchmarks, unlike their peers who did not meet with an academic advisor (CCCSE, 2018).

Figure 1: Academic Advisor Engagement
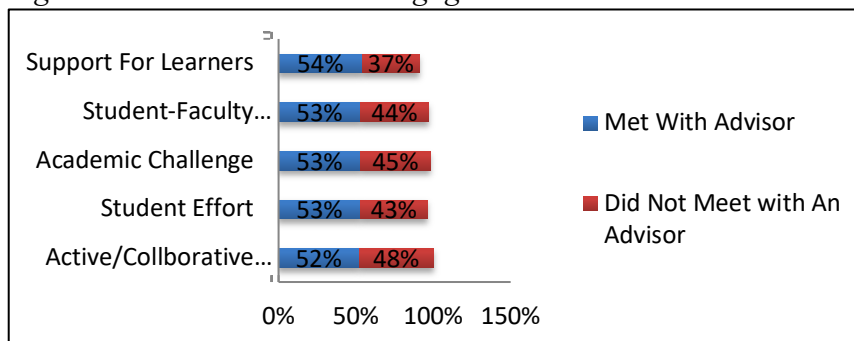
(CCCSE, 2018)

CCCSE (2018) found that returning students are more likely to meet with an academic advisor than new students. Less than 50% of first-time-in-any-college (FTIAC) students return to the same college the second year. Early academic advising may contribute to increased persistence and retention (CCCSE, 2018). Academic advising redesigns reflect positive improvements in persistence, retention, and completion (see Table 8).

Table 8: Examples of Academic Advising Redesign

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	REDESIGN COMPONENTS	DATA	NOTES
Community College of Philadelphia (PA)	• Hired 9 full-time professional academic advisors • Intense advising with intake process and longer advising meetings • Added progress tracking, assigned caseload, outreach, and multiple modalities	• Fall-to-fall retention increased from 45% in 2015-16 to 51% in 2016-7 • Fall-to-spring persistence increased from 70% in 2015 to 75% in 2016	• While the college recognized positive impacts from the initial analysis, administration will continue to monitor persistence and retention rates

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	REDESIGN COMPONENTS	DATA	NOTES
Cleveland State Community College (TN)	• In 2013, completed a complete advising redesign as part of the governors Drive to 55 initiative which aims to increase degree completion in the state by 55% • Four components changed: 1) who gets advising, 2) who provides advising, 3) content of advising, and 4) intensity of advising	• Three-year graduation rate increased from 14% for the fall 2010 cohort to 22% for the fall 2013 cohort • Increased the number of students earning 24 credits in first year from 10% in 2010 to 30% in 2016 • Student satisfaction with advising increased from 59% in 2014 to 78% in 2017	• No formal case management model was created, 43% of students reported meeting with the same advisor more than twice • The college will use results to target areas for improvement and hopes to continue to see an increase in relationship building between advisor and advisee
Walla Walla Community College (WA)	• Implemented a degree tracking system • Three components: 1) who gets advised, who does the advising, and when and how advising • is delivered	• In fall of 2017, 85% of all advised students were tracked through the Degree Navigation Application system • All but two of those tracked enrolled in the classes they had been advised to take	• The college has also began tracking students after they transfer; using data from the National Student Clearinghouse

(CCCSE, 2018)

Conclusion

Educators and policy leaders increasingly address issues of access to education and college completion. Improving student persistence, retention, and on-time graduation rates is important to individual students, communities, and the workforce. Many colleges implemented student success initiatives but brought few to scale to make a substantial impact. Creating and implementing a community college redesign is complex and requires involvement from all community college departments, faculty, and staff to improve services for students. Academic advising is an important part of the student experience and connection to the institution. Academic advisors can provide necessary nonacademic support in conjunction with curriculum redesign, the principles of the Guided Pathways model, and supportive technology to positively affect student success.

CHAPTER 3: CREATING THE GUIDE

Introduction

Chapter 3 contains descriptions of the elements that make up a resource guide for academic and student affairs leaders as they redesign academic advising services. The academic advising redesign guide reflects the findings of multiple researchers, particularly the Guided Pathways model (Jenkins et al., 2015) and Tinto's (1993) integration framework. Academic advising redesigns effectively improve student persistence and retention (Drake et al., 2013).

Creating the Guide

Need for change. Data in Chapter 1 demonstrated that only 12% of students who first enrolled at a community college in 2013 graduated with an associate's degree in 2 years and only 22% graduated after 3 years (MI School Data, 2017). Completion rates were even lower for at-risk students (e.g., students of color, low socioeconomic status, and first-generation college attendees). Colleges must address these low rates and explore alternative approaches to academic advising.

Review of models and approaches. Before making changes, colleges should first understand current and previous initiatives, theories, and models to improve student persistence, retention, and completion, including the "Completion Agenda" (Bailey, 2017). This initiative gained momentum during the Obama administration. The goal was to create programs to increase college completion. In response, many colleges created student success activities models (see Table 9).

Table 9: Student Success Initiatives

INITIATIVES	AUTHOR/RESEARCHER	HIGHLIGHTS
Accelerated Study of Associate Programs (ASAP)	City University of New York (CUNY) (ASAP, n.d.)	• Assists students to graduate with an associate's degree in three years by providing intensive assistance in financial needs, academic needs, personal support, and comprehensive and personalized advising
College Learning Effectiveness Inventory (CLEI)	Eunhee Kim Fred Newton Ronald Downey Steven Benton (Kim, Newton, Downey, & Benton, 2010)	• Assessment tool to identify personal variables important to college student success • Identifies six (6) underlying factors: Academic self-efficacy, organization, and attention to study, stress and time press, involvement with college activity, emotional satisfaction, and class communication
Tinto's Retention Model	Vincent Tinto (Tinto, 2012)	• Proposes that students, specifically in the early years, require institutional actions that set high expectations, provide structured academic, financial, social support, provide frequent assessment of performance, and promote active involvement with students and faculty
Guttman Community College	(Guttman Community College, n.d.)	• The college developed a comprehensive design that combines enhanced advising, expanded services to help students choose majors, significant instructional reform, and profound curricular redesign and simplification • Students take a common first-year curriculum and choose from a small selection of programs their second year • Curriculum was designed based on an analysis of the needs of the local labor market
Guided Pathways	Community College Research Center ("Complete College America," 2012)	• Reduces choices for students to create structured paths to completion built around simplified, well-organized, and easy-to-understand college-level programs of study • Four practice areas; (1) clarifying curricular paths, (2) helping students get on a path, (3) keeping students on a path, and (4) ensuring learning

In addition to the increase in student success initiatives such as the ones listed in table 5, community colleges began redesigning their academic advising services to positively influence student persistence and retention (CCCSE, 2018). Table 10 includes the results of such initiatives.

Table 10: Examples of Academic Advising Redesign

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	REDESIGN COMPONENTS	DATA	NOTES
Community College of Philadelphia (PA)	- Hired 9 full-time professional academic advisors - Intense advising with intake process and longer advising meetings - Added progress tracking, assigned caseload, outreach, and multiple modalities	- Fall-to-fall retention increased from 45% in 2015-16 to 51% in 2016-7 - Fall-to-spring persistence increased from 70% in 2015 to 75% in 2016	While the college recognized positive impacts from the initial analysis, administration will continue to monitor persistence and retention rates
Cleveland State Community College (TN)	- In 2013, completed a complete advising redesign as part of the governors Drive to 55 initiative which aims to increase degree completion in the state by 55% - Four components changed: 1) who gets advising, 2) who provides advising, 3) content of advising, and 4) intensity of advising	- Three-year graduation rate increased from 14% for the fall 2010 cohort to 22% for the fall 2013 cohort - Increased the number of students earning 24 credits in first year from 10% in 2010 to 30% in 2016 - Student satisfaction with advising increased from 59% in 2014 to 78% in 2017	- No formal case management model was created, 43% of students reported meeting with the same advisor more than twice - The college will use results to target areas for improvement and hopes to continue to see an increase in relationship building between advisor and advisee
Walla Walla Community College (WA)	- Implemented a degree tracking system - Three components: 1) who gets advised, who does the advising, and when and how advising - is delivered	- In fall of 2017, 85% of all advised students were tracked through the Degree Navigation Application system - All but two of those tracked enrolled in the classes they had been advised to take	The college has also began tracking students after they transfer; using data from the National Student Clearinghouse

(CCCSE, 2018)

The three academic advising redesign examples in Table 10 include the *intensity* of advising (the length of time for advising appointments), degree tracking (keeping students on

their career path), and the content of the advising (what and how information is shared). Analysis of the three programs demonstrates that there were positive gains in persistence, retention, and completion after the academic advising redesigns.

Components of the Guide

The guide (see Chapter 4) may serve as a tool to assist academic and student affairs leaders in redesigning academic advising at their respective institutions. This guide is not an all-inclusive instrument but rather a resource for users to review recommendations and incorporate those that meet the needs of their students and institution. The guide includes three components: (a) operational; (b) institutional; and (c) personnel. A brief definition of each component, sections within each component, and the deliverables for each section include:

1. *Operational components* are recommendations for the design of academic advising and the tools to support it to best serve students.

   - A mission statement to create the foundation for all decision-making in academic advising.

     o The author provides at least three samples of mission statements.

   - An assigned case management model to assign new students an academic advisor based on major, alphabet, or both.

     o The author provides examples of how to implement assigned case management at community colleges.

     o The author provides a review of the six factors necessary to create an optimal student-to-advisor caseload.

   - An academic progress tracking tool to track student progress using technology; academic advisors conduct outreach to students who modify their paths.

     o The author describes samples of academic progress tracking tools; a rubric for best practices; and options to track progress without purchasing software.

   - A student-focused academic advising model for the proactive, prescriptive, and developmental academic advising models of a redesign.

     o The author provides sample scripts for advisor and advisee scenarios.

- Academic advising logistics with sample resources for operational efficiency to effectively address student needs.

  o Examples include sample floor plans, explanations of potential locations for academic advising, sample schedules for office hours, and suggestions for appointment scheduling and tracking.

2. *Institutional components* include college-wide support for the academic advising redesign, which requires involvement of multiple departments.

- Campus culture and communication to ensuring that the community college portrays the redesign as an intentional part of a campus-wide focus to improve student success.

- Examples *of community college communications that demonstrate the school operates as a student-focused institution.*

- Academic affairs and student affairs collaboration to support teaching of content and provision of the services that support learning.

  o Examples of projects in which academic affairs and academic advising collaborate on in-class and out-of-class activities (e.g., providing academic advisors as coaches in foundation-level courses, combined communications, sharing of student progress, and dual career/academic advising in the major).

3. *Personnel components* include the hiring and training of academic advising staff.

- Establish a hiring and training plan to determine who should be an academic advisor and what training is necessary for the job.

  o The author provides examples of job descriptions and training plans.

4. *Conclusion and references.*

- Approaches to identify next steps in the redesign process.

- The author provides a reference list.

Conclusion

As O'Banion (1972) stresses, "Academic advising is a central and important activity in the process of education" (p. 10). Academic advising has become an important activity on many college campuses, but the methodology and processes have not changed in recent decades. The guide in this dissertation may serve as a tool for community colleges to create meaningful

changes to student success rates. The guide is flexible to allow the reader to choose all or part of

a component or section, depending on the needs of students. Chapter 4 is the guide itself, a stand-

alone product. Page numbering is specific to the guide and page two is a table of contents to

allow for a quick review of each component and section. References appear at the end of the

guide, which may or may not be repeated from the dissertation reference list. Following the

guide, Chapter 5 includes a discussion of considerations for the use of the guide and

recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 4: THE GUIDE

Introduction

This guide is designed for community college leaders to select the areas in which there is interest or need to redesign academic advising services. Resources, needs, data, demographics, and technology determine which areas will provide the best option for your institution. Student success outcome improvements do not necessarily depend on how many areas you select for the redesign; it depends on how well the redesign implementation is done, its integration into the college culture, and how well students perceive and use the services.

This guide identifies three components necessary for an academic advising redesign: (a) operational components; (b) institutional components; and (c) personnel components. Within each component, there are subsections related to the primary component; each subsection includes practical ideas and techniques that are ready for you to implement.

Guide Design

The guide may serve as a tool to assist academic and student affairs leaders in redesigning academic advising at their respective institutions. Although it is not an all-inclusive instrument it serves as a resource for users to review recommendations based on research and best practices and incorporate only those that meet the needs of their students and institution.

The guide includes three components: (a) operational; (b) institutional; and (c) personnel. The guide uses a workbook format to allow readers the opportunity to assess, practice, and discuss sections of each component. The guide is paginated separately from the dissertation and includes a list of references that is independent of the dissertation references.

Conclusion

What follows this chapter is the guide itself and is meant to act as a stand-alone product. Consequently, it includes internal pagination for the guide as well as the sequential pagination within this dissertation. A legend is created for the guide that draws the reader's attention to pre-work assignments, loss point risks, touchpoint opportunities, and practice assignments (referred to as try it assignments in the guide).

Following the guide, Chapter 5 provides a summary of the dissertation along with considerations and recommendations for future research and implementation.

Moving From Course Selection to Degree Completion:

A Guide to Redesign Academic Advising Services to Improve Student Success

Laurie Kattuah-Snyder, EdD

"The goal of academic advising redesign is transformation from a model in which the advisor essentially serves as a registration clerk to one in which advising is sustained, strategic, integrated, proactive, and personalized (SSIPP)"

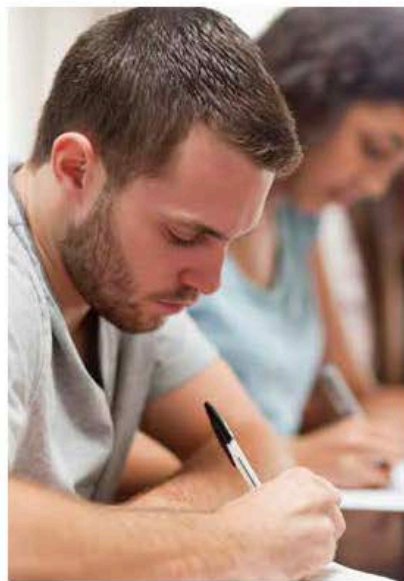(Kalamkarian, Karp, & Ganga, 20 7, para. 2).

