Advising Analysis, 2014
College of Liberal Arts Student Services

Chris Kearns & the CLASS Steering Committee
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II. CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION CONSIDERATION

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Advising Analysis, 2014  
College of Liberal Arts Student Services

Introduction

We appreciate this opportunity to present our view of the state of advising and related student support in CLA Student Support Services. A great many of my CLASS colleagues have helped to prepare the information that follows. My hope is that the resulting picture of advising and student support does justice to the important work of our advisors, counselors, and dedicated student support professionals.

--Chris Kearns

Executive Summary

1. What do you consider are the strengths of your college’s advising effort?

The strength of our advising effort is grounded in our integrated, team-based approach to student support services and in our focus on working at the intersection of learning and development.

Within this context we would draw particular attention to the following strengths:

- A well-developed and well-articulated model of undergraduate student services in the liberal arts (drawing on education research and on social science and humanities modes of thinking)
- Systems thinking geared toward adapting to complexity
- Caring, talented, dedicated, and knowledgeable staff
- Culturally attentive, inclusive, and equity-minded practice drawing on relevant contemporary research and well-established best practices related to diversity and inclusion
- A division of labor that works well for our large and academically diverse college: centralized services blended with specialized services in academic departments. The latter includes a mix of larger departments with their own advisors and groups of smaller departments served by select regional advisors
- Effective use of technology to support services and analyses
• Research-based and cutting edge analytics-informed practices

2. Are there areas where you are hoping you can improve/change advising?

There are three areas we would identify here. We would be interested in expanding our group advising work with targeted populations, improving the physical facilities in which advising takes place, and expanding career support for our students. We also want to improve support for transfer students and for international students.

3. What are your greatest concerns about your advising effort?

We are concerned about a combination of specific and global challenges. In the context of increasing pressure on resources, we point to mission clarity limitations and mission match hurdles that continue to hamper our abilities to help the University and the College realize its retention and graduation rate goals. The major global challenge is continuing to introduce systems thinking as a way to thrive in the context of a paradigm shift in higher education in the U.S.

4. What is your vision for academic advising/student support over the next 5 years in your college? For the University?

There are three elements to our CLASS student support vision for the next five years. The first element is positioned at the level of “inputs” that are largely beyond our control – there we would like to see: (1) movement toward admitting for success to better match student characteristics with available degree pathways, and (2) better alignment of the supply side of curriculum provision to the demand side of curriculum consumptions.

The second element of our CLASS vision is to deepen our student services self-understanding. Understanding student services work as a practice discipline requires identifying the conceptual, informational, relational, technological, and personal developmental dimensions of the profession, as well as better understanding how all these interact.

The third element of our CLASS vision is to better match our practices and priorities with measurable outcomes on both a real-time and long-term basis.

Our university student support vision is to build a student support architecture that meets undergraduate needs in ways that simultaneously advance university and collegiate priorities through campus partnerships.
5. Define academic advising in your unit.

Advising is the work done by educators who teach students to identify and connect learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom to their strengths, values, and short and long-term goals. By helping students to identify their strengths and interests, and by helping them discover and make use of pertinent resources, information, and options, we assist our undergraduates in crafting educational plans and making learning choices that inform their educations as a whole while advancing them toward degree.

We understand advising a specific form of teaching. Advising is that student-centered form of teaching that positions undergraduates to construct the logic and meaning organizing the full range of their learning choices in the context of their strengths, values, and goals. Advising as teaching operates through various modes depending on student needs at specific junctures in their degree progress. These modes include (but are not confined to) interactions that are instrumental, developmental, intrusive, and collegial. Regardless of the particular form taken by the advising interaction, however, what is constant is the use of a blend of challenge and support to help students take responsibility for what might be called their signature curriculum.

6. Describe your advising model.

CLA adopts an engagement-focused, outcomes driven, advising team model of undergraduate support. Incoming new high school students have a core advisor and a year-long engagement experience that lays the foundation for adding other advising team members as they progress toward degree. Incoming transfer students also have a core advisor, with a departmental advisor added as soon as possible.

New high school students participate in our First Year Experience course, which in turn is an integral part of their student services experience throughout the year. The relationship with the core advisor is established and developed, and, typically, is maintained throughout the student’s time in CLA. When appropriate, an additional departmental advising relationship is established. The large number and widely differing characteristics of CLA departments entails some variety in the organization of advising within departments. Faculty play a formal advising role only in relatively small departments, although they function as disciplinary mentors throughout the College. Within CLASS, professional advising services are supported by peer advisors.
7. How are your advising resources (people, money, time, etc.) distributed across levels (first-year, sophomores, juniors, seniors)?

Staffing in the unit is assigned on the basis of the support necessary to obtain key performance outcomes, including timely graduation, retention, academic success, and student satisfaction. Because of our commitment to the development of an advising relationship, all of our advisors work with students at all grade levels. In an average year, approximately three-fourths of our CLASS advising resources are dedicated to students in their first two years; departmental advising resources follow the obverse pattern.

8. How many academic advisors are in your college?

Currently the College of Liberal Arts employs 47 staff members in the classifications of Assistant, Associate, and Senior Academic Advisor. Additionally, there are a number of other CLA staff who are academic advisors with other responsibilities.

9. What is the advising ratio for both lower division students and upper division students?

For many reasons, this is hard to ascertain with any serious rigor and it remains important to emphasize that, while ratios are frequently employed as a proxy for quality of advising support, other, more appropriate measures of advising support are available and currently tracked. Nevertheless, we calculate the student-to-advisor ratio for advisors in CLASS at 372:1. Our best-case estimate, college wide (including departmental advisors), would be 248:1. Moreover, 5 career counselors also serve CLA’s 13,988 students, though there is no standard agreement on how (or if) they should be included in our advising ratios. Nonetheless, career counselors form an integral part of our advising team. If we break them out separately, our student-to-career counselor ratio would be 2,798:1.

10. What are your collegiate policies related to how often students, or cohorts of students, are required to meet with an academic advisor?

Contact with an academic advisor can and does take many forms, and we group our contacts into three categories: default contact, intrusive contact, and support contact. Each student is “allocated” various amounts of contact, depending upon the student’s experience.
11. How does academic advising fit in with other student services offered in your college, particularly career services?

We take an integrated approach to student support. Our career support services, collegiate academic advising, student information processes and communication, and student support services technology development all report to the assistant dean of student support services and work together as a collaborative team.

12. What are your goals for academic advising?

Our goals are to work within and draw from our unique liberal arts context to further the campus and collegiate student success targets of timely graduation, retention, satisfaction, and performance. The most important goal for the next year is continued development and implementation of an engagement pathways projects.

13. How do you define success?

We are successful to the extent that we contribute to engagement, retention, academic success, and graduation through the support and development of learning partnerships that help students map and pursue their educational pathways. In addition to their undergraduate curricular and co-curricular decisions, these pathways include the identification and implementation of career and graduate or professional school choices that are satisfying to our students and recognized and valued by our college, campus, and stakeholders.

14. How do you measure success?

We measure success by the improvements we make in graduation rates, retention rates, and diversity.

15. What data do you have related to student satisfaction with academic advising beyond SERU data?

We gather data from point-of-service surveys, which shows high levels of student satisfaction with their advising services as well as very high levels of agreement with the statement that they left the advising appointment with a plan for next steps to take toward timely degree completion.
16. **Include an org chart.**

An organizational chart for CLASS can be found in question #16 in the complete analysis below.

17. **What role does your faculty play in academic advising in your college?**

Although a small number of faculty engage in academic advising (generally in smaller departments), most faculty members play the role of disciplinary mentor or academic coach.

18. **Describe the format(s) you use to advise students? (Individual appointments, peer mentors, group advising appointments, etc.) If you have multiple formats how do you decide which students are assigned to a particular format?**

To best serve our students, we offer a number of advising formats. They include attending an individual appointment, visiting drop-in advising, connecting with peer advisors, participating in group workshops, and enrolling in career courses. Students are not assigned to particular formats per se (aside from the fact that all students attend orientation and have individual advisor appointments at that time and for both of the semesters of the first year). We have sought to devise a comprehensive support system that makes available to students what is most relevant to them at the time they seek service or we reach out to them.

19. **How you intentionally incorporate Strengths, self-authorship, other learning partnerships, Brief Motivational Interviews (BMI), advising syllabus, the Student Learning Outcomes, and the Student Development Outcomes into your academic advising efforts, etc.?**

Notions of self-authorship and learning partnerships are built into the theoretical core of our student services approach and informs all aspects of its design and implementation. Information about the Student Learning Outcomes and the Student Development Outcomes is provided to all students, but more importantly, we have identified three learning outcomes and three development outcomes for which our student services work is uniquely poised to contribute. We are currently engaged in an initiative to build assessment of three learning outcomes into our FYE course.
Strengths and BMI are utilized by advising staff in their work with students. Training has been and continues to be offered for both. Finally, the college has an advising syllabus, available on the web and handed out to students at orientation.

20. What types of professional development opportunities and resources do you offer, or support, for staff in your academic advising offices?

We provide a robust series of in-house trainings on various topics throughout the year, frequently involving campus experts from outside the unit. Professional development is an expectation of all academic advisors and career services staff and is discussed as part of the annual performance review process. Advisors are routinely encouraged to seek development opportunities, whether on campus (for example, the Tate Conference or the Career Development Network) or elsewhere (regional NACADA or the Minnesota Association of Colleges and Employers. Our Diversity Advocacy Team performs a central role in providing professional development of our CLASS staff in relation to strengthening our capacity to engage in culturally attentive, inclusive, and equity-minded practice.

21. Do you have guidelines for promotion? (if so, please attach)

For academic advisors, yes. The guidelines are included in the full analysis below. Promotion guidelines for career counselors are currently being explored and are under active discussion.

22. How do you use technology, beyond APLUS, in advising?

While bracketed by the question here asked, inasmuch as we developed APLUS and are in the process of testing the next generation of its applications, we include here information about the rich use of technology currently in place and soon to be available in the future.

23. What tools do you use?

Advisors rely on APLUS, PeopleSoft, APAS, Chronos/Schedule-Builder, GradPlaner, Transfer Databases (Admissions Lib Eds, Other UM colleges transfer pages, and USelect – formerly MNCAS), OneStop, University Catalogs, Class schedule, Class search, PCAS, ECAS, Departmental websites, websites for other colleges and service providers on campus, ImageNow, and Math, Chemistry, and Second Language Placement scores. In addition to these tools, direct advisor support service staff also rely on CLA language testing program website, the Commencement RSVP website, Crimson, DARwin, Data
Warehouse, Google Calendar, a variety of Microsoft Access databases (13-credit, Open List, Probation, etc.) Moodle, MyU Portal, New Student Check List, Orientation Database, Orientation First Year Program’s NGOT database, Placement Testing Administration Database, Proxy administration, Transfer Evaluation System (TES), UM Reports, and uSelect.

24. **What tools would you like to have, but don’t?**

Our current tools are functional but significant improvements could be made in the areas of capacity, reliability, interoperability, coordination, and timeliness of tools, data, and communications.

25. **If you had additional resources, what would you use them for?**

Our most pressing need for additional resources is in the area of career services support.

26. **What additional information would be useful for us to know that we didn’t ask?**

This year we are implementing a new set of performance evaluation guidelines for academic advisors in CLASS. We were eager to build on previous materials to include all the elements we believe are essential to effective advisor performance. This will be an important building block in revising our promotion guidelines and in improving on our ongoing training to make sure we address all aspects of advisor success.
Question 1: What do you consider are the strengths of your college’s advising effort?

"Our destiny is to live out what we think, because unless we live what we know, we do not even know it. It is only by making our knowledge part of ourselves, through action, that we enter into the reality that is signified by our concepts."

--Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*, p. 16

**Our Team-Based Approach, Our Learning and Development Model**

The strength of our advising effort is grounded in our integrated, team-based approach to student support services and in our focus on working at the intersection of learning and development.

Academic advising is distinct from other student support modalities. But one result of our integrated approach is to conceptualize advising both intellectually and operationally within a broader context that includes career counseling, classroom and disciplinary learning, undergraduate engagement, intellectual development, and life planning. In the liberal arts, academic advising must play a distinct role as part of a larger educational system and student support team, and our ability to conceptualize, articulate, and operationalize that role in the multiple languages of the college and the campus represents a core competency of our advising effort.

**Seven Strengths of Our Advising Effort**

Within this context we would draw particular attention to the following strengths:

- A well-developed and well-articulated model of undergraduate student services in the liberal arts (drawing on education research and on social science and humanities modes of thinking)
- Systems thinking geared toward adapting to complexity
- Caring, talented, dedicated, and knowledgeable staff
- Culturally attentive, inclusive, and equity-minded practice drawing on relevant contemporary research and well-established best practices related to diversity and inclusion
- A division of labor that works well for our large and academically diverse college: centralized services blended with specialized services in academic departments. The latter includes a mix of larger departments with their own advisors and groups of smaller departments served by select regional advisors
- Effective use of technology to support services and analyses
- Research-based and cutting edge analytics-informed practices
Our Advising Goal, Strategy, and Modes of Service Delivery

Drawing on these strengths, the core goal of our work at the intersection of learning and development is to help students move effectively and intelligently to degree in ways that take full advantage of CLA's and UMN’s outstanding educational opportunities, and that both align with and cultivate the strengths and goals of our undergraduates.

Our key strategy in undertaking this deeply interdisciplinary, student-centric work is to establish educational partnerships that provide our learners with access to the tools, resources, support, and motivation needed to craft a signature undergraduate experience along the lines of both personal and academic excellence.

Our primary student support modes in helping undergraduates look and plan across the entire degree include academic advising, career counseling, and analytics-driven, technologically leveraged outreach, programming, and classes.

