Promoting Student Self-Direction

Critical Policies and Innovative Technologies for Smarter Academic Navigation
A Bridge Too Far?
Not Just Practical, But Principled Concerns About Intrusive Advising

“The Enrollment Counselor”

“Upon calling WGU I was assigned an enrollment counselor who would take me through the process of applying… He streamlined the process for me and tracked my progress. We had scheduled conversations through the entire process.”

“The Personal Mentor”

“At WGU your mentor’s job is to assist you in making viable choices and achieving your goals. They are also responsible for tracking your progress. Each week I have a scheduled phone call with my mentor during which we set my weekly goals. Not semester goals, weekly goals.”

Western Governors University Student
Quantity and Quality

Will “Throughput” Gains Undermine the Value of Education?

The Allure of the “No Frills” University as a Completion Panacea

- Streamlined Curriculum
- Accelerated Programs
- Personal Success Coaches
- Inexpensive

...But at What Cost?

- Comprehensiveness and Choice
- Rigor and Exploration
- Student Responsibility
- Co/Extra-Curricular Options

“Throughput" gains under the completion engine have hurtled down the track with a lot of states putting in financial rewards and penalties for speeding up completion and cracking down on excess credits. Then there’s the quality engine, still struggling to get out of the shed.

- Carol Geary Schneider, President, AAC&U
Meeting Students Halfway
Navigating Between Extremes in Student Success

Selectivity

Ivy League
Most Institutions
Non-Traditional

Student Independence

Research Internships Networking Peers Family

Guided Choice

The Student-Centered University

Informed Planning

The Self-Directed Student

Competency Analytics Coaching Limited Choice Acceleration

The Overachiever
The Murky Middle
The Risky Student
Labyrinthine Service Structure an Unnecessary Obstacle for Students

“Because there are no one-stop registration centers and because both academic units and central support service units want to regulate the registration process, an unfortunate student can walk several miles and cross the Mississippi River numerous times to complete registration—assuming everything goes right.”

- Robert B. Kvavik and Michael N. Handberg, “Transforming Student Services,” Educause Quarterly
The Slippery Slope to Attrition

Seemingly Small Choices Can Derail Long-Term Plans

Student doing poorly in several classes this term, doesn't feel engaged

Support Services
- Wants to switch courses but can't get advising appointment; frustrated by reception at registrar's office
- Stays enrolled, but fails two courses and enters probation

Engagement
- Doesn't see how course is relevant to major and career goals; merely delaying more applicable experiences
- Leaves for alternate institution with clear experiential focus

Commitment
- Not sure if she's cut out for college, doesn't fit in. Drops two courses and spends more time at home with parents
- Withdraws from the institution and enrolls in community college

Progress
- Wandering aimlessly through courses and programs, accumulating credits but failing to graduate
- Leaves as financial aid expires and enters workforce without BA

What went wrong, and when?
Promoting Student Self-Direction

Critical Policies and Innovative Technologies for Smarter Academic Navigation

How do I help students make better decisions without massive new investments in advising?

1. Scaling Student Self Service
   - Actionable Checklists
   - Service Tutorials
   - Personalized Alerts
   - Engagement Feed

2. Enabling Integrated Planning
   - Configurable Degree Maps
   - Co-Curricular Timelines
   - Experiential Planning Policies

How do I reduce the likelihood and costs of failure without sacrificing rigor?

3. Sustaining Academic Momentum
   - Preemptive Resilience Exercise
   - Course Load Incentives
   - Multi-term Registration
   - Withdrawal Survey Modules

4. Reducing Deviation Costs
   - Withdrawal Redirect Courses
   - Macro Majors
   - Last Mile Initiatives

User-Centric Design  A Full Experience  Curricular Guardrails  Student Safety Net

©2014 The Advisory Board Company • eab.com
Flipping the Service Model

Traditional Support Structure Inefficient, Expensive, and Impersonal

Removing Logistical Barriers to Self-Support Allows Staff to Reallocate Time

Student reliant on staff for basic transactions

Staff time wasted on processing, data entry

Specialist Bottleneck Means New Staff Only Way to Improve Service

Student able to resolve majority of problems

Staff time reallocated to service design, advising
Scaling Self Service

Building Tomorrow’s Self-Service Portal

From Information Resource to Engagement Application

Personalization

Central Service Gateway

Focus: **Information**
- Comprehensive Service Listing
- Web-based Forms
- FAQ Database

