Challenge on Academic Advising

Part 1 Who Registered
Part 2 The Submissions
Part 3 Selected Submissions

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Knowledge in the Public Interest

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Momentum is a program of online collaborative inquiry to advance compelling strategies for student success in higher education, hosted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (gatesfoundation.org) with Knowledge in the Public Interest (kpublic.com)

The Challenge on Academic Advising took place August 19-28, 2013 at momentum.edthemes.org

This Brief on the Challenge is in three parts:

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Registrants
Who signed up and signed on?

The Challenge on Academic Advising was noteworthy on many accounts. Not only did a large number of people from almost every state in the country participate, but from a wide range of institutions. The challenge of effectively guiding students is of concern to schools large and small - from Wheelock College in Boston with 871 undergraduates to the University of Texas at Austin with 38,000. Graduate schools like the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and the USC School of Engineering were among the registrants as were religiously affiliated private non-profit institutions like Notre Dame and St Joseph’s College (NY)
782
Individuals
Registered

45+
States
+ Puerto Rico, District of Columbia, US Virgin Islands

Top States by Registrant

- Texas: 90
- Florida: 60
- Washington: 52
- California: 43
- Oregon: 38
- Utah: 38
- Indiana: 37
Half of those who registered are directly involved in advising students, and an additional 36% work in post-secondary administration. Over 80% of those who registered for the Challenge are working on the ground inside higher education.
Those who registered for the Challenge contributed their views on advising strategies.

What 1-3 advising strategies have you found to be most effective for student persistence, progress and/or completion?

532

Establish a human connection with a student

- Secure data/inputs that allow the advisor to jump start the relationship
- Build trust as basis for motivating, setting high expectations and encouraging the student
- Actively guide student to make and follow a plan, adjust as needed and capitalize on available resources
- And…

105

Communicate, communicate, communicate

- Listen actively, empathize, respond honestly, be clear
- Use multiple media/match media and timing to message
Those who registered for the Challenge contributed their views on advising strategies.

What 1-3 advising strategies have you found to be most effective for student persistence, progress and/or completion?

2

Don’t wait for students to ask for assistance

• Capitalize on data to monitor student achievement and use of support resources

• Apply predictive analytics to accumulated data to see patterns and trends

• Actively reach out to students at risk of falling behind

350
Those who registered for the Challenge contributed their views on advising strategies.

What 1-3 advising strategies have you found to be most effective for student persistence, progress and/or completion?

322

Help each student to shape and own a plan

- Link student passions and concerns to academic choices
- Engage students in understanding college expectations, options and resources
- Make the system to develop and track plans easy to use
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The Challenge drew 76 submissions from 66 individuals. The submissions can be viewed as roughly representative of the registrant population in terms of institutional type and role, although post-secondary administrators dominate the submitting group.
Institutions

- 4 Year Public: 47%
- Community College: 28%
- 4 Year Private: 18%

Roles

- Faculty: 17%
- Post-Secondary Admin: 37%
- Post-Secondary Student Support: 33%

All Institutions

- 31 - 4 Year Public College/University
- 18 - Community College
- 8 - 4 Year Private Non-profit
- 4 - .com
- 3 - 4 Year for Profit
- 2 - Association

All Roles

- 8 - Faculty
- 3 - National or Regional Organization Admin/Staff
- 36 - Post-Secondary Administration
- 14 - Post-Secondary Student Support
- 2 - Post-Secondary IT/IR
- 2 - Researcher
- 1 - State/City/System Admin/Staff
Submissions come from institutions and organizations located in 26 states

76 Submissions

26 States

…and 22 of the 76 submissions are from institutions and organizations in 3 states

11 Texas
6 Florida
5 California
A Perfect Bell Curve
- most of the models are not yet at scale

16
Early Discovery

44
Implementing with favorable results

16
Delivering at scale
Advising submissions fall into two buckets. The larger of the two by far is programs and models that support all students as they prepare for and engage in college. The second bucket includes programs and models that are tailored to the needs of a specific group within the overall college population, such as those who are first in the family to attend college or those whose record suggests they are at risk of failing to complete.

Advising support for the macro student population

- Orientation to college programs (13)
- Academic planning tools (9)
- Advising curricula for students (7)
- Integrated technology-driven systems (5)
- Integrated technology-supported models (4)
- Peer advising (4)
- 1-1 advising (3)
- Advising curricula for advisers (2)

Targeted advising for micro student groups

- Student Characteristic-based Models (18)
- Subject/Major-focused Advising (6)
- Early Alert Systems (4)
Trends in Advising

Technology and data are amplifying traditional models and radically altering the delivery of advising.
Technology is being used to harness actionable data that increases the impact of individual advising in large student populations.

Platforms based on customer relationship management (Pierce) and case management (Bushway) software, for example, are now in operation in institution-wide applications. Overall these systems enable an adviser to tap data that improves the quality of academic planning done with a student. A valuable byproduct of the student tracking features of the systems is the application of predictive analytics that identify students at risk.

And even in institutions that have not implemented integrated advising systems, technology is being used to generate “early alerts” which prompt intrusive outreach (Miller/Brumfeld).