Our Overarching Model - Working with Engagement Pathways:

Our way of describing this strategy is in terms of establishing engagement pathways for our undergraduates. This pathways metaphor should not, however, be understood as locking our students into a predetermined sequence of studies or to refer merely to preparation for graduate study or the world of work. Although engagement pathways can refer to the process of entering into and deepening one of our many liberal arts communities of learning or to planning for a career, it is also intended to apply as readily to path-breaking work of self-discovery, knowledge creation, or artistic innovation.

The model of engagement pathways has an established history in CLASS. The Individualized Degree Program has long offered students the option of creating an Individually Designed Interdepartmental Major (IDIM) or a Bachelor of Individualized Studies (BIS). Both degrees provide students with the opportunity to shape their educations to fit their own interests, talents, and aspirations with the support and guidance of advisers knowledgeable about programs and opportunities across the Twin Cities campus. This program allows students to take responsibility for mapping their own educational plan and to maximize the potential we see in partnership-based education.

A number of years ago we drew on similar impulses when joining our campus partners to develop recommendations to the university leadership in support of establishing the Center for Academic Planning and Exploration (CAPE). As we then indicated, our aim in working with all students, including those who are undecided, is to assist them in moving from ineffective or unstructured academic exploration to structured opportunities facilitating development of the knowledge, skills, and habits necessary for effective and engaged educational planning that will put them on the path to graduation.
Engagement Pathways and Student Integration Models of Persistence

Insofar as college serves as a transformative experience, all undergraduates are students in transition. In order to better understand this process, we developed the model below as a framework for our efforts to support all students in transition, including those who are experiencing significant confusion about their strengths and options. As the diagram indicates, successful undergraduates navigate the interrelated processes of separation, transition, and incorporation either sequentially or in combination:

Figure 1 - Student Integration Theories of Persistence

This three-phase model represents a synthesis of the best practices outlined in the retention, graduation, and transition support literature we have reviewed. In applying this model to the needs of students on our campus, we have advocated the need to develop pathways of engagement designed to connect with undergraduates in the various phases of transition to University life.

Separation

In this context, separation is a period in which students work free of those aspects of their pre-U of M life that might hinder entrance into the social and academic spaces of higher education.

Transition

Transition is a period in which students begin to explore the new curricular and co-curricular options available to them through their role as undergraduates. For many students, this is a difficult and ambiguous phase involving searching questions about their identity and goals. Chickering and Reisser survey much of the existing developmental educational literature in their monumental Education and Identity (2nd ed., 1993) and conclude that college students undergo pivotal changes over the course of their undergraduate career that shape the extent to which they are successful or otherwise in adult life. Among other attributes, Chickering and Reisser suggest that successful
undergraduates develop competence, establish their identity, develop a life purpose, and build their integrity, and that such development is a necessary component of student success. None of these changes can occur, however, unless students first navigate separation and transition.

**Incorporation**

Incorporation is a period in which, having negotiated the first two phases, students begin to assimilate what they have learned in preparation for their resumption of life outside the University.

While remaining attuned to alternative approaches to student success such as those advanced by Tierney and Rendon – undergraduate support models that are especially important for work with diverse student populations, we have employed a support strategy adapting key components of Tinto’s and Astin’s Student Integration Model in the context of Bean and Eaton’s psychologically grounded student development theories and various models of self-authoring. All of these writers emphasize the importance of academic and social integration to undergraduate success.

**Working with Diverse Student Populations:**

**Preface: Why this Work Remains a Priority**

As University of Minnesota President Eric Kaler indicated when unveiling the initiative *Retaining all Our Students* at the White House opportunity summit held in January 2014, our university intends “to lower the barriers for low-income students to attend the U and obtain their degrees. This is about changing their lives by helping to set their career paths in motion.” Nowhere on our campus or nationally is the commitment to lowering such barriers more important than in our work with traditionally underrepresented student populations.

According to recent projections of the U.S. Department of Education, the student body of American college campuses will continue to become more racially diverse, older, and more female over the next decade (“Projection of Education Statistics to 2018”). However, a point that deserves special emphasis is that although a college degree is increasingly within the reach of more diverse students, there still remain substantial disparities in the educational access and achievement of students of color, low-income students, and first-generation college students. The lingering gaps in academic performance, persistence and graduation rates threaten to undermine recent gains in access to higher education for traditionally underserved populations. In this context, there is an urgent need for our unit to identify educational policies and practices that are successful in reducing this education gap in American universities and colleges. An understanding of how universities and colleges can better support college access and success among underrepresented students is vitally important both in terms of the challenges of the education gap in higher education and as a matter of public interest. Understanding these students’ learning experiences – and particularly which educational practices are most beneficial for their learning, development, and persistence – can
provide a more in-depth grasp of how colleges and universities can better assist underrepresented students to successfully make the journey toward the college degree.

Overview: Three CLASS Programs to Support Diversity

Campuses are complex social systems defined by the relationships among people, bureaucratic procedures, structural arrangements, institutional goals and values, traditions, and larger socio-historical environments. Consequently, efforts to enhance support services for students from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds must be comprehensive, multilayered, integrated, and long-term.

Given the importance of adapting to the complexities characterizing our current educational environment, no single model of student support can be expected to be effective for all student groups at all times. With such challenges in mind, CLASS strives to remain especially programatically and intellectually nimble when working with non-traditional and traditionally underrepresented student populations.

Our support for diverse student cohorts is provided through a number of related efforts, including the work of the President’s Emerging Scholars program, the Martin Luther King Jr., (MLK) program, and the Diversity Advocacy Team. Before moving to a more detailed snapshot of how advising works in and through these three efforts, however, we should briefly sketch our general approach to diversity support.

Four Areas of Concern when Addressing Outcomes Gaps

CLASS tends to focus on strategies to reduce outcomes gaps of different student groups, with a particular emphasis on the outcomes of diverse student populations. Consequently, we keep a close eye on metrics. However, this outcomes focused starting point also leads us to think broadly and systemically. There is, for example, often a correlation noted between the robustness of support of faculty and staff diversity and the educational outcomes of diverse student cohorts. Likewise there are many pipeline-related questions that have a bearing on various levels of diverse student outcomes.

We believe anyone following the ramifications of serious diversity support conversations will quickly conclude that the question of how best to serve our diverse student populations has so many roots and branches that it is easy to lose focus on how to prioritize our efforts. Developing a clear strategy for diversity support, and understanding where that strategy fits within the overall picture of success drivers for these student populations, is therefore essential.

On the whole, there are four areas CLASS hopes to bring into alignment in order to address student outcomes gaps. Clearly they pass well beyond our portfolio of direct responsibilities, which is one reason we rely heavily on campus partnerships to achieve our objectives. The four areas are:

- Student diversity
- Faculty/Staff diversity
• Curricular diversity
• Welcoming climate

We know from the relevant professional literature on retaining and graduating diverse student cohorts that these undergraduates, like all students, need to see their histories, politics, and cultures reflected in the curriculum where possible. Such a curriculum helps drive higher levels of intellectual and institutional engagement. Further, the inclusion of diverse perspectives and systems of knowledge helps instantiate our collegiate values.

Our effort centers on helping students to identify, develop and apply their strengths, cultural resources, and multiple intelligences to academics, careers, and leadership. Because research and experience indicates that students of color and other historically underrepresented student groups on predominantly white campuses confront a range of unique social, cultural, and psychological challenges, our staff also helps students to understand and effectively address any inequities, stereotyping, and marginalization they may encounter as part of their college experience. In short, our staff works to ensure that traditionally underrepresented students have access to the knowledge, resources, and self-advocacy skills needed to thrive and earn their college degree in ways that are meaningful to them personally, culturally, and professionally.

The Importance of Encounters with Diversity to Learning and Development Goals

In fact, there is a growing body of social science research indicating that engaged and reflective encounters with diversity provide one of the only ways to move from unthinking moralism (which connects virtue with judgmentalism) to genuine values-based thinking. As such, thoughtful encounters with diversity not only assist with our retention and graduation goals among select student populations, such encounters with diversity also provide a core competency for participating in the civic life of democracy.

In writing about the psychological underpinnings of today’s hyper-partisan political climate, for example, Jonathan Haidt observes, “people bind themselves into political teams that share moral narratives. Once they accept a particular narrative, they become blind to alternative moral worlds,” (The Righteous Mind). Clearly the inability to bridge values differences threatens the civic basis of democracy.

As Haidt goes on to explain, what we call moral thinking is more often a form of pattern recognition rather than an exercise of reflective rationality. As a mode of pattern recognition, moralistic thinking is highly resistant to evidence and to change. Moralism, in other words, is largely immune to being modified by education.

An exception to this general rule involves experiences of difference or diversity which are valued by the learner. In undergraduate terms, we might think of a learner from one culture encountering someone they regard highly, but whose way of life differs markedly from the pattern the learner has been taught to call “right” or “normal.” Under these circumstances, the student experiences what we might call a developmental cognitive
According to Haidt, when our values patterns cannot adequately map our actual experience, and when we care about the gap between our values and what we experience, we can find ourselves motivated to modify or at least deeply consider our beliefs. **Meaningful encounters with diversity, in short, are a fundamental driver of learning and development.**

**Engaging Our Colleagues in Diversity Support**

When considering diversity on campus, most institutions tend to focus on increasing the numbers of students from under-represented ethnic groups. While this area of institutional effort is important and no easy task, there are other elements of diversity support that also require attention: student retention, the recruitment and retention of culturally diverse faculty and staff, curriculum and instruction, advising, community and global engagement opportunities, and campus climate. To be effective in supporting the retention and development of diverse students, in other words, our educational community must do significantly more than focus on recruitment – although recruitment is also vital to our efforts.

The complex interplay of our goals and constraints – including the reality of limited resources - dictates that we adopt a genuinely collaborative approach. Along these lines, CLASS continues to work to sustain and strengthen our partnerships with the Office of Admissions, Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence, Community Service Learning Center, Learning Abroad Center, and University Counseling and Consulting Services. Working with these collaborative partners positions us to more effectively support the holistic development and well-being of students.

Building an effective system of support for diverse student populations within CLASS itself is likewise not achievable unless we also engage our collegiate educational community as broadly as possible in this work. Therefore, within CLASS we bring our community together around issues of broader and more effective inclusivity in a variety of ways. These include further developing our ongoing training programs to enhance our intercultural competency and our understanding of a range of related topics.

On the faculty side we want to expand our support for faculty engaged in developing an academic coaching and disciplinary mentoring culture with the widest possible span of students. We believe that if faculty can be more deeply involved in cultivating the next generation of liberal arts scholars in ways that fully reflect the composition of the student body, they will make a substantial contribution to lessening outcomes gaps. To that end, CLASS is working to do a better job of supporting our faculty in navigating difficult questions that can come up in a mentoring and classroom context regarding encounters with racial, sexual, or related barriers or stereotypes.

Such is the background against which we work through the three efforts sketched immediately below: the President’s Emerging Scholars, the Martin Luther King Jr., Program, and the Diversity Advocacy Team.
President’s Emerging Scholars

The President’s Emerging Scholars succeeds through a strong partnership with central administration, which provides leadership and additional resources for this initiative. CLA provides targeted curricular and advising support to PES students.

The mission of the President's Emerging Scholars Program (formerly Access to Success) is to ensure the enrollment, retention, and timely graduation of its participants. PES is designed for students who may not meet the typical profile of admitted students, but whose academic records—including their curriculum, grades, and test scores—suggest high potential for success through the Program. The Program serves students who have demonstrated the potential to succeed academically at the University, but whose high school academic records and/or lived experiences suggest they would benefit from support to ensure a smooth transition to college and their successful development as students. The PES program serves as a critical access point to the University of Minnesota for students of color, low-income students, and first-generation college students.

The President's Emerging Scholars Program participants benefit from a full range of services that enhance and support their engagement in the University community and their academic success. The Association of American Colleges & University’s 2007 report, “College Learning for the New Global Century, the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & America’s Promise (LEAP)” identified a number of innovative, “high impact” practices that are gaining increased attention in higher education. These practices – which include first-year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service-learning, internships, and capstone courses – are frequently implemented in order to meet the shifting needs of a new generation of college students. There is evidence that these practices can lead to a range of positive outcomes (academic, personal, and civic) for the general population of college students as well as underserved students. The PES Program from its inception has been characterized by a number of these high-impact educational practices, including a first-year seminar, learning communities, service learning, and diversity/global learning. Educational research suggests that these high impact practices increase rates of student retention and student engagement, especially for students from groups that have historically been underserved within higher education and/or for students who start farther behind (AAC&U, 2007; Gonyea, Kinzie, Kuh, and Laird, 2008).

The PES Program participants also benefit from the full range of academic advising, career counseling, and peer mentoring services that are provided all CLA students. Students in the PES Program are required to meet with their academic advisor and a peer mentor twice each semester. Each semester PES students are also required to enroll in one of seven learning communities that provide a potential infrastructure for building community, academic collaboration, and professional networking. Courses with higher D, F, and I rates are also aided by Peer Assisted Learning group sessions supported by the SMART Learning Commons. Finally, each semester of their first year, PES students are also required to enroll in a three credit first year experience course that is tailored to the
specific learning and support needs of PES students while also being aligned with the
general philosophy and goals of the CLA First Year Experience (FYE) course designed
for the vast majority of CLA students. Below, we have included a more detailed
explanation of the PES first year experience course.

In the fall semester PES students enroll in CLA 1005: My Freshman Year: Introduction
to Liberal Arts Learning. Through a shared experience that includes dialogue,
experiential workshops, readings, videos, audio essays, spoken word poetry, journaling,
and digital storytelling, students are asked to apply an autobiographical and ethnographic
lens to their first year experience. Students explore how diverse American college
students understand their college education, what they want from it, and how they
negotiate and give meaning to their university experience. The core goal of the course is
assist students to develop the knowledge and understanding of self, society, and the
university that is needed to successfully navigate life in a complex institution of higher
education and an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. More specifically the
course pushes students to reflect simultaneously on their identities, values, strengths, and
goals as well as the “culture of power” (Delpit) or hidden curriculum of the university.
Through reflective essays, in-class exercises, and digital storytelling we ask students to
name and make visible their insights into self, student cultures, and institutional culture.

