Work Group on Undergraduate Advising Recommendations

Presented to the Chancellor’s Enrollment Management Action Team

November 30, 2015
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Charge from CEMAT

In early 2015, recognizing the critical role academic advising serves in enabling student success and retention, the Work Group for Undergraduate Advising was charged by CEMAT to:

- Study and document the current environment of undergraduate advising
- Identify enhancement and improvement opportunities
- Identify national best practices that are appropriate for adoption at UWM
- Evaluate the “Academic Advising” recommendations offered by the attendees of the John Gardner Institute (see Appendix) to determine if they merit implementation as a means to provide the best advising environment including:
  - Identify standards of practice, core competencies and guiding principles for all advisors at UWM along with training and support needed to ensure application across advising units.
  - Explore the creation of a centralized academic advising service for all undecided students and develop an implementation plan(s) that will incorporate methods for connecting students to major advisors at the point of major declaration.
  - Explore the idea of a coordinator role for undergraduate academic advising.
  - Consider procedures that will enable effective advising partnerships between faculty and professional advisors for juniors and seniors.

INITIAL OBJECTIVES:

1. Document the current environment at UWM and identify best practices, and standards of practice for academic advising appropriate for adoption at UWM. The committee report will also provide a foundational framework of consistent practices that may be enhanced by schools, colleges and multicultural centers with methods that support their specific needs and cultures. The report will also identify training and support needed to ensure adoption that will provide a consistent student experience, regardless of advising unit.

2. If appropriate, develop a project management plan(s), accounting for infrastructure needs given different funding and resource (space and staff) scenarios, with timelines and assigned role(s) that will provide centralized administration of academic advising for all undecided students.

3. If appropriate, propose a model(s) for implementing a coordinator role for undergraduate academic advising, accounting for infrastructure needs given different funding and resource (space and staff) scenarios, including reporting structure, how the coordinator will lead the campus advising network, and other components necessary for success.

4. Prepare documents for consideration by campus stakeholders that details best practices for “handing off” advising of juniors and seniors from advising staff to faculty, and provides communication plan for sharing with faculty any finalized document.
Structure and Membership
Work Group membership was developed with the recognition that student success is multifaceted, involving staff across division and school/college boundaries. Members include:

- Gesele Durham, Academic Affairs Co-chair
- Kay Eilers, Student Success Center Co-chair
- Phyllis King, Academic Affairs Co-chair
- Robert Smith, GIE
- Robin Jens, Nursing
- Louis Molina, Arts
- Rodney Swain, L&S
- Jennifer Deroche, L&S
- Warren Scherer, Inclusive Excellence Center
- Brian Hinshaw, OEM
- Angie Sadowsky, SOIS and Jen Hayes, Education (Enhancing Advising Council)
- Scott Emmons, Arts
- Janice Miller (LSB)/Hope Longwell-Grice (Education)

Campus Stakeholder Groups:
Students
Academic Services & Advising Leadership Council (ASALC) – Assistant Deans
Enhancing Advising Council (EAC)
Faculty Advisors
Multicultural Center Advisors
Academic Opportunity Center (AOC) Advisors
Letters & Science (L&S) First Year Advisors
Associate Deans
Academic Leadership Council (ALC)
Advisors & Counselors Network (ACN)
Career Development Center (CDC)
Honors Advisors
CIE Advisors
Athletics Advisors
Student support offices across campus

The Work Group met weekly from March 2015-November 2015 and held several information gathering open-forums at the start of the process to solicit campus input as well as feedback sessions after the development of initial recommendations. Information and data was also studied from various national sources including CAS standards, NACADA, and the EAB.
General observations

Launched in March 2015, the Work Group sought, in its examination of the current environment, to identify enhancements and opportunities to maximize resources. Beginning with the recommendations offered by the attendees of the John Gardner Institute in January 2015, the Work Group researched and thoughtfully considered a wide range and variety of ideas and structures for delivering the best possible academic advising at UWM. The recommendations that follow are those that the Work Group determined to be the most appropriate at this time for further consideration at UWM while acknowledging that there were many more ideas and structures the Work Group considered in the course of our meetings.

Advising at UWM is structured around schools/colleges. Students without a clear direction, lacking a determined major or scope of study, are advised within L&S. Students, depending on their circumstances, may have a number of assigned advisors including major advisor(s), athletics, honors, multicultural office advisors, and AOC. It can be a complex process for students to navigate, requiring meeting with multiple advisors in various offices who may or may not be fully aware each other’s actions or advice.

