

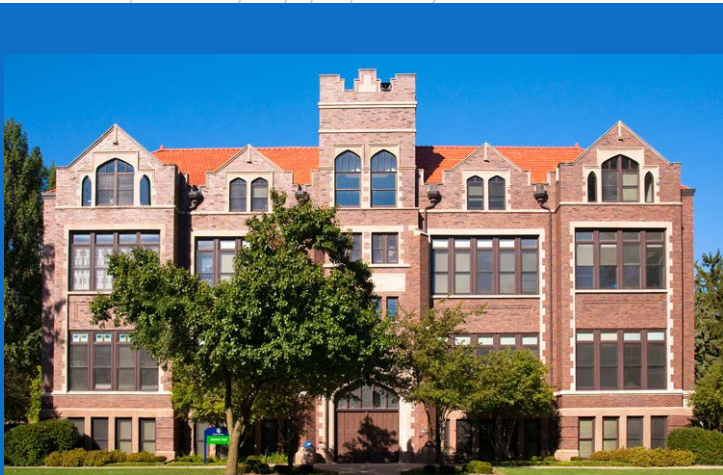


IMPLEMENTING CENTRALIZED ADVISING: HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

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■ Aurora University

- Four-year, non-profit, independent, liberal arts, co-educational university
- Offers residential, commuter, full-time and part-time programs
- Awards bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees
- Approximately 5,600 degree-seeking students on the Illinois and Wisconsin campuses (approx. 4000 traditional undergraduate students at the Aurora campus)
- 17 to 1 student-to-faculty ratio
- 40+ undergraduate majors in arts and sciences, business, criminal justice, education, nursing and social work



- The Crouse Center for Student Success
- Ultimate goal
 - Fewer advising errors
 - Greater student satisfaction
- First attempt
 - Multiple services in one “Student Success” center with common thread of advising
 - Academic Advising
 - Career Services
 - Service Learning
 - Latino Student Initiatives
 - Black Student Initiatives
 - Retention
 - Conditionally Admitted Student Services
 - Meant to supplement faculty advising

First Attempt

■ Issues

- Expectations were unclear
- Staff felt misinformed
- Lack of understanding of advising problems

■ Lessons

- Be clear about problems and solutions
- Buy-in is crucial
- Get the right people, in the right seats, on the bus

Second Attempt Introduced Problems to Others

- Multiple meetings with academic department, committees, etc.
- Explanation of the problem:
 - The Strategic Market Survey Report prepared by The Alford Group in Nov 2006
 - Students and parents brought forward concerns re: academic advising
 - 48.5% of students are “somewhat satisfied;” 12.1% are “somewhat unsatisfied;” 6.1% are “completely unsatisfied” with academic advising
 - Student and parent comments reflect perceptions that academic advisors do not know requirements well enough, do not track student academic progress enough, do not offer enough academic mentoring in students’ early years

Problems, cont.

- Faculty concerns:
 - Uneven advising loads across faculty, i.e. large majors with few faculty members lead to large advising loads for some faculty
 - Need to rely on staff in academic advising office for reliable information; incorrect or inaccessible Web-based information on advisees
 - Faculty advisors find general education requirements confusing, i.e. 3000-level courses & Writing Intensive
 - Too much time spent on course scheduling and paperwork rather than academic and career mentoring
 - Tenure committee does not know how to evaluate advising responsibilities in tenure proposal

Problems, cont.

- Student concerns:
 - Students are assigned different advisors over their time at AU; they would prefer to work with one person
 - Students often find they need to take a class they didn't expect to take as they enter their junior/senior years -- blame being "misled" by advisor early in their college careers
 - Students would like a plan to follow for their entire college career; often students don't know what they need to take until junior year
 - Students feel unprepared for advising appointments and find it difficult to manage the varying expectations among advisors
 - Students want an advisor who they believe knows their major well and is easily accessible year-round

Proposed A Solution

- All students are assigned an Academic Advisor as they enter AU
 - Academic Advisor is a student's advisor until the time they graduate or leave AU
 - Advisor is not a faculty member; Advisors are staff members
 - Advisors are experts on General Education
 - Advisors advise all native and transfer students with the exception of adult degree completion students (advised through Center for Adult and Graduate Studies)
 - Advisors are highly accessible: evening hours, mandatory instant messaging capabilities, shared calendar access
 - Advisors perform the registration process for/with students
 - Advisors help students to electronically access their own academic evaluation/degree audit indicating which courses are complete and which still need to be taken

Solutions, cont.