Digital storytelling also provides the opportunity for students to delineate the relationship
between their identity, strengths, interests, and values and their academic and
professional pathways. Therefore, along with providing students a space and a process to
reflect on their first-semester experiences, the digital story assignment also supports the
development of self-authorship, media literacy, communication skills, and greater cross-
cultural awareness. And by embedding the graduation planner and professional
development resources in the digital story assignment, we are also facilitating
development of the knowledge, skills, and habits necessary for efficient, effective and
engaged educational planning toward graduation and professional advancement.

In the spring semester PES students enroll in CLA 2005: Education and Responsible
Citizenship in order to complete the FYE requirement. CLA 2005 is a service-learning
course that provides students a space and process to explore what it means to be an
informed, critical, engaged citizen of the world in the 21st century. Through an
examination of such issues as environmental justice, hunger, homelessness, refugees,
gang violence, sexual violence, educational disparities, and mass incarceration students
are given the opportunity to critically assess information as well as their values, morals,
and ethics. The course also affords students the opportunity to engage in creative
problem solving and transformative design work. And through an exploration of local,
national, and international civic organizations and leaders that are finding new ways to
achieve community, social justice, democracy, and environmental healing, students are
challenged to move beyond seeing the oppressed and/or themselves solely as victims.
The service-learning component of the course, in turn, provides students the opportunity
to consider how they can learn from and work responsively and inclusively with diverse
individuals, groups, and organizations to build more just, equitable, and sustainable
communities. Through service-learning, not only do students learn about practical
applications of their studies, they also become actively contributing citizens and community members through the work they provide. Put another way, the community engagement component of our course allows students to explore classroom concepts in the real world while developing valuable leadership, intercultural, and other professional skills.

**Martin Luther King Jr. Program**

The **Martin Luther King Jr., Program** has been serving CLA students for over 40 years, providing college advising in the service of academic excellence, professional development, multiculturalism, and social justice. One of ten CLA advising communities, the MLK Program offers advising for all of the CLA majors and is open to all students who wish to take advantage of a diverse, inclusive, and culturally attentive advising and learning community.

Through individualized and holistic advising, a unique first year experience course, and other programming, our MLK advisors help students navigate academic life as well as the increasingly important and complex identity issues that typically emerge for college students. MLK’s mission is also informed by research and experience that indicates students of color on predominantly white campuses such as our own may confront a range of unique social, cultural, and psychological challenges. Therefore, when necessary, our MLK staff also helps students understand and effectively address any inequities, stereotyping, and marginalization they may encounter as part of their college experience. In short, our MLK staff works to ensure that traditionally underrepresented students have access to the knowledge, resources, and self-advocacy skills needed to thrive and earn their college degree.

**A Description of MCAE, Student Excellence in Academics and Multiculturalism (SEAM)/MLK FYE**

The CLA FYE course includes a section for students in the MLK Program and MCAE SEAM. This section draws on content similar to that of the general FYE. However, this section also explores issues and questions related to identity, diversity, multiculturalism, and social justice. Much of our content is grounded in the lived experiences of diverse students. The course gives students a space and process to grapple with the increasingly important identity questions that typically emerge during the college years. The course is also designed to assist students effectively to navigate the experiences of marginalization, stereotyping, and discrimination they may encounter as undergraduates on a predominantly white campus. In short, our central goal is to ensure that students have access to the knowledge, resources, and services needed to thrive and earn their college degree.

**Diversity Advocacy Team**

Our **Diversity Advocacy Team** operates to insure that diversity student cohort support remains an active common good pursued across the entirety of our unit and beyond. The DAT mission statement follows:
Guided by the Office of Equity and Diversity’s 2008 Mission and Vision Framework, the Diversity Advocacy Team (DAT) advises CLA Student Services on systematic ways to promote greater diversity, equity, and inclusiveness within CLA Student Services (CLASS). DAT is comprised of a group of student development professionals who are dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. DAT, in consultation with the Assistant Dean of CLA Student Services, works to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusiveness through:

- Developing and recommending comprehensive goals and measurable objectives for the CLASS in relation to fostering a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and learning environment for staff and students.

- Developing, recommending, reviewing, coordinating, and in some cases, implementing CLASS policies, plans, projects, programs, and trainings that promote diversity, equity, and intercultural competence.

- Developing programs for students that provide opportunities for meaningful encounters with difference and the development of greater intercultural awareness and equity-mindedness.

- Monitoring and reporting on the progress and success of CLASS efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusiveness.

- In collaboration, as appropriate, with the Office of Media and Public Relations, informing the college community about the progress and success of CLASS efforts to promote diversity and equity.
Question 2: Are there areas where you are hoping you can improve/change advising?

If, considering probable resource constraints for the foreseeable future, we look to opportunities for possible improvement, we might hope for the following:

**Group Advising (all applicable student groups)**

Building on our experience with the CLA FYE, we could expand our use of group advising. Although this approach is better suited to dealing with the transactional needs of students than to increasing outcomes-focused student engagement, it does represent a cost-effective approach to meeting well-defined student needs. The advent of APLUS and the operational reporting calendar (discussed later in this document) offers us expanded opportunities to apply high impact practices research to targeted group advising.

**Improving Support for Transfer Students**

**Strengthening Transfer Advising**

CLA has one academic advisor dedicated to serving our transfer student population prior to a student’s orientation, assuming that the student opts to apply here and is admitted. Given the reality of our resource base and the need to balance a number of competing goods, however, this advisor only serves part time in the transfer student support role, with the remainder of her time committed to one of our advising communities. If they can be secured, additional resources dedicated to transfer advising efforts could help ensure that admitted transfer students more quickly chart a viable pathway to degree by improving their understanding of degree requirements and of the academic programs offered in CLA.

Additionally, an enhanced resource base would allow us to work proactively with NAS pipeline opportunities. We could, for example, allocate time for transfer advisor visits to feeder community colleges or to organize Transfer Student Visit Days here for prospective enrollees.

More resources dedicated in this way to pre-admission advising also might well expand our CLA-centric transfer pool, resulting in admission of more transfer students who are seeking a CLA degree rather than admits who wish to use CLA as a gateway for application to a different college at the university.

The unique needs of our international student transfer population could also be better supported with additional resources that would position us to initiate communication with this student cohort prior to their arrival on campus, easing their transition to the University by clarifying expectations sooner.
Optimizing Transfer Student (NAS) Orientation
CLA admits a large number of transfer students each fall and spring. Our transfer students currently have very little time in the established orientation schedule dedicated individual meetings with advisors. Time for orientation work is extremely limited, so we continuously redesign our systems and processes to apply it to greatest effect. For example, we want to minimize the time spent discussing certain information at orientation that can be conveyed just as effectively online (e.g. institutional requirements and policies). Consequently we are developing an online orientation for our transfer students which will replace our in-person college meeting sessions. The online meeting will employ a variety of technologies to ensure that it is engaging and manageable. This format will allow students to review information at their own pace outside of the regular orientation programming which some students find overwhelming. The subtitled information provided through this format may prove especially beneficial to the large population of international transfer students admitted into CLA.

We hope that these changes will help students arrive at orientation with a better understanding of:

- our institutional requirements and policies
- how their credits have transferred
- institutional resources available to them.

We also hope that the additional individual contact time at orientation will allow advisors to gain a better understanding of each student’s goals and aspirations, thus building a stronger foundation for a collaborative relationship throughout the student’s degree program.

Improving Support for International Students
The increased number of international students admitted to the college has strained advising resources. International students request advising contacts more frequently than do other undergraduate populations. Their appointments typically take longer than those with domestic students. The need for additional time when working with international students is due to a variety of factors including language barriers, the need to complete administrative paperwork due to their international status, and additional time explaining processes and practices of our educational system.

We see similar increases in demand by international students for Career Services Support. In Fall 2013, 9.3% of CLA undergraduates were international students. As is also true with advising services, these students are utilizing our career services at a greater rate than their domestic peers. For instance, in Fall 2013, 18.1% of our career counselors’ appointments were with international students. These students come to campus with a unique set of needs and expectations around career opportunities. Many of them hope to find employment in the U.S. after graduation. Helping such students can be quite challenging and complicated due to visa and sponsorship requirements.
As we better understand the emergent pattern of international student enrollments we will be assessing our resource needs, the potential for process improvements, and any other ways that we might improve support for this important student cohort.

**Upgraded Facilities**
Two and a half years ago we drafted and presented a plan to "hub" front desk activities by combining east bank and west bank CLASS advising in Johnston Hall. That plan depended, however, on funding that is no longer available. We are therefore considering a less ambitious consolidation of space in Johnston Hall alone. The consolidation would strengthen the centralized services of CLA advising efforts. Regardless of the extent of the facilities improvements, the goals remain largely the same: to take advantage of economies of scale while optimizing working conditions and expanding student support modalities.

**Expanded Career Support**
We would like to provide intensive career counseling work with our non-CLA centric population in order to give them expanded opportunities to consider more viable academic options, many of which will doubtless include CLA programs and majors. We would also like to advance our:

- Collaboration with academic advisors of students in pre-professional programs (pre-health sciences and pre-engineering, in particular).
- Facilitation of intensive career development work for interested students
- Development of career support workshops for non-CLA centric audiences
- Design and delivery of enhanced on-line career strategies modules for the FYE, drawing on and leveraging ongoing departmentally-based FYE work with our alumni.

**Addressing the Gap between Formative Assessment and Summative Assessment of Advising**
As we note in the concluding section of our response to question 15, students tend to feel more positively toward their advisors as a whole than they do toward advising in general. When students discuss specific interactions or support contacts, advisors normally receive high marks for being caring, knowledgeable, and proactive. However, our research is in line with much of the professional literature in finding that when students discuss advising in general, they frequently indicate they want more personalized support than they currently receive.

At a minimum, we hope to better understand this gap between formative and summative assessments of advising; and if possible, we would like to lessen it.
Question 3: What are your greatest concerns about your advising effort?

We are concerned about a combination of specific and global challenges. We will briefly outline each.

**SPECIFIC CHALLENGES:**
Our specific challenges can be broken into three areas:

- Resource Constraints
- Mission Clarity Limitations
- Mission Match Hurdles

**Resource Constraints**
Although our unit has a demonstrated track record of increasing productivity even when faced with declining resources, we have reached a juncture where further cuts (or further increases in demand on the same resource base) will degrade our ability to advance at least some collegiate and campus priorities. Additional cuts would also affect student information communication and processes efficiencies. Budget challenges over the course of the past two years have required significant staffing changes in CLASS leadership, student support functions, and direct service to students. We have recently recovered a modest amount of ground through the development of the First Year Experience program. But the FYE also led to a significant increase in demand for student services, and this demand has outstripped the additional resources.

**Mission Clarity Limitations**
Like the larger university, CLA has for many years juggled multiple missions in an effort to serve our varied constituencies. Although many of our students plan to earn their degree in the liberal arts, a sizable number of our undergraduates come to CLA as a port of entry on the way to another UMN college from which they hope to graduate. Hence CLA serves as a staging area for these colleges - although we should also note that many of the aspirants to those colleges are not in fact accepted by them as students. Furthermore, with the closure of the General College, CLA now also serves much of the access mission of the larger university.

Given the range of disciplines and missions (home college, staging area, point of access) served by the College, developing a consistent message that resonates with all our varied student and stakeholder populations presents a significant ongoing challenge. In our view, this challenge can only be met when and if the liberal arts community of faculty, administrators, and staff decides how it wants to make itself present to its students. In order for this decision about our public image and message to be effective, however, we also need to determine who our students should be.
Mission Match Hurdles
Our mission clarity limitations exacerbate the mission match hurdles faced by the college. Many of our incoming students, particularly those attracted to engineering and a number of the biological sciences, do not actually want the degrees we offer. The question of the kind (or kinds) of college we are, like the question of the value and role of the liberal arts in the contemporary world of work, is particularly challenging in the context of appealing to these student cohorts. It is not immediately clear how we might best meet such students where they are and partner with them to chart a personally and educationally meaningful pathway to degree.

The impact of the combination of mission clarity limitations and mission match hurdles is perhaps most clearly reflected in the outcomes of our non-first-choice CLA students. As we have indicated on a number of occasions, non-first-choice CLA freshmen are at significantly higher risk of attrition than students who enter the College with the intention of earning their degree from CLA, impeding our ability to meet the retention and graduation rate targets set by the Provost. For example, the target four-year graduation rate for CLA’s 2008 freshman cohort was 60%, which our college would have met had that cohort consisted solely of first-choice CLA freshmen (who had a 60.2% four-year graduation rate). However, because the four-year graduation rate of non-first-choice CLA freshmen from that cohort was 46.8%, and also because they were a full 31% of our entire 2008 freshman cohort, CLA’s overall four-year graduation rate ended up being 56.1%. This represents a significant improvement over 53.3% 4-year graduation rate for the 2007 cohort, but it missed the Provost’s target by nearly 4 points.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES

The Growth of Complexity
We are concerned about the global challenges driven by the broadening and deepening of complexity in higher education – a process that has a significant impact on advising, career counseling, and student support more generally. Asynchronous communication technologies mixed with an increase in communicating with international students as well as the twenty-four/seven communication expectations from domestic students has increased daily demands on staff, pushing the boundaries of the forty-hour workweek and limiting the time allotted to professional development and other CLASS projects.