Focus: **Interaction**
- To-Do Checklists
- Actionable Alerts
- Guided Tutorials

One-Stop Transactions

Focus: **Information**
- Comprehensive Service Listing
- Web-based Forms
- FAQ Database

Focus: **Interaction**
- To-Do Checklists
- Actionable Alerts
- Guided Tutorials

Personalized Triage Tool

Focus: **Engagement**
- Custom Student Feed
- User Analytics
- Holistic Data Integration

Impact on Students

©2014 The Advisory Board Company • eab.com
Scaling Self Service

Step One: The Central Service Gateway

One-Stop Redesign Eliminates Information Barrier

Upcoming deadlines

- **Academic dates & deadlines**
  - Monday, June 10: Summer financial aid disbursement for all undergraduate, graduate, and pharmacy students
  - Tuesday, June 11: Last day to apply for undergraduate summer term graduation
  - Friday, June 14: Last day of instruction for May session
  - Monday, June 17: Summer 10-week, 8-week, 6-week, and first 4-week sessions begin

Direct Loan changes

- Interest rates and loan fees on Direct Loans are scheduled to increase on July 1:
  - Interest rates: 3.4% to 6.6%
  - Loan fees for Direct Loans: 1.0% to 3.001%
  - Loan fees for Direct PLUS loans: 4.0% to 4.041%
- In order to receive the lower interest and loan fee rates, you must respond to your iAdvise by June 15 and complete your promissory note by June 20.

“Just in time” news

- Quick Links
  - Forms online
- Registration tools
  - Class Schedule
  - Class Search
  - Course Guide
  - University Catalog
- Manuals
  - Enrollment Services
  - Register
  - When to register
- Class section tools
  - Class section
- Financial tools
  - Direct Deposit
  - Financial Aid
  - Pay online
  - Pay Parent/guest
- Student account tools
  - Student account
- Scholarship Search

FAQ knowledge base

- **FAQs**
  - Financial aid
  - Your student account
  - Pay the University
  - Money management
  - Educational tax benefits
  - Scams & fraud

Comprehensive categories without "scope creep"

- **Finances**
  - Costs, tuition, & fees
  - Financial aid
- **Grades & Transcripts**
  - Understanding grades
  - Unofficial transcripts
  - Official transcripts
  - Graduation Planner
- **Degree Planning**
  - Explore degree options
  - Advising & counseling
  - Graduation Planner
- **U Resources**
  - New to the U
  - Campus Life
  - Computing & Technology

Fully electronic forms

- **Forms**
  - Online forms

All pages housed on One-Stop site; not just links to F2F services

Mobile-friendly

- **View mobile version**

Source: University of Minnesota One Stop website, OneStop.umn.edu
Core Components of a Progressive Portal
Maximizing Impact and Adoption Through Focus on Student Action

1. Actionable Checklists
2. Service Tutorials
3. Personalized Alerts
4. Engagement Feed

Self-Service Hub Focused on Process Navigation

Quick Links
- Registration
- Financial Aid
- Bursar
- Course Schedule
- Student Activities
- Library

ABC University
My Portal

- Complete Student Health Form
  - Form
- Take English Placement Exam
  - Done
- Obtain ABC ID Card
  - Done

Navigating Student Health Services

Student Health Form
- Name ___________
- Date of Birth __/__/__
- Vaccinations ___________
- Emergency Contact ___________

ABC University
My Alerts

- Payment Past Due
- Spring Registration
- Required Form Submitted

My University Feed
- Psych 250 – Week 7
  - Read Ch. 7-8
  - Interim project updates
  - Midterm next week!

©2014 The Advisory Board Company • eab.com
One Step at a Time
Simplifying Action Items for Defined Student Segments

Tailored Checklists Focus
Attention on Relevant Tasks

Clear Links to Actions
and Further Information

Simple Web Forms Enable
Instant Resolution

2014 Housing Application
Name
Address

When forms or documents
must be physically
delivered...