Faculty advisors also play a critical role in the advising experience for students. However, the role of faculty advisors across different schools/colleges, or perhaps even within campus units, varies by expectations and individual faculty. There are no broad based expectations or standards regarding faculty advising and no broad educational opportunities provided. Nor do faculty advisors necessarily have a comprehensive understanding of the role of professional advisors and the multi-faceted services they provide. Faculty advisors would also benefit from training that alerts them to the many campus resources available for student referrals. Perhaps one next step would be to explore effective models on campus for professional/faculty advisor relationships—where they exits, how they work, and how they can be replicated elsewhere.

Marketing initiatives regarding the value of advising might engender better understanding for students about the role of advisors and the critical role they can play in enhancing a student’s university experience. This sort of marketing could serve as a mechanism to alert students to what advising can be beyond course scheduling. Additional internal marketing campaigns might focus on the undecided/exploring student, i.e. a campaign at admissions and beyond about how one can productively explore major options while making satisfactory progress towards a degree and the many campus resources available to them.

Finally, advisors at UWM are charged with a variety of tasks that go far beyond what many might perceive to be the traditional role of academic advising. Positions descriptions vary but tasks that might be included range from:

**Degree Audit/Course Selection/“Advising”** including performing graduation checks and pre major audits, providing career development guidance, graduate/ transfer /international student advising, conducting probation reinstatement, general academic actions e.g. appeals, working with technology tools, e.g. MAP-Works, early warning, etc, and acting as a referral service to other support offices.

**Course/Program Management** including developing course projections, teaching LLC’s or FYTC, etc., schedule building, independent study/internships coordination, curricular affairs tasks.
Recruitment including participation in Meet Milwaukee or working with Hobsons.

Student Programming including running multi-cultural programming, mentoring, undergraduate research, orientation/NSO, scholarship administration, tutoring coordination, running summer camps, and assisting student organizations

Departmental/Program Support including grant/report writing, supporting accreditation processes, participating in governance work, participation in search committee work, and assisting with development of school/college/unit publications.
Executive Summary
The Work Group for Undergraduate Advising proposes the following recommendations for consideration by CEMAT:

1. **Designate Staff Responsible for Activities Needed to Coordinate Undergraduate Advising.**
   Virtually all of the proposed recommendations from the WGUA will require significant dedicated time and resources from at least one staff person empowered to shepherd the process and work with personnel across campus, both within advising offices and other student support offices, to build systems and community. This is not an insignificant workload that can be easily incorporated into an already full portfolio and care must be taken to consider the balance of current expectations and capacity.

2. **Develop Comprehensive University-wide Program of Academic Advisor Training:** While school/colleges provide training opportunities for advisors, there is currently no university-wide training that would help enable and encourage consistency of practice, norms, and expectations and would also enable continuing advisors to maintain currency in practice and information. The creation of an advisor training curriculum would serve as a prompt to develop common practice and standards.

3. **Develop University-wide Policies Regarding Appropriate Use of Campus Technology Tools/Consider Basic Functions to be Performed and Develop Campus Policies Regarding Appropriate Tool Usage by User.** There are a variety of tools available to campus offices related to advising and other support services. These tools, developed and adopted over time for different reasons and populations, all are valuable to the offices that use them. However, the disjointed nature in which campus units have adopted/not adopted tools in this decentralized environment has created a complicated, multi-layered structure that confounds communication and services to the student and can be confusing for personnel to navigate. Clear policies detailing how to effectively use what tool when for what population will provide clarity of purpose for each tool and eliminate distracting technology clutter for personnel. Sub recommendations include:
   a. Establish campus-wide expectations regarding use of SSC Campus including the use of the tool as the single campus-wide repository for advising/student notes and the tool for early warnings. The SSC Campus also needs a resourced “champion” to oversee implementation and usage.
   b. Establish coordinated use standards for the SSC Campus to run campus-wide campaigns to meet common goals, e.g. re-enrollment, tracking students at-risk, etc.
   c. Establish MapWorks as the official repository for student staff notes and referrals
   d. Sunset Cattrack
   e. Explore options for linking PAWS to the SSC and MapWorks, perhaps through the creation of customized buttons in PAWS that connects the Student Center page for a particular student (which lists the student’s class schedule, contact information, holds, etc.) to that student’s records in the SSC and in MapWorks

