

Charting the Future Academic Advising Workgroup Recommendations

At our initial January meeting, the **Academic Advising Work Group** convened to discuss our charge and related roles and responsibilities. Our group started to recognize the challenges we would face trying to “assist campus-based advising groups to research best practices and develop specific recommendations for strengthening advising.” Still, as a group of individuals passionate about how academic advising shapes students’ success, the opportunity to engage the system in active conversation about academic advising’s potential was invigorating. We moved forward, hoping the process would yield results worthy of the students we serve.

Five months later, our work group has an end-product that includes recommendations and action steps for the system office and individual colleges and universities to consider. However, the product itself oversimplifies the nuanced conversations we had, the challenges we wrestled with, and the constraints that prevented us from making a more significant impact. Our work would be incomplete if we failed to include those items so they are outlined below.

1. We know that academic advising is a necessarily diverse, complex process – thanks in part to its variability of structure, process, programs, staffing and students from one institution to another. This makes advising a challenging process to impact at one institution – never mind all of our institutions, accounting for the different student populations we serve. An initiative that is a “best practice” in one setting can be irrelevant or even counterproductive in a different setting. Many group members agreed that it would have been ideal to have two **separate work groups** – one to focus on the community and technical colleges, and another to focus on the universities. Separate groups would have allowed us to better address the unique challenges and advising characteristics that each type of institution faces.
2. The timeline and format of our final product required that we oversimplify advising, diluting the impact that some promising practices can yield. Each of our recommendations calls for more explication about how and in what setting it can be helpful. **Additional time** could have allowed us to share drafted recommendations with broader campus constituents and to use their expertise and feedback to refine them. Such consultation would benefit implementation – as a broader population could feel some ownership of the recommendations made.
3. Additionally, we recognize that there are multiple Charting the Future actions that relate to academic advising. Multiple actions involving multiple groups hopefully can impact student success. However, additional **time, coordination, and**

collaboration could have facilitated more momentum around this topic – again, strengthening recommendations and actions from all groups involved.

Despite these limitations, our final product gives us hope by elevating the visibility of academic advising as a practice that, when done well, can truly impact student success. We hope that the system also recognizes this, and will actively support ways for our campuses to continue collaborating on this critical student success topic. After all, we know “**academic advising is the only structured activity on the campus in which all students have the opportunity for a one-to-one interaction with a concerned representative of the institution**” (Habley, 1994).

We are grateful for the opportunities to work with colleagues from across the system, including our capable work group leaders, Nicole Merz and Wendy Robinson, for their unyielding persistence and guidance throughout our processes.

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Charting the Future Workgroup Report

CTF Workgroup: Academic Advising

Part A. Workgroup Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Ensure that all students are assigned to a faculty or staff member who provides academic advising services and utilize mandatory academic advising for at-risk populations (populations and type of contact are determined by each institution).

Action Steps					
	Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe for Completion	Ease of Implementation	Resources Needed
#1	Assess campus capacity for advisor assignment, establish assignment process, and implement identified process.	Individual Institution	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Moderate	*budget will vary by campus based on staffing models.
#2	Identify campus at-risk populations	Individual Institution	Early Win (< 6 months)	Easy	Utilize current campus resources (IR offices/Advising Leaders)
#3	Develop and implement model for mandatory advising	Multi-Institutional	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Moderate	Utilize campus groups working on advising initiative.

Recommendation #2: Create a plan to collect appropriate data on advising services to enable ongoing assessment and improvement of advising services at both the system and campus level.					
Action Steps					
	Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe for Completion	Ease of Implementation	Resources Needed
#1	Establish work group to Identify key data elements to be collected by all institutions	Colleges, Universities, and ASA	Early Win (< 6 months)	Easy	
#2	Develop process for collection and analysis of data by both the institution and system.	Colleges, Universities, and ASA	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Moderate	*budget will vary by institution depending on IR staff available.
Recommendation #3: In order to ensure student success, create a systemwide enrollment deadline that limits late registration.					
Action Steps					
	Action	Responsible Party	Timeframe for Completion	Ease of Implementation	Resources Needed
#1	Engage stakeholders in conversation regarding appropriate registration deadlines	ASA	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Moderate	
#2	Draft policy and procedures around registration deadlines	ASA	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Difficult	Utilize current policy and procedure process.
#3	Develop marketing and communication plan as well as training plan for staff and faculty.	Colleges, Universities, and ASA	Medium Term (6-18 months)	Moderate	Will need marketing budget to support plans developed.
Part B. Workgroup Additional Recommendations					

#1	Develop a campus-based professional development training program to support the staff and faculty providing advising services.
#2	Perform a systemwide review of advising positions to explore minimum qualifications of positions providing advising services, clarify academic advising roles, and assess the scope and causes for turnover of faculty and staff in advising positions.
#3	Provide system support (e.g. contracting, implementation, financial resources, training) to opt-in campuses for technology tools that support academic advising (e.g. early alert, academic planning, appointment scheduling, CRM).