- Checklist status is
  updated once received
- Processing time listed in
task description

Create Login ID
* Required

Apply for Financial Aid
* Optional

Pay Admissions Deposit
* Required

Pay Deposit

Apply for Housing
* Optional

Info
Apply
Status

My Status Alerts
Fall 2014 Freshman
Fall 2014 Transfer

My Checklists

My Systems
- Blackboard
- Library
- Gmail
- Outlook
- MyAdvisor
- Tutoring

Simple Web Forms Enable Instant Resolution

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Guiding Students Through Complexity
Accessible Tutorials Reduce Reliance on One-on-One Assistance

UC Santa Barbara’s < 1 Minute Video Guides

Financial Aid TV’s Customizable Library

#1 Google Result for “FAFSA Steps”

47,000+ Views in First Year at Rutgers U.
**From Generic to Personal**

“Action Center” Highlights Student-Specific Issues and Opportunities

---

### Student Data Powers Three-Tier Alert System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Attention</th>
<th>Eligible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero Courses Next Term</td>
<td>Early Enrollment Advising</td>
<td>Honors Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Standing</td>
<td>Probation / Mandatory Remediation</td>
<td>Review Impact of Low GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Progress</td>
<td>Missing Requirement &gt; 60 credits</td>
<td>Missing Requirement &lt; 30 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>Missed Multiple Classes</td>
<td>Missed One Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missed One Class</td>
<td>RA Position</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Each Alert Enables and Requires Action

**12/16/2013**  
**Urgent**  
**Enrolled in Fewer than 12 Units in Upcoming Term**

- **REGISTER NOW**
- **SEE ADVISOR**
- **MORE INFO**

**Dismiss Alert:**
- Done
- Disregard
- Does Not Apply

---

**98.5%**  
Share of students that have viewed alerts

**171,000**  
Unique actions taken since 2011

---

Source: NAU Action Center, nau.edu/University-College/Action-Center; EAB interviews and analysis.

©2014 The Advisory Board Company - eab.com
Top Principles for Notification Design
Alert Criteria Prevent Oversaturation and Promote Impact

**Impact on Success**
- Addresses student persistence
- Geared toward specific population
- Can be categorized by type / urgency

*Reserved for critical issues*

**Concision**
- Header less than 50 characters
- Fewer than 5 explanatory sentences
- Scanable, simple content

*Short and to the point*

**Call to Action**
- Requires student to take an action
- Links directly to relevant next step
- Links directly to more information

*Pathway to resolution*

**Toolkit: Portal Design Principles**
- Alert purpose and approach
- Rules for action steps and descriptions

Source: “MyNAU Action Center: Description, Policies, Governance,” August 2013; EAB interviews and analysis.
A Data-Driven Lesson in User-Centered Design

Innovative Mobile App Reflects and Inflects Holistic Student Experience

From a Score…

To a Health Indicator…

…To a Personalized Feed
Calibrating Messages With Analytics

Microtargeting Enables Bigger Impact and Deeper Analysis

Easy to Get Lost in Sea of Messages from Administration, Clubs, Friends, and Family

Analytics Behind K-Feed Enable Personalization and Ensure Relevance

Flexible Platform
Campus units opt in; not an administrative mouthpiece

Smart Curation
IT/Analytics group can tailor feed according to usage metrics

Micro-Surveys
Institution and feed gain valuable data from targeted user input

Parent Opt-In
Students can allow parents to view feed to aid awareness

Behind the Scenes

Timely, Personalized Feedback Requires Advanced Infrastructure

Central Analytics Platform

Static Risk Score
- Demographic Information

Dynamic Risk Score
- Degree Progress

Activity Score
- LMS
- Advising Activity
- Alert System
- Swipe Cards
- Clickers
- Tutoring Attendance
- Echo 360

User analytics
- Input queries, design rules

Notifications based on score, activity
- Micro-survey results, transactions

Mobile App
14,000+
Active app users

100,000+
Micro-survey responses in last academic year

### Summary – Scaling Student Self-Service

1. **Migrate** as many paper-based processes and transactions to the web as is permissible and possible at your institution, to help both on- and off-campus students interact more easily with support services.