Table of Contents

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There is a perfect storm brewing at community colleges in the United States. The U.S. now has fewer college-age students than the previous decade. The economy is good; so, fewer students are entering higher education, less funding is provided to colleges, and colleges face increased pressure from stakeholders to improve student success outcomes.

Community colleges are limited in what they can do to resolve many of these challenges, but improving student success outcomes is the one area in which community colleges can make positive improvements. Student success outcome measurements include: persistence (fall-to-winter term), retention (fall-to-fall term), and completion (credential attainment). To improve student success outcome metrics, community colleges add new technology, new majors, new learning and service modalities, and new locations to try to support student learning and retention. It is unclear whether these measures are working.

One method that garnered much attention over the past few years is to redesign academic advising processes at community colleges. The academic advising redesign methods often follow the Guided Pathways model (Bailey, Smith-Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015). Two of the key components of Guided Pathways are to help students enter a pathway and keep them on a pathway through the efforts of academic advisors. (Bailey, Smith-Jaggers, & Jenkins, 2015).

This guide is designed for community college leaders to select the areas in which there is interest or need to redesign academic advising services. Resources, needs, data, demographics, and technology determine which areas will provide the best option for your institution. Student success outcome improvements do not necessarily depend on how many areas you select for the redesign; it depends on how well the redesign implementation is done, its integration into the college culture, and how well students perceive and use the services. This guide identifies three components necessary for an academic advising redesign: (a) operational components; (b) institutional components; and (c) personnel components. Within each component, there are subsections related to the primary component; each subsection includes practical ideas and techniques that are ready for you to implement.
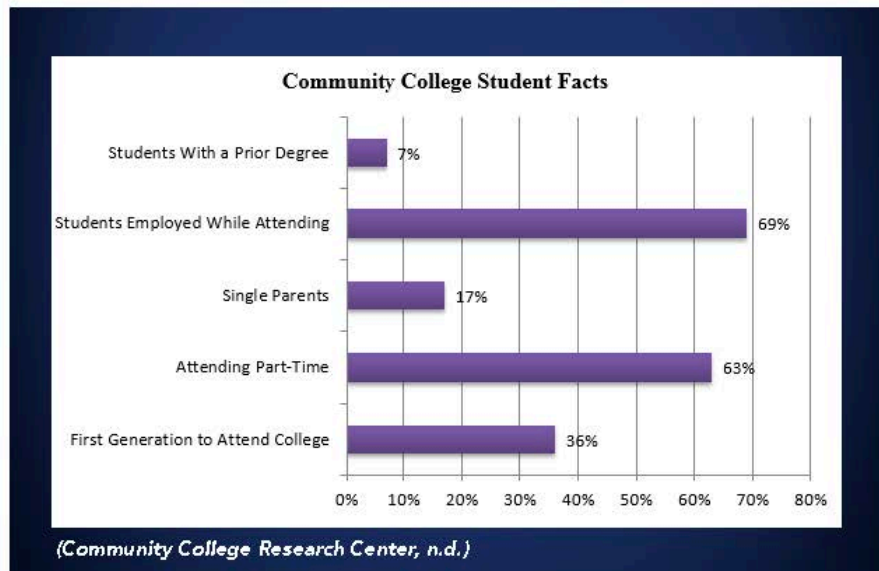
Introduction

3

First Things First. Get to Know the Student Data

Community college student data can come from a variety of state and federal sources. Your college's institutional research department will know which one is best to represent your student body. One website that provides users with a compilation of data in an easy-to-read format is the College Scorecard (collegescorecard. ed.gov) (College Scorecard, n.d.). This website shows data on cost, retention, graduation rates, post-graduation salary, financial aid and debt, student body, and SAT/ ACT scores. The data for the College Scorecard website comes from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which is the core postsecondary education data collection program for the U.S. Department of Education. IPEDS (n.d.) analyzes only those students who are attending college full-time and for the first time, and track whether students graduate in three years from the first institution they attend. Unfortunately, the IPEDS student success metrics are not relevant to most community college students, as illustrated in the chart below.

Community College Student Facts

Students With a Prior Degree	7%
Students Employed While Attending	69%
Single Parents	17%
Attending Part-Time	63%
First Generation to Attend College	36%

(Community College Research Center, n.d.)

Because IPEDS measures only students attending college full-time and graduation within three years from the first college attended, community college student data do not support the IPEDS criterion. Community college students are working; they are parenting, and many of them come from low-income homes. With the pressure to improve student success outcomes, community colleges are making changes in almost every part of the college experience. They are creating and marketing new majors and programs, offering tuition guarantees, and providing concierge services. These are creative ways to recruit new students, and possibly retain current students. But do they really improve student success outcomes?

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"Student success is one of the hottest higher education buzzwords in the public media discourse and among enrollment management professionals" (Henry, Seifert, & Peregrina-Kretz, 2014, p. 151). Defining student success is a complex and challenging task as educators, policy-makers, students, and academic leaders have different definitions. There are three common terms within the constructs of student success: retention, attrition, and persistence. In its simplest form, student success can be defined and measured as college completion and degree attainment (Bloom, Habley, & Robbins, 2012). Defining student success is one thing, but achieving student success is another. The table below represents several student success initiatives that have shown positive improvements in student persistence, retention, and completion.

Initiative	Author/Researcher	Highlights
Accelerated Study of Associate Programs (ASAP)	City University of New York (CUNY) (ASAP, n.d.)	• Assists students to graduate with an associate's degree in three years by providing intensive assistance for financial needs, academic needs, personal support, and comprehensive and personalized advising
College Learning Effectiveness Inventory (CLEI)	Eunhee Kim Fred Newton Ronald Downey Steven Benton (Kim, Newton, Downey, & Benton, 2010)	• An assessment tool to identify personal variables important to college student success • Identifies six (6) underlying factors: Academic self-efficacy, organization, and attention to study, stress and time press, involvement with college activity, emotional satisfaction, and class communication
Tinto's Retention Model	Vincent Tinto (Tinto, 2012)	• Proposes that students, specifically in the early years, require institutional actions that set high expectations, provide structured academic, financial, social support, provide frequent performance assessment, and promote active involvement with students and faculty
Limiting Choices	(Guttman Community College, n.d.)	• The college developed a comprehensive design that combines enhanced advising, expanded services to help students choose majors, significant instructional reform, and profound curricular redesign and simplification • Students take a common first-year curriculum and choose from a small selection of programs their second year • The curriculum was designed based on an analysis of the needs of the local labor market
Guided Pathways	("Complete College America," 2012)	• Reduces choices for students to create structured paths to completion built around simplified, well-organized, and easy-to-understand college-level programs of study • Four practice areas: (1) clarifying curricular paths, (2) helping students get on a path, (3) keeping students on a path, and (4) ensuring learning

What is Student Success and How it is Achieved?

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Of these initiatives, I chose the Guided Pathways (Complete College America, 2012) model and Tinto's (Tinto, 2012) integration content from his retention model as the framework for the academic advising redesign. The two initiatives blend well for an academic advising construct. Advisors must: (a) set high expectations; (b) provide opportunities for academic and social integration; (c) help students establish an academic and career path; and (d) keep students on an academic and career path.

"Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience" (Light, 2001)

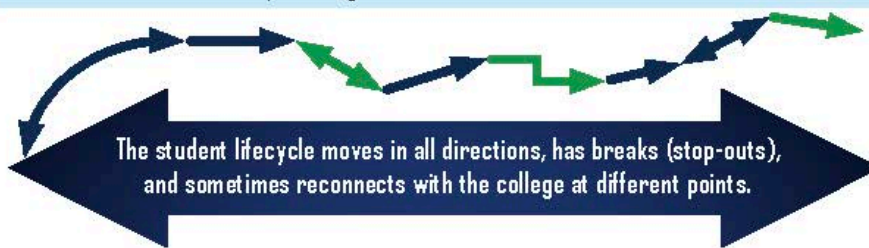"When viewed as an educational process and done well, academic advising plays a critical role in connecting students with learning opportunities to foster and support their engagement, success, and the attainment of key learning outcomes" (Nutt & Campbell, 2008, para. 2). I wrote this guide because I believe academic advising can improve student success.

For far too long, community colleges employed academic advisors as ad hoc registration clerks who selected courses for students, term-by-term, without providing any understanding or relevance of the courses to the students' goals. What students needed the most (i.e., help negotiating and understanding college life and expectations) was missing. Advisors also failed to help manage the ups and downs of the student lifecycle. I use the term lifecycle in this guide to represent the movements students make while attending a community college, stopping attending, re-entering a college, or graduating from the college.

Within the community college student lifecycle, there are opportunities I call *touchpoints* and *loss points* in which the college influences a student's decision to stay in college or drop out. Touch points are *intentional* actions that positively engage students and support their journey on the lifecycle. Touch points can be formal (e.g., an intake process) or informal (e.g., 1:1 engagement with a staff member).

The student's lifecycle is filled with loss points as well. Loss points are instances in which the community college impedes the student's progression on the lifecycle. These are *unintentional* actions of the college (e.g., misguided processes, student-unfriendly policies, or poor staff oversight) that may cause students to feel their presence at the college is not worth the effort they have to put in to get what they need.

The student lifecycle moves in all directions, has breaks (stop-outs), and sometimes reconnects with the college at different points.

We have all witnessed or heard examples of touch points and loss points for students. For example, a cafeteria cashier who knows a student by name and asks them about an exam they just took is a touch point. The registration clerk who refuses to look at or say anything to a student while they are processing a course drop is a loss point. My goal for this guide is to share ways community colleges can increase their touch point opportunities through a well-designed academic advising model. To help you use this guide in an efficient way, I added visual cues to draw attention to items of importance or activities.

The guide is organized in three components that are necessary to create a transformational change in the way academic advising is performed and integrated in to the college community:

- Operational Components
- Institutional Components
- Personnel Components

Each component will provide readers with research, examples, and resources. Each component will also provide readers with pre-work assignments to be used as an assessment for their institutions as it relates to the material in the component. The pre-work assignments can be done alone or in a group.

I added alerts to sections of the guide to bring awareness to opportunities that can increase "touchpoints" and those opportunities that could be a loss point. The reader is also provided the opportunity to practice new ideas through "try it assignments."

Try it assignment ➡	**This green arrow illustrates an activity for you to practice or assess.**
Touch point Opportunity!	**This blue call-out draws attention to a touch point opportunity.**
Loss Point Risk! ▼	**This yellow triangle alerts you to a loss point risk.**
Pre-Work Assignment!	**The purple cloud alerts you to a pre-work assignment; the pre-work assignment will provide context for the section you are about to read.**

It is up to each community college to assess their student needs, resources, and conditions related to academic advising redesign readiness to decide if any of the recommendations will be useful at their institution.

The role of academic advising changed over the years. It was once simply a way "to help students choose a program of study" (Center for Community College Student Engagement [CCCSE], 2018, para. 1) and evolved to much more.

Advisors are being asked to provide multiple services such as:

1. Goal clarification
2. Outline course sequences
3. Facilitate student orientations
4. Interpret transfer information
5. Understand and share college and community resources, and
6. Take the appropriate steps to promote student success (CCCSE, 2018, p.1).

Academic advisors do all this while simultaneously building a relationship with a student. Advisors can make a positive impact on community college students and increase touch points along the student's lifecycle. I say this as a veteran academic advisor and it is supported by research. A study conducted by the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE, 2018) reported that required academic advising leads to improved student success. The next three sections of the guide will address components that are important for an academic advising redesign: operational components, institutional components, and personnel. Each component will have pre-work assignments and activities to help you assess your current academic advising services and create tools to support your academic advising redesign efforts.

Operational components are the foundation of the academic advising office or center. In this section, I will share information about mission statements, advising case management, student-to-advisor ratios, progress tracking, and the academic advising model. Before each component, there will be a pre-work task or question(s) to help you assess your institution's current situation relevant to the component discussed. It may be helpful to use the questions to discuss the redesign with a group of colleagues to generate more insight.

Pre-Work Assignment! Mission Statements

1. Review your college's mission statement (have it handy).

2. Select the words in the college mission statement that align with the work of the academic advising office.

3. Is the mission statement broad enough for the multiple constituents that the college serves?

STRATEGY
MISSION
PLANNING
DIRECTION
VISION

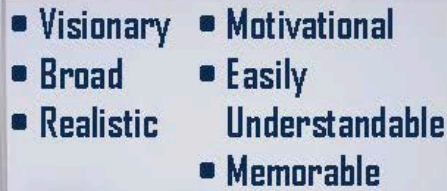**Operational Components of a Redesign**

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A strong mission statement brings your goals and ideals into focus so students, faculty, staff, and administrators understand who you are, what you do, and why you do it. It keeps a department's attention on the essentials for its existence. For academic advising to move from a *course selection/ registration* model to a *student* success model, members of the department should be involved in creating it. This will improve their understanding and implementation of the redesign.
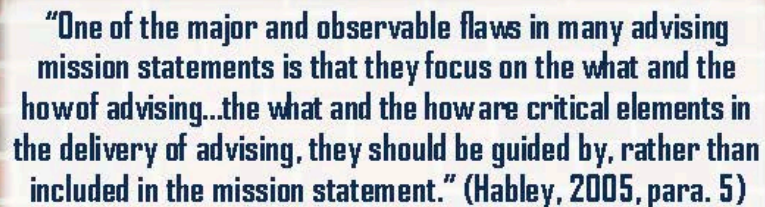
The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) recommended that academic advising mission statements be consistent with the institutional mission (NACADA, n.d.). NACADA suggested extracting specific statements from the institutional mission statement and integrating them into the academic advising statement.