4. **Codify advising assessments and student feedback and create student learning outcomes for advising with a university assessment cycle** While each school/college advising office currently assess advising at some level, often ascertaining student satisfaction with advising appointments, there is no university-wide assessment of advising with consistent measures or agreed upon base
outcomes. Developing those outcomes and developing those assessments would, among other benefits, ensure greater consistency of practice, inform training needs, and enable greater communication across offices. Implementing an assessment cycle with each school/college developing a self-study of advising practice will incorporate a continuous quality improvement process that can be used university-wide to inform and exchange good practice data and information. School/college advising practices would be reviewed on a cyclical basis, à la accreditation, based on CAS standards/NACADA standards/UWM derived standards.

5. **Address the various needs of students without a declared major by type of student.**

“Exploring” students may or may not be academically at risk and vice versa. This variation requires the university to consider different paths for different kinds of students. Academic advisors play a critical role in engaging students in practices best suited to their needs. While some of the options detailed below are not “advising”, on the front-line, advisors often need to address these issues and participation in these practices is often a result of the advice students receive from their advisors. Advisors will play a critical role in their implementation and success. Sub recommendations include:

a. Change "Undecided" to "Exploring"—a state of action rather than a state of being
b. Develop pre-professional intended major designations for students who have an intended major but are not admitted into their school of choice
c. Guide students with meta-majors or to a set of "funnels" built around particular career or academic major themes and direct course registrations as a way to encourage major selection.
   i. Require students without a declared major but who can designate a general area of interest to register for a theme/meta-major based learning community that would act as a funnel towards a specific major
   ii. If a student was truly undecided and unable to select a learning community, require registration in a course or activity designed to help choose a major.

6. **Create an Advisor Information Resource:** Student roadblocks come in all shapes and sizes, are often not academically based but have academic implications. Not knowing where else to turn, students may approach their advisor for help, yet advisors may or may not have access to the appropriate information to facilitate problem-solving. An identified central resource of information would allow for more effective referrals, follow-up and allow advising on campus to stay current on best paths to connect students to the correct resources. The purpose of this resource is to eliminate the “run-around” to different offices given effective referrals that cut through bureaucracy and allow maximization of staff expertise.
Recommendation: Designate Staff Responsible for Activities Needed to Coordinate Undergraduate Advising

**Rationale:** Virtually all of the proposed recommendations from the WGUA will require significant dedicated time and resources from at least one staff person empowered to shepherd the process and work with personnel across campus, both within advising offices and other student support offices, to build systems and community. This is not an insignificant workload that can be easily incorporated into an already full portfolio and care must be taken to consider the balance of current expectations and capacity. Responsibilities of this individual would include:

- Encourage and facilitate campus-wide coordination between academic advisors and other campus services
- Develop networks across campus
- Codify advising practices for undecided populations
- Work with schools/colleges to create major fairs/events
- Develop touch points and training regarding the cycle of pursuing a meta major to a final major
- Work with faculty/staff to develop meta-majors and refine curricular options or develop freshmen interest groups with packaged courses
- Develop training protocols and resources for advisors campus-wide
- Develop/coordinate assessment protocols across campus
- Coordinate use of campus advising tools, e.g. SSC
- Coordinate and maintain advising resources (see Advisor Information Resource recommendation)

The WGUA recommends the hiring of a coordinator of undergraduate advising (title to be determined.) This new personnel would be charged with leading the work of coordinating the activity as their primary work objective.

The coordinator will report directly to the Provost and should have significant professional advising experience. In the course of their work, the coordinator will work in consultation with various campus constituencies including, but not limited to, the EAC, ACN, ASALC, ALC, Associate Deans, Student Affairs offices and students.

**Potential stumbling blocks:**

- Potential campus resistance to new personnel
- Financial constraints

**Assessment:** Progress on reaching goals stated in recommendations ranging from establishing a training program for advisors to assessment to appropriate use of campus technology tools, etc.
Next Steps:

- This must be the top priority moving forward as successfully identifying and implementing the coordinator position will enable successful implementation for remaining recommendations.
- Secure funding.
- Finalize the coordinator’s placement within UWM’s organizational structure.
- Determine and charge a search and screen committee to launch a hiring campaign to fill this position. The committee should be comprised of Academic Advisors, Assistant Deans, Associate Deans, Deans, Faculty Advisors, Provost Office representative, Student Affairs representative, Student Association representative.
Recommendation: Develop Comprehensive University-wide Program of Academic Advisor Training

**Rationale:** While school/colleges hire appropriately qualified personnel and provide training opportunities for professional advisors, there is currently no university-wide training that would help enable and encourage consistency of practice, norms, and expectations and would also enable continuing advisors to maintain currency in practice and information. The creation of an advisor training curriculum would serve as a prompt to develop common practice and standards.