2. Online support services and transactions should be integrated into a central student portal optimized for multiple platforms, preventing a “virtual runaround” that mirrors the physical separation of many campus support offices.

3. Develop curated, step-by-step support guides tailored to student segments and complex processes to reduce student dependence on staff for basic transactional support.

4. Allow students to take immediate action to address holds, restrictions, and other problems communicated through portal alert systems by providing clear action links.

5. Enable real-time, personalized interventions and recommendations through the use of a central analytics platform combining student records, academic performance data, engagement activity, and advising information.
Promoting Student Self-Direction
Critical Policies and Innovative Technologies for Smarter Academic Navigation

How do I help students make better decisions without massive new investments in advising?

1. Scaling Student Self Service
   - Actionable Checklists
   - Service Tutorials
   - Personalized Alerts
   - Engagement Feed

2. Enabling Integrated Planning
   - Configurable Degree Maps
   - Co-Curricular Pathways
   - Experiential Planning Policies

3. Sustaining Academic Momentum
   - Preemptive Resilience Exercise
   - Course Load Incentives
   - Multi-term Registration
   - Withdrawal Survey Modules

4. Reducing Deviation Costs
   - Withdrawal Redirect Courses
   - Macro Majors
   - Last Mile Initiatives

How do I reduce the likelihood and costs of failure without sacrificing rigor?

User-Centric Design  A Full Experience  Curricular Guardrails  Student Safety Net

User-Centric Design

©2014 The Advisory Board Company • eab.com
Enabling Integrated Planning

Not All According to Plan
Focus on Near-Term Academic Navigation Shortchanges Experience

Co-Curricular Goals
- Research Opportunity
- Study Abroad
- Student Club

Professional Goals
- Major Requirements
- Graduation Requirements
- Internship

Degree Map

Only planning next term…

Co-curricular and professional goals on the periphery…

No clear vision of how near-term decisions affect long-term plans…

©2014 The Advisory Board Company • eab.com
The Next Generation

Today's Degree Mapping Tools Better Track Actual Student Paths

Meaningful Milestones
- Uses historical data to identify courses and grade thresholds most correlated with success
- Incorporates critical courses and grade thresholds into degree maps

Scenario Planning
- Allows students to model future paths to degree, incorporating coursework and co-curricular options
- Accounts for courses completed and future availability to alert students when a proposed plan does not fulfill requirements

Monitoring Capability
- Tracks student progress against proposed degree plan
- Responds to deviation from the major plan with messages or requirements based on the significance of the divergence

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Outside the Classroom Walls

GVSU Blueprint for Student Success Tracks Experiential Milestones

Second Year
*Exploration of the College Community*

- Attend Sophomore Welcome Event
- Confirm selection of a major
- Complete first Writing Skills Course
- Register for next academic year
- Finish 60 credits with 2.0 GPA
- Meet with advisor
- Attend leadership training
- Participate in Service Learning
- Begin development of resume
- % Selected Major by 45 Credit Hours
- % Complete Course within 2 Years
- Assessment Milestone
- Student Landmark

**Comprehensive Inventory**
Includes academic and co-curricular roadmap for each year in student’s career

**High Visibility**
Introduced at student and parent orientations, used by advising centers, published in student guides

**Joint Accountability**
Shared benchmarks for tracking completion of landmarks by students and institution

Source: Grand Valley State University, “Four Year Blueprint for Student Success”; EAB interviews and analysis.
The Right Activities for Me

Major-Specific Co-Curricular Maps Provide Tailored Recommendations

Unique to Major
Individual map for each of the 30 Arts and Sciences majors

Relevant Career Paths
Lists relevant career paths open to students in particular major

Early Planning Prompts
Co-curricular prompts begin in first year

Co-curricular Opportunities
Suggests on- and off-campus activities alongside curriculum