It is now a commonplace to observe that we are undergoing a paradigm shift in higher education. We are in the process of redefining both the critical variables that govern success in post-secondary education and the logic with which we should prioritize our efforts and assess our outcomes. To cite just one significant change that has ramifications across many educational domains, we now face consistent pressure from students, parents, legislators and the public to more clearly connect higher education to individual career success and to workforce development more broadly.
**The Need for Systems Thinking**

At the same time our outcomes expectations are shifting, the various domains of the world of higher education are becoming more interdependent in ways that require not only data-driven analysis but also creative systems thinking. As a number of writers about the impact of complexity on business architecture have written, systems thinking differs from analytic thinking in important ways. “Systems thinking uses a different process. It puts the system in the context of the larger environment of which it is a part and studies the role it plays in the larger whole” (Systems Thinking, Gharajedaghi). As indicated at the outset of this document, we regard systems thinking as a core competency of CLASS, and it is one of the primary ways we approach the challenges of dealing with the complexity and chaos characterizing today’s environment of higher education.

**Three Steps in Adapting to Complexity**

We have organized the global challenges with which complexity confronts advising in the following figure, which we have been working with to think about the organization of our services architecture for the past two years:

![Diagram: Adapting to Complexity](adapt_complexity_diagram.png)

Adapted from *Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos & Complexity* by Jamshid Gharajedaghi

*Figure 2 - Adapting to Complexity*
We have taken (and will continue to take) steps in all three of the areas listed in the arrows on the left-hand side of the diagram.
Question 4: What is your vision for academic advising/student support over the next 5 years in your college? For the University?

Our Vision for the College
In order to fulfill its promise of helping the largest number of students chart a successful pathway to degree efficiently and effectively, academic advising must:

- Optimize its inputs
- Deepen its self-understanding
- Match practices and priorities with measurable outcomes on both a real-time and long-term basis

The pragmatic core of our advising vision is to advance in all three areas over the next five to ten years.

We have been working for the past six or seven years to develop an integrated systems approach to advising spanning from pipeline through graduation. Our approach can be represented thus:

![Figure 3 - Integrated Systems Approach to Advising](image-url)

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- Financial Need
- Preparedness
- Fit

- Financial Support
  - Services Support
  - Targeted Interventions

- Student Engagement
  - Integrated Learning Opportunities
  - Mentoring Support

- Opportunities to Contribute
- Opportunities to Reflect and Integrate

Retain

Student Achievement

Graduation

Student Satisfaction (formative)

Student Satisfaction (summative)
Optimizing our inputs
In order to be maximally effective, optimizing our inputs will depend to a significant degree on two other advances that are largely beyond the purview of advising. At the campus level, we need to improve our ability to ‘admit for student success’ by better matching incoming student characteristics with available degree pathways in the various colleges. At the college level, a core problem affecting our graduation and retention rates involves better aligning the supply side of curriculum provision to the demand side of curriculum consumption.

If the campus and college can make progress in these two key areas, then improvements in early and on-going intervention have increased odds of producing the desired outcomes (academic success, retention, promotion, and graduation).

At the level of student support services we have for many years worked to improve our inputs by pursuing what we refer to internally as the advising trifecta:

- Transparent and portable student records that follow the undergraduate across institutional domains
- Real-time course scheduling capacity that works within both student-defined and institutionally defined constraints
- A common grade book that transforms classroom data into institutionally actionable information

The first two components of the advising trifecta have been built and are operational across many parts of the campus. The third component is currently being piloted.

Over the next five to ten years we want to improve these (and any other needed) inputs and to better connect them to outputs, practices, priorities, training, and communication.

Deepening our self-understanding
Our data and information can only be as effective as the practices which make use of them. Those practices, in turn, are shaped by our understanding of who we are and the professional roles we play. Systematically developing this understanding will be a focus of the next five to ten years.

More specifically, our profession is a practice discipline - meaning that it is devoted to helping individuals thrive over time. We do this work, of course, in an institutional context, but the work itself is pursued on a case-by-case basis. As such, it is underdetermined - meaning that knowing a rule, practice or theory may or may not help in deciding what to do at a given moment in a particular case.

Our role as practice professionals requires us to know how to pay attention to both the particular and the general, to the individual student and also to how they fit into or depart from our global models of educational best practices. In order to support this balance
between the singular and the general we need to develop an integrated approach to the following five dimensions of our profession.

**Conceptual**
Models that guide practice: these are intellectual contexts in which we work. These include:

- Strengths and positive psychology models
- Constructivist-developmental psychological models, including
  - Self-authoring
  - Learning partnerships
    - Challenge and support model
    - Establishing rapport
    - Setting boundaries with undergraduates
- Growth mindset
- BMI (Brief Motivational Intervention)
- Advising as teaching
- Learning organizations, communities of practice, and reflective practitioner theory
- Best practices case studies
- Networking skills
- Teamwork
- Team leadership
- Analytics
- Liberal Arts philosophy and practice

**Informational**
Knowledge advisors and counselors need in order to help students succeed. These include:

- Requirements
- Programs
- Facts, policies, procedures
- Taxonomies and organization logics
- Resources and their applications

**Relational**
Interpersonal competencies needed to do work with students (learned in a variety of ways, including role-playing, shadowing, case studies, etc.). These include:

- Interpersonal skills
  - Rapport building
    - Bridging differences
    - When to say ‘yes’ and when to say ‘no’
  - Problem solving
- Advising, counseling, coaching, teaching, and mentoring
• Communication skills
  o Listening
  o Interviewing
  o Speaking
  o Writing
  o Presenting
    ▪ Email
    ▪ Case notes
    ▪ Reports

Technological
Tools advisors and counselors need in order to complete their work. These include:
• Campus systems
  o Google environment
  o PeopleSoft
  o DARS
  o ImageNow
  o Schedule Builder/Chronos
  o APLUS
• Other systems
  o Word processing
  o Spreadsheet applications
  o Social media
  o Mobile applications

Personal
Knowledge and skills needed to enter, contribute to, and thrive in personally meaningful ways within our communities of practice. These include:
• Self-knowledge of strengths values and goals
• Cultural and intercultural competency
• Professional and career development plans
• Personal and professionals assessment
• Personal Big Picture Skills
  o Practices to gain perspective
    ▪ Joining a community of practice
    ▪ Attending conferences
    ▪ Connecting with mentors (for general purposes) or coaches (for particular goals)
    ▪ Readings in the professional literature
    ▪ Journaling
  o Assessing where one is in relation to one’s goals
  o Adjusting and adapting in the face of new developments
Matching our practices and priorities with measurable outcomes on both a real-time and long-term basis

The efficacy of our inputs, models, and practices will ultimately be assessed in terms of our key success outcomes. We have already begun to develop the capacity for real-time data-driven interventions with individual students and with undergraduate cohorts. Over the next five to ten years we need to continue to improve our predictive modeling, our on-going and summative analytics, and our systems thinking to better target limited resources in the service of measurable impacts.

In order to enhance our ability to integrate data, analytics, and systems thinking into our operations and strategic planning, we are currently piloting an Operational Reporting Calendar (ORC) which serves both as a data dashboard and as reporting engine for our unit steering group.

Our Vision for the Campus: A Partnership-Based University Student Support System

Clearly none of the work done in CLA Student Support Services can hope to be effective in isolation. If we want to achieve our collective goals, all stakeholders need to work together to create a campus student support system that balances common goods and local strengths without sacrificing one to the other. In order for CLASS to take such a systems approach to improving undergraduate success we must work to align the efforts of at least three areas:

- Local Advising and Student Support Systems
- Collegiate Advising, Student Support, and Instructional Systems
- Campus Advising and Student Support Systems

Three Areas for Partnership Alignment

Nearly six years ago we first depicted our intention to move toward a campus-wide student support system by aligning the foci of these three areas in the service of our collective goals:
Our vision for university academic advising and student support for the next 5 years and beyond is to build a student support architecture that meets undergraduate needs in ways that simultaneously advance university and collegiate priorities. Our aim is to continue crafting partnerships that move both the campus and the college toward an ever more seamless system that pursues common goods by building on rather than sacrificing local needs and knowledge.

We have already done a great deal of work along these lines – establishing partnerships to build the APLUS advising environment, the Chronos/Schedule Builder tool, and the numerous intra-college partnerships of the FYE.

**CLASS Opportunities to Operationalize Partnership Alignment**

We organize this work in terms of a more detailed version of the above figure:
This version of our Campus Partnerships vision suggests concrete ways in which we might operationalize our efforts to use campus alliances to meet undergraduate needs. The top sphere illustrates how CLASS both draws on and contributes to campus level student support systems while at the same time advancing common goods within the college.

What is not explicitly outlined in the above figure is the need to build better partnerships with faculty. As George Kuh indicated after reviewing our ongoing
efforts to improve retention and graduation rates, there can be no comprehensive approach to optimizing student outcomes that does not include and build on the efforts of our outstanding faculty.
Question 5: Define academic advising in your unit.

Our Advising Definition
Advising is the work done by educators who teach students to identify and connect learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom to their strengths, values, and short and long-term goals. By helping students to identify their strengths and interests, and by helping them discover and make use of pertinent resources, information, and options, we assist our undergraduates in crafting educational plans and making learning choices that inform their educations as a whole while advancing them toward degree.

Within this broad understanding of our work, we are defined by our mission and our philosophy.

Our Advising Mission
Our mission in CLA Student Services (CLASS) is to assist undergraduates in the College of Liberal Arts in identifying meaningful academic, engagement, and professional goals that reflect their strengths and interests and in developing informed educational and co-curricular plans to reach those goals.

CLASS staff members are professionals who serve this mission, guiding students in identifying and connecting learning opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom, to their broader goals. Staff members also serve as problem solving experts, removing barriers and explaining policies that assist in student retention and advancement toward degree. We assist our undergraduates in making choices that will inform their education as a whole by helping students to recognize their strengths and interests, to discover and connect with relevant educational resources, information, and options, and to align their curricular, co-curricular, and post-graduation planning.

Our Advising Philosophy
Our philosophy is that advising is a specific form of teaching. Advising is that student-centered form of teaching that positions undergraduates to construct the logic and meaning organizing the full range of their learning choices in the context of their strengths, values, and goals. Advising as teaching operates through various modes depending on student needs at specific junctures in their degree progress. These modes include (but are not confined to) interactions that are instrumental, developmental, intrusive, and collegial. Regardless of the particular form taken by the advising interaction, however, what is constant is the use of a blend of challenge and support to help students take responsibility for what might be called their signature curriculum.

Our philosophy of advising is operationalized through a targeted application of the constructivist developmentalism of writers like Robert Kegan, William Perry, Marcia Baxter-Magolda, and related figures. Constructive developmentalism holds that meaning
making and identity formation are both processes of active construction, but that the sequence of the types of construction involved in meaning making and identity formation usually follows a pattern.

That pattern of constructing meaning and identity is often quite complex, however, when considered at the level of an individual learner. The practice of engaging an individual learner in an institutional setting like a university thus often entails a divergent logic - the kind of thinking associated with the discovery of new ideas, the process of artistic creativity, or any conceptual practice that must entertain the possibility of multiple solutions to a problem or challenge for which there is not one, pre-ordained “right answer.”

Gregory Bateson, whose work we have used for more than a decade to think through these matters, examines divergent logic under a variety of headings, including ecological thinking, systems theory and – in the final phase of his career – recursivity. Unlike the disciplinary mentoring practiced for the most part by faculty members (for further detail on disciplinary mentoring, see our response to question 17), academic advising tends to emphasize symmetrical relationships throughout the undergraduate career as advisors work both to teach and to model the educational strategies to be applied by their advisees. In symmetrical learning relationships both partners have equal access to the various conversational roles available to them. Learning Partnerships are an excellent example of one such symmetrical relationship routinely employed in advising.

Rather than focusing on pre-professional disciplinary training, the aim of academic advising is to support students in undertaking the self-reflective process of conceptualizing the university setting and the fit between it and the pursuit of educational goals consonant with their skills, values, potential, and goals. In this process a number of students will need to consider many different possible solutions to the question of what they should study.

In their role as systemic mediators, academic advisors must grasp and articulate how disciplines can and do fit together while nonetheless remaining distinct conceptual arenas. Its underlying logic therefore presses the field of advising to constitute itself as a meta-profession -- to formulate itself as a profession about the connections possible among students, academic disciplines, and educational professions (including itself).
Question 6: Describe your advising model.

The Advising Team Model
CLA adopts an engagement-focused, outcomes-driven, advising team model of undergraduate support. Incoming new high school students have a core advisor (outlined below) and a year-long engagement experience that lays the foundation for adding other advising team members as they progress toward degree. Incoming transfer students also have a core advisor, with a departmental advisor added as soon as possible.

The advising team model reaches well beyond the advisors and counselors who, from a student’s perspective, are often the most readily identifiable members of their advising support group. The Student Information Office (SIO), for example, is integral to welcoming the largest population of undergraduate students at the University to CLA. Staff members work closely with the CLA Office of Application and Development and Enrollment Analytics, using the Orientation Administration Database to manage orientation planning and implementation for incoming students. SIO staff provide a critical central communication role for incoming students around orientation planning and assisting students to navigate the sometimes logistically complicated pathways into the University of Minnesota and CLA. The SIO staff also provide central internal and external communication for orientation department participants and unit partners, such as: CLA advisors, CLA departments, Orientation First Year Programs, the Athletics Department, and in the case of new high school students, the Assistant Director of the First Year Experience.

All incoming new high school students participate in our First Year Experience (FYE) course, which is designed to enhance student engagement and to be an integral part of their advising experience throughout their first year.

The FYE works to leverage the fact that students who connect early map their pathway to degree more quickly, and generally enjoy better educational outcomes. We want the FYE to provide our students with the opportunity and tools necessary to

- Connect early
- Engage broadly
- Reflect effectively

Peer-to-peer connections are one of the best and least expensive ways to drive engagement, and technology offers one of the most powerful methods for controlling costs. The FYE makes use of both.