Other considerations recommended by NACADA include:

1. Development of the mission statement must include a wide variety of constituencies.

2. It should serve as a guide for decision-making.

3. The mission statement must be prominently displayed and promoted.

- Visionary
- Broad
- Realistic
- Motivational
- Easily Understandable
- Memorable

4. The mission statement must be regularly reviewed and revised, if necessary.

5. The advising mission statement must be:

"One of the major and observable flaws in many advising mission statements is that they focus on the what and the how of advising...the what and the how are critical elements in the delivery of advising, they should be guided by, rather than included in the mission statement." (Habley, 2005, para. 5)

Examples of Mission Statements

1. Southwestern Community College (SCC) (Southwestern Community College, n.d.)

   The primary responsibility of an academic advisor is to guide students in making wise selections of course offerings with careful attention to institutional policies and degree requirements. In addition, effective advising will also assist students in identifying available internal and external resources that will have a positive impact on their SCC experience. Consideration of each student as a unique individual with unique needs is recognized as the foundation of SCC's advising program.

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2. Oregon Tech (Oregon Tech, n.d.)

Advising is a process that teaches students to be responsible "consumers" of their own education, to be responsible "creators" of their own learning, and to be mature examiners of their own goals and learning processes. Advisors at Oregon Tech encounter situations that fall into one or more of the following broad categories:

- Developmental advising: Developing student goals and objectives, encouraging student growth
- Academic advising: Course sequencing, registration, long term course plans
- Personal advising: Supporting, identifying and helping students at risk (academic as well as personal)
- Recruiting advising: Contacting and advising prospective students, conducting tours, providing career guidance

3. Middlesex Community College (Middlesex Community College, n.d.)

In support of the College and Student Affairs missions, the Advising department empowers students to discover and achieve their educational and professional goals by utilizing academic pathways and comprehensive academic plans.

4. Boise State University (Boise State University, n.d.)

General advising and academic support services are available to all students regardless of major status. Academic Advising and Academic Support Center strives to achieve the following for all Boise State students:

- Empowerment: We work to ensure that all students are empowered to make the best decisions possible while pursuing their academic goals.
- Approachability: We are passionate about student success and do our utmost to help all students feel welcome and valued.
- Knowledge: We strive to increase our students' knowledge about opportunities at Boise State and then use that knowledge to make progress in their academic programs.

Many examples include what the academic advisors do and how they do it. This is a common mistake many colleges make because it is easy to discuss what academic advisors do. As Habley (2005) stated, the mission statement should guide how the academic advising department duties are delivered.

Try it assignment: Mission Statements

Using the mission statement examples above, select the words that you think are *broad, realistic, motivational, understandable, or memorable* and write them down on the activity chart on the next page. This activity will help you identify the contextual properties of a well-written mission statement and initiate the creation of ideas for your own academic advising department. Allow others in your work group to participate in this activity and regroup to review everyone's lists. The collective list will be a great foundation for you to begin writing your academic advising mission statement.

Examples of Academic Advising Mission Statements

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Visionary
Is this the first time you've heard this?

Broad
Is it wide-ranging?

Realistic
Is it relevant?

Motivational
Does it make you want to take action?

Easily Understandable
Is it logical?

Memorable
Is it noteworthy?

This assignment will help you assess your ability to move academic advising to a case management model by understanding the current work load of your advising staff. You may need to consult with a few of your academic advisors to complete this assignment.

1. List all the academic advisor responsibilities that appear in their job description.

2. Are there additional responsibilities that academic advisors have that are not in their job description? Consider tasks they perform on a regular basis.

3. List all the types of needs/assistance/activities that academic advisors provide for your students.

4. Which offices work with students to meet their needs? In what capacity?

**Touch point
Opportunity!**

Case management is an integral part of moving from a course selection model to a student success model. A case management model gives oversight of the student's progress to an assigned academic advisor who is responsible for the student's movement through the student lifecycle, leading them to completion or transfer. The concept of case management is diverse and spans a wide variety of disciplines and industries. According to the Case Management Society of America (2008),

case management is a "collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's needs through communication and available resources to promote quality cost-effective outcomes" (http://www.cmsa.org/).

**Loss Point
Risk!**

Typical advisors at most community colleges use a self-contained advising model; all academic advising is in a centralized office and students meet with any available advisor when necessary. This is the traditional advising model because community college advising grew out of the guidance office concepts of public high schools. Like traditional high school guidance offices, students at community colleges meet with advisors on a walk-in basis rather than using scheduled appointments.

While the term and its many synonyms vary in use among institutions, research studies on case management use in a variety of settings show there is a common set of functions which operationally define case management: 1) identifying and attracting clients, 2) intake and assessment, 3) developing a coordinated service plan, 4) advocating on behalf of the client (s) while brokering and linking different services together, 5) implementing and monitoring service delivery, and 6) continually evaluating and adjusting the service delivery plan while determining outcomes clients are or are not achieving. (Smith, 1995, para. 5)

Case Management

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Case Management

Use this checklist to assess your college's ability to create a case management model with your current academic advising staff.

What is the total student enrollment per year (average the last five years)?	
Number of full-time academic advisors? Total number of work hours available? (1 full-time = 40 work hours *available*/week x number of full-time academic advisors)	
Number of part-time academic advisors? Total number of work hours available? (1 part-time =25 work hours *available*/week X number of part-time academic advisors)	
Which tasks/responsibilities from the pre-work assignment can transfer to another office, department, or technology? (E.g., do your academic advisors spend time with students showing them *how* to register? Can student employees do this?)	
How much time is allocated for each academic advising appointment? Is there a difference in how much time is allocated for new students compared to returning students? If so, average the difference in allocated time.	

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1. Jackson College (Jackson, Michigan)

Jackson College is a public, residential community college with an enrollment of approximately 5,000 students. In 2015, Jackson instituted an academic advising redesign and began assigning students to academic advisors (student success navigators). Each navigator carried a caseload of a few hundred students.

The caseloads are assigned based on the student's meta major (a cluster of similar majors under one category with common entry-level courses organized alphabetically). For example, one Jackson navigator is assigned all health science students with last names beginning with the letters A through D. Jackson College originally hired 18 student success navigators to service students at the college. The navigators are centrally located in a student service building and are geographically close to financial aid, admissions, tutoring, and student activities.

To track student progress, the navigators use an academic tracking tool called Student Planning (Ellucian, n.d.). Navigators manage student progress based on an academic program. Students meet with their assigned navigator at least twice per year and the navigator approves the student to register based on their academic plan. Students meet with navigators by appointments but there are also small blocks of time during each day for walk-in advising.

According to Nathan Venske, Jackson College assistant director of student services, since launching the navigator model, Jackson College reduced the number of navigators from 18 to 13 due to enrollment changes and a shift in navigator responsibilities (N. Venske, personal communication, May 25, 2018). The navigators are still responsible for an assigned list of students, but the responsibilities are manageable by 13 navigators because of the Student Planning tool.

Venske (2018) reported that the navigators require more time with this model than their previous walk-in advising because they monitor students, respond to student questions, and make necessary changes in the Student Planning tool. Despite the additional work, the navigators reported feeling satisfied with the case management model. They feel more connected with their students due to continuous supervision and monitoring (Venske, 2018).

2. Des Moines Area Community College (Des Moines, Iowa)

Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) is a multi-campus, public community college with over 35,000 students. DMACC is the largest community college in Iowa and offers 252 majors. Matt Sprengeler, a liberal arts academic advisor at the Ankeny campus, provided information about how the academic advisors manage caseloads. In 2016, DMACC implemented a case management model and assigned students an academic advisor based on major and alphabet. At the

Ankeny campus, there are 10 full-time academic advisors to service approximately 9,000 students.

DMACC, like Jackson College, used the Student Planning module from Ellucian to create, track, and intervene with students. Academic advisors view student caseloads, communicate with the whole group via email, and respond and intervene if a student is not following their degree plan. The advisor-to-student ratio differs greatly based on major. For occupational majors, advisors average about 900 students; for liberal arts majors, academic advisors carry approximately 1,200 to 1,500 students per caseload.

The caseload numbers vary because academic advising is not a required activity for students. Consequently, academic advising becomes reactionary in response to an issue rather than proactive to help students make plans.

Sprengeler (2018) reported that most academic advisors help students on academic probation and suspension. The rest of the academic advisors' time is spent course planning, career advising, and in "some discussion about transfer and pathways" (Sprengeler, personal interview, 2018). Although DMACC does not have a strong academic advising purpose, its caseload management model would perform at a high level if academic advising was a required task for students rather than a reactionary task.

Pre-Work Assignment! Student-to-Advisor Caseload
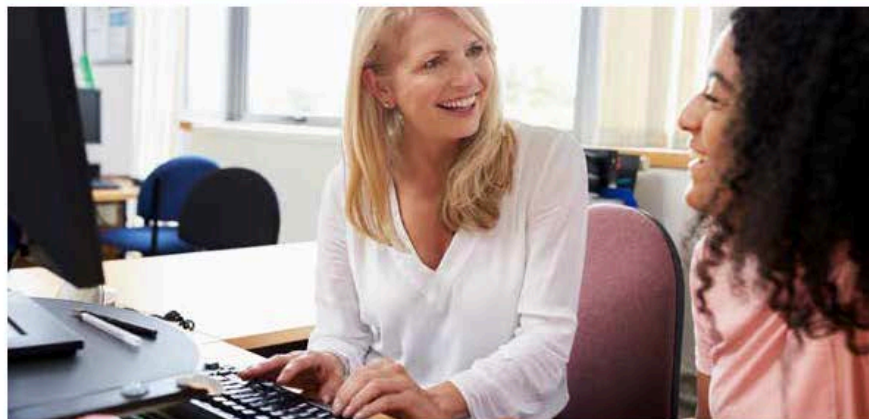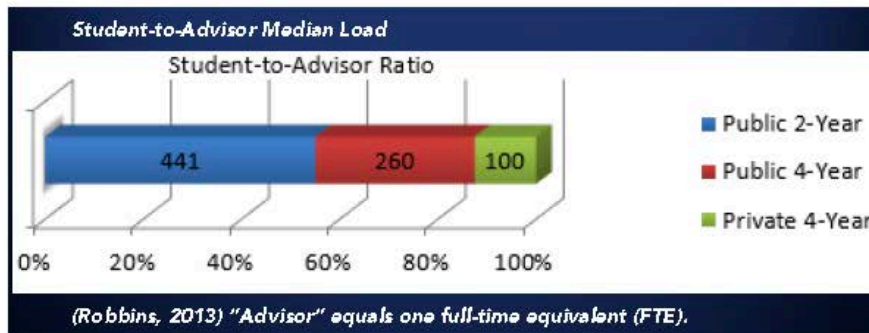
1. Student enrollment for academic year (use average from last pre-work assignment).	
2. Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) academic advisors. Calculate part-time academic advisors by 2 part-time = 1 FTE (use numbers from last pre-work assignment).	
3. Calculate student-to-advisor caseload.	_____ ÷ _____ = _____ #1 #2

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Based on the NACADA 2011 National Survey of Academic Advising, the median case load of advisees per full-time professional academic advisor is 296, or a ratio of 296 students to one full-time advisor. By institutional size, the median individual advisor caseloads are 233, 333, and 600 advisees for small, medium, and large institutions, respectively. (Robbins, 2013, para. 1)

The NACADA study is a starting point for community colleges to create a fair caseload for students and advisors, but it does not define what constitutes a small, medium, or large institution nor does it provide details of academic advisor responsibilities. NACADA cannot objectively recommend appropriate caseloads because of the factors listed in the next section (Robbins, 2013).

A clearer benchmark for assessing student-to-advisor caseload is a by Robbins (2013) in which Robbins surveyed colleges about caseload. To capture a clearer picture of student-to-advisor caseload, Robbins (2013) identified caseload based on institution type: public two-year colleges, public four-year colleges, and private four-year colleges.

Student-to-Advisor Median Load

Student-to-Advisor Ratio

441	260	100

- Public 2-Year
- Public 4-Year
- Private 4-Year

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

(Robbins, 2013) "Advisor" equals one full-time equivalent (FTE).

According to Robbins (2013), comparisons of advisor caseloads at institutions of the same type with similar student populations, programs, or geographical area are complicated by multiple factors, such as campus climate, politics, institutional mission, and other factors. Robbins (2013) described six factors to consider when addressing the student-to-advisor caseload.
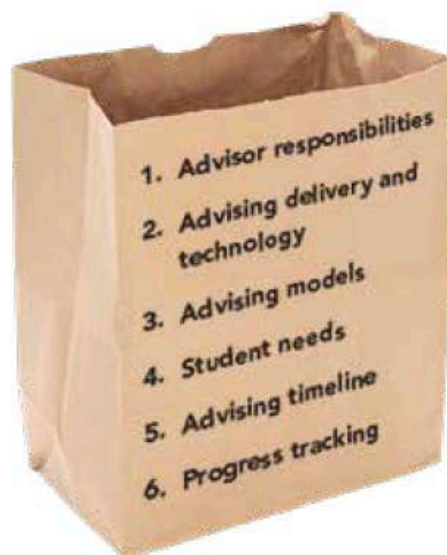
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1. Advisor Responsibilities

What do your academic advisors do on a daily basis? What responsibilities do they have that you evaluate? What additional as needed tasks do they perform that have become a regular part of their daily responsibilities?

Academic advisors are responsible for providing students with transfer and degree planning, evaluating ACT and SAT test scores, selecting appropriate courses, and communicating with students. They also sit on committees, participate in new student orientations, and teach first-year seminar courses. Advisor responsibilities differ by institution and within institutions by division, program, or position.

1. Advisor responsibilities
2. Advising delivery and technology
3. Advising models
4. Student needs
5. Advising timeline
6. Progress tracking

Thus, two advisors at two different but similarly sized institutions with identical advising caseloads may have completely different duties in addition to advising. Therefore, the caseload for one advisor may allow plenty of time to advise while the other has less time for advising.