Source: Georgia State University Major Maps, http://www.cas.gsu.edu/major_maps.html
### Getting Guidance In Front of Students

#### Four Ways to Expand Experiential Conversation and Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optional</th>
<th>Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career Development Courses</strong></td>
<td><strong>Co-Curricular Policy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sequence of four 1.5-credit career courses beginning in first year</td>
<td>- Requires all university students to participate in a required number of co-curricular, personal development, and service learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Facilitates early career and co-curricular planning, progressing from personal exploration to workplace readiness skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Seminar in Major</strong></th>
<th><strong>Career Workshop</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 1 credit first year course co-taught by faculty and academic advisor</td>
<td>- Mandatory workshop for second semester freshmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Includes early exploration of career options associated with major and long-term planning for experiential learning participation</td>
<td>- Outlines co-curricular transcript development, requires career preparation planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First Year Only
Summary – Enabling Integrated Planning

1. Advising conversations and prescriptive degree maps are typically focused on near-term curricular decisions, making it difficult for students to incorporate co-curricular, experiential, and pre-professional considerations into their planning.

2. To enable longer-term academic planning, invest in a configurable degree audit tool that allows students to foresee the long-term consequences of next-term decisions and alerts them when their progress deviates from their expressed plans.

3. Co-curricular expectations and resources should be mapped to particular student segments, cohorts, and academic programs, so that students can easily identify relevant opportunities.

4. Incorporate co-curricular planning into credit-bearing or mandatory student activities to expand the conversation beyond advising appointments and campus offices.
Promoting Student Self-Direction

Critical Policies and Innovative Technologies for Smarter Academic Navigation

How do I help students make better decisions without massive new investments in advising?

1. Scaling Student Self Service
   - Actionable Checklists
   - Service Tutorials
   - Personalized Alerts
   - Engagement Feed

2. Enabling Integrated Planning
   - Configurable Degree Maps
   - Co-Curricular Timelines
   - Experiential Planning Policies

3. Sustaining Academic Momentum
   - Preemptive Resilience Exercise
   - Course Load Incentives
   - Multi-Term Registration
   - Withdrawal Survey Modules

4. Reducing Deviation Costs
   - Withdrawal Redirect Courses
   - Macro Majors
   - Last Mile Initiatives

How do I reduce the likelihood and costs of failure without sacrificing rigor?

User-Centric Design • A Full Experience • Curricular Guardrails • Student Safety Net
**Steering Choice Architecture in Our Favor**

Behavioral Economics Comes to Higher Ed

---

**Minor Changes in Policy and Framing Affect All Aspects of Life**

**Framing**

“Medium” most popular coffee size, even when actual size manipulated

**The Default Option**

Retirement plan enrollment climbs after “opt in” changed to “opt out”

**Convenience**

Consumers more likely to purchase food within easy reach, at eye level

**Burdening Bad Choice**

Motorcyclists must pass extra test and prove insurance to forgo helmet

---

**But Too Often, Students are “Nudged” in the Wrong Direction**

Students take “full load” of 12 credits, assume they’re on track for timely graduation

Students only register one term at a time, and many stick to minimum course requirements

Students pick courses from huge catalog based on flawed criteria, delay graduation requirements

Students able to withdraw from courses, drop out, or deviate from plans with easy transaction

---

©2014 The Advisory Board Company • eab.com
Sustaining Academic Momentum

The Role of Resilience
At-Risk Students Often One Obstacle Away from Attrition

Well-Resourced
- "I’ll form a study group"
- "My parents will help me"
- "I’ll join a club"
- Difficult Class
- Short on Cash
- Lonely

At-Risk
- "I’m not smart enough"
- "I’ll work full time"
- "I’ll go back home"

The Achievement Gap
Chance of Earning a Four-Year Degree by Age 24

SAT Score
1,200-1,600 1,100-1,199 1,000-1,099 800-999

Top Income Quartile
82% 67% 65% 52%

Bottom Income Quartile
44% 20% 15% 8%

Source: Anthony P. Carnevale and Jeff Strohl, "Rewarding Strivers," 2010.
Building a “Belonging” Mindset
UT Austin’s Innovative Psychosocial Intervention for Risky Students

Welcome!
1. How to Register
2. Student Groups
3. Signature Course Information
4. Changing Colleges
5. Important Campus Resources
6. Vaccine Requirement
7. The “UT Mindset”
8. Honor Code

Complete online orientation activities ➤ Read articles about the “UT Mindset” ➤ Reflect on material to help future students

Growth Mindset and Belonging Group
“The brain is malleable”
“I realized I’m not alone”

“College-level courses can be intimidating, but don’t give up! We are all a bit scared at first.”

