Elevating the Advising Profession
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Elevating the Advising Profession

On the Frontline

Academic Advisors Are Critical Link Between Administration and Students

University Leadership Dictates Academic Policies and Practices... ...Which Advisors Execute, Facilitating Connection Between Student and University

- Course policies
- Transfer policies
- Course and major offerings
- Student success initiatives

Advisor

Administration and Faculty

Students

Advisor as Cultural Navigator
Helping First Generation Students Navigate Uncharted Territory

"First Experience" Students Entering the University

- I don't have a support group yet, and I don't know how to get around campus.
- My mother didn't get me the right supplies for college, and I don't have enough aid to buy more.
- I think I may be depressed. How can I get help and still stay in school?

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Academic Advising

- Tools and Resources
- Counseling Services
- Student Groups and Campus Life
- Tutoring, Mentors, Academic Support
- Financial Aid Office
- Work Study Coordinator

Traditional University Resources

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Seeing Advising as the Keystone
Advising Can Impact Success of Retention Efforts Across Campus

Effective Advising Linked to:
- Student satisfaction
- Effective academic and career planning
- Familiarity with and use of campus resources
- Student engagement and interaction with faculty

Same Goal, Different Languages
For Advisors, Institutional Goals Feel Distinct From Their Core Mission

Administrator's Priorities

- Increase retention rates in order to maintain revenue
- Maintain L.S. News rankings and high quality academics
- Respond to new legislation tying state funding to institutional outcomes
- Ensure that graduates are career-ready and able to find jobs after graduation

Advisor’s Priorities

Long-Standing Priorities
- Build relationships and mentor students, ensuring they get the most out of their college experience
- Provide accurate information to help students make smart decisions
- Help students do well in their courses

New Expectations
- Identify and inflect greater numbers of at-risk students
- Resolve financial aid, job placement, and other concerns

What Really Matters

"It's not about retention. 'Retention' is a word for enrollment management. It's about supporting individual students."

Academic Advisor
Road Map
A Multi-Layered Approach to Elevating Advising

1
Recognizing and Reframing Advising as a Career

2
Cultivating Next Generation Advisors
Just a Job?
Most Advising Offices Lack the Central Tenets of Professional Careers

Tenets of Professional Careers

- Rigorous, Comprehensive Training
- Formal Evaluation and Review
- Formal Promotion and Compensation Track
- Professional Development Opportunities

Typical Advising Office

- New hire training limited in scope and effectiveness
- Reviews overly reliant on subjective metrics
- Promotion and pay track largely non-existent
- Opportunities fail short of expectations

How Are You Doing?
Professionalization Uneven Across Membership

My institution offers ___ for all advisors. (Select all that apply.)
Poll of SSC Members (N = 71 institutions)

- Rigorous, Comprehensive Training: 18%
- Formal Evaluation and Review: 50%
- Formal Promotion and Compensation Track: 68%
- Professional Development Opportunities: 22%
- None of these: 5%
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North Carolina State University

Comprehensive Advisor Training at NC State

New Hires Complete Advisor Academy, Followed by Ongoing Development

Advisor Academy
For New Professional and Faculty Advisors

- Two-day intensive offered during the summer and winter terms
- 14-16 advisors participate in workshops led by advising leaders and mentor advisors

Advisor Development Institute
Ongoing Training Available to All Advisors

- Advisors earn an ADI Certificate by:
  - Completing two elective sessions in addition to Advisor Academy
  - Or participating in four core development workshops plus two elective sessions

Agenda
Advisor Academy Day 1

8:30-8:45 Welcome Address – Executive Director, Academic Advising Services

9:00-11:00 “What student information is available to me?” – Associate Registrar, Registration and Records

11:00-12:15 “What if my advisor has questions about financial aid?” – Director, Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid

12:45-1:45 “Who are the students coming through my door?” – Counselor, Counseling Center

2:00-3:40 “How can I help my students be career ready?” – Counselor, Career Center