2. Advising Delivery and Technology

How is academic advising delivered at your campus? How do advisors use technology in advising delivery? Have other advising approaches been tried; if so, what was the outcome?

The most common delivery method for academic advising is one-to-one, in-person advising (King, 2008). One-to-one academic advising provides students with uninterrupted personal time with their advisor. This type of academic advising provides the foundation to build a relationship with the student

Touch point Opportunity!

and understand the student's individual needs. The advisor-to-student relationship is a critical component that supports student persistence and retention.

What if resources are not available to accommodate one-to-one academic advising? Other delivery options to consider in place of or in addition to in-person, one-to-one advising include: group advising and technology-based advising.

Group Advising

Group advising is a delivery model to share information with more than one student at the same time. If students are at different academic and social readiness levels, group advising can be challenging. Group advising can be effective in the following scenarios: advising for cohort models, advising for second-year students in the same major, advising for learning communities, and advising for students near degree completion.

Types of group advising vary from campus to campus. For most students, their first introduction to the college is a group advising experience (new student orientation). Although not all new student orientations provide academic advising, students usually receive important information from a college faculty or staff member in a group setting. According to a study by American College Testing (ACT), the Sixth National Survey of Academic Advising found that group academic advising at new student orientations, although declining, continues to be a common method of delivery for new students (Habley, 2004).

1. Create sample 1st term course plans for occupational majors.

2. During new student orientation, have students in same occupational majors attend a group advising session.

3. Provide sample 1st term course plans and walk new students through the registration process.

4. Before students leave orientation, schedule an advising appointment for them to review the 1st term plan and create degree plans.

Try it assignment Case Management Readiness Checklist

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Technology-Based Advising

"Technology has had and will continue to have a profound effect on academic advising. In fact, there is nothing else that has had a significant impact on advising in the past ten years as the introduction of new technologies" (Leonard, 2008, p. 292). White (2005), former president of NACADA wrote, "We talk about the power of computers and how technology can free us…What we must now do is take advantage of the freedom the technology provides and deliver on the promises that are inherent in sound academic advising" (p. 2). Technology plays a big role in students' lives. How can academic advisors use technology to enhance the student/advisor relationship?

Leonard (2008) listed multiple types of technology that can assist academic advisors and students:

- Advising websites
- Student information systems
- Degree audit programs

Touch point Opportunity!

- Transfer articulation systems
- Career guidance systems
- Webinars

Technology provides advantages to students and academic advisors due to its convenience, availability, accessibility, accuracy, anonymity, consistency, and consensus (Leonard, 2008).

Technology can help advisors improve communication with students by using email, text, instant messaging, podcasts, social media, and blogs. Will these modalities replace one-to-one academic advising? I do not think that will happen, but advisors and students can use technology to stay connected via multiple communication methods. Technology should *enhance* academic advising and student experiences, not replace it.

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Ask a small group of students to find a specific page on your website (transfer guide to a specific college, admission application, a professor's email address) and time how long it takes them to find it. Add individual times and average.	Transfer Guide	Admission Application	Professor's Email
What are the different ways your college can communicate with students? List each type in separate boxes.			
What social media sites is your college actively using? (*Actively* means equal parts posting information on a weekly basis, surveying students, and providing live feeds). List each type in separate boxes.			

3. Advising Models

There are many academic advising models for college students. Depending on your institution's student demographics, student needs, and college resources, any one or a combination of models may be beneficial to create a student success academic advising model. Below is a chart illustrating the possible academic advising models.

Model	Rsearcher(s)	Highlights
Learner-Centered	Based on Chickering and Gamson (Reynolds, 2013)	◆ Connecting learning principles that are effective in the classroom are effective in academic advising. ◆ Promotes student learning in and out of the classroom. ◆ Sets clear, positive, and reasonable goals.
Developmental	Winston, Ender, and Miller (Grites, 2013)	◆ Based on student development theories and holds a premise that advisors take a holistic approach to each student. ◆ Advising for student success includes academic, personal, and career goals. ◆ Advisors identify student's skills, abilities, and expectations, and use resources to achieve goals.
Motivational Interviewing	Miller and Rolnick (Hughey & Pettay, 2013)	◆ A collaborative, person-centered partnership between student and advisor, to elicit motivation for change, on four principles: a) expressing empathy, b) developing discrepancy, c) rolling with resistance, and d) supporting self-efficacy.
Prescriptive	Crookston (1972)	◆ Academic advisor acts as a doctor does with a patient and dictate what needs to be done ◆ It is assumed that the student will follow the advice and recommendations of the academic advisor.
Appreciative	Based on the social constructivist framework (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2013)	◆ Using organizational change theory, advisors seek the positive in each student to mobilize change. ◆ Promotes unconditional positive questioning, engagement of people at individual and organizational levels, and the systematic approach to action research.
Strength-Based	Theoretical framework found in the Positive Psychology Movement (Varney, 2013) (Schreiner, 2013)	◆ The premise of emphasizing on one greatest talent likely leads to success rather than spending time and effort to remediate areas of weakness.
Proactive	Glennen (Varney, 2013)	◆ Formerly known as Intrusive Advising, Proactive advising blends developmental academic advising and personal counseling. ◆ Uses student retention research that suggests contact with a significant person within the institution is a crucial factor to a student's decision to stay in college (Heisserer & Parette, 2002). ◆ Involves intentional outreach to students before academic challenges occur.

Most community colleges use a prescriptive model of advising for course selection and communication of academic policy. Prescriptive advising is complementary to advising models that operate as an extension of the registration office because advisors use a linear approach to communicate with students and assume the student will follow the advisor's advice.

Loss Point Risk!

No single model should serve all students. The diversity of students, their needs, and your established relationships should dictate the method of advising. For example, when I advise a new student, my first goal is to establish a trusting relationship with them and let them know I care. I usually use appreciative or developmental models to build the relationship. Once the student is on their academic path, I use a combination of proactive and prescriptive advising to help them stay on the academic path and communicate with them at critical points during the semester.

However, if I did not establish a relationship with them during the first visit, the student would not interpret my communication and advice as genuine and I would be at risk for being disregarded.

Try it assignment: Advising Model

"Because all students interpret their experiences in ways that are particular to them, no single approach or advising strategy will sufficiently assist everyone optimally" (Kimball & Campbell, 2013, p. 35).

Factors to Consider
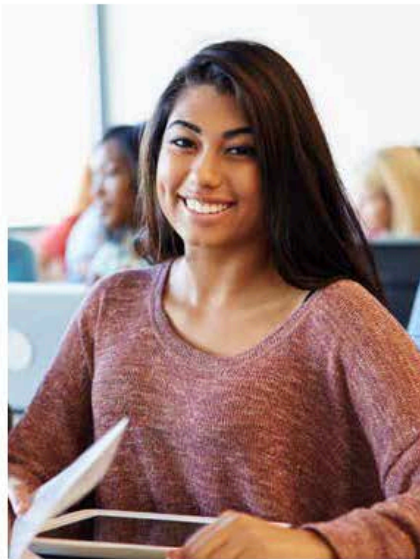
Observe at least one advising session with each academic advisor	
Which advising model is used most of the time?	
What percentage of the session is spent on transactional tasks?	
What percentage of the session is spent on relational tasks?	

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Scenario #1 – New Student

"Hi Susan, I'm Laurie your academic advisor. It's nice to meet you. What brings you in today?"	◆ Warm introduction ◆ Open-ended question	◆ Commonly used in the developmental approach
"To make sure I can help you plan your degree that meets your needs, I want to make sure I understand your goals correctly…"	◆ Paraphrasing is a great way to let the student know you were listening and to make sure you understood them correctly.	◆ Developmental approach as the advisor is using a holistic approach to assess needs and goals
"Susan, based on your SAT scores and your high school transcripts, I want you to register for these courses…"	◆ Be clear and specific on recommendations that we as academic advisors know are best for the student.	◆ Prescriptive; very limited room for negotiating what is best for the student based on where they are **now**, and where they want to **go**

Scenario #2 – Current Student with Established Relationship with Advisor

"It's great to see you again, Susan. How is everything going with your math class?"	◆ Asking students questions, in which you have an established relationship, shows the student you care.	◆ Proactive approach; getting to the issue before the student needs help
"Susan, tell me how the new study plan we created is working out?"	◆ Asking students questions, in which you have an established relationship, shows the student you care.	◆ Proactive approach; getting to the issue before the student needs help
"Susan, I'm very concerned that you skipped your math class last week. Tell me why you made that decision."	◆ This may sound stern, but with an established relationship, this will be received positively and shows the student the advisor cares.	◆ This sounds parental, but with an established relationship, the advice (prescriptive), the outreach (proactive), and the concern for the whole student (developmental) will be received positively.

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4. Student Needs

The uniqueness of each student, specifically in open admission colleges, is varied and diverse. With variances in age, sex, race, geography, income, college-readiness, and culture, the list of divergent student needs is long and extensive. Attempting to meet all student needs can be daunting and financially challenging for most community colleges.

Academic advisors play a pivotal role in assessing student needs and helping students find resources. "To advise students effectively, academic advisors should be familiar with changing student demographics, characteristics, and experiences" (Kennedy & Ishler, 2008, p. 123). Kennedy and Ishler (2008) explained that students and their needs changed over time in terms of age, enrollment status, place of residence, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnic group, international student status, and physical disabilities or learning differences. Changing student demographics, characteristics, and experiences all risk impeding learning and student persistence. Additional student needs include mental and physical health needs, financial needs, childcare needs, and balancing work/school/home life needs (Kennedy & Ishler, 2008).

Loss Point Risk!

For academic advisors, it is important to know about the services available to students at the college and services available to them off-campus (see example below).

Service	Name	Notes	Contact Information
Mental Health	Lightpoint Services	Sliding scale fees, affiliated with Saturn University counseling program, and counseling students available without charge	(000) 123-0000
Food	St. Dustun's Church (Jupiter)	Open Monday-Thursday, 10-5; required to meet with Mary for intake	(000) 999-4321
Transportation	Student Activities Board	Check board for ride share information	Student Activities Center

Knowing the student demographics and student needs can help inform policy and practice and influence decision makers to add new services. Kennedy and Ishler (2008) recommended that knowing demographic profiles for a campus can help when "reconsidering academic advising policies and practices, and making them more responsive to student needs" (p. 137).
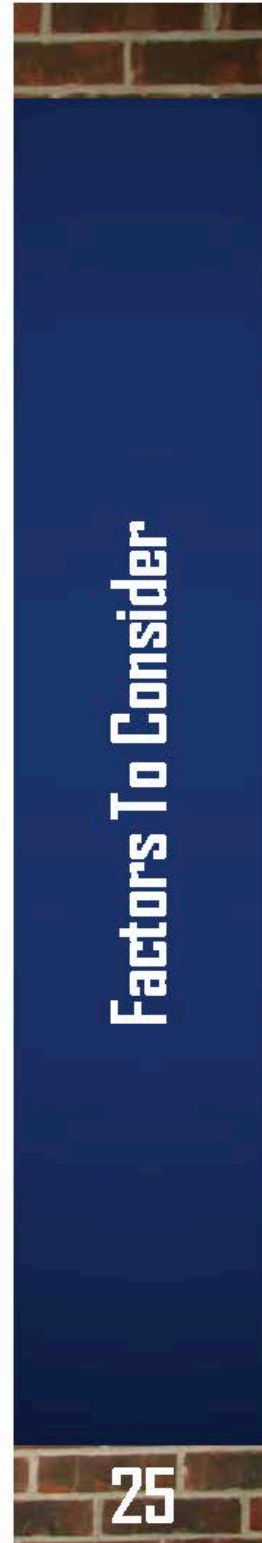
5. Advising Timeline

**Pre-Work Assignment!
Advising Timeline**

Assess the academic advising timeline at your college by answering these questions.

"The timing of academic advising also plays a role regarding the significance of caseloads" (Robbins, 2013, para. 9). Is academic advising mandatory at your college? If so, are students required to see an academic advisor every

Advising Timeline Assessment	Yes	No
Required for new students?		
Required every term?		
Required for transfer-in students?		
Can students see an academic advisor without an appointment?		
Do students receive at least 30 minutes for appointments?		

term or only once per year? Is it required for only specific majors or after earning a certain number of credits? If advising is not mandatory, when do your students meet with an advisor?

Touch point Opportunity!

Best Practices

✓ Make academic advising required for all new students.

✓ Allow a minimum of 30 minutes per advising meeting to permit students to ask questions and get answers.

✓ Require undecided students and those at risk of stopping-out (e.g., students on academic probation, students taking foundation-level courses) to meet with an advisor at least twice per semester.

✓ Provide students with opportunities to schedule an appointment but also have times during the week for walk-in advising (no appointment necessary).

Depending on student type, student needs, and academic calendar, the academic advisor must resolve a variety of "common and unique transitional issues" regarding the timing and frequency of advising for students (Steele & McDonald, 2008, p. 173). Some advising needs are anticipated and the academic advisor can make appropriate plans and prepare for the meeting. Other advising needs cannot be anticipated and academic advisors need to be flexible and resourceful for these advising meetings.

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6. Academic Progress Tracking

Two of the fundamental goals of the Guided Pathways framework (Complete College America, 2012) are to reduce time to degree completion and reduce the number of credits earned to complete the degree. In the United States, too few students graduate from college and even fewer graduate on time.

