



## Transition to a Centralized and Proactive Advising Model

### I. Executive Summary

Kentucky State University is currently experiencing below average retention and graduation rates (59.0% and 22.4% respectively). Among the ways the administration is transforming the institution is in the process of advising. The following document describes rationale and process of transitioning to a centralized advising model at Kentucky State University in efforts to improve retention and graduation rates. Research suggests that the Proactive Advising model is the most beneficial model to increase retention and support first-generation, minority, and low-income students. The model requires advisors to go beyond simply scheduling classes to initiate contact with students at critical times throughout the semester and to help students develop key skills for academic, personal, and career success.

In order to effectively facilitate this type of advising, Kentucky State University will move from a decentralized/shared model to a centralized delivery model. Centralized advising allows advisors to build a relationship based on the proactive advising model that begins during the admissions process and continues through graduation. The centralized advising model features an advising team approach that includes two professional advisors and a faculty mentor per student. Each member of the advising team will be responsible for addressing specific factors associated with retention and student success.

On October 1<sup>st</sup> the following changes will be made:

- To improve recognition and to reflect the change in advising, the Center for Academic Success and Persistence (CAPS) will be known as the Academic Advising Center.
- All students will be advised by the staff in the Academic Advising Center.
- October 1<sup>st</sup> – October 28<sup>th</sup> will be Registration Preparations month in which students will verify and update contact information and major field of study. All students will receive their assigned advisors and be allowed to schedule registration appointments. Juniors and Seniors will also receive their degree audits.

- Advising staff will begin meeting with department chairs and faculty to discuss specific transition plans.
- October 31<sup>st</sup>- December 2<sup>nd</sup> will be Spring Registration. There will be specific registration periods for each classification.
  - Senior Registration: Monday, October 31 – Friday, November 4, 2016
  - Junior Registration: Monday, November 7 – Friday, November 11, 2016
  - Sophomore Registration: Monday, November 14 – Friday, November 18, 2016
  - Freshman Registration: Monday, November 28 – Friday, November 2, 2016
- Advisors in the Academic Center are: Sherrie Lyons (Director), Travis Haskins, Stephanie Cramer, Sophia Ellis, Whitney Milton, and Walter Malone.

The changes presented in this document are based on recommendations from the National Academic Advising Association, The Global Academic Advising Community (NACADA).

## II. Selecting an Advising Model for Kentucky State University

Three major advising models are validated by research and used in various higher education institutions: prescriptive advising, developmental advising and proactive advising.

- According to Barron & Powell, 2014, *prescriptive advising* is the traditional approach, where the advisor is perceived to be the authority figure who makes suggestions and tells the student what to do, and the student is expected to follow this advice (Crookston, 1972).
- *Developmental advising* on the other hand requires a deeper degree of interaction between the advisor and the student (Crookston, 1972). This style focuses on the student's potentials, develops the student's self-direction, joint decision-making and problem-solving, and utilizes a shared division of control and responsibility.
- *Proactive advising* (formally known as intrusive advising) is similar to developmental advising but calls for the advisor to initiate contact at key points during the student's postsecondary education (Glennen, 1975; Varney, 2012).

**Currently, there is not a consistently used advising model at Kentucky State University. The Center for Academic Persistence and Success philosophy has some characteristics of prescriptive and proactive models, while faculty advising can be characterized solely as prescriptive. Using a specific advising model allows for effective training, assessment, and evaluation.**

In selecting an advising model, student and university characteristics must be major deciding factors. Kentucky State University has a large proportion of students considered at-risk for not completing a college degree (i.e. low-income, minority, 1<sup>st</sup>-generation). Moreover, the University recognizes nurturing and being student-centered as two of its primary qualities and has retention as its chief focus. ***The proactive advising model best fits the needs of the University at this time.*** Research posits, proactive advising is the best method for improving the success of at-risk students by providing social, emotional, and academic support before an academic intervention is needed.