3:40-4:20 “What if my advisee needs tutorial assistance?” – Director, Tutorial Center
Passing the Driver's Test
Training Academy Culminates in a Simulated Advising Appointment

Advisor (Academy trainee)  Student (Played by mentor advisor)

Honoring Skills With Mentor Role Play

Sample Scenario
Student selects the College of General Education and receives an advisor's name in a random order. The advisor meets the student in her office to discuss the student's progress. The advisor learns that the student is interested in pursuing a degree in business and has selected Economics as her major. The advisor provides feedback on the student's performance in previous courses and offers suggestions for improvement.

Program: Business Administration
PCE: Academic, WIFI, Carolls
Fall 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>CH 101</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH 102</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOC 201</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 101</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT 155</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAR 100</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total GPA: 3.0

Head Honoring Advisor: 12 GPA, 3.0 GPA, 3.0 GPA, 3.0 GPA

Debrief
Academy participants discuss their experiences and how they might apply it.

Notes

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Source: Education Advisory Board Interviews and Analysis
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How Are Your Advisors Performing?
Across the Country, Advisor Effectiveness Not Measured

Most Advisors Not Meaningfully Evaluated

- Only 64% of advising offices evaluate advising staff at all
- 8% of advising offices use a central, institution-wide evaluation tool

Advisors Demanding Higher Standards

- "All advisors should be evaluated according to one instrument."
- "Clear expectations and clear evaluation standards would help tremendously."
- "Theoretically, a portion of our pay is determined by performance standards; but it hasn't been applied in any measurable or meaningful way for over 20 years."

http://www.nacada.ttu.edu/Pubs/PeerReviews/Recognition/Reward-of-Advising-July-2007.pdf Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis
A Comprehensive Approach
UMSL Pilots 360-Degree Advisor Evaluation Method

Development and Implementation
- Relyed on focus groups, observation, and experts, including Industrial/Organizational Psychology Program Director, to build advisor performance management tool
- Senior and novice advisors worked together to define competencies
- Piloting in one advising unit to refine before implementing campus-wide

Supervisor Evaluation Tool
Assesses Five Key Advisor Competencies

The Advisor As...

1. Humanizing Agent
2. Counselor/Mentor
3. Educator/Instructor
4. Collaborator
5. Developer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Category</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanizing Agent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes the initiative to reach out to and meet with current and prospective students as well as other campus community members.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates a positive environment for students by welcoming them upon arrival. Shows interest, and genuine care for, students' concerns by building positive rapport.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively listens by giving full attention to what others are saying, takes the time to understand what is being said, asks questions to appropriate and avoids interruptions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates information and ideas in speaking so that others will understand, verifying comprehension of what was said.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deals calmly and effectively with high stress situations; maintains composure and keeps emotions in check even in very difficult situations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determines that students' needs have been met, confirms next steps, and provides follow-up contact information. Takes the initiative to reach out to students who may benefit from additional follow-up.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ratings
- Below Expectations (1)
- Meets Expectations (3)
- Exceeds Expectations (5)

Full evaluation tool available upon request
How Could We Expand Evaluation Even More?
Many Possible Metrics to Assess Advisor Impact and Effectiveness

- Student exit assessments
- Student web activity
- Course performance
- Median GPA
- Retention and graduation rates of advising cohorts
- Technology utilization data
- Advising session notes and data
- Student surveys
- Peer reviews
- Administrator reviews

Source: Education Advisory Board interviews and analysis

Notes
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**A Tale of Two Advisors**

High Advisor Turnover Results in Two Disparate Personas

**Novice Advisors**

- Early- to mid-20s, recently completed BA or MA
- Energetic, likely to embrace innovation and technology
- Inexperienced working with students, untrained on university policies
- Tend to leave after 2-3 years

**Veteran Advisors**

- Over age 45
- Experienced in working with students, knowledgeable about university policies
- Not motivated to embrace innovation or technology
- Stagnant, unlikely to leave
Sam Houston State University