(Complete College America, 2012)
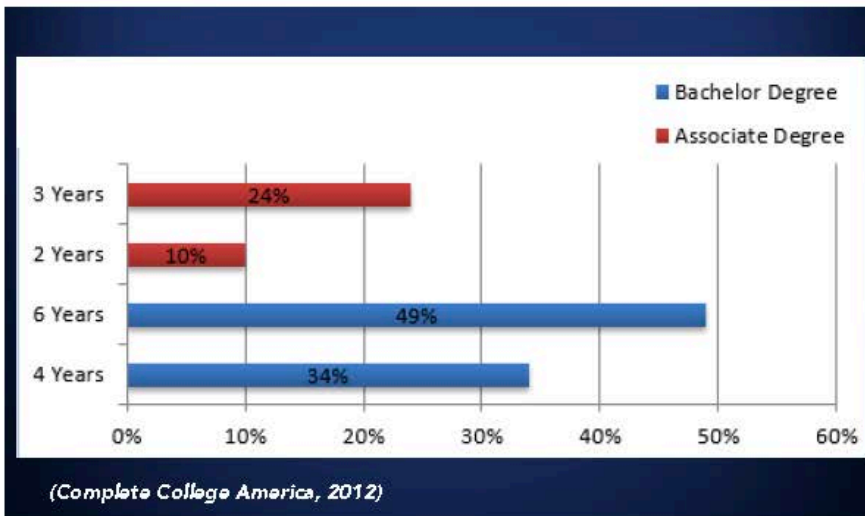
One method that colleges use to help students complete college on time and with fewer credits is tracking of students' academic progress. Tracking a student's progress from the point of declaring a major to the point of completing a degree requires the academic advisor and student to use technology to view courses, grades, and degree audits and to quickly communicate when progress is hindered. Academic advisors can use technology to view student academic progress and communicate with students in-between appointments to guide them or intervene. Some available academic progress tracking tools include:

- Degree Works (Ellucian, n.d.)
- Student Success Management System (EAB)
- Starfish Connect (Hobsons)
- Navigate (EAB)

All of these tracking systems provide colleges with similar features but at different price points and reporting options. Before purchasing new tracking technology, I recommend colleges evaluate their specific needs and student persistence and retention data and discuss realistic goals they hope to achieve with the new technology. Most vendors will assist with a needs assessment and demonstrate how their product will meet your goals.

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Factors To Consider

This chart serves as a rubric for assessing student tracking technology using four important variables: 1) integration with the student information system (SIS), 2) student-facing features, 3) reporting, and 4) communication.

Deliverable	Basic	Moderate	Optimal
Integration with SIS	• Operates as a stand-alone system	• Integrates with SIS but with programming upgrades	• Plug and play integration with existing SIS
Student-Facing Features	• Simple view with degree require-ments and courses completed	• Student view with degree require-ments, courses completed, grade accumulation, and anticipated gradu-ation	• Ability to view courses needed, courses completed, cumulative grade point averages, anticipated grad-uation, and ability to register from the plan
Reporting	• On-time reporting for class registration activity	• On-time reporting for class registra-tion activity and ability to forecast	• On-time reporting for class registra-tion activity and ability to forecast • Early alert and intervention system built in
Communication	• Provides phone number and email contact information	• Student and advi-sor contact infor-mation available with the ability to email and call from application	• Texting and email on demand and in batch • Automatic com-munication on credit accumulation benchmarks
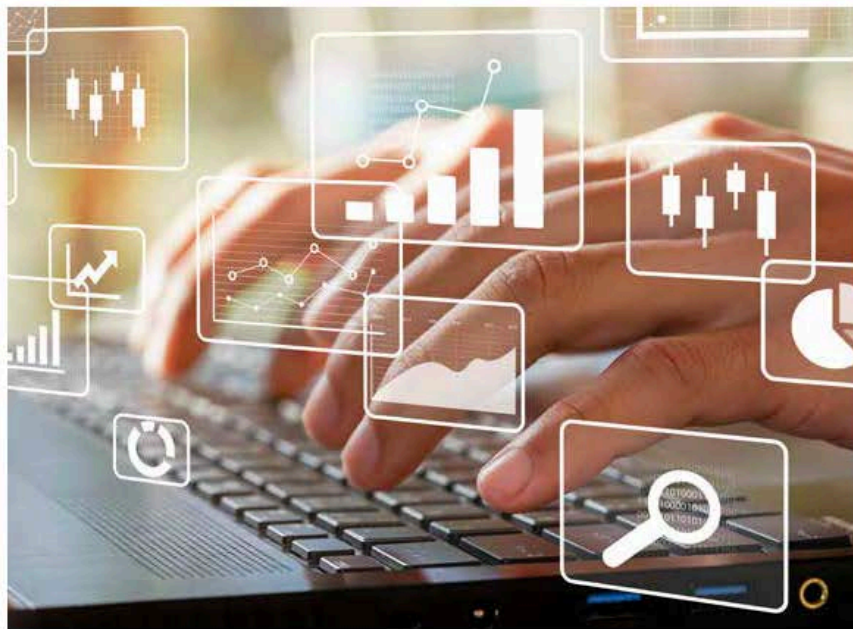
No Technology? No Problem?

What if your college is unable to purchase new tracking technology? This is a dilemma for many colleges if available resources are very limited. Depending on the number of students and academic advisors, an advisor can use an Excel spreadsheet or Microsoft Project database to track student progress. A sample Excel spreadsheet with formulas that total credit hours, grades, and grade point average is shown below. An advisor can create this and insert a separate tab for each student. This involves a lot of manual work, but if the college does not have academic progress tracking technology, the advisor can work with Excel to monitor the student's progress.

Academic Progress Tracking

Details		Assesment	
Student name	Sue Smith	Math	72
First Term	Fall 29018	English	88
FTIAC?	Yes	Reading	89
Transfer-In?	No	High School GPA	3.4
Major	Psychology; Transfer to ABC Univ		
Goal	BSW and MSW		

Academic Progress Tracking

Fall 2018 Term	Credit Hours	Final Grade	Fall 2019 Term	Credit Hours	Final Grade
ENG 101	3	4.00	POLS 105	3	
MATH 053	4	4.00	HUM 253	4	
HIST 151	4	3.00	BIOL 235	4	
FYE 100	3	3.00	PSYCH 227	4	
Total credits and GPA	16	3.60	Total credits and GPA	15	#DIV/0!

Winter 2019	Credit Hours	Final Grade	Winter 2019	Credit Hours	Final Grade
ENG 102	3	3.80	PHIL 240	3	
MATH 111	4	2.80	ETH. 210	4	
BIOL 101	4	3.00	SOC 101	3	
PSYCH 201	4	3.50	MATH 240	4	
PE 120	2	4.00			
Total credits and GPA	15	3.28	Total credits and GPA	14	#DIV/0!

A Student-Focused Academic Advising Model

Different academic advising models may work for most college students. However, the effectiveness of the different models in achieving term-to-term persistence, fall-to-fall retention, and degree completion depends on the student population, academic program, student's decision on a major/career, and the educational environment. For community college students, academic advising is typically "registration-orientated advising"

(Bailey et al., 2015, p. 55). In this advising approach, students get shuffled through the advising process quickly. Academic advisors only review assessment test scores and recommend courses for the next term. Due to high demand and a limited number of advising staff, students feel rushed.

"It's like they want to get you in and out as fast as possible. Like they kind of threw some papers at you. Then it's like, have a good one."

What does a student-focused advising model look like? Is it like the customer is always right model in business and retail? With the variety of student needs and the limitations of college resources, there is not only one advising model that is best for supporting student success. Since there is no single advising model that can work for multiple student types and multiple student needs, academic advisors need to be flexible and offer a diverse repertoire of models.

Integrated support and intense and purposeful engagement influence the persistence, retention, and

credential attainment of students (CCCSE, 2012). Academic advising, as a profession, should fulfill these practices but some models fail to engage with students. Of the advising models available, I find a combination of developmental, proactive, and prescriptive to be most beneficial in creating a student-focused academic advising model that is easy to teach to new academic advisors and is relevant to today's students.

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A student-focused advising model makes personal connections with the student. This is a critical variable that improves the odds of persistence (Community College Survey of Student Engagement [CCSSE], 2009). Contact with a significant person within the institution is a crucial factor in a student's decision to stay in college (CCSSE, 2009).

The premise for utilizing proactive academic advising is predicated upon the belief that some students will not seek help, even when they need it, thereby necessitating assistance from a pre-assigned academic advisor.

Touch point Opportunity!

Earl (1987) described this model as "action-oriented by involving and motivating students to seek help when needed" (p. 24). "Intrusive (proactive) advising utilizes the good qualities of prescriptive advising (experience, awareness of student needs, and structured programs) and of developmental advising (relationship to a student's total needs)" (Varney, 2013, p. 161).

Try it assignment: Which Model and When?

Student Needs	Model
New Student	
Unsure of college major	
Trouble with a class	
Registration issue	
Trouble acclimating	
Transfer questions	
Dropping a class	
1) Prescriptive	
2) Proactive/Intrusive	
3) Developmental	
4) Combination	

(Hint: The answer is the same for all the student needs!)

A Student-Focused Academic Advising Model

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This section includes sample resources that are necessary for operational efficiency in academic advising that effectively addresses student needs. Examples include sample floor plans, explanations of potential locations for academic advising, sample schedules for office hours, and suggestions for appointment scheduling and tracking.

Advising Floor Plans

Few community college staff members have the luxury of designing their own office space. If you are able, I recommend designing the space in a way that works best for the student. An open floor plan with a central front desk helps students avoid feeling confused about where to check-in for an appointment or to ask a question. The front desk should be large enough to allow multiple clerks space to hold conversations in-person and over the phone.

To make the advising office look open and approachable, advisors should have offices behind and surrounding the front desk so that students can see if their advisor is available and allow the front desk staff to ask advisors questions.

For safety and to further the open look of the area, I also recommend that the doors for the advisor offices and the lobby be glass or Plexiglas to allow a clear view of the areas. Advising offices should be on the same floor as all the other student support offices (e.g., financial aid, tutoring, registration, counseling, and employment). This provides students ease of access to all support services.

Try it assignment: Office Aesthetics

- Open window blinds.
- Hang pictures of students engaged in college activities.
- Hang advisor photos by their doors.
- Keep the lobby clutter-free.
- Remove physical barriers from the front desk.

Advising Extension Offices and Locations

"Colleges can strengthen student engagement by making outside-the-classroom engagement inescapable" (CCSSE, 2009, p. 15). How can academic advising be inescapable? I recommend colleges create ad hoc academic advising locations in student traffic-heavy

Touch point Opportunity!

areas, such as academic buildings, student activities, and food/dining areas. A full-time schedule may not be necessary, but offer at least some hours of service in these areas.

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Advising Office Hours

Office hours at community colleges rarely change, but should reflect the needs of students. Are the hours convenient for students? Have you ever asked students about the hours? Do the hours make the staff happy but frustrate students?

Several years ago, my college conducted a survey of student opinions about office hours of student support areas. We were surprised to find out that most students thought that Saturday office hours would be nice but that most of them would not use Saturday office hours. Rather than open on Saturday, we extended office hours on Fridays and expanded advising modalities by creating phone appointments and Skype-style appointments via Blackboard Collaborate.

Depending on your students' needs and demographics, you might need to remain open on Saturdays and in the evenings. Do not make immediate changes. Survey your students first!

Use these questions to guide the assessment of office hours:

1. Is your college located in a city, suburb, or rural area?

2. What surrounds the campus?

3. Do most of your students work?

4. What percentage of your students are parents?

5. What are the hours of other student-facing departments on campus?

Academic Advising Extras

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Appointments or Walk-In?

There is no easy answer to this question. Does the advising office operate as an all walk-in model or does it operate by appointments only? Like office hours, this depends on student needs; unlike office hours, this can be supported by on technology. Scheduling technology can perform a host of
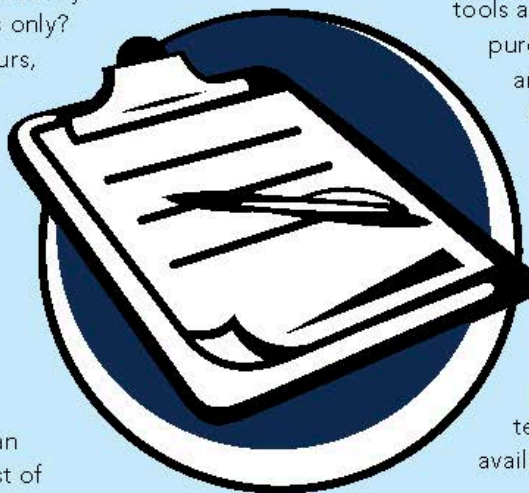
duties beyond just keeping track of appointments.

There are many scheduling tools available for purchase that are specific to academic advising and other student service offices. Below is a list of some of the scheduling technology available:

- GigaBook (https://gigabook.com/blog/academic-advising-appointment-scheduling-software/)
- Appointment Manager (http://www.e2eadvising.com/)
- SARSGrid (http://www.sarsgrid.com/sars-anywhere.aspx)

If operating as an appointment-only model, I recommend scheduling software. These include features beyond regular appointment scheduling options, such as Outlook or Google Calendar. Our office uses the SARSGrid, which provides reports on student head count (students serviced for a period of time), drop-in advising tools, and an easy-to-use grid to quickly see advisor availability. However, this does not answer the question of whether to operate an advising office by scheduling student appointments or walk-in advising. To answer this, a college needs must consider the periods during the day, month, and year in which the office is busiest.

For community colleges, the busiest times are usually the 2 to 3 weeks before the fall and winter terms. Based on your advisor headcount, estimate how many students an advisor can meet with if they are on appointments compared to the average time spent for walk-in hours. My college used the data from the SARSGrid to determine that we would only use walk-in advising for the month of August and the 3 weeks before the winter term (end of December and early January). The rest of the time, we operate only by appointment. Students responded in a survey that they preferred this model to walk-in advising.

The operations of an academic advising department vary as diversely as the student population. From the formation of a well-defined mission statement to deciding which academic advising model to use, the operational elements form the crux of the advising center redesign. For too many years, academic advising offices operated as an extension of the registration office. Advisors met with students and selected courses for the upcoming term. There were no discussions of career goals or majors, no identification of individual needs, and no relationships between the advisor and student.