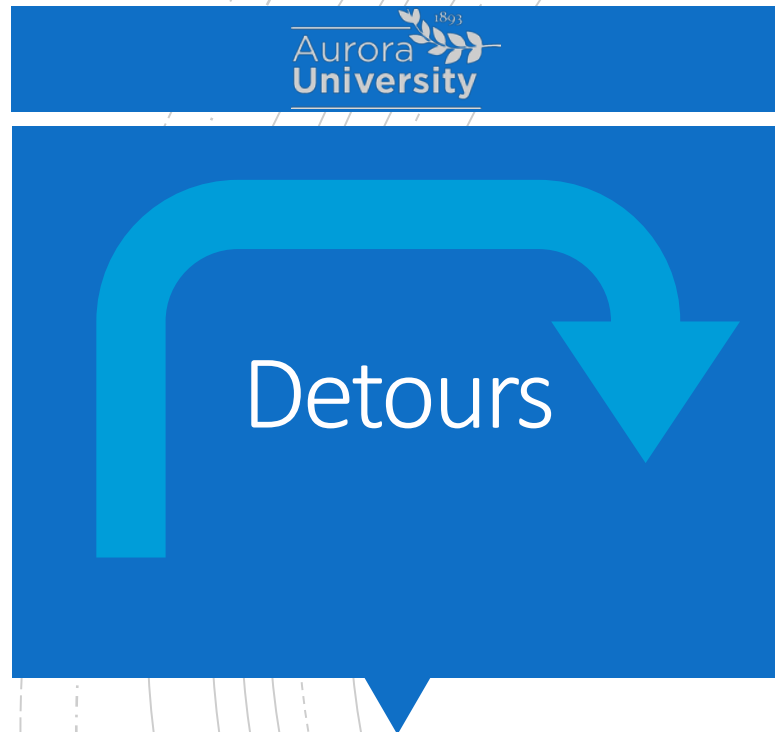
- Provide opportunities for faculty
- Faculty Mentoring Program
 - To be developed with academic advising advisory committee in conjunction with Faculty Senate
 - Suggestions
 - Faculty Mentor Appointments in first or second year between student and faculty member in academic major– scheduling done through the Crouse Center
 - Students are not allowed to self-register unless they have met with a faculty in their major

Solutions, cont.

- Create a plan
 - In two years, all students will be assigned a professional advisor
 - All first-year students, returning sophomores, new transfer students, and continuing students who wish to change their major will be assigned an academic advisor in the Crouse Center.
 - All juniors and seniors will remain assigned to their faculty advisors through transition

Summary: What Worked

- Buy-In
 - Administration
 - Students
 - Staff
 - Faculty
- Timeline



- Experiments with staffing models
 - Career & Academic Advisors
 - Combined office with Career Services
 - 5 academic advisors (full-time advising)
 - 1 career & academic advisor (part-time advising)
 - 1 academic advisor and assistant director of career development (part-time advising)
 - Part-Time Advisors/Part-Time Faculty
 - 6 advisors/faculty in IDS (part-time advising)
 - 3 academic advisors (full-time advising)
 - 2 academic advisors (part-time advising)
 - 1 director of academic advising (part-time advising)

Today

- Staff
 - 5 full-time advisors
 - 1 part-time advisor
 - 1 part-time advisor and director of academic advising
- Office hours
 - Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm; walk-ins Fridays 9:00am-1:00pm
- Advisors specialize in majors
- Required student meetings
 - Freshmen – Three meetings
 - Summer – to register for fall
 - October – to register for spring
 - February – to register for sophomore year (introduce online registration)
 - Transfers – One meeting
 - Introduce degree requirements, online academic planning tools, online registration



Crouse Center

for Student Success

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