

Solution Areas

Advising

Putting observed practices to work

This activity walks you and your team through a collection of observed practices — good ideas from lean institutions that are making progress in narrowing attainment gaps and increasing student success. Let them serve as a source of inspiration for brainstorming.

Observed practice

Use technology to track students through their academic journey, and incorporate predictive analytics to alert advisors early if students are at risk of veering off track

To discuss

- **At what points in the student experience do we use technology to monitor student progress? Are we missing any key points in the academic journey?**
 - **How can we use technology to track students in a human-centric way?**
 - **How can we track students without relegating them into set academic “tracks”?**
 - **How might we use technology and data to predict which students are at risk of veering off track?**
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Observed practice

Use primarily professional advisors to conduct student academic advising alongside select faculty member support

To discuss

- What does advising look like at our institution?
 - How do professional advisors work? What about faculty advisors?
 - What might (or does) “select faculty member support” look like?
 - How can professional advisors work with faculty members to support students?
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Observed practice

Centrally manage advising in order to provide consistent, high-quality advising regardless of major / college, and to more easily implement changes across the function

To discuss

- How is advising managed at our institution?
 - What advising is managed through the departments and what advising is managed through advising centers? What are the strengths and gaps in this approach?
 - What might centrally managed advising look like at our institution?
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Observed practice

Cross-train advisors (of all types) and other student support functions to promote collaboration

To discuss

- What type of advisors do we have at our institution?
 - How do these advisors, if at all, work together to support students?
 - Are any of these groups cross-trained to help one another?
 - What does it mean to cross-train advisors? What's involved in the effort?
 - What does collaboration look like?
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Observed practice

Continuously clarify advising roles and responsibilities (e.g., career, academic, other student support) for advising staff, faculty, and students

To discuss

- What are the advising roles found on your campus?
- Does everyone know and embrace their role?
- How might your institution continuously review and clarify advising roles?
- How does external advising (e.g., high school and community college advising) help or hinder our own advising efforts? Are there any changes worth considering?

Observed practice

Mandate advising at credit accumulation thresholds and / or move advising deadline to 2-3 weeks into the semester to reduce demand at peak times

To discuss

- Does our institution already mandate advising holds?
 - If so, how and when?
 - Are these holds achieving what we hoped?
 - How might we use advising holds to reduce demand at peak times?
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Observed practice

Establish and maintain low student-to-advisor ratios and caseloads

To discuss

- What is our current student-to-advisor ratio?
 - How many caseloads does a typical advisor have?
 - How many students does an advisor work with in one day and in one year?
 - How can establish and maintain low student-to-advisor ratios and caseloads?
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Observed practice

Create formal feedback loops for advisors to share challenges and barriers students face, in order to continuously improve credentialing pathways

To discuss

- **What does feedback, both formal and informal, to advisors look like at our institution?**
 - **Who gets to give feedback? What voices are amplified? Which are left out and why?**
 - **How is the student perspective part of the formal feedback process?**
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Observed practice

Organize discipline-specific advising governance committees comprised of faculty members responsible for providing feedback on and guidance to advisors

To discuss

- **Does our institution have discipline-specific advising governance committees? If so, how do these committees function? If not, how might we create such committees?**
- **How can faculty and professional advisors complement the student advising efforts of each other?**
- **How might we involve professionals from the community in these committees?**