I use the terms touch points and loss points to describe actions and opportunities of community colleges within the academic advising office. Think about your institution. If you were a new student, would you feel engaged from the moment you applied to the moment you attended class? Are rules and processes arbitrarily created to make employees' jobs easier? If you were a student, would anyone at your college know your name?

There are some community colleges in the United States that are making college-wide transformational changes. However, most community colleges can only make department-wide changes. If this is the case at your institution, change whichever department can provide more opportunities for touch points through a well-defined mission statement, selection of an advising model to meet the needs of your students, and tracking of students' academic progress to provide outreach early and often.

Operational Component Summary

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Institutional Components of a Redesign

Institutional components refer to college-wide supports for an academic advising redesign and the multiple departments that this includes. Institutionally, there are several resources available to assist with an academic advising redesign: technical infrastructure, governance, and finance and budgeting. For the purposes of an academic advising redesign, I chose only those components that have a more direct impact on the project: campus culture and collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs.

1. How is the college mission discussed? Is it used to make decisions?

2. How do new employees become socialized at the college?

3. How is information shared?

4. What makes you proud to work for your college?

5. In what ways does the college support student success?

6. What is one thing you would change at the college to make it more student-focused?

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The business community uses the topic of culture to define managerial and organizational performance. "Researchers and practitioners alike often view culture as a new management approach that will not only cure a variety of organizational troubles but will serve to explain virtually every event that occurs within an organization" (Tierney, 1988, p. 1).

Even the most seasoned higher education leaders sometimes wonder what is holding their college together. Is it the college mission, the values, or adherence to procedures?

That's how we do things around here!

What is culture? For purposes of this guide, I use a definition by anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Geertz (1973) explained that traditional culture "denotes a historically transmitted **pattern of meanings** embodied in **symbols**, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which [people] **communicate, perpetuate**, and **develop their knowledge** about and **attitudes** toward life" (p. 89). There is considerable power in cultural codes, norms, symbols, and conventions. By breaking codes and conventions, we are reminded of their presence and power. The intent of including culture in this guide is to bring an awareness of its importance to successfully completing projects. Understanding the college culture will prepare you to better communicate with other departments and administrators regarding what you are doing with the academic advising redesign and how the redesign will affect them.

Culture and Communication

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What did you learn in the pre-work assignment on page 36? How much does culture influence how the college operates and how it makes decisions? Which question was the easiest? Which was the hardest to answer?

"Institutions certainly are influenced by powerful, external factors such as demographic, economic, and political conditions, yet they are also shaped by strong forces that emanate from within" (Tierney, 1988, p. 3).

Understanding culture minimizes the occurrence and consequences of conflict and builds a sense of shared purpose and common goals. Communicating the academic advising redesign within the context of a student-focused culture will improve the chances of it gaining support from different parts of the institution.

Assessing organizational culture requires a comprehensive study by organizational communication experts of cultural subsets (e.g., subculture, anti-culture, and disciplinary culture) (Tierney, 1988). Understanding the breadth of the college culture when implementing an academic advising redesign may provide simple truths about the culture. How are decisions made? How is information shared? Where are the power gaps? Anticipating these answers and determining where push back may come from can provide you with information to *prepare* and *avoid* conflict.

What Can I Do to Create a Student-Focused Culture?

It is understandable that you might feel overwhelmed thinking that you must improve the college culture at your institution before you can implement changes in academic advising. This is not so. In your role as a director, dean, or other position of authority, you simply **start the conversation.**

1. First, make sure the way **you communicate** with others is clear, open, and student-focused.

2. Second, **assess** the culture within your own department. Are your processes, rules, and messaging student-focused?

3. Third, (this is difficult but I guarantee it will start a conversation) as a meeting is ending, ask everyone, "Did our discussion and decisions today have a positive impact for our students?"

Examples of Student-Focused Culture Improvement

- Monthly communication via email or video from the college president.

- Invite students to monthly open-door meetings or chats with the president, vice president, or deans.

- Invite students to attend board meetings.

- Hang pictures of real students on campus such as, graduation pictures, students playing sports, or students engaging with other students (academically or socially).

- Like I challenged you before, end every meeting with a question…" *"Did our discussion and decisions made today have a positive impact for our students?"*

Culture and Communication

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During the early years of postsecondary education, student affairs work was the responsibility of academic faculty and administrators (Colwell, 2006). When student affairs became more specialized, a divide between academic affairs and student affairs developed. Schuh (1999) explained that "the failure of colleges to establish links between students' out-of-classroom experiences and their academic endeavors has impeded not only students' overall personal development but also the quality of their academic experience" (p. 87).

How often do staff members from academic affairs and student affairs collaborate on projects at your institution? I sometimes hear from my student affairs colleagues that, "All they care about is the faculty," "We'd have better student persistence if the faculty would be nicer to the students," and "Why can't they understand student success is everyone's responsibility"? I have also heard comments from academic affairs staff that, "Anything outside of the classroom is the responsibility of student affairs."

Why is collaboration between the two divisions so important to an academic advising redesign? When academic and student affairs partner to improve student outcomes, they "bridge the academic, social, and affective elements of students' experiences to create seamless learning environments and foster student engagement" (Nesheim, Guentzel, McDonald, Wells, & Whitt, 2007, p. 437). Nesheim et al. (2007) examined outcomes for students participating in academic and student affairs partnership programs at 18 institutions and identified four student outcome categories: (a) acclimation to the institution; (b) engagement; (c) student learning; and (d) academic and career decisions. Students participating in the academic and student affairs collaboration programs reported enhanced student learning, engagement, and academic and career decision-making (Nesheim et al., 2007).

Examples of Academic and Student Affairs Collaboration

- First-year experience courses and programs
- Orientation programs
- Supplemental instruction
- Learning communities
- Student life and activities

Touch point Opportunity!

Try it assignment: Office Aesthetics

1. Invite faculty to new student orientation. Ask them to talk to students about what to expect in the college classroom, share information about their course/discipline, and engage with students.

2. Ask the first-year experience faculty if academic advisors can visit during the first week of class to introduce themselves, hand out business cards, or talk about why and when to meet with academic advisors.

3. Attend academic division monthly meetings. Take notes and share with the rest of the divisional team.

4. Ask if academic advisors can be a part of foundation-level courses as coaches and be available before and after classes to answer questions.

5. Explore ways faculty and academic advisors can share information and concerns about students.

6. Invite an academic dean or faculty member out to lunch!

Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Collaboration

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An academic advising redesign requires the support of the institution. The culture needs to support a redesign by adopting student-focused behaviors and communicate their focus through words and actions. Trying to create a student success-focused academic advising center is impossible unless the college effectively communicates that it is student-focused.

It can be daunting to think that the campus culture and communication should align with a student focus before redesigning academic advising.

Without knowing your specific college, it is difficult to assess what will be necessary to change at the institution before redesigning an academic advising office. The best advice is for you and others working on the project to communicate frequently to everyone, be transparent, and remain student-focused in everything you say and do.

What is the answer to the *which model* and *when* assignment on page 31? Combination. There is rarely a situation with a student when an academic advisor is only using one modality to communicate and service students.

Personnel Components

Personnel components refer to the hiring and training of academic advisors for the academic advising redesign. This section includes details of the hiring process such as job description, criteria to measure candidates, the interview, and training new academic advisors.
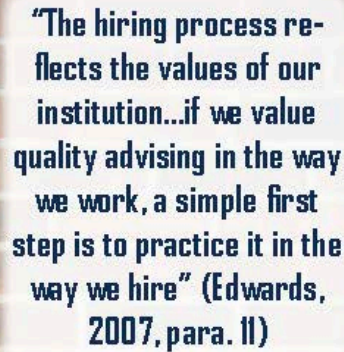
Pre-Work Assignment!
Job Description

- Review the current job description for academic advisors.
  - *Does it accurately list the core responsibilities of the position?*
  - *Is the job title Academic Advisor or something else?*
  - *Does it have college-specific terminology or acronyms that may be confusing?*
  - *Does it describe how the position fits into the organization?*

The first step in the hiring process is to write the job description. A well-written job description is prudent so that applicants have a clear understanding of the position before applying for the job. It is also a valuable tool for the hiring manager to use to train, supervise, and evaluate staff.

Job Description and Examples

The components of a well-written job description include the following:

1. Job title

- Job titles should be specific to the job function. Students, staff, and faculty are all familiar with the title of Academic

> "The hiring process reflects the values of our institution…if we value quality advising in the way we work, a simple first step is to practice it in the way we hire" (Edwards, 2007, para. 11)

Advisor Do not complicate matters by calling it something confusing like Learner Advocate, Finish Line Coach, or Success Guru.

  - *Academic Advisor*

2. Job summary

- The summary should be attention grabbing and provide an overview of the college and how the position supports the college.

- Include the exact location of the position.

  - *"ABC College of Saturn, MI, is looking for smart and compassionate individuals to work as Academic Advisors to help our students succeed. ABC College is the destination college for students located in Saturn, MI who wish to earn a certificate, associate's degree, transfer to a four-year college, or learn new skills. Academic Advisors work collaboratively with instructors and administrators to create career-ready and transfer-friendly paths for students."*

3. Responsibilities and duties

- Outline the core responsibilities of the position. Be detailed but concise.

- List any duties that are unique to your college.

- Describe the day-to-day activities and work environment.

- Describe how the position fits within the college and the reporting structure.

  o *"The Academic Advisor will be responsible for helping our students plan their success through career decision-making, degree-planning, transfer-planning, and course-scheduling. Using exceptional interpersonal skills and personal judgment, the Academic Advisor will guide students to complete their academic and career goals. On a daily basis, the Academic Advisor will meet with students for individual appointments, call, text, or email students who need redirection or intervention, and collaborate with faculty and administrators to improve student outcomes. Through intentional outreach and engagement with students, the Academic Advisor will support ABC Colleges' mission to be the leader in community college graduation and employment rates."*

"If you don't know why they'd hire you, neither will they." Frank Sonnenberg
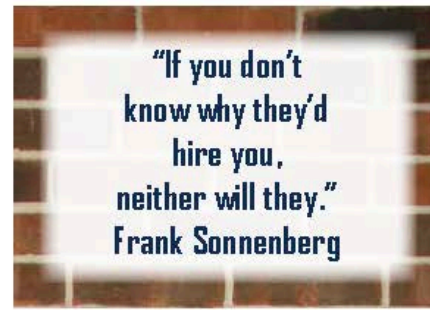
4. Qualifications and skills

- Identify your minimum educational qualifications. Do responsibilities align with a candidate who must have a graduate degree or will a bachelor's in a specific discipline suffice?

- List all soft and hard skills that are necessary (e.g., active listening, information gathering, or specific computer skills).

  o *"The Academic Advisor requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree in psychology, student affairs, human service, or a comparable social science major. The candidate should also have at least three years of experience working with college students in a student-facing function. The Academic Advisor must have active listening skills, exercise professional judgment, and the ability to behave genuinely and think creatively."*

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1. Using the academic advisor job description in the pre-work assignment, edit it using examples on the previous page.

2. Highlight words in the job summary that are attention grabbing.

3. Does the job summary align the academic advisor's functions to the college? How?

4. Are core responsibilities easily identifiable or are they generic and hidden?

5. Do the responsibilities and duties provide a dear picture of what a typical work day looks like?

6. Are qualifications dear? Are there specific soft and hard skills listed?

7. Do the education qualifications match the job responsibilities?

8. Does your college provide the minimum compensation?

Interviewing and Assessing Applicants

Once you reviewed the applications, it is time to interview and select. Interviewing techniques that require applicants to provide examples is best to assess knowledge and capabilities. This type of interview is called behavioral interviewing. The purpose of this type of interview is to have candidates provide concrete examples of skills and experiences that directly relate to the position. Sample behavioral interview questions and indications for interviewers indude:

- Tell us about a time when you had to share unpopular information with a student.
  - *How does the applicant indude the student's feelings or thoughts in the communication? Does the candidate express thoughtfulness in how they shared the unpopular information?*

- How do you handle conflict? Give us an example that involved a student or a coworker.
  - *How does the applicant discuss conflict? How does the applicant label the conflict?*

- Describe a difficult decision you had to make.
  - *Does the applicant use a process to assess their options?*

- Talk about a time when you had to work closely with someone whose personality was very different from yours.
  - *How does the applicant describe the person and the situation?*

- Explain what relationship-building looks like to you in an advisor/ advisee interaction.
  - *What is the applicant's comfort level when talking about relationships and relationship building?*

- Tell a short story (interviewer) and ask the applicant to summarize what they heard.
  - *Does the applicant ask clarifying questions? What were their non-verbal responses? Did the applicant summarize the story accurately?*

- You get to create three newspaper headlines of any kind. What three headlines would you select?
  - *Did the applicant find humor in the question? Since there is no wrong or right answer, how does the applicant handle a request for creativity?*

Hiring Process

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Assessing Applicants

I have hired dozens of people in my professional life. I often got it right and selected applicants who were a great fit for the job and the team. Sometimes I got it wrong; what I thought was a good fit turned out to be the opposite. Even with behavioral interviewing techniques, the interview process is imperfect and there is no way to know if a applicant will be successful. Interviewers should be prepared with an assessment tool (provided here) to objectively review the applicants and use the tool as the framework for a post-interview discussion.

Candidate Interview Assessment				
Applicant:			**Date:**	
Interviewer:				
Questions	**Rating** 1. Exceptional 2. Average 3. Unsatisfactory			**Notes**
Tell us about a time when you had to share unpopular information with a student.	1	2	3	
How do you handle a challenge? Give us an example that involved a student or a coworker.	1	2	3	
Describe a difficult decision you had to make.	1	2	3	
Give us an example of how you set goals. Did you ever experience a time when you had to ask for help to reach a goal? Explain.	1	2	3	
Explain what relationship-building looks like to you in an advisor/advisee interaction.	1	2	3	
Tell a short story (interviewer) and ask the candidate to summarize what they heard.	1	2	3	
You get to create three newspaper headlines of any kind. What three headlines would you select?	1	2	3	

Academic advisors, whether professional advisors, teaching faculty, or counselors, help students make sense of their past experiences to plan for the future. Research on student persistence and completion focus more on the importance of academic advising than any other department (Hossler & Bean, 1990). Frequent interactions with faculty and academic advisors positively influence student persistence (Deil-Amen, 2011).