Three types of training are envisioned:

1. **Onboard training of new professional academic advisors** to include:
   - Tools, e.g. MapWorks, Student Success Collaborative, PAWS, etc. (including note taking in shared systems)
   - Functional Offices: what they do and how to work with them
   - Core Competencies of Professional Advisors/Role of Advisor at UWM
     - The role of advisors at UWM;
     - Norms and expectations
     - How professional and faculty advisors interact
   - Student Development Theory—understanding the UWM student
   - Networking with Peers (the training will both provide the opportunity to do so and will allow for discussions about how and when to become involved in the greater community of advising at UWM)
   - Standards of practice, e.g. FERPA, service expectations, communications with students, etc.

2. **Advanced training for experienced advisors** that would provide one mechanism for ongoing professional development. Topics might cover many of the same ones developed for new advisors and may also be generated through the discussions within leadership groups, e.g. ACN, ASALC, EAC, the Associate Deans and/or driven by recognized campus need (e.g. the introduction of new software, changes in functional offices),

3. **Faculty advisor training** would cover many of the same topics as those for professional academic advisors with topics to include university-wide norms and expectations for faculty and professional advisors and best practice for joint professional and faculty advising

With all training opportunities, expectations regarding participation will need to be established.

**Delivery:** web-based modules for all types combined with in-person training sessions offered throughout the year. Number of in-person sessions to be determined by resource capacity. A calendar similar to that offered by CETL could be developed allowing advisors to register for training as appropriate/needed and recommended by supervisor. Advising resources can also be catalogued/coordinated on-line for at-will delivery.
Potential stumbling blocks and questions:

- Coordination of personnel time to participate and/or conduct training
- Will require the development of university-wide standards of practice at UWM and core competencies of advisors
- Need to inventory current training opportunities to understand/document current training environment by school/college
- Ensuring faculty participation
- Requires personnel to coordinate training opportunities
- Technology resources and support to develop/maintain web-based training modules
- Will this training, at any level, be mandatory? If so, how will it be enforced?
- How will completion of training be recognized? Certificate?
- Would continuing advisors be expected to participate in X number of modules per year? How many?
- How would successful completion/continuing education be measured?
- How many training opportunities need to be offered each year to meet campus need?
- Who would be responsible for training? Committee? Central office?

Assessment:

- Survey of participants to evaluate relevancy and content.
- Review of content and survey results by EAC/ASALC/office charged with establishing/conducting training for appropriate modifications, etc.
- Development of learning outcomes/objectives aligned with expected core competencies for advising.

Next Steps:

Charge a new work group, with membership drawn from committees and units related to advising, e.g. ACN, EAC, WGUA, ASALC, Associate Deans, in consultation with Faculty Advisors, student support offices, and CETL, to develop training opportunities.

- Timeline: January - May for development; training program to start in Summer 2016
- Document current training opportunities
- Document student learning outcomes for advising as basis for training protocols/needs
- Explore topics and training from student support offices
- Explore CETL as a mechanism for delivery/coordination of training
- In the absence of an Advising Coordinator, this work group must actively coordinate their efforts with the Advising Tools Work Group and vice versa.
Recommendation: Develop University-wide Policies Regarding Appropriate Use of Campus Technology Tools/Consider Basic Functions to be Performed and Develop Campus Policies Regarding Appropriate Tool Usage by User

Rationale: There are a variety of tools available to campus offices related to advising and other support services. These tools, developed and adopted over time for different reasons and populations, all are valuable to the offices that use them. However, the disjointed nature in which campus units have adopted/not adopted tools in this decentralized environment has created a complicated, multi-layered structure that confounds communication and services to the student and can be confusing for personnel to navigate. Clear policies detailing how to effectively use what tool when for what population will provide clarity of purpose for each tool and eliminate distracting technology clutter for personnel.