Control Group
“Austin’s culture was surprising”
“It sure is hot here”

“College is a new experience, with a lot of big changes to adjust to. You’ll get used to it, I know I did!”

The Results
For “Mindset and Belonging” groups, the gap between share of disadvantaged and advantaged students completing 12+ credits in 1st term reduced by half

Intervention will be used for all 7,800 incoming freshmen this year

The Impact of a Full Course Load

Mounting Evidence Shows Full-Time Enrollment Boosts Success

Better Results Across Spectrum of Academic Preparedness
First-Time Freshmen at U of Hawaii, 2009-2011

...Even When Isolating Pell Recipients
First-Time Freshman Pell Grant Recipients at U of Hawaii, 2009-2011

1) Composite of SAT, ACT, HS GPA, and HS Class Rank

"Impact of Enrolling in 15 or More Credits on Selected Performance Outcomes," Institutional Research and Analysis Office, University of Hawaii System, September 2013.
Encouraging Credit Accumulation

Policies and Messaging Incentivize Larger Student Course Loads

Full-Time Definition

- Full-time students pay for 15 credits, rather than 12

Class Standing

- Sophomore standing now defined as 30 credits, rather than 24 credits

Aid Incentives

- State offers greater financial aid benefits for taking 15 credits rather than 12 credits

Credit Incentives

- $500 incentive scholarship for students completing 30 annual credits increased mean number of credits taken by 11 percent

Marketing Campaign

- “Fifteen to Finish” campaign promotes financial and academic benefits of taking full credit load

Withdrawal Deadlines

- Course withdrawal deadline moved from week 14 to week 9 to discourage drops motivated by final grades

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Multi-Term Commitment Enables and Encourages Long-Term Planning

Immediate Benefits to Students

- Students able to plan further ahead to accommodate complex schedules, requirements, and plans
- Fall to spring retention increased 3% in first year
- Departments able to forecast section demand
- Academic units realize cost-efficiency gains, better aligning resources and instructor workload with enrollment

Broader Impact on Campus

Student Participation is Voluntary, But High and Growing Quickly

- 100% in 2012
- 0% in 2012
- 60% in 2012
- 82% in 2013

Technical Worries Unwarranted

"I'm kind of surprised it’s not more widespread, because it’s not technologically a challenge. I think it makes a lot of sense if you can do it. It’s good resource planning."

- Michael V. Reilly, Executive Director
American Association of College Registrars

Source: Allie Grasgreen, “Registering Toward Completion,” Inside Higher Ed, April 11, 2014; “Cleveland State University - Multi-Term Registration: Course Scheduling for Student Success,” AASCU Innovations Exchange, EAB interviews and analysis.
Learning from Early Adopters

Student Adoption and Sequential Course Management Key to Success

Increasing Student Adoption

- **Default Registration Option**
  
  Show all available terms on main registration page to “nudge” students toward participation, and alter language to reinforce year-long planning

- **Targeted Email Outreach**
  
  Send monthly awareness emails throughout summer and fall to students who haven’t registered for additional terms

Improving Predictive Capacity

- **Post-Requisite Audits**
  
  Audit prerequisite course progress at the add/drop deadline, withdrawal deadline, and end of term to reduce artificial post-requisite demand

- **Course Waitlists**
  
  Use waitlists to dynamically adjust section enrollment, justify additional sections, and forecast need for additional adjuncts

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Giving Up Too Easily
When Students Drop or Withdraw for the Wrong Reason

Students have many reasons for choosing to withdraw from a course or the institution

