

2012 UNM Advising Institute

In 2006, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) introduced a set of principles, captured in a set of documents, that they referred to as the Concept of Academic Advising. The guiding principles in the Concept of Advising involve aligning academic advising with teaching and learning, and integrating advising into the educational mission of the institution. These principles assert that academic advising should:

1. Have a basis in the teaching and learning mission of higher education,
2. Consist of a series of intentional interactions with curriculum, a pedagogy, and a set of student learning outcomes,
3. Should synthesize and contextualize students' educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities and lives to extend learning beyond campus boundaries and timeframes.

The Concept of Advising is very nicely summarized in its preamble, which I would like to read to you:

Academic advising is integral to fulfilling the teaching and learning mission of higher education. Through academic advising, students learn to become members of their higher education community, to think critically about their roles and responsibilities as students, and to prepare to be educated citizens of a democratic society and a global community. Academic advising engages

students beyond their own world views, while acknowledging their individual characteristics, values, and motivations as they enter, move through, and exit the institution. Regardless of the diversity of our institutions, our students, our advisors, and our organizational structures, academic advising has three components: curriculum (what advising deals with), pedagogy (how advising does what it does), and student learning outcomes (the result of academic advising).

<Advising Report Comments>

“Shadow [advising software] systems were developed and implemented to close the ‘gaps’ in IT delivery. The current analysis should focus on those gaps and determine what product will address the majority of concerns”.

“Academic advising at a research one university is often an ‘easy target’ for blame when examining retention and graduation rates”.

It is evident “that units are not tied to a common mission or set of advising goals in spite of the work that has been done by the leadership to change the advising culture. This has resulted in major inconsistencies in advising programs and delivery across campus”.

“The advisors themselves seemed confused as to mixed messages about their role as “educators” and the importance of what they do as many spend an inordinate amount of time on “clerical” tasks, e.g. clearing holds, filling out forms, and other unit administrivia. As a result of these frustrations, a high rate of turnover was mentioned several times by various members of the advising community”.

“In advising alone, there are eleven holds that are placed on students’ records. ... The desired outcome of an advising program that supports student success and progress towards degree is basically being held ‘hostage’ by the creation of a system based on holds and other administrative functions. New and innovative approaches to advising, e.g. academic coaching and career advising, will not yield the results hoped for if continued emphasis is placed on a complicated and administratively-driven process rather than a student-centered advising approach”.

“Standardize holds placed on students files. Currently, individual colleges and departments place holds for various reasons, i.e. the 80- and 100- hour holds placed by Arts & Sciences and Engineering respectively and the departmental holds placed by some departments. We believe a standardized approach to mandatory advising and the development of supporting materials for students (i.e. on-line

graduation check, degree progress checking/tracking) will communicate that advising is important while making the processes less confusing and cumbersome to all stakeholders”.

“Missing from the implementation strategies is a clear plan for assessment. ... Absent from the framework needed for assessment are process outcomes that complement the goals and learning outcomes”.

<End of comments>

Vincent Tinto has noted that advising is “one of the key conditions that promotes retention for it reflects an institution’s commitment to the education of students” (Tinto, 1999).

In summary, when done well, academic advising has a significant impact on student success as reflected in an institution’s retention and graduation rates.