Advantages of proactive advising include:

- increase in retention rates and number of credit hours completed (Bray, 1985; Brophy, 1984; Nichols, 1986)
- increased gpa demonstrated by students (Schultz, 1989; Spears, 1990)
- increase in use of study skills, time management strategies, and in classroom attendance (Spears, 1990)

Proactive advising involves:

- deliberate intervention to enhance student motivation
- using strategies to show interest and involvement with students
- intensive advising designed to increase the probability of student success
- working to educate students on all options
- approaching students before situations develop
- contacting students at critical points during the semester (i.e. the first 3 weeks of the semester, at midterm, during the preregistration period, and in between semesters.)
- assisting students in developing a personalized plan of long-term and short-term goals

Proactive advisors are able to work with students through:

- early intervention at the first sign of any type of difficulty (risk factors can be identified in the admissions process);
- introduction of rules, policies and procedures, along with clear explanations and expectations of students;
- monitoring progress of students to determine how well they are using information provided; and
- customizing intervention and targeting it specifically toward student needs.

### **III. Advising Delivery: Transition to Centralized Advising**

Models for delivering advising services may be categorized as one of three organizational structures (Pardee, 2004):

- Centralized: where professional and faculty advisors are housed in one academic or administrative unit
- Decentralized: professional or faculty advisors are located in their respective academic departments.
- Shared: where some advisors meet with students in a central administrative unit (i.e., an advising center), while others advise students in the academic department of their major discipline

**KSU is currently utilizing the shared model. Beginning October 1, 2016, we will transition into centralized advising. Research validates that centralized advising increases retention and improves students' university experience (ACT, 2010; Noel-Levitz, 2009; Swecker, Fifolt, & Searby, 2013; Tinto, 2012).**

**Centralized advising at Kentucky State University will:**

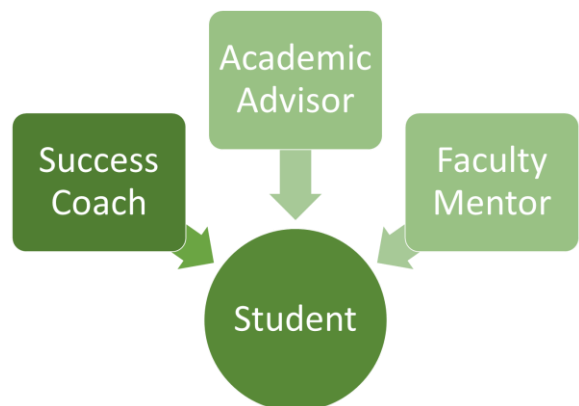
- Allow advisors to effectively deliver proactive advising in a consistent manner.
- Allow retention initiatives to be implemented more effectively.
- Concentrate the accountability for advising.
- Allow faculty to focus on mentoring and graduate school preparation.

**IV. Centralized Advising Roles and Responsibilities**

There are six advisors in the Academic Advising Center (See Figure 3). Each student will have an advising team that will be composed of a Success Coach, an Academic Advisor and a Faculty Mentor. A Faculty Advising Liaison will be responsible for fostering communication and collaboration between Academic Advising and each academic department.

**Success Coach**

A Success Coach is professional advisor that will be responsible for monitoring the persistence, retention and graduation rates for a cohort of students (first-time, full-time students). Through UNV 101, individual meetings, small groups, interventions, workshops, and seminars, Success Coaches will be responsible for ensuring that all cognitive, metacognitive, and social factors affecting retention and success are addressed from freshman to senior year. Coaches will also ensure that all students are properly progressing in their career and professional school pathways.



*Figure 1 3:1 Advising Team Model*

## Academic Advisor

The Academic Advisor is a professional advisor that will be responsible for assisting students with academic planning and registration, graduation applications, course substitutions and transcript evaluations. The Academic Advisor will work closely with the Faculty Advising Liaison to implement initiatives aimed at improving retention and graduate rates within designated academic departments.

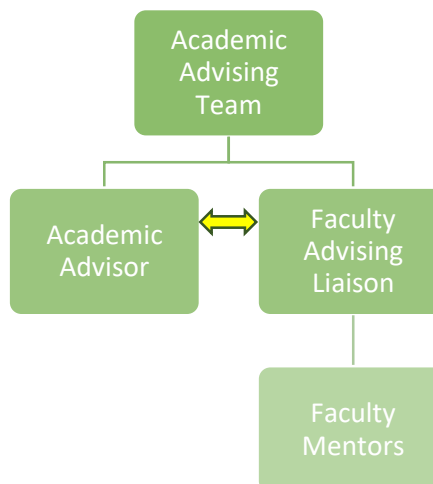


Figure 2 Academic Advising and Academic Department Relationship

## Faculty Mentor

In collaboration with the department Advising Liaison, Faculty Mentors will be responsible for preparing students for graduate and professional schools and careers. Chairs will select one faculty mentor for each academic program in each department.