Some are “good” reasons

“I’m avoiding a failing grade”
“I’m overwhelmed and worried about my grades in other courses”

Many are “bad” reasons

“I’m not earning the grade I want”
“I dislike the instructor”
“I don’t want to get up this early”
“I’ve lost interest in the material”

Sub-optimal advising practices let too many students make “bad” choices

Structure
Few institutions require an advising meeting prior to withdrawing

Quality
Some advisors simply rubber stamp all withdraw requests

Capacity
Even the best advisors cannot always dedicate adequate time to assessing all requests

Absent a meaningful conversation, many students do not understand the long-term implications of their withdrawal decision

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Are You Absolutely Sure?

Penn State’s Online Withdrawal Process Highlights Implications

Each Stage of Module Provides New Information and Opportunity To Back Out

- **Broad Implications**
  - Lists impact on aid, time-to-degree, standing, grades, benefits, and enrollment status

- **Initial Student Decision**
  - *For course drop*, student inputs major, reason for drop, anticipated grade
  - *For withdrawal*, student selects from list of 22 academic and non-academic reasons

- **Personalized Advice**
  - Based on info provided in previous step and student degree audit

- **Final Student Decision**
  - Re-lists implications
  - Requires student password to confirm final decision

40% Students dissuaded from course drop

Incorporates Advising Into Formerly Transactional Process

Scales Intervention to Avoid Overburdening Advisors

Provides Data to Target Future Institutional Intervention

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Summary – Sustaining Academic Momentum

1. Students from traditionally “at-risk” populations are often more likely to leave college due to a lack of confidence or connection to the institution. By targeting these students during orientation with messages that help them envision success and engagement, institutions can begin to prevent early attrition.

2. While most institutions cannot (and should not) require every student to take a full course load, every institution should ensure that students are advised to enroll in as many courses as they are able to prevent delays in graduation or loss of financial aid.

3. Allowing students to register for several terms at a time strengthens their commitment to the university, helps them to plan their program further in advance, and encourages the institution to accommodate the long-term interests of its students.

4. Consequential decisions like dropping a course or withdrawing from the university should not be enabled through simple registrar transactions; structure withdrawal processes in a way that informs students of potential negative consequences and allows them multiple opportunities to reconsider.
Promoting Student Self-Direction

Critical Policies and Innovative Technologies for Smarter Academic Navigation

How do I help students make better decisions without massive new investments in advising?

1
Scaling Student Self Service

- Actionable Checklists
- Service Tutorials
- Personalized Alerts
- Engagement Feed

2
Enabling Integrated Planning

- Configurable Degree Maps
- Co-Curricular Timelines
- Experiential Planning Policies

3
Sustaining Academic Momentum

- Preemptive Resilience Exercises
- Course Load Incentives
- Multi-term Registration
- Withdrawal Survey Modules

4
Reducing Deviation Costs

- Withdrawal Redirect Courses
- Macro Majors
- Last Mile Initiatives

How do I reduce the likelihood and costs of failure without sacrificing rigor?

User-Centric Design
A Full Experience
Curricular Guardrails
Student Safety Net

©2014 The Advisory Board Company • eab.com
Reducing Deviation Costs

Falling Through the Cracks
When Planning Tools and Guardrails Fail

The Wanderer
...meanders through programs with no plan
Student accumulates credits without satisfying major requirements or a clear plan for completion

The Stop Out
...is waylaid by other life commitments
Personal and economic needs force student to choose other priorities over degree completion

The Locked Out
...isn’t accepted into first-choice major
Student drops out or transfers to another institution after declined admission into competitive program

The Super Senior
...goes past a degree without graduating
Student continues to accumulate credits without completing a graduation application

©2014 The Advisory Board Company • eab.com
A Second Chance at a Full Course Load

Withdrawal Redirect Courses Keep Students on Track

Withdrawal Redirect Courses >> Macro Majors >> Last Mile Initiatives

Advisors notify DFW students of “fail safe” option

Traditional 15-Week Course

Add/Drop Deadline

Course Prioritization: High demand prerequisites, general education courses, and introductory pre-med courses

