A Blueprint for Success:

Pilot program for academic advising and retention for first year students, from orientation through the first semester of college

NACADA Annual Conference, 10/8/16

PRESENTERS

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Miranda Swain
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AGENDA

- UTSA Overview
- 2014 vs. 2015
- First-Year Advising Program
- Results & Data Discussion
- Conclusions & Implications

ACTIVITY

- Write names in square
- Only sign one square per card
- Vertical, horizontal, or diagonal “BINGO” to win
UTSA OVERVIEW

UTSA FUN FACTS

• 4-year, public institution
• Approximately 29,000 students
• 46.2% are first-generation
• 48.4% are Hispanic
• 70% need-based financial aid
STRIVING FOR TIER ONE

• Creation of University College and First-Year Experience
• Increased admission standards
• Restructuring of the Advising Centers

OLD ADVISING STRUCTURE

• Dedicated freshmen advising center
• Remaining advising centers divided by college
NEW ADVISING STRUCTURE

• One “UTSA Advising” with multiple centers
• Students assigned a professional advisor
• Caseload model
ARTS & HUMANITIES ADVISING CENTER

• The College of Liberal and Fine Arts
• Fields of study:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Art</th>
<th>History</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art History</td>
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<td>Classics &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>Medical Humanities</td>
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<td>Music</td>
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<td>Philosophy</td>
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2014 vs. 2015

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Ye Olde Way

ORIENTATION ADVISING IN SUMMER 2014

- Learning outcome – expose students to policy
- Didactic, lecture style
- One time contact
- Focused on fall registration
- Future advising is reactive
Important Sites for Registration

1. UNDERGRADUATE CATALOG: utsa.edu/ucat
   • Degree requirements, semester-by-semester plans, course prerequisites and descriptions
   • Information Bulletin: important academic policy information
     - Probation/Dismissal, Dean’s List, Dropping courses, etc.

2. SCHEDULE OF CLASSES: asap.utsa.edu → “Class Schedule”
   • Do NOT have to sign into ASAP to view classes
   • Times & instructors for each course
   • Only fields required are first three: (1) Term, (2) Subject, & (3) Course #
   • Previous semesters: “Click here to view archived copies of schedules from prior terms”
     - Get an idea of which classes are offered during fall, spring, & summer semesters by looking at previous availability

“FALL” OUT FROM SUMMER 2014

• Were our learning outcomes being met?
• Was our advising at orientation effective?
• How can we make freshmen more successful?
BACK TO BASICS – BUILDING A NEW FOUNDATION

• Team returns to the drawing board
• Learning outcomes reimagined
• Founded new program in student development theory

GEORGE KUH

• High school senior as a “cultural outsider”
• A smooth transition to college requires gaining college cultural capital
GEORGE KUH

• Path to becoming a cultural insider
• Assimilation to campus culture

ARTHUR CHICKERING

• Seven vectors of development
• #1 – Developing competence (special focus on interpersonal competence)
ARTHUR CHICKERING

• Focus on ways students can develop competence
• Establish feeling of belonging

NANCY SCHLOSSBERG

• Marginality and mattering
• Drives student engagement
NANCY SCHLOSSBERG

- Higher motivation
- Higher loyalty
- Increased retention

First-Year Advising Program
PROGRAM TIMELINE

1. Summer Orientation Presentation
   - Expectations & Building Relationships

2. Summer Orientation Appointment
   - Degree Requirements & Registration

3. Monthly Fall Check-ins
   - Transition, Future Planning, & Success Monitoring

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ORIENTATION ADVISING IN SUMMER 2015

- Learning outcome – begin building strong relationships
- Engaging, dynamic approach
- First of several specific contacts
- Focused on purposeful interactions
- Future advising is proactive

Important Sites for Registration

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Important Sites

- Class Schedule
- Undergraduate Catalog
- ASAP

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PICTURES

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2014 Tips for Success

- Buy all of your books before classes start.
- Find the locations of all of your classes before school begins.
- See an advisor EARLY each semester before registration begins.
- Plan ahead (check holds weeks before registration, make multiple schedule options, map out your degree and update it each semester, etc.).
- Take responsibility for your success and educate yourself about your degree plan and UTSA policies.

2015 TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Be informed
- Be professional
- Attend every class
- Put in the time
- Ask for help
HIGH SCHOOL vs. COLLEGE

High School

35 hours

In Class

Studying

College

15 hours

PERSONAL STORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Grades</th>
<th>Spring Grades</th>
<th>Freshman Year GPA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT</td>
<td>VERY</td>
<td>GOOD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PERSONAL STORIES

In Class  Studying

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PERSONAL STORIES

Going to class AND being prepared.