Tools to be studied/documentied include (but are not limited to):
PAWS, MapWorks, Student Success Collaborative, Cattrack

Issues to be studied include:
What basic functions need to be considered?
What is the primary purpose of each tool?
When in the student life-cycle is this tool most effective?
Is this tool duplicative? Can it be eliminated?

Sub Recommendation: Establish campus-wide expectations regarding use of SSC Campus including the use of the tool as the single campus-wide repository for advising/student notes and the tool for early warnings. The SSC Campus also needs a resourced “champion” to oversee implementation and usage.

Sub Recommendation: Establish the coordinated use standards for the SSC Campus to run campus-wide campaigns to meet common goals, e.g. re-enrollment, tracking students at-risk, etc.

Sub Recommendation: Establish MapWorks as the official repository for student employees to document notes and referrals. Doing so will enable mentors and other student employees to document their work in a separate tool than that used by professional staff and faculty.

Sub Recommendation: Sunset Cattrack

Sub Recommendation: Explore options for linking PAWS to the SSC and MapWorks, perhaps through the creation of customized buttons in PAWS that connects the Student Center page for a particular student (which lists the student’s class schedule, contact information, holds, etc.) to that student’s records in the SSC and in MapWorks
Potential Stumbling Blocks:

- Advising office current practice and S.O.P.’s
- Perceptions of “additional” or add-on work processes
- Training needs including appropriate note-taking practice, i.e. what and what not to include in a shared notes system

Assessment: Usage Statistics

Next Steps:

Charge work group, comprised of members from SSC SWAT, UITS, Web Services, MapWorks (SS Center), Registrar, Cattrack users, EAC, ASALC to carry out this work.

- Define standards of practice and roles for each tool, e.g. faculty in the SSC—what type of access under what type of circumstances
- Develop and disseminate policies for current technology and exploration of new technology
- Explore how current notes from various sources can be imported into the SSC
- Explore how to ensure current functions of Cattrack can be replicated in other tools prior to sun setting the tool.
- Resource SSC Campus to ensure appropriate implementation, development of standards, etc.
- In the absence of an Advising Coordinator, this work group must actively coordinate their efforts with the Advisor Training Work Group and vice versa.
Recommendation: Codify advising assessments and student feedback and create student learning outcomes for advising with a university assessment cycle

Rationale: While each school/college advising office currently assess advising at some level, often ascertaining student satisfaction with advising appointments, there is no university-wide assessment of advising with consistent measures or agreed upon base outcomes. Developing those outcomes and developing those assessments would, among other benefits, ensure greater consistency of practice, inform training needs, and enable greater communication across offices.

Implementing an assessment cycle with each school/college developing a self-study of advising practice will incorporate a continuous quality improvement process that can be used university-wide to inform and exchange good practice data and information. School/college advising practices would be reviewed on a cyclical basis, a la accreditation, based on CAS standards/NACADA standards/UWM derived standards.

Potential stumbling blocks:

• Development of standards document and protocols of review process.
• Time commitment needed to complete review.
• Staff concerns regarding relationship of review to job performance and security.

Assessment: Greater inter-advising office communication. Improved student satisfaction and understanding of the role of advising. Common outcomes development and greater consistency of practice across campus.

Next Steps:

Charge work group with membership drawn from campus collaborators with advising along with advising representation to include, e.g. EAC, ASALC, and in consultation with other offices and interested parties as needed including faculty and students. Work group would focus on:

• Development of objective outcomes across the university that define what a student is expected to learn from the advising experience.
• Ensure campus focus is on the “take away”, i.e. do students take away from the experience what was intended?
• Connect with work of ASALC and EAC regarding work underway in this area to ensure creation of cohesive structure.
• Build structures for review process with designated personnel charged to oversee this function.
• Development of poster/marketing campaign to promote advising and alert students regarding anticipated learning outcomes for them
• In the absence of an Advising Coordinator, this work group must actively coordinate their efforts with the Advisor Training Work Group and vice versa.
Recommendation: Address the various needs of students without a declared major by type of student

At-Risk does not equal exploring—but the overlap of these populations is critical to address. Parsing the population to recognize various levels of support needed as well as varying degrees of “undecided” is critical to consider paths to success. Students who are further down the path in determining major will require different interventions and strategies than those who have no clear direction established. Regardless, lacking a declared major can negatively impact time to degree to greater or lesser extents.

