



Advising Principles

 **ADVISING
SUCCESS
NETWORK**

ASN MISSION

The mission of the Advising Success Network is to help institutions: build a culture of student success, with a focus on Black, Latinx/a/o, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islander and poverty-affected students, by identifying, building, and scaling equitable and holistic advising solutions that support all facets of the student experience.



Definition of Advising

Advising is a critical component of student success, and a “bright star” in the integrated constellation of student supports at an institution. The advisor-advisee relationship supports students as they identify and attain their academic, career, and personal goals.

The network defines “advising” as encompassing more than the student interaction, to also include the structure and operations of academic advising; the roles and responsibilities of primary-role and faculty advisors; and advising pedagogies, approaches, and models.

Centering Equity

Central to our view of holistic advising is the equity-minded approach that informs all of these principles. Equity-mindedness requires an intentional focus on dismantling historically racist and racialized structures, policies, and practices that continue today. Equity-minded advising reform requires elevating students’ voices, explicitly identifying and focusing on disaggregated student outcomes and on a deeper understanding of racially minoritized and low-income students’ experiences. We believe that progress in these areas is measured in terms of student outcomes, and not just in the creation or removal of policy and practice.

Eight Principles of Advising

1

Advising is an essential support for student success; institutions must position and resource advising accordingly.

2

Institutions must employ equity-minded practices in all aspects of advising policies and practices.

3

Both primary-role and faculty advisors must serve as change agents working to minimize institutional barriers to degree completion.

4

Institutions appropriately resource advisors to engage in ongoing training and professional development informed by evidence-based practices centering racial and economic equity.

5

Advising is driven by an institution-wide advising mission led by a cabinet level position that is responsible for centering advising in the student experience.

6

Institutions clearly define student learning outcomes positioning advisors as teachers and learners as decision makers.

7

Institutional leaders intentionally design advising programs for student success, utilizing models and structures best suited to the students they serve.

8

Institutions recognize advising as a profession, practiced by both faculty and primary-role advisors.



Advising is an essential support for student success; institutions must position and resource advising accordingly.

At its core, advising is an essential, holistic support for student success in higher education. Advising includes a comprehensive set of policies and behaviors that greatly expands the transactional experiences associated with advising, and incorporates teaching and learning, retention/persistence, and student development.

Holistic advising can only be truly comprehensive if advising policies and practices are student-centric, learning focused, consistently improved through scholarship and research, enhanced with technology, efficiently organized, and foster collaboration, and communication.



Institutions must employ equity-minded practices in all aspects of advising policies and practices.

The Advising Success Network defines equity as an understanding of the experiences, talents, and aspirations of Black, Latinx/a/o, Indigenous, Asian, and Pacific Islander students and poverty-affected students. The intention behind this definition is to ensure that our institutions consider how these students, and their lived experiences are incorporated into advising systems and practices while also providing them with the tools and resources to be successful.

Equitable advising practices must be systemic and inclusive to maximize the greatest impact on student success for minoritized students and other historically marginalized groups. Equitable advising strategies should be larger scale initiatives guided by institutional and program mission statements that directly support students who need assistance beyond traditional advising services.

3

Both primary-role and faculty advisors must serve as change agents working to minimize institutional barriers to degree completion.

Advisors, both professional and faculty, must have regular and direct access to students. Advisors should create intentional opportunities to connect directly with students throughout the academic year, especially during times in the semester students need additional clarity and support. Through these intentional connections, advisors can seek to understand the narratives of minoritized students and shed light on existing barriers and inequities. These counternarratives are crucial for dismantling racist and classist structures that perpetuate outcomes disparities.

Administrators from various campus support units should collaborate to identify strategies promoting cross-functional collaboration across campus. Collaboration and information sharing on the student experience among campus units should be the norm. As institutions become more collaborative across academic and student support units, they retain more students; this effect is measurable at both two- and four-year institutions, as well as at both selective and accessible institutions (Tyton Partners, 2020).

 4

Institutions appropriately resource advisors to engage in ongoing training and professional development informed by evidence-based practices centering racial and economic equity.

As a result of its unique connection between the student, their education, and all other support services and programs in an institution, advisors become “expert-generalists” over curriculum, policies, and resources available to the student. They are responsible for knowing the breadth of options available to students in pursuit of their academic, personal, and career goals, but they also need to have depth of knowledge around the student’s curriculum, the student themselves and all their intersecting identities, and the institution. The complexity of advising work requires that faculty and primary-role advisors engage in ongoing professional development for continuous improvement of their advising practice.