Academic advisor training goes beyond understanding academic programs and policies. Effective academic advisor training should include "relational and informational issues" (Drake, Jordan, & Miller, 2013, p. 309). Informational issues involve programs, policies, and processes.

But what is a relational issue in effective academic advising? According to Fox (2008), effective relational academic advisors display a genuine interest in students, focus on student needs, involve students in the process of academic advising and learning, and guide students through the process rather than directing them.

The bridge between relational and informational issues became clearer when Habley (1986) outlined a framework for the three major components of high-quality academic advising experiences: informational, conceptual, and relational. The definitions of each component appear here as well as real-world examples.

Component	Definition	Examples
Informational	The information students need to know about courses, majors, registration, payment, etc.	◆ Registration deadlines on a website ◆ Number of credit hours in a degree ◆ Where to buy books
Conceptual	This is the big picture of how and why the pieces fit together; helping the student see themselves in the world of academics and ultimately, the world of work	◆ Goal and career discussions ◆ Visualization of self in different contexts ◆ Helping students to experience different ways of doing things
Relational	This describes interpersonal relationship between advisor and advisee and its impact on the students understanding of the information and its application to world outside of the advising session	◆ One-on-one meetings ◆ Open-ended questions and clarifying responses ◆ Expressing a genuine interest in the student ◆ Using and remembering the students name

(Fox, 2008, p. 343)

A quality training plan must include all three components. How do you train someone to show genuine concern for students? This part of the training requires observation and role-playing. Observation of seasoned academic advisors is helpful to view how a relationship is developed with new students and to showcase the relational skills that advisors should learn during the training.

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Academic Advising Training Outline Relational Components

1. They display a genuine interest in students.

   - Can you train someone to take a genuine interest in others? I do not believe it can be learned but it can be assessed in the interview process. How does the candidate talk about students? How does the academic advisor appear when sharing student experiences with you? How do academic advisors describe student challenges?

   - How can an academic advisor show genuine interest in students? This can be determined through observation of the academic advisor with their students, how they share information with others about students, and the advisors' willingness to work with students.

2. They develop relationship-building skills through knowledge and practice. It begins with learning how to greet students and start a conversation.

   - Always smile and maintain eye contact.

> **If this part is missing, "sharing information, relaying concepts, or attempting to build a constructive relationship is not likely to occur"** (Fox, 2008, p. 344).

- Say the students name several times in the first 10 minutes.

- Ask students open-ended questions.

   o *"Hi Susan, my name is Laurie and I'm your academic advisor. It's nice to meet you. What brings you in today?"*

   o *Paraphrase their answers. This shows the student you are listening to them*

- "Susan, What I'm hearing you say is that you're new to our college but you are transferring to us from South Community College where you majored in welding, but now you're interested in a health-focused major. Is that correct?"

   o *Continue gathering information/data through open-ended questioning and paraphrasing until you have enough information to provide direction and advising.*

Touch point Opportunity!

- "Susan, I'm curious why you're switching majors. Was it the welding class you took or was it a personal experience you had that made you change your major?"

- "Since we don't have your South Community College transcripts yet, what type of courses did you take there? How did you do in them?"

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- "What did you like best about your college classes? What did you like least about them?"
  - o Before ending the advising meeting, summarize what was discussed, decided, and the next steps. Look for nonverbal cues from the student to ensure they understand the next steps and what they need to do.
  - o Closing the advising meeting means that you provided the student with your business card, told the student when to meet again (and how to schedule the meeting), and let the student know you are available if they need you.
- "Susan, it was a pleasure meeting with you today. Your next step is to go to the registration office, which is next door, and pick your classes. Here's my business card with my phone and email on it in case you need anything. I want to meet with you in October so we can create a degree and transfer plan. Do you have any questions before you leave today?"

- Training through role-playing
  - o Role-playing allows new academic advisors the freedom to practice relationship-building skills in a safe way without the fear of making a mistake with a student. I prepare 3 or 4 student scenarios to practice different components of relationship building: new student (first time in any college), returning student (after stopping out for a couple of years), returning non-traditional aged student (job change or job loss instigating a return to college), and new student/high risk indicators (first-generation student or low socioeconomic condition).
- Ask seasoned advisors to help with role-playing scenarios and contribute to providing feedback to the new academic advisor.
  - o "Laurie, I really liked how you recognized the student's anxiousness in starting college. As soon as you acknowledged it, you can tell she relaxed a little and started talking."
  - o "Laurie, after the student told you about her high school experience, you missed an opportunity to paraphrase her experience. Let's redo that part and I'd like to hear you paraphrase the student's experience."

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3. They focus on student needs.

- An academic advisor cannot focus on student needs if they do not know what the needs are. Ask open-ended questions and paraphrase. Asking questions that require more than a one-word answer collects more information and paraphrasing shows the student you are listening. These provide opportunities for students to elaborate on their answers.

- Every student has unique needs. It is very important to build a genuine and caring relationships with them so they feel comfortable sharing information with you.

- Know your resources and contacts and keep them in your office. I encourage academic advisors to have a personal contact in each campus office that provides financial, personal, and academic support. Meeting student needs sometimes takes villages; so, know who the villagers are and ask for help.

  o *Resource and contact guide example:*

Student Need	Resource Name	Contact Information	Notes
Off-Campus Resources			
Food	St. Dunstan's Church Food Pantry	Marybeth; 000-123-1234	M-TH, 10 AM - 2:00 PM; no application needed
Shelter; with children	St. Dunstan's Family Shelter Program	Corey; 000-123-05678	Open 24-7; Call the office for the student as transportation is available but needs to be arranged
Shelter; w/o children	YMCA	Short-Term Shelter office: 000-111-2222	Open 24-7; Call the office for the student as transportation is available but needs to be arranged
Transportation	Metro Transport	www.metrotransport.com; bus schedules available online	Bus passes available from the Student Activities Center
On Campus Resources			
Mental Health	Counseling Center	x 1234	Appointment and walk-in personal counseling available
Tutoring	Learning Assistance Center	x5678; ask for Claire	Call Claire and get recommendation for tutor based on student need
Financial Aid	Financial Aid Office	x0987; Rachel	Call Rachel and discuss student issue

- Focusing on student needs does not mean that you take care of everything for the student. Academic advisors teach students how to find answers for themselves. Be prepared with resources, guidance, Kleenex, and active listening. The needs may be personal, financial, academic, or social. Do not be afraid to ask questions that sound intrusive. Quality academic advising gets to the heart of the matter.

  o *"Susan, I can see how this situation is making you feel hurt and angry. I don't understand how you got involved in this situation. Is there anything else you can share that will help me provide you help? The more information I have, the better I can advise you."*

  o *"Susan, I think this issue needs more help than I can provide you right now. I'm going to call the counseling office and see if there is someone available to talk to you right now."*

4) They involve students in the process of academic advising and learning.

  - I align this component with Tinto's (2012) integration framework for providing opportunities for social and academic integration. An academic advisor can teach students how to maneuver within the college and become an active part of the college experience.

    o *"Susan, last month we talked about ways for you to learn more about the health industry. We talked about job shadowing your aunt, who is a nurse, interviewing your neighbor, who is a doctor, and researching the field on our Career Coach website. Tell me what you've done and what the experience was like."*

  - *"Susan, let's talk about your timeline to finish your degree at ABC College and transfer out to Michigan College. Tell me how quickly you want to transfer."*

  - *"Susan, I hear you saying that you're feeling frustrated with your medical terminology instructor. What options do you have to turn this around?"*

5) They guide students through the process rather than directing them.

  - Academic advising is a process in which advisors help students along the lifecycle to conceptually understand where the lifecycle is leading them. At times, the advisor must use a prescriptive approach to direct a student to do things they would not have thought of doing or to avoid a mistake.

  - When we view academic advising in a student success model, then this component is reasonable. Advisors guide students through the process using multiple techniques to explore, communicate, and engage.

- Use open-ended questioning and paraphrasing.
  - o *As discussed in the first component, using open-ended questions forces the person who is talking to provide more information than one-word answers. Paraphrasing tells the student that you are listening and gives the student another opportunity to clarify what they said. Collecting data from the student gives the advisor enough information to guide students to make decisions about their career and academics.*

- Present limited choices to students and discuss the pros and cons of deciding for each choice. Presenting too many choices is overwhelming and does not help students conceptualize the big picture.
  - o *"Based on your career coach assessment, Susan, it looks like your style leans toward helping professions. This could be medical field helping, like a nurse, or social service helping, like a social worker. Let's spend time learning about these careers."*

- Ask students about past academic experiences.
  - o *I like to ask students about an experience in a classroom where they felt they got it and were proud of their accomplishment. From this, I ask them what they did prior to that time. Did they work in a small group to prepare for a project? Did they use a tutor? Did they study in a different place? With this information, the academic advisor guides the*
    student to understand that the student has control in the situation, made a decision, and had a good outcome.

- Assign homework to advisees.
  - o *I use the term homework with my students when I need them to learn something at a deeper and personal level. A homework assignment is anything the student must do differently from what they have done before (e.g., study in a different place, meet faculty during scheduled office hours, do an informational interview with a professional in their desired career, or start a study group). The student puts energy into an activity to learn rather than the academic advisor telling them what to do.*
  - o *"Susan, let's try something new that I think will help you improve your math grade. First of all, right after math class is done, go somewhere to rewrite your math notes and outline your homework assignment. Where would you like to do this?" (Student provides answer.) "Next, when do you work on your math assignments?" (Student answers "at night.") "Let's change that up. What do you do before your 11:00 class and where are you?" After getting the student's input on the details, their homework is to find out if changing how, where, and when homework is done positively affects their grades.*

Conceptual Components

Conceptual components of academic advisor training refer to the high-level implications of academic advising. To understand the conceptual component is to think of academic advising in a student success model rather than a registration model. This is big picture thinking (i.e., an opportunity to help students understand what college means to them in the real world).

This might be difficult with new students who are trying to understand where their classes are and how many credits they registered for. Conceptual thinking requires people to look at the whole picture instead of parts of the picture.

Touch point Opportunity!

- Foster social engagement.
  - o *Academic advisors can encourage advisees to join social and professional groups on campus to engage with others in similar majors or to explore different majors. Social engagement encourages conceptual thinking as the student begins to explore college life through social activity. Students begin to see themselves as a part of a larger group. Social engagement can also be a tool to help the career decision-making process.*

I had a student years ago who was not connecting to college life outside of the classroom and was feeling alone. Instead of advising her to join a club or attend a sport event, I told her to attend a business club meeting because she was a business major. I connected her with the faculty advisor for the business club and arranged for her to attend the next meeting. She returned to my office and said she felt she was nothing like the other students at the club because all they talked about was money during the whole meeting. This student also communicated an interest in getting involved in an upcoming Earth Day event; therefore, I told her to attend a social activist club meeting. She discovered a new group of students who thought and felt the same way she did about the earth. She joined the club, made new friends, and changed her major to earth science. She was beginning to see herself conceptually as she experienced connections with others.

- Writing task
  - o *If your advisee comes to you with a challenge, review the options to remedy the challenge and ask your student to write a letter to their future self about the experience. This will help the student learn to understand their experience as they write about what they hypothetically learned and did to overcome the challenge.*
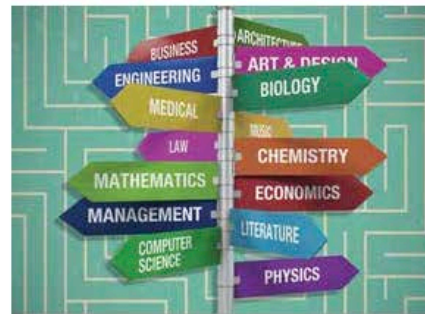
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• Job shadowing and informational interviewing

   o *Using a student's network of friends and acquaintances, call people who hold jobs that sound interesting to them and ask if they will meet for an informational interview. Tell students to prepare questions, write notes, and begin to put pieces of the big picture together. I always tell students to ask the question, "If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same career?"*

   o *Job shadowing is a great way for students to learn conceptual thinking by playing a day in the life of with someone who works in a career they find interesting. Using the same network of friends and family, find people working in an interesting career and contact them to ask if they can job shadow. The student will receive ground-level information about a career or industry and begin to see themselves working in it. It is also a great way for students to obtain paid internships.*

• Career advising

   o *Helping students determine a career path early in the student's lifecycle is an important part of the Guided Pathways approach. It helps build the conceptual component of academic advising.*

   o *Academic advisors are very helpful resources. They guide students in the career discovery process. This does not mean academic advisors must know about all careers.*

   o *Training new academic advisors to provide career advice requires training them on career advising dialogue and career advising resources.*

"Career advising promotes self-exploration, the acquisition of academic and career information, and decision-making" (Gore & Metz, 2008, p. 104).

Gordon (2006) described the three-I's approach to career advising.

• Inquire.

   o *In this stage, advisors encourage students to talk about their academic and career needs and concerns, then provide answers and resources to move students to the information-gathering stage.*

"Susan, what concerns you about making a decision about your major?"

• Information gathering.

   o *During this stage, advisor and advisee come to tentative conclusions about the best course of action. Depending on the student's ability, comfort level in making decisions, and acquisition of career knowledge, the advisor's approach will be different for each student.*

"Susan, since you did a great job with the job shadowing and informational interviews, but are still hesitant to declare a major, lets create a list of the skills needed for this career, and then work on the skill assessment together."