Advising Career Ladder
Building a Formal Pathway to Recognize and Motivate Advisors

New Titles in Each Academic Area

- Director of Academic Advising
- Associate Dir. of Academic Advising
- Associate Dir. of Academic Advising
- Senior Academic Advisor
- Asst. Academic Advisor

Case in Brief

- Executive Director of Advising and Mentoring Center worked with HR to develop an advising career ladder
- Additional funds for higher compensation secured through advising center fees ($50 per student per term)
- New titles aligned with academic job titles, enhancing prestige and helping to make advisors feel valued as professionals

Sam Houston State University

Job Descriptions
Outlining Expectations and Pathways for Each Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asst. Academic Advisor</th>
<th>Assoc. Academic Advisor</th>
<th>Senior Academic Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATION &amp; EXPERIENCE:</strong> Bachelor's degree with 3+ years experience</td>
<td><strong>EDUCATION &amp; EXPERIENCE:</strong> Master's degree with 3+ years experience</td>
<td><strong>EDUCATION &amp; EXPERIENCE:</strong> Master's degree with 5+ years experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SELECTED RESPONSIBILITIES:</strong></td>
<td><strong>SELECTED RESPONSIBILITIES:</strong></td>
<td><strong>SELECTED RESPONSIBILITIES:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advises students regarding programs and curriculum.</td>
<td>- Assists in coordinating orientation sessions for groups of incoming new students.</td>
<td>- Serves as a resource for academic advisors and students, working collaboratively with administrators and other staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Maintains student files and makes changes to records.</td>
<td>- Acts as a liaison among students, faculty, and university constituents.</td>
<td>- May be responsible for developing advising upgrades and programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provides retention advice for students on probation.</td>
<td>- Helps to train new advisors.</td>
<td>- Evaluates advising services; proposes improvements or changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assists in resolving academic problems.</td>
<td>- Assists faculty advisors.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

- $31,800 Starting Salary
- $35,400 Starting Salary
- $37,500 Starting Salary
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Professional Growth Highly Valued
Advisors Seeking Opportunities to Grow in Their Careers

Motivation to Attend Professional Development
Percent of Advisors that Rated Each as "Very Important"
NACADA Poll (n=1,917)

85%
83%
50%
36%
34%
25%
21%
12%

# A "Top-Down Celebration"

Focus on Supporting Advisors Builds Sense of Ownership for Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>$20,000</strong></th>
<th>Annual budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Positive Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping Advisors Be Successful</td>
<td>Communicating That Success Is Noticed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Advisement Forum
  - Lead representatives identify and plan development opportunities
- National Speakers
  - Bringing recognized experts to campus
- Conference Trips
  - Sponsored travel to national events
- Annual Incentive
  - $1,000 awards for outstanding professional and faculty advisors
- Advisor Shout Outs
  - Finding opportunities for public recognition
- Outside Award Submissions
  - Statewide and NACADA awards

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Beyond Training Modules

Monthly SSC Webinars Explore Key Advising Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform Usage</th>
<th>Proactive Outreach</th>
<th>Managing Difficult Conversations</th>
<th>Serving Specific Populations</th>
<th>Research and Trends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;What Your Institution Needs to Know About the Murky Middle&quot;</td>
<td>![Platform Usage]</td>
<td>![Proactive Outreach]</td>
<td>![Managing Difficult Conversations]</td>
<td>![Serving Specific Populations]</td>
</tr>
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Source: Education Advisory Board Interviews and analysis
Road Map
A Multi-Layered Approach to Elevating Advising

1. Recognizing and Reframing Advising as a Career
2. Cultivating Next Generation Advisors

Tech-Enabled Advising Is Here to Stay

"When our advising office went paperless five years ago, advisors all said "No! We want our paper!" Now, they hate paper. They can't imagine advising in a world without technology.

