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Charting Their Course: Allowing First Year Students to Take Charge of Their Academic Success

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Charting Their Own Course: Empowering First Year Students to Take Charge of Their Academic Success

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College of Education and Human Development Office of Admissions and Advising

Background

Academic advisors are committed to helping students develop ownership regarding the success of their educational experience and to working with students on a plan that includes numerous opportunities and options for professional success.

Part of our challenge, however, is helping students take responsibility for knowing and completing their program and graduation requirements so that advising time can focus on refining a student’s comprehensive, holistic graduation plan—a pathway to success—that includes:

- mapping out classes
- determining potential academic/lifestyle hurdles and opportunities and ways to surmount or optimize each
- recognizing volunteer/service and other career exploration and resume building prospects
- understanding how to use campus and local resources
- focusing on student identified priorities

Yet many students come to advising with little knowledge of their program and University requirements, which limits efforts to provide more holistic advising that will ensure students succeed.

Our assessment program will help us make data-driven decisions as we redirect students’ understanding of advising appointment preparation.

Objectives and Means of Assessment

The table below details (1) the student learning outcomes, (2) the on-line advising module in which specific content would be addressed, (3) student mastery criteria, and (4) means of assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Student Mastery Criteria</th>
<th>Means of Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FYE 2100: First Year Experience</td>
<td>1. On-line modules can help about 80% of students learn and apply targeted advising and course scheduling content</td>
<td>FYE/ITD student responds to “What is one thing you learned in this module?”</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One FCS 1500: Intro to Interior Design</td>
<td>2. Freshmen could not translate module content to full graduation plan</td>
<td>Percentage of FYE/ITD students who correctly identify classes for next term after viewing short module</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYE 2100: First Year Experience</td>
<td>3. Students like modules, but want modules to be more interactive</td>
<td>43% increase in students who could correctly identify classes for next term after viewing short module</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One FCS 1500: Intro to Interior Design</td>
<td>4. Modules won’t replace advisors, but can supplement our work</td>
<td>Students responded to on-line module content questions</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYE 2100: First Year Experience</td>
<td>5. Modules are more effective when used in major specific classes than in open advising</td>
<td>Student Suggested Improvements</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But... Students Still Wanted/Needed Advisor Assistance to Successfully Transfer Knowledge to Program Planning

- 100% of students who viewed either module had questions for an advisor about their course selections and/or their individual major specific program plan.
- 100% of students wanted advisor sign-off on their planned classes and/or program plan.

Assessment of Process

The vast majority of students would recommend modules to others and felt modules were good use of their time.

% of FYE/ITD Students who said they learned something from module

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of FYE/ITD Students who said they learned something from module</th>
<th>Before Short Module</th>
<th>After Short Module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students Demonstrated Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of FYE/ITD students who correctly answered module content questions</td>
<td>Before Short Module</td>
<td>After Short Module</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Thought They Could Transfer Knowledge to Program Planning</td>
<td>Will use modules in core spring legislation</td>
<td>After the module, I better understand how to major requirements differ from other majors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

What We Learned

1. On-line modules can help about 80% of students learn and apply targeted advising and course scheduling content
2. Freshmen could not translate module content to full graduation plan
3. Students like modules, but want modules to be:
   - More Interactive
   - Very Interactive
4. Modules won’t replace advisors, but can supplement our work
5. Modules are more effective when used in major specific classes than in open advising

Next Steps/Closing the Loop

- Revise modules to be shorter, major specific, and more interactive
- Integrate Degree Works program planning into modules
- Expand module use to support program planning in additional introductory classes (HPHE 1520, HPHE 1530, ES 2000, ED 2900, HPHE 2710, FCS 1500, etc.)
- Make Program Plan Rubric easily available to students and advisors as key learning tool

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Sample Module Slides

Created Assessments

Direct and Indirect Measures of Student Learning

Program Plan Assessment Rubric

Student Feedback on Pilot Study

Program Plan Assessment Rubric (See Handout)

Piloted in Fall 2012

Full module required in
- Three FYE 2100: First Year Experience courses taught by CoEHD advising staff (60 students)
- One FCS 1500: Intro to Interior Design taught by faculty member (18 students)

Short pre-advising module offered to CoEHD walk-in advising students in October 2012 (155 students)