Engagement - The FYE and the ‘Hidden Curriculum’
One critical function of helping students see across the different components of their degree involves making more aspects of the ‘hidden curriculum’ visible in order to speed their acclimation to campus culture. For our purposes, the ‘hidden curriculum’ can be
defined as the background knowledge and practices that are not explicitly taught but which must nonetheless be mastered in order to demonstrate cultural competency in a campus setting. The hidden curriculum, in other words, is what goes without saying but is everywhere assumed. Alongside their formal studies, students must also learn the hidden curriculum in order to adapt to campus.

Ethnographic writers stress that we generally make use of three sorts of knowledge when trying to understand a new culture. James Spradley, for instance, writes in *Participant Observation* that we make cultural inferences about how to act and speak in a new culture by observing:

- What people do (cultural behavior)
- What people make and use (cultural artifacts)
- What and how people speak and communicate (cultural communications)

Some of the lessons we learn through such observation are explicit. Others are tacit and might be described as gaining a “feel” for how to work, relate, and communicate in the new cultural setting.

In helping our students adjust as quickly and successfully as possible to the campus culture they have entered, we work to expand and deepen their explicit and tacit educational knowledge by doing three things. We endeavor to:

- Provide them with needed educational information and tools
- Engage them in exemplary educational experiences that challenge them to use their growing knowledge base
- Motivate them to excel through an artful blend of high expectations and individually tailored support

A key goal in helping students successfully adapt to campus culture as quickly as possible is to make more visible and useful the process through which both the explicit and the tacit educational knowledge required of undergraduates drives what they understand and what they do. This process is depicted in the figure below:
As the above figure suggests, underlying our educational efforts in the First Year Experience course and in CLASS support work more generally is a model of symbolic interactionism that we regard as the cultural equivalent of the constructive-developmental model of self-authoring.

As Spradley explains, **symbolic interactionism** operates on the basis of three assumptions:

"The first premise is that 'human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them'. . . . The second premise underlying symbolic interactionism is that the 'meaning of such things is derived from, or arise out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows'. Culture, as a shared system of meanings, is learned, revised, maintained, and defined in the context of people interacting. . . . The third premise of symbolic interactionism is that 'meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person dealing with the things he encounters.'"

--- *Participant Observation*, pp. 8 - 9.
The FYE is one of the primary ways we seek quickly to introduce our students to the culture of higher education and the liberal arts. It forms a core component of our outcomes-focused advising model, which works to craft a culture of undergraduate engagement by creating and/or driving student-centered institutional change. Consequently, a number of innovations have been generated by or catalyzed through the FYE. These include web-based “mass customization,” an integrated services model that allows traditional advising modalities to integrate with other student support platforms such as online and classroom instruction and student mentoring and coaching, cross-platform analytics that integrate data from advising and the classroom, and systems and meta-analyses.

Building a Student Support Architecture
Another key strategy underlying these efforts to optimize and redefine our work involves using training, process design, and technology to build a student support architecture capable of taking advantage of institutional zones of excellence rather than reinforcing programmatic silos. Our college has, for example, coordinated and in many instances integrated advising and career counseling. All students in the FYE create a first year resume that is reviewed in conjunction with our career support specialists and complete assignments designed by our career support team. These materials are also used when needed and appropriate in advising appointments.

Similarly we also prepare students for their first-semester advising appointments by prompting our undergraduates to use GradPlanner, read their APAS report, and locate critical information on OneStop (registration dates and registration holds, for example). This is another example of a synergy among the FYE, advising, and these centralized university resources.

Finally our efforts to integrate Moodle and APLUS represent yet another concrete strategy for employing this integrated services advising model (and also constitute a modest first step toward creating the common grade book mentioned above). From the perspective of aligning data, systems, and processes the integration can be depicted thus:
- Grades from assignments and student login information (i.e., when they last visited the class website) recorded by Moodle fed to APLUS
- APLUS uses this data to generate alerts based on individual student performance and/or engagement in the course
- These alerts go to the assigned PAL, which can then be escalated to the student’s academic advisor

**Student Advising Team Modes of Service Delivery**

**CLA Student Advising Communities**

This and our related student support work is leveraged by our students’ advising team. All incoming CLA students are assigned a CLA advisor and a CLA advising community. Advising communities are grouped around majors/disciplines (Arts, Communication and Media, Health and Natural Sciences, Languages and Mathematics, Psychological Sciences, Social Sciences, and Society and Culture) or targeted student populations (President’s Emerging Scholars and Martin Luther King, Jr. Program, University Honors Program). The advisors in advising communities focused around majors/disciplines have in-depth of training in the majors that the community serves and a breadth of training in
all majors, as well as training for working with undecided students, overly-decided students and students at risk. All communities offer programming targeted to the majors or student populations for that community and each community has a lobby area where students can explore resources and use the computers.

Students meet with their CLA advisor and/or their advising team from orientation to graduation. **CLASS advisors** assist students with 1) exploring learning opportunities outside the classroom; 2) finding ways to explore majors; 3) discussing course options and overall degree requirements; 4) selecting activities to prepare for post-graduation goals; 5) planning classes to stay on track for a timely graduation; 6) understanding policies and requirements; 7) learning about referrals for other services and resources; 8) responding to any questions or concerns the student may have about their academic experience at the University. Once students start to identify a major, they also work with a departmental advisor; students are required to meet with a departmental advisor to declare their major(s) and/or minor(s). **Departmental advisors** assist students with 1) deciding if a certain major is a good choice; 2) learning about coursework in the major; 3) enriching the major through participation in off-campus study, student organizations and events in the department; 4) planning for graduate studies, professional schools, and careers related to the major.

**Departmental Advising (Large Departments)**

**Advising in large departments** (such as Art, Psychology, Political Science, Spanish, Sociology, English, Geography, Biology, Society and Environment, Global Studies, History) is often carried out by professional advisors, with oversight by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Some large and small departments employ **regional advisors**, who report to CLA Student Services (such as Communication Studies, Anthropology, Art History, Economics, Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature/Studies in Cinema and Media Culture). This model allows for cross training between college and departmental advising and provides flexibility in staffing.

**Departmental Advising (Small Departments)**

Some **smaller departments** utilize a regional advisor for 25% to 50% time; the rest of the time of that advisor is allocated to another small department or to CLA advising. Departments under this model include American Studies, Chicano Studies, African and African American Studies, Asian Languages and Literatures, Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies, Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences).

Those colleagues who work as a departmental advisor and as a CLA community advisor attend the staff meetings for CLA advising, thereby creating a line of communication between departments and CLA advising. Furthermore, departmental advisors regularly connect with CLA advisors through the collaboration of programming, attendance of staff meetings and regular contact with staff. In addition, many CLA departmental advisors participate in a monthly meeting to share information and best practices. This meeting is attended by a CLASS Steering committee member, which increases the lines of communication between departments and CLA advising.
Departmental Advising (Faculty)
Some departments (mostly smaller departments) utilize **faculty for departmental advising**. In most cases, it is the Director of Undergraduate Studies who serves as the advisor; this position can change hands every two years. Departments under this model include French, Italian, German, Scandinavian, Dutch, Linguistics, Music, Theatre, Dance, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Statistics, Writing Studies; Urban Studies utilizes an instructional staff person for advising. Journalism follows a unique model: professional advisors serve as front-line advising for potential majors and minors; once students are accepted into the major, they are assigned a faculty member who does work in the area of Journalism and Mass Communication that is of interest to the student.

Faculty advising typically takes place after declaring a major so first-year students don’t tend to take advantage of this option, though they could certainly speak with faculty if they chose to do so. As we outline below, most faculty advising is oriented toward disciplinary mentoring or academic coaching.

Peer Advisors
We use **peer advisors** throughout the academic year. They are especially effective during orientation to help freshmen and transfer students understand how to use registration resources. Peers are also often helpful with informational programming, serving as panel members. Students tend to trust recommendations to talk with instructors, to not skip classes, to complete all of the reading and assignments, as so forth, when they come from peers.

During the academic year, peer advisors assist in offices by addressing basic informational questions, helping students find resources, and offering office support functions. All populations of students have access to peer advisors. Obviously, some students prefer not to talk with peers and would rather always to work with a professional advisor. These students are concerned about sharing information about difficulties with a fellow student. Also, some older-than-average students are more comfortable talking with a professional advisor.

Students have access to **drop-in advising** services from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm Monday through Friday during the academic year. Any student can come in for drop-in and our practice is to address questions as fully as time permits. During a high traffic period, advisors may need to address immediate concerns and refer the student to an appointment to consider long-term academic and co-curricular planning. However, if no other students are waiting for the drop-in advisor, we spend time on more complex concerns. Advisor availability on drop-in is crucial. Though not every student issue must be dealt with immediately, it certainly eases student stress to be able to consult with an advisor on short notice. Drop-in contacts, even short contacts, often generate referrals or questions for follow-up.
**FYE PALs and PAs**
The First Year Experience employs CLA students with class standing in or beyond their sophomore year to provide feedback on assignments and to serve as mentors to the incoming CLA first-year cohort. The FYE relies upon 10 Program Assistant Leads (PALs) to manage teams of 12-14 Program Assistants (PAs), who in turn oversee class sections of 20-25 students apiece in CLA 1001/1002, the CLA First Year Experience course. In total, nearly 125 engaged student peers work with approximately 2,250 incoming first-year students. PALs and PAs first meet with the students in their section during College Day, and subsequently meet with them at least once per semester for a mentoring conversation. First-year students also receive email communications and assignment feedback on a near weekly basis from their designated PA, providing every incoming student with a consistent peer-to-peer learning partnership to support the self-authoring process of the First Year Experience.

**CLA Student Information Office**
The CLA Student Information Office (SIO) provides direct service to students as a key information and referral office for all CLA undergraduates. In this role, SIO serves as a pivotal outreach and communication arm of CLA Student Services (CLASS) for such areas as 13-credit policy support and enforcement, advisor assignments during orientation and ongoing, APAS updates and APAS pseudosheets verification, coordinate process of degree applications, assisting in monitoring students academic progress through probation review, orientation planning, communication, and partnering, project managing degree clearance, probation suspension, major/minor declaration system, records and registration tracking including admission, tuition coding, and registration, readmission process, leave of absences, serving as the liaison between CLA advising staff and ASR, student record maintenance through systems management of ImageNow processing student records, forms into online student records, and transfer equivalence comparisons from other colleges and universities for transfer students into CLA.

Organizing and delivering these data-driven processes assists with student retention and helping students to overcome the logistical hurdles associated with policy and process at a large university. In individual cases, the SIO staff work to understand the students’ needs and connect them with the appropriate resources necessary to move them in the direction of their goals, using applied analytics in support of key success outcomes.

Functionally, the SIO team operates as the "front door" of the College for the majority of our incoming first-year students and transfers. And because SIO interacts with all of our units, this office also functions an engine of process improvement and quality control, working to insure that students receive comparable support services and information regardless of where they interact with CLASS.
Success Metrics

Success metrics include both our point-of-service surveys (discussed below) and our monitoring of key success outcomes through our operational reporting calendar. These are considered in the context of the success measures discussed in question 14:

- Graduation rates
- Retention rates
- Academic preparedness and diversity
Question 7: How are your advising resources (people, money, time, etc.) distributed across levels (first-year, sophomores, juniors, seniors)?

Resource Allocation Goals
Staffing in the unit is assigned on the basis of the support necessary to obtain key performance outcomes, including timely graduation, retention, academic success, and student satisfaction. Staff performance enhancement is important, in part, because CLASS adopts an integrated resource management approach to its staffing, communications, and other needs, employing technology wherever possible to leverage existing investments. Cross-training and broad-based collaboration and cooperation are employed to offset the comparatively small staff size throughout the unit. This results in a need for continuous adaptation at all points throughout the unit.

Resource Allocation Distribution
Because of our commitment to the development of an advising relationship, all of our advisors work with students at all grade levels. In an average year, approximately three-fourths of our CLASS advising resources are dedicated to students in their first two years; departmental advising resources follow the obverse pattern.

Resource Allocation Numbers
Advising FTE Resources are currently distributed as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLA Student Community</th>
<th>Number of Advisors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Natural Sciences</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications &amp; Media</td>
<td>6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Sciences</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages &amp; Mathematics</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society &amp; Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. Program</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President’s Emerging Scholars</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 8: How many academic advisors are in your college?

CLASS Advising FTE
Currently the College of Liberal Arts employs 47 staff members in the classifications of Assistant, Associate, and Senior Academic Advisor. Additionally, there are a number of other CLA staff who are academic advisors with other responsibilities. The answer to question 9 provides a more detailed discussion of this topic.
Question 9: What is the advising ratio for both lower division students and upper division students?

Some Approximate Numbers
In the context of the considerations sketched below, following are some approximate student/academic advisor ratios. Our office did our last by-hand count of advisors late last year, and we updated that work again last semester. Our best guess estimate of college-wide advising FTE is around 57. This includes departmental advisors and other departmental staff who regularly serve as major advisors— including titles such as coordinators, directors, teaching specialists, and the like. To arrive at this number, we had to make our best approximations regarding advising percentages performed by these staff members. And if we erred, it is most likely to be in the direction of overestimating advising percentages and in over-counting advisors. But we wanted to get a best-case estimate of advising in the College, and that is what we have produced. Given the fall 2012 total of 14,142 CLA students, our college-wide advising ratio is estimated to be 248:1. We realize this ratio may be appreciably lower than the real figure since any error in our assumptions is likely to favor lower rather than higher numbers. In any case, this represents our most recent internal (and unavoidably flawed) estimate.