### Responsibilities:

- Encourage and monitor student participation in professional student organizations.
- Collect, distribute and assist students with applying for internships, undergraduate research opportunities and other professional development opportunities.
- Facilitate workshops to help students apply for graduate and professional schools.
- Facilitate workshops to or other learning opportunities to help students learn about career paths in their field.
- Work with the Career and Professional Development Center to outreach to possible employers that would be interested in employing students in the field.
- Assist with data collection and reporting on graduate school and career preparation.
- Attend advisor trainings.

## Faculty Advising Liaison

Faculty Advising Liaison is a faculty member selected to serve as the official faculty representative for their department. In collaboration with the assigned academic advisor, the Liaison will assist with academic planning and registration, graduation applications, course substitutions, and transfer equivalencies. Liaisons will also assist in creating and implementing departmental or college specific retention initiatives. Liaisons will be responsible for working with faculty mentors to improve and assess graduate school and career preparation of their students.

## Responsibilities

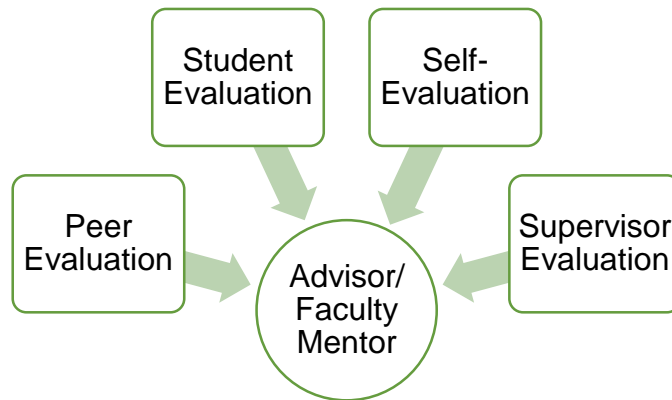
- Meet regularly (at least 2-3 times per month) with assigned academic advisor.
- Attend advisor trainings.
- In collaboration with the academic advisor, facilitate small group meetings with students.
- Review course schedules and academic plans with academic advisor.
- Coordinate the creation of departmental graduate school and career preparation plans.
- Meet regularly (at least once per month) with faculty mentors.
- Collect and report assessment data on graduate school and career preparation activities.

	<b>Sherr Lyons</b>	<b>Travis Haskins</b>	<b>Stephanie Cramer</b>	<b>Sophia Ellis</b>	<b>Whitni Milton</b>	<b>Walter Malone</b>
Cohort	All	Cohort 2015, 2019	Cohort 2012, 2014	Cohort 2011, 2013	Cohort 2016	Cohort 2016, 2020
Academic Department	Undeclared, Home-school, Non-degree seeking	Behavioral and Social Sciences, Criminal Justice, Social Work	Fine Arts, Education	Liberal Studies, Business and Honors	Math, Science, Computer Science, Nursing, Ag	Literature, Language and Philosophy
Special responsibilities	Academic Probation, High Achieving Students	Thorobred Tracker, High risk-students, Advisor training	Living/Learning Community	Liberal Studies, Honors	Living/Learning Community	2+2 Program, Marketing

*Figure 3 Academic Advising Center Staff and Responsibilities*

## V. Advisor Evaluation Process

All faculty and staff involved in advising (advisors, advising liaisons, faculty mentors) will be evaluated each semester by various members of the advising community. Evaluations will be discussed and made available to the advisor and their immediate supervisor as well as the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Advising portfolios should be created and updated each year that documents advising effectiveness. The portfolio would include a philosophy of advising; self-evaluation; reflective essay responding to peer, student, and supervisor's reviews; description of strongest and weakest advising case and professional development plan highlighting strengths, weakness and development goals. All hard copies of portfolios should be submitted to the department chairs or director by June 1 of each academic year. The advising portfolio should be included in the tenure/promotion review packet. Portfolios will also be reviewed as part of employee evaluations for professional advising staff.



*Figure 4 Advising Evaluation Process*

## **VI. Timeline and Upcoming Changes**

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