TOOLKIT

Advising Model Self-Audit

Assess Your Institution's Student Support Against Best-Practice Approaches to Address Growing Readiness Challenges

Advising Model Self-Audit

How to Use This Self-Audit: Evaluate the effectiveness of your institution's advising model by using the diagnostic exercise below. In each section of the diagnostic, read the statements on the left and right and determine which best represent existing practice at your institution. In sections where you have checked boxes in the left-hand column ("Typical Practice"), turn to the relevant section(s) of *Prepare to Meet Student Readiness Gaps with Just-in-Time Advising: Eight Imperatives for Academic Leaders* for further information on how to improve the advising experience for both students and staff.

Typical Practice	Best Practice
Just-In-Time Advising *For more information, see Imperatives #1, #2, and #6.*	
Advising appointments are based primarily on the academic calendar. During registration and add-drop periods, students are required to meet with an advisor to add or remove courses from their schedule. During registration weeks, advisors have back-to-back appointments and unmanageable workloads, while students with urgent issues may not be able to get an appointment quickly. At other times in the academic year, advisors see few appointments.	Advising appointments are based primarily on student need. Using data on students' course attendance, GPA, and any behavioral alerts raised by faculty, staff, or peers; advisors schedule appointments or share information at the time when it is most necessary or useful for students. Advisor schedules and workloads stay consistent throughout the academic year.
☐ Students need to meet with their advisors to register, so most student-advisor meetings take place during registration periods.	☐ Students have the information and tools they need to self-register.
☐ Most advising meetings are scheduled when students reach out to advisors.	☐ Most advising meetings are scheduled when advisors reach out to students.
☐ Advising meetings are first-come, first-served.	☐ Advisors use student data and academic and behavioral alerts to prioritize meeting with students at the time when an intervention, recommendation, or referral will be the most timely and helpful.
☐ All students meet with advisors the same number of times.	☐ High-need students meet with advisors more frequently, while well-prepared students have occasional check-ins.
Team Advising *For more information, see Imperatives #1, #7, and #8.*	
To deliver holistic advising, the institution seeks to recruit advising staff who can support students across a wide range of specialties (e.g., academic planning, financial aid, career pathing…), often resulting in long searches and difficulties finding qualified employees. Once advisors are hired, a holistic approach requires lengthy cross-training and heavy advising workloads.	The institution does not rely on any one individual to deliver holistic advising. Instead, each student is assigned a "care team" of faculty, staff, and peers across different divisions and specialties (e.g., degree planning, academic specialization, financial aid, career pathing…) based on the student's need.
☐ Students switch from a staff advisor to a faculty mentor after the first year or after declaring a major	☐ Students have both an assigned staff advisor *and* faculty mentor.
☐ Students work with a peer mentor or tutor only in specific courses or programs.	☐ Advisors can refer any student to a peer mentor or tutor on a short- or long-term basis for additional support beyond what advising can provide.

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Advising Model Self-Audit (cont.)

Typical Practice	Best Practice
Team Advising (cont.) *For more information, see Imperatives #1, #7, and #8.*	
☐ Communication between student support units (and faculty or peer mentors) is informal or infrequent.	☐ All support units and student-facing faculty/staff can add shared case notes to a student's file; advisors are responsible for monitoring and responding to case notes.
☐ Referrals between support units are informal, typically verbal between a student and advisor.	☐ Referral systems use a formal, integrated case system. Any faculty or staff member can open a case, and the case is only closed after a student interacts with the appropriate support unit.
Standardized Advising *For more information, see Imperative #4.*	
Advising approaches vary widely between colleges/schools, offices, programs, or majors, leading students to have inconsistent experiences with advisors when they declare or change majors; and leading advisors to have inconsistent experiences with the profession across units.	Central and distributed units agree together on shared standards for advising roles, methodology, caseload sizes, technology systems, and career management. Both students and advisors have consistent experiences and agree on the shared vision across units.
☐ Each academic unit defines advisor roles and job duties for advisors within the unit.	☐ The institution defines shared roles and standards for all advisors across units.
☐ Centralized oversight of academic advisors is informal.	☐ Central advising units and distributed academic units sign memoranda of understanding defining shared advising standards and tying central funds to upholding these standards.
☐ Advisor-to-student ratios vary by academic unit.	☐ The institution defines a universal advisor-to-student or advisor-per-unit ratio.
☐ Advisor communication across units is informal and infrequent.	☐ The central advising unit sends regular communications to all advisors and holds regular convenings for advisors across units to share best practices and troubleshoot common issues.
Professionalized Advising *For more information, see Imperative #3.*	
Advising organizations are very flat, with advising staff reporting directly to unit leaders. This model leaves little room for advisors to advance in their careers. Advisors also do not have standardized pay scales or professional development opportunities.	Advisors can advance along a career path with standardized pay scales and tracks for management and specialized student support. Institution-wide training focuses on developing the skills that advisors need to advance along this career path.
☐ Advisors are assessed informally or infrequently.	☐ Advisors receive at least an annual performance assessment.
☐ Advisor assessment uses student surveys or student learning outcomes.	☐ Advisor assessment uses caseload success metrics (e.g., percentage of an advisor's caseload whose GPA increased, or who declared a major by the deadline), which avoids bias and ties career advancement directly to quantitative student outcomes.
☐ Advisors do not have opportunities for career advancement, or advisors can only be promoted to managerial roles.	☐ Advisors can advance along career tracks toward managerial roles or toward specialized advisor roles (e.g., case managers for high-need students).
☐ Advisors are encouraged to seek out professional development on their own.	☐ All advisors participate in a shared, institution-wide curriculum of training and professional development.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.