Doing the reading, homework, etc.

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Present Yourself Professionally

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ADDITIONAL NEW CONTENT

• Asking for help
• Long-term planning
• Quiz covering important points
STUDENT COMMENTS

• Fun, Energetic, Interactive (games)
• Enjoyable & entertaining PowerPoint
• Less nervous & more confident

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PROGRAM TIMELINE

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SUMMER 1-ON-1 APPOINTMENT

• Unified script – consistent
• Standardized content shared with every student
• Reinforced important items in the presentation
• Continued laying foundation for the advising relationship

PROGRAM TIMELINE

1. Summer Orientation Presentation
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FALL MONTHLY CHECK-INS

• Specifically crafted with theory in mind
• Monthly themes with specific learning outcomes
• Email reminders each month
• Required!
• Follow-up emails for those who did not attend
• Spreadsheet maintained to track check-ins

SUCCESSFUL SEPTEMBER

• Study skills
• Getting involved at UTSA
• Daily life adjustment
• Q&A on major/minor exploration
OCTOBER OUTLOOK

• GPA calculation with syllabi
• Drop and withdrawal deadlines
• Beginning career exploration
• Campus resources
• Tips for building future schedule
• Proactive planning for finals

NEXT STEP NOVEMBER

• Creating next semester class schedule
• How and when to register
• More on schedule building
• Game plan for finals
• Reinforce academic calendar
DE-STRESS DECEMBER

• Congratulations or commiseration
• Resilience discussion
• Fall semester & finals debrief
• Delicious snacks
• Preparation for next semester
Results & Data Discussion

PROGRAM ANALYSIS

Compared students in the 2015 cohort that did or did not see an advisor during the fall semester.

1. Were students more successful academically?
2. Did students report a strong relationship with their advisor?
3. Did students more successfully meet our learning outcomes?
GUESS THE OUTCOME

1. Were students more successful academically?

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

- Higher GPA
- Higher number of earned hours
- First-generation students:
  - Almost 0.5 point increase in GPA
  - Over 1.5 additional hours earned
- # of times advisor seen = greater success
GUESS THE OUTCOME

2. Did students report a strong relationship with their advisor?

STRONG RELATIONSHIP

- 95% agreed advisor provided useful info
- 95% felt comfortable asking advisor for help
- 91% agreed they were developing a good relationship with their advisor
- Advisor cares about:
  - Well-being (67%)
  - Academic success (95%)
  - Career goals & future plans (85%)
  - Understanding of policy (62%)
  - Connection to UTSA (54%)
STUDENT COMMENTS

“I absolutely love my advisor.”

“My advising experience actually really helped me understand everything and really set me straight.”

“I wish I would have met with my advisor more times during the fall 2015 semester.”

“Amazing 😊”

STUDENT COMMENTS

“Hands down, he has to be one of the best ones on the block.”

“I had no problem going to her and asking questions.”

“He’s kind, understanding, and wants to help as much as he can in order to help you gain a better future in school.”
3. Did students more successfully meet our learning outcomes?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Prepared with better questions
- Knowledgeable
- Seemed to need less help with the basics
- Comfortable
- Connected
- Insiders who matter
ADVISOR COMMENTS

“In all my years advising, I have never had such a strong connection with my students.”

“The difference is clear. Previously, I would mainly recognize the ‘problem’ students, but now I recognize them all and they recognize me too.”

“My students and I have covered more of everything, and I’ve gotten to know them better in one semester than I previously did in a year.”

ADVISOR COMMENTS

“I really enjoyed getting to know the new students on a more personal level in which they were comfortable sharing their dreams and goals.”

“Because they had the chance to get to know me well, the freshmen felt comfortable being completely honest with me about academic struggles and knew they could do that without judgment.”
ADVISOR COMMENTS

“During the first semester, I saw that my new freshmen really seemed to understand and retain much more than they did previously.”

“It was a great way for us to have a fun introduction to the new students during summer, and it translated well to continuing to build on it in the fall.”

Conclusions & Implications
A FINAL LOOK AT 2014 VS. 2015

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<tr>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<td>Information focused</td>
<td>Relationship focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture style</td>
<td>Participation style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One and done… unless</td>
<td>First of several… regardless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule driven</td>
<td>Connection driven</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boring, overwhelming</td>
<td>Engaging, interactive</td>
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NEXT STEPS

- Increase participation for specific subpopulations (First-generation)
- Consider how to increase overall outcomes
REFERENCES


Thank You!

Arts & Humanities Advising Center

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