We are on less ambiguous— but still uncertain— ground if we talk about CLA Student Services. The student communities plus MLK and ATS have an overall advising ratio of 372:1, calculated as 14,142 students/37.975 advising FTE. That falls short of the 250/1 ratio that is often cited as the benchmark for adequate service, but it is also the case that our student communities don’t always serve as the primary advising home for our undergraduates— especially when they are concentrating on their major in the departments. So if the previous ratio is probably too low, this is probably too high. The “actual” student/advisor ratio, if it could be reliably produced, likely falls between the overall CLA number and the CLA Student Services number.

Our career services unit operates with a very lean staff, especially when compared with other collegiate career services offices on campus. As mentioned in the Executive Summary, and elsewhere throughout this document, we regard career counselors as an integral part of our advising team approach to student support. If we break them out separately from academic advisors (as is commonly done on this campus and in career services generally) our career counselor-to-student ratio is 2,798:1. According to our calculations, the average for other colleges on campus is 1,466:1. Hence our student support priority has for some time been to expand the infrastructure of CLA career support, and we are heartened by the encouragement we have received along these lines from our college’s senior administration.¹

¹ If we are to continue to upgrade CLA career support as we hope, however, the need reaches beyond career counselors. Our two employer relations staff members in CLA are also charged with nurturing relationships with local and national employers, and they are similarly challenged by the breadth of student interests, and by overwhelming student demand.
We have not been able to produce estimates of ratios for lower-division and upper-division students as separate categories of students.

**Some Complicating Background**
Any answer to the inquiry about student-advisor ratios from a large or complex college such as ours is likely to be both inaccurate and misleading in ways that could produce mischief if not appropriately contextualized. So in addition to the numbers above, we’ll try to provide some context that may be helpful.

**Why Advising Ratios are Inaccurate**
The answer regarding student-advisor ratios is likely to be inaccurate because there is no single way to count the numbers that go into such a ratio, and neither is there clear agreement about what should be counted. This is because there are several different kinds of advisors and several different types of advising, and there are no standardized definitions for either. We have faculty advisors, professional advisors, peer advisors, administrators with advising duties (coordinators, directors, and a variety of appointments in the departments), teaching specialists who advise, and career counselors providing both advising and counseling. Adding to the complexity is the fact that some advisors are full time, some are part time, some are P/A, and some are Civil Service. Because of the different ways in which appointments are coded, not even Colin—who very much wants to answer this question—has been able to write a query that can list and classify all of the advisors in the college. Furthermore, thanks to our advising team approach, students frequently have more than one advisor (this is especially true as students progress toward degree).

Although some of this variety might usefully be standardized, there are good reasons for much of it, having to do with the varying needs of students in different majors and at distinct points in their undergraduate careers. Indeed, we regard our stress on an “advising team” approach to be a strength of the model. But the complexity of advising appointments is a nightmare for anyone trying (as we do at multiple points each year) to arrive at clear answers to seemingly simple questions such as: What is the cost of advising? What are our student/advisors ratios? How many advisors are needed for a given student population? We have well-informed hypotheses in many instances, but we don’t have accurate global counts.

**Why Advising Ratios are Misleading**
The answer regarding student-advisor ratios is likely to be misleading because it is an unreliable proxy in many respects for the question of the quality and adequacy of advising support. When we are asked this question, the person posing it usually wants to know if an individual student or student population will have the support needed. But knowing student-advisor ratios alone cannot reliably provide this information. Although student-advisor ratios may form part of an answer, better measures would include average wait-times for appointments, point of service satisfaction data, summative satisfaction data, success metrics for distinct student cohorts (coefficients of degree
completion, academic success ratios – both in the context of known risk factors and associated academic performance benchmarks), targeted services offered (and service usage rates), contributions toward promotion, continuation, retention, and graduation (although advisors are often only able to work at the margins in these areas), the use of high impact student support practices, etc.

We realize that talking in these terms is more complicated than providing a simple ratio. But as is evident from the modeling done by the Vice Provost’s office and shared with a variety of campus groups, student success is never driven by a single number. To give only one example from work that could not have been done without the partnership between central administration and the participating colleges: In calendar year 2012, 11,683 students enrolled in CLA spring 2012 or fall 2012 generated 24,172 alerts or warnings from APLUS which were followed up on by advising. The transformation in the quality of advising which that represents over the last year or so is nowhere reflected in our college’s fairly constant student/advisor ratio.
Question 10: What are your collegiate policies related to how often students, or cohorts of students, are required to meet with an academic advisor?

**Contact Policy in the Context of Three Drivers of Student Contact**

We believe policies requiring contact between students and advisors should be understood as one component of three interlocking drivers of student support contact:

- **Default contact** driven by policies and baseline expectations - this is the minimal level of contact we expect from all students
- **Intrusive contact** initiated by the college or campus on the basis of targeted criteria
- **Support contact** driven by student needs and student engagement, initiated by either student or the college - we would hope this contact becomes routine for as many students as possible

In our integrated student support model, we try to understand the interrelation of all three contact drivers, and some contacts could be grouped under more than one heading.

**Default Contact:**

Students admitted to CLA are required to attend orientation. Prior to the start of fall semester, all incoming new high school students attend a 2-day orientation. The goal of orientation is to acclimatize students to campus, to inform them of requirements and policies, and to establish a foundation for an educational partnership with their academic advisor. Inter-University transfer and external transfer students are required to attend a 1-day orientation with the same goals. In addition, we set the expectation that students will have several more contacts during the first year (see Support Contact below), although the extent to which these additional contacts should be regarded as required varies. Each contact builds on the previous one and includes opportunities to share and explore interests, values, and skills in relation to student goals.

Furthermore, the college follows institutional guidelines and best practices regarding when advising contacts are required. For example, advising contacts are required for students who have not declared a major by the time they have earned 60 credits and for students on academic probation. Some major departments place an advising hold as well, requiring the students to consult with them prior to registration. Some time ago the college was discouraged by Central Administration from placing any other holds on students’ records, viewing them as an obstacle to timely registration. So a number of contacts that some might argue should be required are instead recommended.

Our standard practice is to encourage students to meet with an advisor at least once each semester. If students do not meet with us at least once a year, we conduct outreach efforts to encourage them to schedule an advising appointment. In years past, identifying
this population was time consuming because there was no automated means of collecting the needed data regarding students who had not had an annual advising appointment. But now that we have APLUS and a “no drop-ins/appointments in the past year” warning, we can automatically generate the needed lists, using advisor time to connect with students rather than assembling contact lists by hand.

**Intrusive Contact:**

We also provide support for our students through intrusive advising methods. The technology systems we utilize (e.g. APLUS) often help to drive such outreach. We engage in this outreach under all the following scenarios:

- When students are reaching the 60 credit mark and have not declared a major,
- when ICT students are assigned an advisor,
- when students should sign up for orientation,
- when students are on probation or academic contract,
- when students have not been in to see us for an extended period of time,
- when APAS reports identify students who are close to graduation but haven’t applied yet,
- when students drop all of their courses,
- when students drop below 13 credits,
- when students repeat a course,
- when students need to know the last day to withdraw from a course without college approval,
- when students receive one or more negative mid-term alerts,
- when students have not been in for a first-year check-back appointment,
- when a PAL in the First Year Experience refers a student to their advisor,
- when students are not registered for the upcoming semester,
- when a student is at 100+ credits and needs to meet the degree application deadline,
- when international transfer students have not yet declared a major.

For students who are on academic contract we may develop special terms that they must meet, which may include counseling sessions, advising appointments, proof of class attendance, programming attendance, career exploration, major exploration, tutoring, and specific parameters on their selection of courses.

The MLK program requires all students to meet with their advisor once per semester during the first year. Also, all students in competitive majors are required to meet with their advisor once per semester throughout their first two years of study at the University.

International Transfer Students -- Admissions assigns a major at admission for visa reasons which advisors cannot subsequently remove without prompting an immediate change in the student’s visa paperwork. Therefore, we allow the initial major to stay on the student’s record until they have officially declared a major on campus following our typical declaration processes. We employ the OC hold on these students’ records to track their progress toward major declaration.
Support Contact:
Following orientation, CLA uses a series of sequenced service modalities throughout the first year to encourage continued acclimation to the College community. In addition, these touch-points foster partnered learning between the College and students. All students are expected to participate although involvement is what might be called a “soft requirement” insofar as consequences for non-participation normally fall short of the holds associated with hard requirements. Involvement expectations include:

- Welcome Week/College Day
- Fall and Spring check-back advising appointments
- Weekly FYE assignments
- FYE peer mentoring
- Co-curricular experiences, like ADFAB

Detailed information about the programs mentioned is listed below.

Welcome Week/College Day
College Day serves as the first student touch-point within our series after orientation. Across campus, all colleges participate in Welcome Week, primarily via College Day activities. While the goal of introducing students to the traditions of the liberal arts remains a constant feature of our efforts, CLA’s College Day has evolved as new needs and support structures emerge, such as the CLA First Year Experience. On College Day, students connect with other first year students, meet their FYE Program Assistant, and attend a faculty-led session focusing on our selected Common Reading, which all students receive when they attend orientation. The day is intended to be fun and uplifting, while also delivering a message of high academic expectations and a sincere desire to develop a strong educational partnership in support of the achievement of our undergraduates’ developmental and educational goals.

Fall and Spring Check-Back Advising Appointments
The fall check-back appointment is a student’s next routinely scheduled opportunity within the first semester to meet with their advisor (although they could always meet earlier if desired). The content of this meeting includes continued discussion of student’s goals, a conversation about the student’s first semester progress and information sharing regarding spring registration options, strategies, and decisions. In the spring, all first year students are expected to schedule another check-back appointment to generate and discuss academic and co-curricular plans for the pivotal second year.

Weekly FYE Assignments
All first-year students participate in the CLA First Year Experience. To encourage thoughtful educational decision making, students participate in weekly reflective assignments in Moodle and engage in experiential learning opportunities. Each assignment is built around the FYE’s three key goals of helping students connect early, engage broadly, and think reflectively about their collegiate experience. These goals and
corresponding assignments are grounded in the most recent research about what contributes to college student success, including the importance of helping students have a smooth transition into college, exploring their interests, and planning carefully for their degree.

**FYE Peer Mentor Program**

Building on previous mentorship programs piloted in CLA, the FYE also matches every incoming first year student with an upper-class peer mentor called a Program Assistant (PA). PAs serve as a guide and a coach for first year students. They provide feedback on students’ reflective writing assignments and meet in-person with each of their mentees at least once per semester to discuss their college experience and goals. CLA has hired over 120 student leaders to serve in the PA role and each PA works with approximately 20 first year students. With an average GPA of 3.5 and a diverse array of majors, backgrounds, and leadership experiences, the PAs are models of student success and participate in a comprehensive training program to be successful in their new role. Together with the more formal support available through advising, career counseling, and other venues, those students who connect often with their PA are expected more quickly to develop a sense of educational community and the kind of engagement widely associated in the professional literature with student success.

**Co-curricular experiences**

CLA works to provide co-curricular experiences, like the Assistant Dean’s Freshman Advisory Board (ADFAB), the CLA Student Board, and leadership opportunities within the First Year Experience. We also strongly support and promote student participation in the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP). We find that students are most successful and satisfied when they seek out meaningful opportunities outside of the classroom to complement their academic learning. These co-curricular experiences can include student groups, research, service learning, and leadership opportunities. Students participating in ADFAB work with the assistant dean for student services and his staff to improve student support of the undergraduate experience – particularly for first year undergraduates. The CLA student board offers students opportunities to work with faculty, alumni, staff, and peers on initiatives to increase undergraduate student engagement and pride within the college. UROP introduces students to the remarkable opportunities the college offers to do research in the liberal arts. Last but not least, the FYE provides students with opportunities to strengthen their leadership capacities through the roles of Program Assistant and Program Assistant Lead.
Question 11: How does academic advising fit in with other student services offered in your college, particularly career services?

Adopting an Integrated Approach to Student Support
As mentioned previously, we take an integrated approach to student support. Our career support services, collegiate academic advising, student information processes and communication, and student support services technology development all report to the assistant dean of student support services and work together as a collaborative team. The figure below offers a visual representation of how our various efforts fit together from a student centric perspective.

As the figure suggests, students interact with academic advisors, career counselors, and student support professionals in order to make optimal use of collegiate and campus faculty in pursuit of their educational and life goals. Academic advising is part of the larger educational team endeavoring to help students map and progress along their pathway to degree and post-graduation life. Advisors intersect with and support the efforts of career counseling and other student life professionals, and like them, they work in the context of curricular instruction provided by faculty.


**Aligning with Career Services Support**

We work collaboratively with the Career Support Services (CSS) to coordinate and integrate our advising and career services and ensure that students are pursuing their academic education and vocational pursuits simultaneously and in complementary fashion. The 5 professional career counselors in CLA’s CSS serve as liaisons to our academic advisors and our advising communities. The Career Counselors consult with advisors about individual students, serve as a contact point for advisors referring students for additional assistance, and assist with workshops or other programming. Career Counselors also actively participate in the professional training sessions led in CLASS along with academic advisors, further encouraging cross-training, sharing of best practices, and general networking amongst staff.

The 5 professional career counselors in CLA’s CSS serve as liaisons to each of our advising offices. Depending on the needs of the advising office, these liaisons conduct training to help advisors infuse career counseling into their appointments, consult with advisors about individual students; serve as a contact point for advisors referring students for additional assistance, and assist with workshops and other programming. CSS also supports academic advising by providing a resource library, career counseling appointments for students, web content, and workshops that help students explore the connections between majors and careers and that help them implement their career choices.

CSS models and support are also built into the FYE. Last year, for example, 85% of our NHS (some 2000 students) visited Career services during the FYE career week (a record usage rate).

