Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Between Office of Academic Affairs
And
Advising & Career Services

Reference: Online Academic Advising & Career Development Modules

I. Purpose

This MOU outlines partnership roles and responsibilities for implementation of the Provost Challenge project: Online Academic Advising & Career Development Modules

II. Project Description and Key Project Outcomes

Overview:
An essential component of student success is early identification of realistic goals and the development of a pathway to achieving them. There is evidence that early choice of major and academic progress towards a degree is tied to graduation success (The Educational Advisory Board, 2012). Furthermore, finding a sense of purpose, making the connection between major and career, choosing a career path, and preparing for the job search or graduate school are essential developmental processes our students need to complete to be successful and satisfied graduates. This project would create a D2L course that could be used to support academic advising and career services by providing broader online access to these resources. This course or modules could be modified and individualized by academic programs and used to augment individual interactions with students. Components of the course could also be used in introductory courses in some disciplines or potentially be offered as a free one-credit course. The course or modules would be pushed out to students through the Talisma CRM as part of a student retention communication plan.

Key project outcomes (as agreed by Project Lead and Vice Provost):
1. D2L advising modules to include explanation of graduation requirements, university policies and procedures, understanding dars, using campus resources
2. D2L career development modules to include career planning process - i.e. self-assessment, career exploration, gaining experience, major and career decision-making, job search strategies
3. 10-15 videos to be included in these two modules covering advising and career development topics.

III. Funding
The project team will be funded up to $14,500 to achieve the outcomes established for this project.
Vice Provost for Academic Innovation in consultation with Provost and the appropriate dean may increase, reduce or terminate funding for this project.

IV. Funding Agreement Terms
The funding agreements in this document are contingent upon completion of the proposed project as describe above. Changes to the agreements, timetables or funding will be based on written agreement between the College/Department and Office of Academic Affairs designees. OAA will provide an index code that will be used for funding of this project. There will be no transfer of funds.
V. Resolution of Disagreements
In the event of a disagreement that cannot be resolved by the parties, resolution will be through agreement of Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and the Dean of the Department’s College or Director of the Unit.

WITNESS WHEREOF, the representatives have signed this Memorandum of Understanding on the

15 day of August, 2013.

Mary Ann Barham
Mary Ann Barham, Project Lead, Director, Advising & Career Services

Dan Fortmiller
Dan Fortmiller, Associate Vice President Academic & Career Services, Student Affairs

Sukhwant Jhaj
Vice Provost for Academic Innovation and Student Success

Enclosures:
• Copy of reThink PSU: Provost Challenge project proposal
#54 Online Academic Advising & Career Development Modules

Last modified: April 15, 2013 – 9:37am

Project Lead
Mary Ann Barham
Director
Advising & Career Services

Primary Collaborators
Beckl Ingersoll
Associate Director
Advising & Career Services
Greg Flores
Associate Director
Advising & Career Services

Additional Collaborators
Kris Henning, Associate Dean, College of Urban & Public Affairs; Casey Campbell, Academic Adviser, Psychology Department; Dan Fortmiller, Associate VP, Enrollment Management & Student Affairs; Melissa Trifiletti, Director, New Student Programs; Doug Siegler & Becky Einolf, School of Business Administration; Bill Ryder, Director, Enrollment Management Communication Technology

Challenge
Inspiration Challenge

Abstract/Summary
An essential component of student success is early identification of realistic goals and the development of a pathway to achieving them. There is evidence that early choice of major and academic progress towards a degree is tied to graduation success (The Educational Advisory Board, 2012). Furthermore, finding a sense of purpose, making the connection between major and career, choosing a career path, and preparing for the job search or graduate school are essential developmental processes our students need to complete to be successful and satisfied graduates. This project would create a D2L course that could be used to support academic advising and career services by providing broader online access to these resources. This course or modules could be modified and individualized by academic programs and used to augment individual interactions with students. Components of the course could also be used in introductory courses in some disciplines or potentially be offered as a free one-credit course. The course or modules would be pushed out to students through the Talisma CRM as part of a student retention communication plan.

Introduction
This project would expand the University’s capacity to provide academic advising and career development services to students and offer students additional information on the academic and career planning process as well as more access to information about resources. Additionally, this project would be helpful in providing advising and career information to advisers and faculty. The University currently offers an online alternative to orientation for new students. This course would expand and build on this orientation, also created in D2L, and significantly extend the University’s online resources for students. It would be designed to complement and enhance this online orientation and provide students with key information necessary beginning their first year at PSU and well past graduation. Students in a recent focus group indicated that they find the PSU website difficult to navigate and many were unaware of the advising and careers websites and the extensive information available on these sites. By using a communication plan to notify students of specific advising and career modules, more students would benefit from this important information.