Distance learning advising models have lessons for campus-based institutions.

Informational resources are posted in attractive digital formats, webinars on specific topics are offered and forums are supported and monitored to facilitate peer “advising.” (Caile/McGuigan/Zeller). (Almost) 24/7 online access to a coach is another replicable feature. (Cook)

Creative applications of technology and analytics go beyond traditional advising to change the student experience.

Promising proposals include systems that would help a student zero in on a potential major (Parish), allocate classes based on specific criteria, rather than first come first served or college class (Parish), or assign students to classes with people they have been in class with before or with whom they share interests, to build engagement and commitment (Barnard).
Trends in Advising

II

But personal relationships matter -
1-1 advising is viewed as best practice.

Peers, when prepared and supported, amplify 1-1 advising relationships.

Integrated models structure shared responsibility between advisers and faculty. This can be a team approach (Saljanin/Dibble) or a smooth transition/hand-off (Porro/Panko).

Peers can be more accessible and persuasive in answering questions and pointing our resources, whether “live” (Wong) or via YouTube video (Janssen).
New concepts of advising-as-curriculum recognize that the first year is a critical period and students need to connect with the purpose of their education.
Orientation to college expectations may take some or all of the first year and involve not just students but families.

A 19 week hybrid MOOC for students and families paces information sharing (Janssen). Catch the Next/Puente similarly builds in outreach to families as part of its first year program (Chavez).

New models of advising-as-teaching (curricula) are less about academic expectations and requirements and more about student self-reflection on personal sustainability.

Most institutions want students to be actively engaged in and responsible for their college experience, including the responsibility to complete. However, few focus on helping students to identify their passions and needs. Doing so seems to lead to active student ownership of an academic experience (Jefts/Johnson).
Increasing completion means more than targeting “at risk” students
Many institutions identify undeclared and close-to-completion student populations as sizeable enough to merit targeted attention.

It appears that some students are unsure of their career direction and therefore reluctant to select a major. Others fail to complete despite being close for an array of reasons. Outreach to these students seems to be effective. (Poch/Cate)

Community colleges are raising completion numbers through outreach to transfer students.

Students are helped to identify credits earned after transfer that could be applied to an AA degree (Corwin) or guided to petition for the degree (Shue).
Selected Submissions

Challenge on Academic Advising
Selected Submissions

Part 3 of 3

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The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation chose 9 of the 76 submissions to attend the September, 2013 Post-Secondary Success convening where they shared their programs, ideas and experiences with the attendees. A brief explanation of the compelling attributes of the selected submissions follows:
Alex G. Ambrose
University of Notre Dame

**Blended Advising Model:**
Transforming the advising field with ePortfolios

**Non-cognitive:** Supports advising through the development of a students’ non-cognitive skills, particularly by building confidence

**Tech-enabled:** Presents a solution that responds to the needs/actions of 21st Century students

**Innovative:** Supports a new way of thinking about the delivery of information and engagement of students in the advising process
Mentoring: Utilizes advisors beyond program and course selection; builds community to support engaged, student learning environments

Collaborative: Breaks down institutional silos to facilitate student success

Contextualized: Integrates culture into the curriculum
Data-driven: Uses data to identify specific populations in order to provide targeted advising interventions

Feasibility: Presents a tangible solution, given that most institutions have the capability to identify the targeted student population, but need guidance on how to approach the problem

Innovative: Requires a change in the role and responsibility of advisors to support student completion

Collaborative: Successful partnership building across institutions
Mentoring: Utilizes advisors beyond program and course selection; supports advisors with individualized reports on advisees

Tech-enabled: Presents a solution that requires institutions to use capability of existing technology

Non-cognitive: Addresses non-academic supports that students need through student empowerment of the college – going process
Non-cognitive: Addresses non-academic supports that students need through peer coaching

Tech-enabled: Presents a solution that responds to the needs/actions of 21st Century students

Innovative: Supports a new of way of thinking about the delivery of information and engagement of students in the advising process
Make College Matter – Create a meaningful life in college and beyond

**Non-cognitive:** Allows students to articulate and stay true to their goals

**Peer mentoring:** creates a learning community/cohort

**Innovative:** Provides college credit for skills generally considered to be “non-academic”
MAP – My Academic Plan

**Personalization:** Allows students to create a holistic experience from the outset that targets their particular goals and needs

**Open-Sourced:** Allows for any institution to adopt programming

**Strong evidence** of impact
Data-driven: Uses data to identify specific populations to provide targeted advising interventions

Tech-enabled: Presents a solution that requires institutions to use nuance capability of existing technology

Feasibility: The solution can be built on existing technological infrastructure
Cynthia Wong
Brigham Young University

Adviser Cloning – A peer coaching program that extends adviser outreach to at-risk students

**Mentoring:** Utilizes advisors beyond program and course selection; engages students as peer advisors/mentors

**Benefits at multiple levels:** This model provides learning for both the students and the mentors – as well as the advisors themselves.

**Culture change:** The approach has buy-in from staff, often the most difficult piece of implementing a new program.