The population can be divided into 6 segments at both the entering and continuing stages of student life:

- Academically prepared/successful but undecided
- Academically prepared/successful with a general direction but no specific major
- Academically prepared/successful with a chosen major
- Academically not prepared/not successful and undecided
- Academically not prepared/not successful with a general direction but no specific major
- Academically not prepared/not successful with a chosen major (but perhaps not accepted to that major)

Rationale: “Exploring” students may or may not be academically at risk and vice versa. This variation requires the university to consider different paths for different kinds of students. Academic advisors play a critical role in engaging students in practices best suited to their needs. While some of the options detailed below are not “advising”, on the front-line, advisors often need to address these issues and participation in these practices is often a result of the advice students receive from their advisors. Advisors will play a critical role in their implementation and success.

Current practices/services for all undecided students include:

- Encouraged enrollment in Ed Psych course
- Connection with the CPRC
- Encouraged use of technology tools to independently explore,
- Encouraged discussion with faculty and how to find those individuals,
- Encouraged attendance at Exploring Majors fair or department open houses. Would be great to encourage more faculty participation/interaction

Proposed Future Practices by type:

Academically prepared but undecided: Encourage early connection to information (self-exploration, possibilities for majors).

- Develop mechanisms that make it easier for students to identify and connect with appropriate faculty easier and with less stress
- Develop major fairs along the lines of Meta Majors events
• All departments create website listing all faculty members’ research as a way to make the connection for students
• Require major exploration/enrollment in coursework geared to making that decision
• Personalize outreach to undecided students to make recommendations regarding resources (i.e. faculty), using course enrollment information, e.g. if they are enrolling in clustered courses, suggest that maybe that is the area they should explore. Use of SSC to enable this activity.
• Build an assignment into exploring majors course where students need to speak with an advisor.
• Consider what sort of incentives could exist to encourage connection to resources, e.g. meeting with advisor to discuss major declaration could result in priority registration
• Detail tech tools in acceptance letter and encourage use prior to coming to campus
• Create more “pre-majors” for professional schools, e.g. pre-engineering, etc., to allow students to declare and formally identify with the major of their choice

Academically prepared with general direction but no specific major (or not admitted to major)
• Consider creating pre-majors for those who know their desired path but are not yet admitted to the major, e.g. nursing, engineering. (see below)
• Consider development of general majors for those who are not admitted to their desired major.
• Develop touch points to guide in another direction when students are not admitted to desired major.
• Consider how CPRC can or should be involved in this process. Could there be a requirement for students without a decided major to take some sort of aptitude test (My Plan).
• Need to figure out a way to differentiate between those who are actually undecided and those who were not admitted.
• Personalize outreach to undecided students to make recommendations regarding resources (i.e. faculty), using course enrollment information, e.g. if they are enrolling in clustered courses, suggest that maybe that is the area they should explore. Use of SSC to enable this activity.

Academically not prepared/successful (all)
• Continued enforcement of completing developmental coursework in first 30 credits.
• Advise students to address practical skills (time management, etc.) through various formats, e.g. course work, success coaching, etc.
• Develop a more conscious and defined notion of how success coaching could support students
• Use of GRIT measure coupled with performance as a way to target interventions

Sub-recommendation: Change "Undecided" to "Exploring"—a state of action rather than a state of being

Sub-recommendation: Develop pre-professional intended major designations for students who have an intended major but are not admitted into their school
of choice. Work on this recommendation has already moved forward using sub-plans. Additional effort will need to be made to ensure these are at the plan level.

Sub-recommendation: Guide students with meta-majors or to a set of "funnels" built around particular career or academic major themes and direct course registrations as a way to encourage major selection.

- Require students without a declared major but who can designate a general area of interest to register for a theme/meta-major based learning community that would act as a funnel towards a specific major
- If a student was truly undecided and unable to select a learning community, require registration in a course or activity designed to help choose a major.

Potential stumbling blocks:
- Academic departmental ownership
- Alignment with degree requirements
- Possible student resistance
- Scheduling coordination
- Coordinating support from CPRC and ensuring sufficient resources from that office are available
- Administrative push for better time to degree rates not matching curriculum design OR student body make up (non trad students).
- All course during the exploring phase would need to meet GERs but would also need to encourage movement from exploring to declared within an established timeframe built around terms enrolled or credits accumulated.
- Impact on and availability of GER courses
- Current LLCs—utilization for exploration

Assessment: Student surveys at end of term/year (declared a major or moved toward choosing a path). Use of an advising / course 'map'. Time to major declaration and degree.