Impact/Significance
This project would support University efforts to improve retention, graduation and employment rates by changing the rote nature of some interactions and allowing the focus to be on the individual and unique needs of students. It would also enhance the Degree Maps to be launched in February and support efforts to assure that all students have academic and career plans. Additionally, the course would include opportunities for schools, colleges and academic departments to individualize the curriculum by adding segments to address the unique admission and graduation requirements of their majors and the career opportunities available.
through their programs, to provide information about accessing advising in these programs and possibly to describe required courses. This project would create a new set of online resources that could be used as part of the curriculum in the different schools and colleges, or as stand-alone academic advising and career development modules. This course could be used to augment the mandatory advising being implemented this year for all new students and could be required to be completed in order for students to have their registration holds lifted at the end of their first year. It would also provide students with essential career development information. Designed to be interactive and engaging, it would include an assessment component to ensure that students had learned the core materials. It could also allow students to return to whenever they need a refresher on requirements, want to review a University policy, are ready to take another step in their career planning, or suddenly realize that there are campus resources and services which may be helpful.

Emphasis on Career Modules

The integration of academic advising and career development information into one curriculum would allow for a greater emphasis on career information. There is a dearth of information available to many students about how their college degree and other co-curricular activities can prepare them to achieve their career goals.

The career planning modules would serve as an adaptable career development roadmap for our students that would provide them with targeted information for all phases of their education. Educating students earlier about the process of choosing major and career paths, as well as the steps to verify and confirm their choices would lead to selection of a well-researched major more quickly. Understanding the connection between majors and careers would lead to more intentionality in selecting classes and seeking out additional skills and experiences. Having more experience would lead to a better understanding of the requirements and expectations of the workplace, and that understanding will lead to better post-grad employment outcomes. The career development materials in this project would help students leave the University better prepared for the world of work, help the University build stronger connections to alumni, and create a culture where students stay connected and give back.

The career modules would address:

- Development of self-knowledge: would help students articulate their skills, abilities, and values and understand how they relate to choosing a career.
- Exploration of careers: offer an alumni video series to explore careers related to different majors; would include a required networking/informational interviewing module that grants access to database of alumni willing to assist students.
- Acquisition of relevant experience and discipline specific professional skills: would have students exploring internships and other experiential opportunities; would also provide the framework for departments to educate students about unique expectations of their discipline.
- Development of job search strategies: would assist students in developing materials, researching organizations, identifying how and when to select search graduate school as an option.
- Implementation of a job search or graduation application process: would provide students with tools and strategies for searching for jobs or applying to graduate school.

Approach and Strategy

Modules or course components would be created in D2L; some of this material currently exist in the online orientation and may be more appropriate to provide to students after they enter the University and/or may be information deemed important to repeat. More videos would be incorporated into this course since research on Generation Y learning preferences point to video materials containing specific examples of desired behaviors as an effective way to reach this audience. For example, the benefits of general education requirements could be explained by interviewing an employer who could confirm the value of critical thinking skills, effective communication, ability to work in diverse settings, and an understanding of ethics as students prepare themselves for their future as citizens and employees.

Modules/Course Components

- Advising & registration: Overview of academic curriculum (video), placement exams, how to register (video), course planning guide, how to read the DARS (video), using Degree Maps, financial literacy
- Stages of career development/planning: gaining self-knowledge, exploring majors & careers, getting experience & relevant skills, developing job search techniques
- Relevant policies & procedures: academic calendar, academic standing policy, student code of conduct (i.e. plagiarism), grading policies, petitions (deadline appeals, academic requirements waivers, reinstatement requests
- Services & resources: Advising & Career Services, Disability Resource Center, Diversity & Multicultural Student Services, The Learning Center, Library, Services for Students with Children, Center for Student Health & Counseling, Student Legal Services, Queer Resource Center, Veteran’s Services, Women’s Resource Center, Writing Center

These modules would use the expertise of professionals in Advising & Career Services (ACS) and other units at the University, seek input from employers, and look to accepted best practices. ACS would also collaborate with the Alumni Association to develop a database of alumni to interview for videos and lists of alumni willing to meet with students for informational interviews or other career assistance. This database could be used to collaborate with academic departments to highlight relevant careers and discipline specific professional skills/expectations.

Existing models for career videos already exist in the online CCJ program. ACS would pilot department specific modules with Psychology and departments in the College of Urban & Public Affairs. This project also aligns many other ReThink proposals, to name a few: "Student Communication & Attrition Intervention Plan", "University Studies Engaged Online Pathways" and "Expanding
the PSU Sphere of Influence: A Vision for Increased Access Through Highly Effective Online Programming in Business Education*.