Assistant Director, Academic Advising Center"
A Fragmented Landscape
Advisors Must Be Able to Navigate a Complex Technological Ecosystem

Awash in New Tools, Impatient for Consolidation

Which tool do I use when, and for what?

An Interim Solution: Streamlining Workflow
Consultants Engage Your Advisors to Outline Standard Use of Tools

Advising Technology Workflow Integration “Toolkit”

An integrated advising technology workflow is a standardized process for how advisors use the technology products available to them for greatest effectiveness.

Why create an integrated workflow?
1. Improves consistency and coordination across advisors
2. Demonstrates that you understand advisor concerns
3. Eliminates redundancy and duplication of effort
4. Increases utilization to ensure value

Consultant works with leadership to conduct Advising Technology Audit and plan implementation approach

Consultant drafts Workflow Plan and Cheat Sheets based on conversations with advisors

Consultant works with leadership to implement final Workflow Plan
Changing Student Populations
Incoming Cohorts More Diverse, More Difficult to Serve

Underprepared
43%
Percent of 2013 SAT-takers prepared for college-level course work, the lowest ever

International and ESL
24%
Increase in the number of ESL students attending US universities between 2010 and 2011

Adult Learners
2.2 Million
Number of full-time college students over the age of 21

A New Generation
Anatomy of a Millennial Student

- Hyper-connected to social media
- Seek immediate gratification
- Value freedom of choice, but do not mind rules
- Open to diverse viewpoints and willing to collaborate
- Value transparency above privacy
- Expect frequent positive recognition

New Needs and Expectations of Advising

SSC Well Positioned to Meet Millennial Needs
What Millennial Students Expect From Advising

- Someone up to speed on their progress
- A safety net that will catch them if they fall off track
- Transparency and objectivity
- Personalized recommendations
- Holistic attention and mentoring

What SSC Provides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Overview</th>
<th>Success Markers</th>
<th>Predicted Risk Level</th>
<th>Major Explorer</th>
<th>Case Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instant and centralized access to key student information</td>
<td>The ability to monitor progress for all students in your caseload</td>
<td>A clear indicator of which students are most likely to need help</td>
<td>Objective data on course, major, and career options based on student skills analysis</td>
<td>Shared notes, statuses, and work lists allow more time for meaningful conversations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Art of Dream Crushing
Advisors Reluctant to Use Data in Tough Conversations

A Counter-Intuitive Moral Imperative

"Our job sometimes requires us to crush dreams. We can't have students walking around our campus at risk just because we won't be honest with them."

"In high school, they will pass kids with 0.5 GPAs just because they get sick of looking at them. The kids we advise are in college—we have a responsibility to be transparent about their odds."

Not as Easy as It Sounds

What is the primary reason you find major-change conversations so challenging?
Poll of SSC Advisors (n=74)

- I don't know how to use data or evidence to make the case: 10%
- I don't have enough time during the appointment to address it: 10%
- I don't know what concrete advice to provide that would help them: 18%
- I don't want to hurt the student's feelings or crush his/her dreams: 61%

Creating Data-Driven Advising Specialists
Giving Your Advisors the Skills and Confidence

Specialist Program Overview

- Week 1 Getting to Know the Cohort and Platform Tips and Tricks
- Week 2 Understanding Predictive Analytics Featuring an SSC data scientist
- Week 3 Elevating Student Conversations With Data Featuring an expert advisor
- Week 4 Creating Successful Targeted Campaigns with the SSC Platform
- Week 5 Extending the Scope of Your Data-Driven Advising Work

Tools for Difficult Conversations

- What to Look for in the Data to Make the Case with a Student
- Scripting to Manage Different Types of "Tough Conversations"
- Q&A with a Panel of Expert Advisors and Group Discussion

178
Advisors completing the Program since 2012

84
Specialists in the Fall 2014 cohort

"These strategies were practical and positive. I learned a great deal about how to speak to students about data. I plan to incorporate it into my advising practice." — Specialist