Next Steps:
Charge 2 new work groups, both of which will need to coordinate and work in conjunction with Retention Steering Committee.
- Group 1: APCC, Deans, Associate Deans, Faculty, and Advisors to focus on curricular components of the meta major/funnel concept.
- Group 2: Representatives from the student body, faculty, Registrar, undecided advisors, at-risk advisors, learning community administration, CRPC and Admissions to study, refine and propose best advising practices by type of student.
Additional Questions:
At what point do students need to declare a major? Should there be a milestone established regarding major declaration? E.g. no junior status until major is declared or create a hold and intervention process for students who reach 30 credits and do not yet have an intended major, and 60 credits without a declared major. How does success coaching articulate with these ideas?
Recommendation: Create an Advisor Information Resource

Rationale: Student roadblocks come in all shapes and sizes, are often not academically based but have academic implications. Not knowing where else to turn, students may approach their advisor for help, yet advisors may or may not have access to the appropriate information to facilitate problem-solving. An identified central warehouse of information would allow for more effective referrals, follow-up and allow advising on campus to stay current on best paths to connect students to the correct resources. The purpose of this warehouse is to eliminate the “run-around” to different offices given effective referrals that cut through bureaucracy and allow maximization of staff expertise.

A central advisor information resource would:

- Be housed within a password protected Wiki allowing access to academic advisors
- Include direct contact information for all Advisors, Library, Norris, Financial Aid, Registrar, Bursar, Bookstore, etc. to allow advisors to cut through phone tree systems and speak with the appropriate staff member to assist students promptly.
- Include a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section for quick answers to challenging questions. This section could be updated anytime new information becomes available.
- Be maintained by the advisor coordinator in conjunction with campus stakeholders.

Potential stumbling blocks:

- The ongoing maintenance of this system would require ownership by a person (advising coordinator) or group of people on campus to ensure its ongoing accuracy.

Assessment:

- Regular surveying of advisors to determine usage of the information and additional items to be added.

Next Steps:

- Charge the Enhancing Advising Committee (EAC) with the creation of this resource in conjunction with the advising coordinator. Please note: without a coordinator, this recommendation is unlikely to witness long-term success.
- Conduct an environmental scan of materials that already exist (advisor handbook/manual).
- Conduct a focus group of advisors to develop the initial resource (FAQs and resources to include).
- Design a maintenance plan
Appendix: Recommendations from John Gardner Institute Attendees to CEMAT

January 2015

Prioritized Action Items to Improve Retention

Academic Advising
Retention Plan Objective 2d: Provide proactive, accessible, inclusive, high-quality and personalized academic advising and curricular resources for all degree-seeking students promoting increased graduation rates.

Recommended action items:
1. Define roles, responsibilities and standards of practice of academic advising.
2. Centralize academic advising for all undecided students.
3. Explore the idea of a coordinator position for undergraduate academic advising.

Process: Chancellor appoints a campus-wide task force charged with addressing the action items.

Timeframe: Task force completes charge within 6 months (February thru July)

Learning Communities
Retention Plan Objective 2b: Ensure that students participate in a cohesive and inclusive first-year academic experience through 1) a living learning community, learning community, or first-year experience course.

Recommended action items:
1. Consider one of two options: 1) identify one course to enroll all first-time, full-time freshmen or 2) each school/college identifies their own course for first-time, full-time freshmen.
2. Appoint a faculty member (50% time) to partner with the Director of the Student Success Center to coordinate all learning communities planning and implementation activities. This faculty member will also participate in faculty development, serve as a member of the Learning Community Council, and teach at least one learning community.

Process: Retention executive committee develops proposal with implications to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Timeframe: Proposal delivered within one month (February)
Gateway Courses with Required Supplemental Instruction and Study Groups
Retention Plan Objective 1b: Enhance educational instruction, structures and policies to facilitate student success and graduation.

Recommended action item:
1. Implement and evaluate a pilot program which requires student participation in supplemental instruction and study groups in one gateway course with high DFW rates (e.g., BIO SCI 202).

Process: Retention executive committee makes recommendation to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to meet and explore the proposed action item with the Dean of Letters and Sciences and the Director of the Panther Academic Support Services.

Timeframe: Meeting scheduled within three weeks