Advisors must be multi-skilled, well informed, and ever adapting to the professional environment and to the field. Advising programs are no longer solely prescriptive, informing students of requirements and policies. Instead, programs have curricula and pedagogies to incorporate students’ needs and identities, all while utilizing an all-encompassing approach of advising as teaching. Dismantling racist and racialized structures requires continual examination of how racialized student outcomes are interpreted and how they might be undone. This requires ongoing professional development for faculty and staff in a professional environment that encourages inquiry and self-reflection.

 5

Advising is driven by an institution-wide advising mission led by a cabinet level position that is responsible for centering advising in the student experience.

There is no one preferred reporting/organizational structure that is recommended over others for advising. Whether advisors report through academic affairs or student affairs is dependent on the division of responsibilities, roles and functions of advising, and the needs of the institution. Functional responsibilities of advisors can vary greatly across and even within institutions. Most importantly, the function of academic advising must be well-defined, represented by an accountable cabinet-level position, and understood as central to the student experience.

Advising roles usually include elements of both academic affairs and student affairs. A key function of advising is monitoring progress toward degree completion, clarifying academic policies and graduation requirements, and supporting students through academic challenges. Experienced advisors must also be prepared to assist students with the academic, nonacademic, and life challenges students may face along their academic journey. They must also assist students in evaluating their academic options based on student performance and interests. In larger institutions with more diffuse student success units, academic advisors are also able to assist students in connecting to the broader academic and student support community to assist with specialty areas such as financial literacy, career exploration, academic support, mental health, and other resources.



Institutions clearly define student learning outcomes positioning advisors as teachers and learners as decision makers.

“The student learning outcomes of academic advising are guided by an institution’s mission, goals, curriculum, and co-curriculum. These outcomes, defined in an advising curriculum, articulate what students will demonstrate, know, value, and do as a result of participating in academic advising.” (NACADA, 2006). Each institution must develop its own set of student learning outcomes and the methods to assess them. Holistic advisors then work to ensure that these learning outcomes are achieved.

After identifying its values, vision, mission, and goal, advising programs will need to create both student learning and advisor outcomes. Learning outcomes establish what students can know, do, and value as a consequence of advising. These outcomes are constructed to be measured on a consistent and ongoing basis. Assessment of advising must be more than a measure of student satisfaction or retention. It is a measure of what students learn, what they experience, and how they are changed. Developing program learning outcomes with an emphasis on student equity allows advising programs to measure their effectiveness in implementing equitable strategies for students.



Institutions clearly define student learning outcomes positioning advisors as teachers and learners as decision makers.

Advising is a critical component of student success because it can serve as one of the pivotal roles and one of the few consistent elements of the student experience from the point of matriculation through to graduation. These representatives may be primary-role advisors, faculty advisors, or both, depending on the needs and structure of the institution. When considering how to structure advising, institutional leaders should create systems that cultivate meaningful connections between students and advisors throughout the student experience, regardless of the advisor's status as a member of the faculty or the staff.

Individual advisors and advising directors rarely have the formal authority needed to lead the institutional transformation of holistic advising policies and practices. Institutional and system leadership –chancellors, presidents, and provosts - must ensure that holistic advising is seen as an institutional priority, and that the organizational structures at the institution level are deliberately constructed to foster collaboration. Advising administrators and practitioners should regularly collaborate with key partners across the institution to foster a student-centered approach for social and academic support. Quality holistic advising has demonstrable ties to a number of positive student and institutional outcomes, including student responsibility, self-efficacy, academic performance, and institutional affinity; advising units should be intentionally designed to coordinate with and promote other high impact practices that contribute to student success (Young-Jones, A. D., Burt, T. D., Dixon, S., & Hawthorne, M. J., 2013). Institutional leaders should intentionally position advising in spaces that will contribute to this intentional coordination.

8

Advising is a profession, practiced by both faculty and primary-role academic advisors.

NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising has established four pillars of holistic advising that guide advisors' practices across institutional types and contexts: the Concept of Academic Advising, the Core Values of Academic Advising, the Core Competencies of Academic Advising, and the CAS Standards of Academic Advising. These pillars ground advisors intentionally in a theory-based, research-driven foundation. Advising structures are then tailored to the unique institutional contexts and the needs of their student populations. The pillars are applicable for both faculty advisors and primary-role advisors.

Holistic advising programs must fit the institution's culture to inform learning and the achievement of learning outcomes. Administrators must consider factors beyond the student-advisor interaction in their design of holistic advising services, balancing consideration of structures, delivery, personnel, professional development, and assessment with sufficient resources to achieve the best outcomes for students and the institution. In that process, institutional administrators have the opportunity to identify and eliminate barriers and inequities for students, improving systems for equitable and inclusive delivery of services. Intentional design of these advising structures must align with the institutional mission while keeping student success and equity central.

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