In addition to coordinating and integrating career support, the First Year Experience course seeks to help students become acquainted with the advising tools the University offers to help undergraduates make informed decisions in determining an academic pathway and developing course schedules to fulfill both University requirements and individual academic goals. These tools include APAS and Graduation Planner. The FYE also aims to help students think critically about preparing for their check-back appointments with their academic advisor, which has contributed to anecdotal reports from advisors that their conversations with first year are starting from a more reflective and substantive point of departure.
Question 12: What are your goals for academic advising?

Our Key Success Indicators
Our goals are to work within and draw from our unique liberal arts context to further the campus and collegiate student success targets of:

- Timely graduation
- Retention
- Satisfaction
- Performance

We pursue these key success indicators through our unit-level goals (outlined below) via a strategic blend of advising, career counseling and general and targeted student support.

CLASS Goals
Our unit level goals for advising are to build an educational team and student support system that will position us to excel in all four outcomes areas. Our core aim, therefore, is to help more of our students chart their path to degree more quickly and effectively.

Our Engagement Pathways Project
We organize our efforts under the heading of our overarching initiative for FY2013 and 2014 -- the continuing development and implementation of our ENGAGEMENT PATHWAYS PROJECT.

There are four major components of this pathways initiative, each of which includes a number of sub-areas. The four major components are:

1. Student Programming and Support Components
2. Key Partnerships to Optimally Leverage Resources
3. Business Intelligence, Systems Thinking & Redesign, and Technology
4. Staff Development, Support, and Retention

Considered in slightly greater detail, the Engagement Pathways Project involves goals in the following areas:

1. Student Programming and Support Components
   - Continuing to enhance the orientation experience for all incoming CLA students, with an intentional focus on the international student experience
   - Continuing Development and Implementation of First Year Experience Course
Continuing work with Faculty Advisory Board (FAB) to further coordinate FYE and departmental opportunities
Continuing partnership with FAB Chair in development of FYE curricular and engagement opportunities
• Developing a Sophomore Year Support Program – aligned wherever appropriate and possible with other collegiate initiatives such as the Humanistic Commons work currently planned
• Broadening Student Support Curriculum Across Entire UG Tenure - with a particular focus on expanded career support
  - Focus on further integrating Career Support and Advising Support
  - Greater Individualization and Customization of Advising
• Continuing Enhancement of Diversity Student Support
  - MLK
  - PES (formerly ATS)
  - DAT (Diversity Advocacy Team) Initiative
• Enhancing Support for Transfer Students
• Expanding Student Mentoring Culture

2. Key Partnerships to Optimally Leverage Resources
• Broadening and Deepening Connections with Departments
• Continuing Partnership with CLA OIT
  - FYE Departmental Videos
  - Student Digital Stories
  - Moodle/APLUS Bridge
• Expansion of Internship Grant and Related Funding Opportunities
• Continuing Partnership with ASR and OneStop
• Continuing Partnership with CAPE
• Enhancing Work with Intercollege Career Support Group
• Strengthening Partnership with International Student and Scholar Services
• Continuing Partnership with Orientation & First-Year Programs

3. Business Intelligence, Systems Thinking & Redesign, and Technology
• APLUS
• Chronos
• Moodle
• Common Gradebook
• Alumni Database
• Operational Reporting Calendar
• Orientation Administration Database
• Integrating real-time analytics into student outreach and support

4. Staff Development, Support, and Retention
• Actively developing and disseminating best practices
• Enhancing professional development opportunities in support of staff retention goals
• CLASS Leadership Curriculum

Understood as outlined above, our Engagement Pathways Project represents the next phase of our ongoing work to craft a student support “curriculum” that coordinates and integrates the entirety of our work with both colleagues and students in the context of a coherent understanding of the learning and development needs of liberal arts undergraduates (the topic of an AACU Paper delivered by Kearns, Brandt, and Williams in November, 2011).
Question 13: How do you define success?

**Quantitative Outcomes by Aligning Three Visions of Success**

We succeed through the academic and personal success of our students. We excel to the extent that we advance progress toward key institutional outcomes goals (outlined in the response to question 12) by supporting the alignment and achievement of three visions of success:

- The individual student vision
- The college vision
- The campus vision

Within this context, we are successful to the extent that we contribute to engagement, retention, academic success, and graduation through the support and development of learning partnerships that help students map and pursue their educational pathways. In addition to their undergraduate curricular and co-curricular decisions, these pathways include the identification and implementation of career and graduate or professional school choices that are satisfying to our students and recognized and valued by our college, campus, and stakeholders.
Question 14. How do you measure success?

Quantitative Outcomes Measures

Graduation rates:
CLA’s undergraduate graduation rates continue to grow: the 4-year graduation rate has risen to 54.3% for the 2009 cohort (compared to 28.1% for the class that entered in 1996 and 19% for the class that entered in 1992); and the 5-year graduation rate has risen to 73.5% for the 2008 cohort (up from 48.4% for the class that entered in 1996).

Retention rates:
CLA’s first-year retention of new freshmen is 88.5% (compared to 81.5% for the class that entered in 2000); the 2-year retention rate is 83.6% (compared to 72.9% for the class that entered in 1999).

Academic preparedness and diversity:
The quality and diversity of the CLA undergraduate student body has dramatically improved over the past decade; the number of applications has, in fall 2013, topped out at 26,606. Fully 72.4% of the fall 2013 freshman class graduated in the top 25% of their high school class.

There has been a significant increase in the diversity of the student body since the turn of the century. In fall 2013 20.2% students were SOC and 9.3% international students. This compares to 14.3% SOC and 1.8% international students in fall 2001.

Average student academic preparedness has also changed greatly, even when only considering the past 5 years. The average ACT score and high school rank for NHS students in fall 2013 were 27.1 and 81.9; this compares to 25.7 and 82.3 in fall 2009.
Question 15: What data do you have related to student satisfaction with academic advising beyond SERU data?

CLA Use of SERU Data
CLA does a good deal of work with SERU data in order to establish a baseline understanding from which to consider the additional information about student satisfaction which we acquire through our point of services survey (outlined immediately below).

Some Patterns in the 2012 SERU Data
As part of our work to establish baselines, we code and analyze all SERU comments. We then used query tools for the 2012 SERU comments related to CLA advising and noted the following patterns.

The Desire for More Active Learning Partnerships
The two areas most frequently commented on by students addressing advising can be understood as indicating our undergraduates want more effective active learning partnerships. The most common response from students regarding advising was to say they wanted it to provide more mentoring, guidance, direction or support. 37% of CLA students who discussed advising made comments along these lines.

This desire for more actively engaged advisors is paralleled by similar advising comments relating to access to advisers. Those who commented wanted more meetings, greater availability, improved adviser/student ratios, and to have advisors proactively reach out to advisees more often. 33% of CLA students addressing advising made observations along these lines.

The second most common topic regarding advising was a desire to "improve advising." 29% of CLA students commenting about advising indicated they wanted advisors to show more interest in them and to communicate more effectively.

The Desire for More Internships and Career Services
The SERU comments indicated that students not only want more student centered contact, they also want this contact to help them toward their post-graduation goals. Along these lines, 20% of CLA students commented on a desire for expanded or improved internships, careers or career services.

Point of service survey data
It is against the background of a consistently expressed student desire for improved contact and support that CLA asks students to complete a brief survey after having attended scheduled advising appointments. The results are almost universally positive:

- 97.6% said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their advisor’s concern for their academic success, with 75.6% indicating that they were very satisfied.
• 95.3% said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the information that the advisor provided around degree requirements, the curriculum, educational policies, or procedures, with 71.9% indicating that they were very satisfied.
• 97.5% said they were satisfied or very satisfied with referrals from the advisor to resources, services, or engagement opportunities, with 71.2% indicating that they were very satisfied.
• 94.6% agreed or strongly agreed that they left the appointment with a plan for the next steps to take toward timely degree completion, with 68.2% strongly agreeing.
• 96.9% agreed or strongly agreed that they would enjoy seeing this advisor again in future appointments, with 78.9% strongly agreeing.

Learning from the Gap between Formative and Summative Assessment of Advising
The gap between formative assessment such as the point of service survey and summative assessment such as that made possible by analysis of the data from SERU and other information source provides a powerful learning opportunity for student support units and administrators alike. On the whole, students consistently indicate high levels of satisfaction with their individual advisor and student support contact. At the same time, however, they also consistently register a desire for more personalized contact tailored to their individual needs. Analysts long familiar with this pattern suggest parallels between survey results that usually show high levels of satisfaction with voters’ individual congressional representatives but generalized dissatisfaction with congress overall.

We believe that working to close the gap between formative and summative assessments of advising in the context of advancing key success indicators should be a unit priority as we move forward. Although we have not yet had occasion to develop a detailed plan for closing this gap, we feel it must involve the alignment of

- Consistent student communications emphasizing
  o Clear expectations and benchmarks
  o Feedback on student progress
  o Personally targeted engagement and learning opportunities
- Coordinated service delivery platforms
- Ongoing training and communication with advisors, counselors, and service delivery staff
- Student-centered strategic planning emphasizing
  o Full use of the resources available for student support
  o Prioritized short and long term planning
- Adequate resourcing
Question 16: Include an org. chart

Over the course of the last six years CLA Student Support Services has worked diligently to flatten its hierarchy and streamline its organization while at the same time increasing efficiency and effectiveness. We went from a system of seven student community coordinators to three student community assistant directors, and from three student services directors to two student services directors (combining oversight of student community advising and collegiate career services). The current top tier organizational view looks thus (followed by more detailed views):

CLASS Org Chart – Top Tier

![CLASS Organization Chart](image-url)
CLASS Org Chart – Student Community Advising

CLASS Student Community Advising

- Carl Brandt
  Director

- Pat DelVecchio
  Assoc. Administrator

- Angela Bowlus
  Asst. Director

- Les Opatz
  Asst. Director

- Julie Ann Edin
  Asst. Director

- Languages & Mathematics
  Student Community

- Psychological Sciences
  Student Community

- Health & Natural Sciences
  Student Community

- Communications and Media
  Student Community

- Arts
  Student Community

- Social Sciences
  Student Community

Society & Culture
Student Community

Figure 10 - CLASS Org Chart - Student Community Advising
CLASS Org Chart – Career Services Support & Service Learning

CLASS Career Services & Service Learning Support

Lisa Murphy Pilchard
Assistant to
Carl Brandl
Director

Paul Timmins
Lead Coordinator
Career Support Services

Employer Relations Coordinators
Career Services Coordinators
ID Course Instructors

Laurel Hiet
Lead Coordinator
CSLC

Of Campus Programs Coordinator
CESP Coordinators
Service Learning Coordinators

Figure 11 - CLASS Org Chart - Career Services Support & Service Learning
CLASS Org Chart – Student Diversity Support

CLASS Student Diversity Support

Andrew Williams
Director

Leah Milojevic
Asst. Director

MLK Program

PES Program

CLASS Diversity
Advocacy Team

Campus Diversity Programs
Liaison

Figure 12 - CLASS Org Chart - Student Diversity Support
Question 17: What role does your faculty play in academic advising in your college?

Advising, Academic Coaching, and Disciplinary Mentoring

Although a small number of faculty engage in academic advising, most faculty members play the role of disciplinary mentor or academic coach.

A **disciplinary mentor** introduces students to the ways of thinking associated with the relevant discipline. **Academic coaches** help students achieve specific goals from a faculty perspective, such as preparing for application to a particular graduate school or pursuing a specific research or creative project. Academic coaching can overlap significantly with academic advising, although the latter tends to be student-centric while the former tends to be disciplinary-specific.

Academic advising in fact has similarities with a number of student support functions, including financial aid advisement, the developmental work of college student personnel staff, and some forms of psychological counseling. However, the educational function sometimes performed by faculty which is most often confused with academic advising is disciplinary mentoring.

Frequently performed by faculty members also charged with advising duties, the aim of disciplinary mentoring is to reproduce the disciplinary map of knowledge by introducing students to a subsection of that map, usually the area associated with their major, and aligning the students’ habits of mind with those intellectual patterns characterizing the discipline’s way of performing conceptual work. Essentially, disciplinary mentoring is a form of apprenticeship for students interested in approaching disciplines in the way faculty members approach them. Often such mentoring is a prelude to students going on themselves to become faculty members.

Because it initiates undergraduates into a subset of the larger educational community, the disciplinary mentoring process is fundamentally **convergent**. Its aim is to teach students to think and reason in a specific way and to produce outcomes acceptable to that way of thought. Academic advising, by contrast looks across the entirety of the educational field and is organized through a **divergent** or comparative meta-logic. Its role is to help students understand the relationships and gaps between different ways of thinking and understanding represented by the disciplines and by undergraduate learning opportunities more broadly. Divergent logics and meta-logics are, however, notoriously under-described in today’s professional literatures of educational practice. As a result, most discussions of the faculty mentoring and professional advising roles are marked by considerable confusion.
Question 18: Describe the format(s) you use to advise students? (Individual appointments, peer mentors, group advising appointments, etc.) If you have multiple formats how do you decide which students are assigned to a particular format?

The Student Advising Communities
Each student is assigned to one of ten student communities that are centered around academic interest (e.g. Psychological Sciences) or programmatic areas (e.g. Martin Luther King, Jr. Program). Within their student community students are assigned an academic advisor and are encouraged to meet with their advisor at least once per semester to discuss their strengths and interests, choose a major, explore engagement opportunities, and plan a timely graduation. Once students declare a major or a minor, they will also work with a departmental advisor to review and plan specific program requirements. Students are also encouraged to meet with a career counselor to explore majors, research careers, prepare their resume, and learn about enhancing their academic experience through internships, jobs, service-learning, and other activities.

The Advising Formats
To best serve our students, we offer a number of advising formats. They include attending an individual appointment, visiting drop-in advising, and connecting with peer advisors.