Information about these modules would be communicated to students via the Talisma CRM and would be part of a planned attrition intervention plan. For example, the advising module would be sent out during a student's first year; the career development modules would be communicated to students at timely dates.

Milestones

1st Year: develop academic advising modules (current to September 2013)

2nd Year: develop career development modules (September 2013 to August 2014)

Benefits

70% of students list improving their employment opportunities as their primary reason for attending college. Graduates in recent years have faced a very tough employment market, and the Northwest has been one of the slowest regions to recover. This, coupled with concerns over the rising costs for education, means it is more important than ever that students have clear plans for completing their degrees or entering and/or advancing in the world of work. They also need the knowledge and skills employers are seeking and the ability to articulate how their education has helped prepare them for their career.

Developing these resources will help students clarify and reach their goals, which should impact retention, graduation and employment outcomes. This project would potentially impact all undergraduate students needing academic advising and would also provide career planning information to undergraduate students, graduate students and alumni. In the short-term it would be used to enhance the mandatory academic advising in effect for all new undergraduates; it would also provide additional resources for faculty and professional advisers that would enhance their abilities to provide advising for these students.

Furthermore, by creating modules in D2L, we can target the time that students need the information rather than developing static websites. We can also assess the use of the modules using either trackable urls or the analytics in D2L.

Consequences

The University's capacity to meet the advising and career development needs of students and alumni is often limited. The consequences of not implementing this project would be continued challenges in the University's efforts to meet student needs in these areas.

Needs Assessment


Inspiration Challenge Only

This proposal supports many of the Student Success Initiatives. It is most closely aligned with two initiatives: Intentional Advising & Charting a Pathway to Degree Completion and Improved Communication with Students. The modules will offer additional materials for students who are developing a successful plan to graduate and achieve their career goals. The use of the CRM to increase the use of these modules will be incorporated into the strategic communication plans being developed.

Media

[Online Academic Advising](http://www.slideshare.net/c8mb/rethink-pp-slides) from [c8mb](http://www.slideshare.net/c8mb)
Modular Career Development Curriculum (http://www.slideshare.net/GregFloresMSNCC/modular-career-development-curriculum) from Greg Flores, MS, NCC (http://www.slideshare.net/GregFloresMSNCC)

Tags
College Access, Student Success, Undergraduate, Workforce Development, Academic Advising, Career Development

Comments

Karen Devoll — December 20, 2012 - 1:09pm

As an academic adviser, I support this idea and especially like the idea to offer it as a free one credit class.

Becky Sanchez — January 3, 2013 - 3:09pm

I like this idea and would love to see it put into action.

Meredith Farkas — January 4, 2013 - 9:15am

This is a great idea to sustainably extend the reach of the advisers. And I love the idea of it existing either as a standalone credit course or a module that can go into other courses/programs. If this does happen, I’d be happy to contribute content about the library.

Amy Hofer — February 14, 2013 - 2:44pm

I second Meredith’s comment. Additionally, the Library can contribute content on plagiarism that relates to the Student Code of Conduct. We’re happy to be involved in advising initiatives.

Amy Hofer — February 14, 2013 - 2:44pm

I second Meredith’s comment. Additionally, the Library can contribute content on plagiarism that relates to the Student Code of Conduct. We’re happy to be involved in advising initiatives.

Becky Einolf — February 15, 2013 - 9:55am
User friendly online learning modules for academic course planning and the basic building blocks of career planning – how to write a standard business resume, a standard education style CV, interview tips, etc. would enable us to serve a broader base of students who cannot easily meet with advisors on campus during regular business hours. They can also improve the preparedness of students who can and do come in, so that academic advisors and career counselors can talk with those students who make use of them at a higher level, even at a first meeting. This proposal will leverage the talents and experience of our staff. The counselors at Advising and Career Services have always been exceedingly gracious and generous with their time in working with the many schools and departments on campus to effect positive change. I look forward to collaborating with them to develop some of the career advising modules.

Jon Rousseau — February 18, 2013 – 9:19am

I think this proposal would be a great addition to PSU online presence. Such a course assisting students in choosing a major, understanding PSU and connecting their education to career goals in an interactive manner would further all of our in-person advising efforts.

Ayasha Shamsud Din — February 21, 2013 – 2:44pm

This is a great idea and it will be useful in helping shape the career paths of students.

Mirela Blekic — February 22, 2013 – 3:41pm

This is a good way to address some of the advising and career needs of our students. We know from our research that students who are not sure about their educational plans leave at a higher rate. Having the proposed resources could help students identify their educational and career goals and give them the tools needed to attain these goals.