Online 10-Week Course

3-Week Registration Period

Proactive registration not allowed

Students avoid losing financial aid eligibility

Online courses:

- Doesn’t use valuable classroom space
- Can be repurposed as “catch up” module

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

©2014 The Advisory Board Company • eab.com
Alternate Majors Make Use of Earned Credits

The University of Missouri’s Bachelor of Health Science

Not Missing a Beat
A Pre-Nursing student who switches to the Bachelor of Health Science program at the end of Year Two will have already completed 21 credits toward the new major plus several general education courses

Bachelor of Health Science Requirements
- New courses
  - Public Health Principles and Practices
  - Healthcare in the United States

Bachelor of Science in Nursing Requirements
- Overlapping requirements
  - Microbiology
  - Human Anatomy
  - Human Development
  - Human Physiology

- No longer applicable
  - Nursing as a Profession
  - Psychosocial Issues in Nursing

Surprisingly High-Demand for BHS Program

250 Anticipated Enrollment (launched in 2006) 1,182 Actual Enrollment (as of Spring 2014)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Overcoming the “Plan B” Stigma
Creating an Alternative That Is Truly Attractive

**Academic Rigor and Respect**

1. **Perceived Prestige and Rigor**
   Missouri’s BHS is built around a course of study that students view as legitimate and worthy

2. **Top-Notch Faculty**
   Recruit talented instructors to dispel student fears of settling for a second-class education

3. **Expanded Horizons**
   Introduce students to new ideas and outside of the narrow focus of their original major

**Clear Connection to Careers**

4. **Industry Endorsement**
   Consult employers to develop a curriculum that best prepares graduates for industry needs

5. **Robust Career Services**
   Build confidence in post-graduate employment through internships and placement programs

6. **Potential for Future Study**
   Curriculum prepares students to continue their studies in an accelerated Nursing Program

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
“99 Year-Old Woman Graduates 75 Years Late After $5 Transcript Fee is Paid”

Class of 1939

Jesse James White
Stenography and Bookkeeping

Investing in the “Final Year Experience”

Proactive and Reactive Approaches to Near-Graduate Completion

1. Graduation Audits
   - CSU Long Beach “Destination Graduation” program proactively audits senior transcripts
   - Advisors negotiate substitutions, waivers with departments

2. Customized Degrees
   - Multidisciplinary Studies degree approved in 2011 helps military, transfer, and undecided upperclassmen complete on time
   - Honors students surprisingly enrolling to gain flexibility

3. Streamlined Re-Admission
   - “Back to Bama” program targets stop-outs gone for 2+ terms
   - First course offered free, plus simple scholarship form
   - 600+ awards since 2008, average amount of $1,000

4. Non-Traditional Outreach
   - “Graduation Project” contracts with credit agency to obtain addresses
   - Alternative methods: social media messaging (Portland State U), DMV (U of Alabama)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Summary – Reducing Deviation Costs

1. No amount of investment and planning will prevent every student failure or mistake. However, the consequences of failure are often excessively or unintentionally high at many institutions. A “safety net” approach to common difficulties can help to keep salvageable students on track for graduation.

2. By creating and advertising accelerated course modules to students who drop or withdraw from a course early in the term, institutions can encourage students who might otherwise have delayed their progress or lost financial aid eligibility to maintain a full course load.

3. Students who do not gain admittance into competitive majors or who remain undecided through junior year are often well-served by “macro majors,” which cluster around particular disciplines but have more flexible degree requirements.

4. Proactively audit near-graduation student transcripts and intervene with off-track students in time for “expected last term” registration. Many institutions find that relatively minor interventions (one course substitution, a resolved hold, etc) can prevent senior year stop outs and push near-graduates to completion on time.
Meeting Students Halfway
Navigating Between Extremes in Student Success

Student Independence

Selectivity

Ivy League

Guided Choice

The Student-Centered University

Most Institutions

Research

Internships

Networking

Peers

Family

The Overachiever

Informed Planning

The Murky Middle

Non-Traditional

Competency

Analytics

Coaching

Limited Choice

Acceleration

The Risky Student

©2014 The Advisory Board Company • eab.com