- Integrate.
  - o *During the integration stage, advisor and advisee put all the information together and derive meaning.*

"I'm excited that you not only did the Career Coach inventory, you met with three professionals for informational interviews and job shadowing. We reviewed your skill assessment results and to me, it's clear that the major you selected is aligned with your skills and interests. Now, let's create a degree and transfer plan to help get you there."

Informational Components

1. Informational components of an academic advising training plan include the information about the college that students will need to know, usually found in a college catalog or on a college website.

   - Academics (degrees and majors)
     - o *Learning about the college products occurs in two ways. First, academic advisors should learn about all degrees and majors by studying the college catalog or the college website. For new advisors, I teach this by grouping multiple majors and assigning them to a larger category, a meta major. This is an organized way to categorize and memorize majors and degrees:*

Health Sciences

Nurse
Associate in Applied Science

Nurse Assistant
One Year Certificate

Phelbotomy
Skill Certificate

Pre-Med
Associate in Science

Pre-Pharmacy
Associate in Science

Pharmacy Techninican
One Year Certificate

2. Second, I highly recommend new academic advisors tour academic buildings and meet faculty in each area. This puts faces to names and the academic advisor learns more about the major than what is available in the catalog or website.

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- Academic Policies
  - *The college policies as they pertain to students are easier to learn for new academic advisors because the information is non-negotiable. The policies usually appear in the college catalog or on the college website. Policies that are important in the academic advisor's role include the student code of conduct, registration guidelines, payment deadlines, course drop rules, course waiver processes, grade appeals, and course overload. Provide new academic advisors with any paperwork they or the student must use for any of the policies and keep a folder for future reference.*

- Transfer
  - *Depending on the state you work in, transferring from a community college to a four-year college may be difficult. Learning about transfer options can be daunting. In my advising office, it takes at least 6 months for academic advisors to feel comfortable advising students on transfers.*

  - *If there is a person at the college assigned to transfer and partnerships with other colleges, make sure new academic advisors receive training from them. As subject matter experts, they will provide new academic advisors with ways to help students and create transfer plans.*

- Financial
  - *New academic advisors should learn about the cost of attending the college and ways to pay for college. I do not advocate for academic advisors learning about the financial aid process. I prefer that it be left to the experts in the financial aid office. However, they must learn about the financial aid timeline and the bigger concepts of financial aid, such as those provided at savingforcollege.com.*


EXAMPLE OF FINANCIAL NEED DETERMINATION:

Cost of Attendance (COA)	Expected Family Contribution (EFC)	Student Financial Aid and Scholarships will review your eligibility for need-based programs up to the amount of your financial need, then review your eligibility for aid programs that are not based on need up to the amount of your COA.
tuition books room/board personal travel	FAFSA data	

| example COA: $22,826 | − | example EFC: $5,000 | = | FINANCIAL NEED $17,826 |

  - *Payment Plans*
  - *Explore whether the college has tuition payment plans and know the rules and timelines.*
  - *Cash, check, or credit?*
  - *New advisors should learn how student can make different types of payments. Do students have to come to campus or is there a way to pay for courses online?*

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Informational components of the training plan were purposefully listed last. In many academic advisor training plans, informational components are the only content for training of new academic advisors. This is sufficient if the academic advising office operates as an extension of the registration office. For student success-focused academic advising, however, informational components are part of new academic advisor training, but they are not central to the training plan.

Relational components are very important to master if advisors want to make a positive impression on each student and help them move along the student lifecycle. The advisor is one of the most important connections a student has at the college. Students must be able to rely on the advisor for accurate information that the advisor delivers in a caring way. It is my belief that academic advisors know what they need to do, but they need an environment, tools, and training to build their knowledge and skill set to be able to create better relationships with students. The advising administrator must support new learning and reinforce it through observation and feedback.
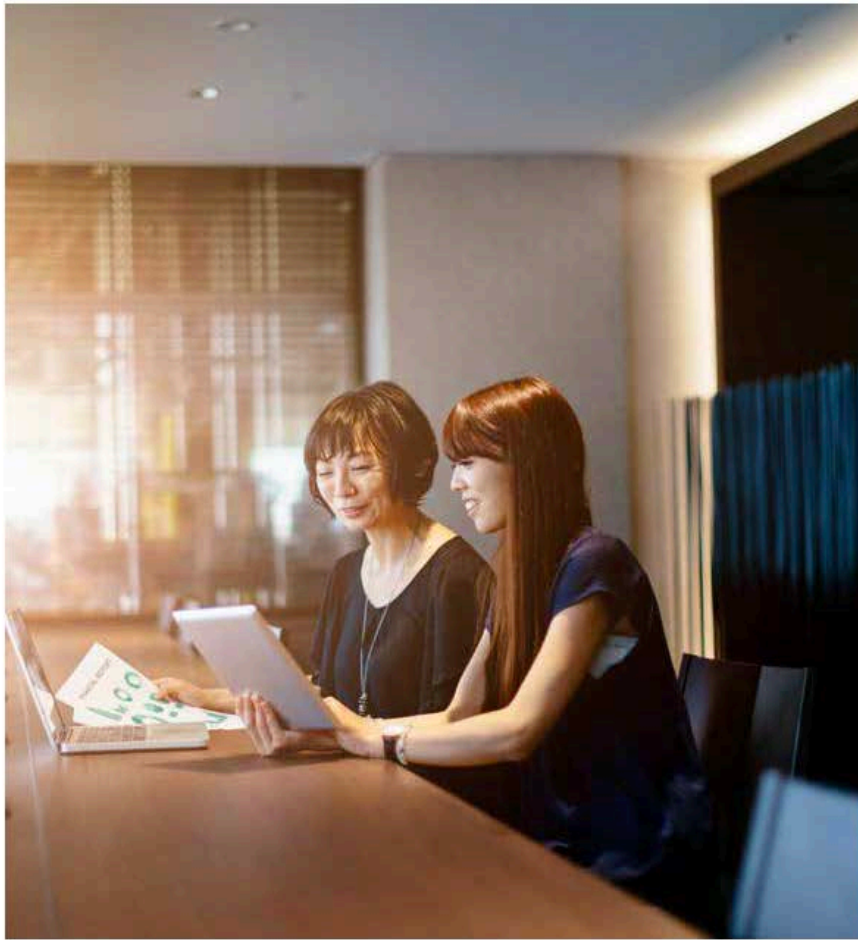
Personnel Component Summary

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Redesigning academic advising services from a registration model to a student success model requires the integration of operational, institutional, and personnel components to form an effective team of advisors who focus on student persistence, retention, and completion. "Advising reform is an integral part of a comprehensive guided pathways redesign of a community college" (Community College Research Center [CCRC], 2017, p. 4). As a stand-alone initiative, an academic advising redesign will not create transformative change without buy-in from stakeholders throughout the college. A deliberate and intentional attempt to improve student outcomes requires the college community to understand why improving student outcomes is necessary and how academic advising redesign is an important step in this goal.

Academic advising redesign is complicated and requires support and collaboration of multiple departments on campus. Academic advising redesign is also costly and time-consuming. Communicating the need to make this change relies on accurate knowledge of persistence and retention data, performance funding, and increasing financial aid restrictions on students. Academic advising redesign, done purposefully and student-focused, will improve student success outcomes over time. It requires thoughtful and brave leadership to make changes happen. Will you make it happen?

I have been an academic advisor for over 20 years. I advised students at a private four-year college, a public two-year college, a telecommunications company, and at Ford Motor Company. I am currently an advising administrator at a community college in the metropolitan Detroit area managing a talented group of professional academic advisors.

Regardless of the professional environment, I took my role as an academic advisor seriously and always knew my role involved more than providing course selection advice. I enjoy watching my students succeed in their academic and professional goals and have seen many of them move on to graduate degrees and promotions.

I am married to my best friend, Phillip, who also works at a community college. We are parents to two beautiful and smart young women, Abigail and Olivia. We have a third "daughter," Lucy, who happens to have four legs and a tail!

Laurie Kattuah-Snyder, EdD

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CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONSIDERATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The modern higher education landscape is heavy with stakeholder opinions and criticisms of low completion rates, high student loan debt, and a low return on investment for the time and money spent on earning a credential. Community colleges felt the "growing assertiveness in the language" used to address these challenges (O'Banion, 2016, para. 1). Terms like *mandatory* placement, *disruptive* innovations, *accelerated* instruction, early *alert*, data *driven*, *deeper* engagement, scalable *interventions*, and *high impact* are examples of the influence of the "Completion Agenda" and attempts to improve degree completion rates.

> This growing assertiveness in the language — and one assumes in the action suggested by the language — is reflected most clearly in the work of academic advising. It used to be "faculty advising" or just "academic advising" as the passive monikers for this important function. In the past, academic advisors talked about "developmental advising" versus "prescriptive advising," the latter a bit assertive but generally rejected by practitioners as an inappropriate model. (O'Banion, 2016, para. 2)

Academic advising has a position of importance; it is a crucial component of improving student success. George Kuh, founder of the National Survey of Student Engagement, supported this argument. "It is hard to imagine any academic support function that is more important to student success and institutional productivity than advising" (Kuh, 1997, p. 7). Redesigning academic advising according to a student success model, rather than a registration model, is the primary reason for the creation of the guide in Chapter 4.

Redesigning academic advising services at community colleges starts larger student success plans. Low rates of community college persistence, retention, and completion prompted

colleges to explore new ways to provide services and respond to student needs. "Across the nation, colleges are looking for better ways to keep students and help them toward graduation" (Anft, 2018, para. 6). The guide in Chapter 4 may assist community college leaders redesigning their academic advising services into a student success model. The guide provides readers with the opportunity to select content that is pertinent to their college's needs for assessment and implementation.

Considerations

The guide includes explanations of the components of an academic advising redesign and provides recommendations and activities based on best practices. The redesign framework includes Tinto's integration and retention theory and Guided Pathways. The guide assists readers as they reflect upon their colleges' current academic advising model and identify areas that need to change. The author wrote the guide with the assumption that the reader's current academic advising model is an extension of registration services. The goal of the guide is to convert registration-type academic advising services to a student success-focused academic advising model.

The target audiences for the guide are student service professionals and community college leaders (e.g., president and cabinet leaders) who must be fully involved and agreeable to make an academic advising redesign a transformative and meaningful change. The guide may also be useful for community colleges that do not yet offer academic advising services. Community college resources are another issue the guide may influence. The recommendations in the guide can be costly and require collaboration with multiple campus resources (e.g., information technology, human resources, and facilities).

The author does not address, neither in the guide nor the dissertation, faculty counselors who provide academic advising. In many states, licensed counselors provide academic advising and are usually called faculty counselors, and such, are members of the faculty union. This in itself is not a problem. However, the challenge with this approach is the financial sustainability as licensed counselors are paid at a higher rate than professional academic advisors.

This author's community college employed both professional academic advisors and licensed counselors to provide academic advising, yet the licensed counselors were compensated at more than twice the hourly rate of the academic advisors. With reduced funding from the state and local property taxes, this model was deemed not financially sustainable. Consequently, beginning in 2019, the community college moved to an all professional academic advisor model and retained 2 licensed counselors to provide personal counseling.

Redesigns of advising change *who* provides academic advising, *what* type of academic advising they provide, and what is financially *sustainable* for the community college without jeopardizing the quality of student-focused academic advising. States, colleges, and models vary significantly. A consideration to explore for future research is whether the location of academic advising within the structure of a college matters to the efficacy of advising services. Models for delivering academic advising include: (a) centralized (i.e., academic advisors are all in one area); (b) decentralized (i.e., academic advisors are in specific academic units); and (c) shared (i.e., some academic advisors meet with students in a centralized area and others meet another department or academic unit) (Kuhtmann, 2004).

Most colleges use a shared model (55%) rather than a centralized (32%) or a decentralized (14%) structure (Habley, 2004). There is currently no definitive research comparing the effectiveness on one model to another.

According to the Sixth National Survey on Academic Advising conducted in 2003 by ACT (Habley, 2004), more institutions use a shared model of delivering advising services (55%) than use centralized (32%) or decentralized (14%) structures. This distribution is similar to that found in 1997 when the Fifth National Survey was conducted. (p. 17)

The guide in Chapter 4 offers recommendations based on a centralized structure, but the ideas within each component of the guide also work with a shared or decentralized academic advising structure.

Recommendations

The guide will hopefully provide community college leaders with a better way to begin discussions about academic advising and assess whether their academic advising model is a registration model or student success model. If the existing model needs to change, then the guide in Chapter 4 provides ways to further assess and implement a redesign. This author is not naïve to the importance of having a student-focused culture in making a transformative change like academic advising redesign. Preparing the culture and establishing communication patterns is necessary to incorporate a large-scale change like a redesign of the institution. The recommendations listed in the institutional component section of Chapter 4 underscore how improving culture and communication at an institution foster completion of projects, like the redesign, and positively improve student outcomes.

To validate the recommendations within the guide, an analysis of student persistence and retention data, pre- and post-implementation of an academic advising redesign is highly desirable. Past research conducted independent studies on different student success initiatives, but none specifically addressed the three components of an academic advising redesign as illustrated in the guide in Chapter 4. Pre- and post-implementation assessment variables may include the review of student level data for one demographic group (e.g., FTIAC students in a specific major) and review of persistence and retention data for a minimum of 3 years post-

implementation of the advising redesign. The rigor of the academic advising redesign, the depth of academic advisor training, and the availability of technological support may positively affect student persistence and retention during the 3-year post-implementation period.

The final recommendation is for continual collaboration between academic advising and the instructional division. The academic advisor is the mouthpiece for the instructional division and an ally for student engagement in the college community. It is this author's recommendation to have academic advising services functionally connect to both student affairs and academic affairs. The hope is that academic advising redesigns can become catalysts for community colleges to engage in additional student-focused initiatives. The "Completion Agenda" brought critical attention to higher education and this author suspects that the attention will not diminish in the near future.

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