Simple questions about registration options, policies, and procedures can be addressed during a 10-15 minute drop-in advising appointment. Drop-in advising is offered daily from 9am-4pm in each advising office and students may come in without an appointment to be seen on a first-come, first-served basis.

Students are encouraged to schedule an individual appointment (typically lasting 30 minutes) for their fall and spring semester check-back appointments (for first year students) and to discuss more in-depth topics, like their strengths and interests, choosing a major, getting involved on campus, and planning for a timely graduation. Email reminders are sent to students encouraging them to schedule an individual appointment if they have not done so in one year.

Peer advisors are available in each advising community to assist students with questions, make appropriate campus referrals, and schedule follow up advising appointments as appropriate. Peer advisors play a critical role in preparing students during orientation and facilitating the educational partnership between students and advisors.
Students may also email or call their advisor or advising community when they have questions. While we prefer to meet face-to-face with students, advisors frequently do address complex questions that students send via email. In many cases, to fully and accurately address emailed questions requires an in-depth review of the student record. In such cases, this means that answering an email can take as long as having a scheduled appointment. Depending on the time of year, an adviser will spend between 15-minutes and two hours per day addressing student emails.

Furthermore, within the FYE, students meet with their Program Assistant (PA) at least once per semester as part of the course curriculum. These meetings occur on-campus and are scheduled at the convenience of the PA and student. The focus of these meetings is around the student’s transition into college, their experiences so far, and upcoming goals. PAs may share relevant information about their background and may also make referrals to campus resources as needed, such as advising. In addition, PAs hold a weekly office hour at a consistent time and location and are available to their students via email for further questions and concerns.

As detailed in question 10 above, we have sought to devise a comprehensive support system that makes available to students what is most relevant to them at the time they seek service or we reach out to them. In this context, our range of student support formats operates as a tool for the maximization of student outcomes.

In Career Services, students can schedule 60-minute individual appointments with career counselors to discuss career exploration, assessments, or implementation of job or internship searches. For students with simple questions about resumes or job searching, peer advisors are available for brief consultation. Group workshops are scheduled as needed to encourage collective learning about topics like resumes, interviewing, or networking. And several elective career courses (ID 1201 - Major and Career Exploration; ID 3201 - Career Planning; ID 3205 – Law School Exploration; ID 3201 – Internship Reflection) enable a small group of 25 students to explore topics in-depth over the course of a semester.
Question 19: How you intentionally incorporate Strengths, self-authorship, other learning partnerships, Brief Motivational Interviews (BMI), advising syllabus, the Student Learning Outcomes, and the Student Development Outcomes into your academic advising efforts, etc.?

Reframing Quantitative Educational Outcomes in Support of Self-Authoring Identity Development

"Insight cannot be taught or learned, but the consciousness that gives rise to insight can be developed."
---Robert Kegan, *In Over Our Heads*

Because we are steadfastly focused on measurable goals, we employ all of the tools and models mentioned in question 19. We use them in an integrated approach to reframing quantitative educational outcomes in the service of undergraduate identity development as self-authors.

The most powerful means available to academic advising and career counseling for advancing our collective goals of retention, graduation, and academic excellence is to engage the skills, passion, and commitment of our student support colleagues. Because student support professionals are dedicated educators, we find qualitative student-centered models more compelling than quantitative outcomes-focused mandates. Put simply, advisors and counselors care more about undergraduate learners than spreadsheet numbers. It is therefore critical that advising leaders build models, resources, and processes that insure student-centered support of undergraduates at the level of individual advisors drives desired quantitative outcomes at the level of the institution. Our strengths-based engagement model is designed to achieve this aim.

Our global strategy for producing outcomes by positioning student identity development as self-authors at the core of our work can be depicted thus:
At the center of our efforts is a learning partnership approach to strengths-based engagement and support, which is discussed more fully below. We further student identity development as self-authors through three interrelated strategies:

- Moving our processes wherever possible from transaction and remediation to strengths development
- Deploying targeted student outreach and engagement opportunities that take advantage of enrolment analytics and systems thinking to
  - develop efficient processes of mass customization tailored to the unique needs of different student cohorts
  - utilize learning partnerships and peer mentoring at the level of individual students
- Employing an integrated approach using all available resources, including collegiate and institutional partnerships, to achieve both qualitative and quantitative student outcomes

The efforts described throughout this section are all situated within this broad, strategic approach to student support.
**Self-Authoring and Constructivist Developmentalism**

“The most fundamental thing we do with what happens to us is organize it. We literally make sense. Human being is the composing of meaning, which we often experience as the loss of our own composure.

---Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self*

The above quote from Kegan refers to the core insight of self-authoring: It is through the processes described by self-authoring that we compose our lives and their meaning. Kegan describes self-authoring as a form of constructivist developmentalism. In the opening section of *The Evolving Self* Kegan writes:

> This book is about human being as an activity. It is not about the doing which a human does; it is about the doing which a human is.

This notion of human being has been most powerfully represented by two separate Big Ideas . . . Constructivism (that persons or systems constitute or construct reality) and developmentalism (that organic systems evolve through eras according to regular principles of stability and change). In somewhat different ways, both ideas insist on a recognition that behind the form (or thing) there exists a process which creates it, or which leads to its coming into being.

---*The Evolving Self*, pp. 8-9

This underlying notion of constructivist developmentalism runs through all of the work done by self-authoring, and it aligns self-authoring with a number of related models such as transformative education, various cutting-edge and classic developmental models (such as those advanced by Kohlberg and Piaget), and assorted schools of embodied cognition (Antonio Damassio, Margaret Wilson, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Gregory Bateson, etc). As Kegan suggests, constructivist developmentalism expresses a movement in the contemporary *Zeitgeist*, so we should not be surprised to find similar trends among writers concerned with more narrowly focused educational models.

Jack Mezirow, for example, argues in *Learning as Transformation* (2000) that transformative education can be understood in terms of "how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others" (p.8). Like self-authoring, with which it is often grouped by writers in the field of advising and student support, transformative education is a form of knowledge construction that positions itself at the intersection of learning and development.
Using Reframing and Self-Authoring to Drive Institutional Engagement & Change

As advisors, counselors, and educators working in a transformative self-authoring context, our first question might be how to support students in organizing their undergraduate experience in ways that make sense. What tools or ideas should we be using in our work?

Reframing and Transformative Education

Reframing is the key idea undergirding transformative self-composition, and it lies at the heart of self-authoring practice. The specific kind of reframing that is transformative for undergraduate identity development is that which brings the frame into view. Whenever questions, challenges, or processes position learners in a conscious relationship with their underlying assumptions or encompassing horizon of expectations, their frame of reference is thereby brought into focus. Any student in such a meta-cognitive position has an opportunity to operate on their frame of reference rather than automatically operating in or through it. Consequently CLASS orients our processes, tools, and interactions toward self-authoring reframing whenever possible.

Such an orientation toward reframing is a best practice in transformative education. As Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience notes: “Transformative education . . . places the student’s reflective processes at the core of the learning experience and asks the student to evaluate both new information and the frames of reference through which the information acquires meaning” (p. 9).

Although reframing can be undertaken in any field or discipline, the Liberal Arts, with its broad diversity of disciplinary perspectives and its deep history of probing inquiry in the service of independent minds and their freely chosen values, provides an especially rich context within which to undertake such work.

The Place and Importance of Student Engagement

In order for reframing to be effective, however, our students must be engaged.

A broad range of professional literature suggests student engagement is an efficient and effective means of achieving both institutional and individual undergraduate success within an emergent educational environment that is shifting our emphasis from the traditional focus on disciplines and teaching toward an outcomes-driven focus on students and transformative learning.

One of the ways student engagement aligns institutional and individual student goals is by functioning as a core driver of transformative education. There has been some progress by George Kuh and few other researchers in identifying high impact educational practices that should be considered by institutions interested in
improving student outcomes. But while many educators concur regarding the need for deep learning that integrates the undergraduate’s curricular and co-curricular experiences as well as the frames of reference within which those experiences acquire their significance, there is little broad agreement concerning

- how such student engagement is most effectively supported and taught, or
- how institutions can know whether they are reaching their engagement goals.

The Role of Reflection

Reflection is the key to supporting, mentoring, and teaching our undergraduates in the transformative context of self-authoring. Consequently CLASS is working to develop success metrics in the FYE and elsewhere to assess the effectiveness of student reflection, and this is an endeavor that we feel should be taken up campus-wide -- albeit with due attention to and deference toward local needs and goals in the various colleges, programs, and disciplines.

Learning Reconsidered addresses the problem of designing developmental ways to employ and assess student reflection by suggesting that we think about transformative learning in terms of self-authoring. As that report observes:

Maturation or development occurs as people become more capable of articulating and critiquing personal stories, reframing them and reshaping their own lives. Kegan (1994) and Baxter-Magolda (1999) describe this process as self-authorship and consider it one of the higher levels of the developmental process, a way of making meaning in which people reflect on their lives, their values and their behavior and consider whether or not previous choices remain useful or productive for them. Frames of reference – and, therefore, students’ stories – change with growth, emerging or fading in a non-linear way. Mezirow (2000) describes this process as transformative learning, “liberating ourselves from reified forms of thought that are no longer dependable.”

--Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience, p. 9

CLASS has been actively working with the above recommendation to adopt a self-authoring approach to the undergraduate experience since 2004. Our core assumption is that students who are engaged in active reframing produce better educational outcomes for themselves, their institutions, and their various communities at large. It seems evident, then, that students and institutions alike must become adept at educational reframing if they hope successfully to pursue transformative outcomes.

2 It should be noted, however, that when discussing his work in private conversation, Kuh indicate to several members of CLASS advising leadership that he felt the terminology of “transformative education” is problematic.
Reframing the Undergraduate Experience: Three Contexts

Adapting the recommendations of *Learning Reconsidered* to our local circumstances, our advising leadership group employed the figure immediately below to organize our thinking about how to reframe the undergraduate experience in order to work with it from the perspective of self-authoring:

![Diagram of three contexts](image)

*Figure 14 - Reframing the Undergraduate Experience - Three Contexts*

*Adapted from Learning Reconsidered (2004)*

This illustration presents an overview of the various contexts within which the self-authoring developmental model views our students’ actions and behaviors, paying particular attention to how learners think, feel, and construct meaning. As is here suggested, advisors working from a self-authoring model ideally regard their advisees through at least three lenses. Whenever possible, they consider the student's engagement with his or her

- Academic Context
  - Critical and reflective opportunities
  - Experiential learning
  - Interdisciplinary classes
- Social Context
  - Personal relationships
  - Group memberships
  - Intergroup connections
- Institutional context
  - Leadership roles
  - Service opportunities
  - Working within and across campus codes
However, when we organized the work of student support professionals along the lines suggested by self-authoring, it immediately became apparent that our campus and our college lacked the technological, analytic, and programmatic infrastructure to support the alignment of these academic, social, and institutional perspectives on any significant scale. Unless advisors had an ongoing individual relationship with their advisees, in other words, they had no ready access to information or data that could help them support students in making sense of their undergraduate experience.

**Developing an Infrastructure: The Spiral Process Model for Program Development**

In order to improve our capacity to work proactively in an environment where advisors operate with heavy caseloads and intermittent contacts as members of an advising team, CLASS initiated its work with APLUS, which expands our ability to work across all three self-authoring contexts. Our work with APLUS was and is part of a broader 5-stage spiral process model for program development that we initiated in 2003, and which is still active today:

![Figure 15 - Spiral Process Model for Program Development](image)

Employing the steps outlined in this model drove a number of additional student support innovations, including the use of digital stories in ATS and PES and the launch of the FYE, both of which help us work across the various perspectives associated with self-authoring. In a similar vein we are piloting portions of the common grade book, which we hope will eventually give advisors, counselors, and faculty a shared student support information environment.
Much more work remains to be done, however, within CLASS, throughout the college, and across campus.

**Self-Authoring and Perry’s Model of Contextual Relativism**

As we have noted, our self-authoring focus is on supporting students in reflecting about how they make sense of their educational experiences. This effort is grounded in student developmental theory.

William Perry, for example, maintains that the pivotal educational and developmental event in a college student’s life is the discovery of relativity, the insight that every claim emerges in a frame of reference that provides its origin and secures its meaning or validity. How a student negotiates the discovery of multiple points of view determines whether he or she will develop or stall. Contextual knowing thus depends on the power of reframing.

Perry depicts the usual undergraduate progression from dualism toward commitment through the following figure:

![Figure 16 - Perry’s Model of Contextual Relativism](image)

---Perry, *Forms of Ethical and Intellectual Development in the College Years* p. xx

Robert Kegan ties Perry’s work to Kohlberg’s stages of moral development (especially stage 4, the law and order orientation associated with ‘conventional morality’ – which Kegan believes is underdeveloped in Kohlberg’s model). As Kegan writes:

Kohlberg’s stage 4 resolved the historic conflict between the individual and the group by deciding entirely for the group (failing actually to construct the individual); the position we are looking at here, Kohlberg’s 4½, a transitional
place, decides entirely for the individual apart from the group if it has to also consider the group). This position, cultural or ethical relativism, the conviction that there is no nonarbitrary basis for judging anything, amounts to confusing two ideas. It confuses the idea that all persons are entitled to hold whatever beliefs they wish with a second idea, that there is no nonarbitrary basis upon which to compare these beliefs. The second idea does not necessarily follow from the first, but, developmentally, the two are fused at this point.

---The Evolving Self, p. 66

Developmentally oriented writers such as Kegan, Kholberg, and Perry suggest that advising and student support should be especially interested in this cultural or ethical relativism insofar as it describes the developmental tier at which which many undergraduates begin their college careers. A self-authoring model further suggests that working with students inclined toward cultural or ethical relativism offers rich opportunities for educational reframing through student reflections that prompt and support student intellectual and identity development. A number of our efforts in CLASS are geared toward taking advantage of this opportunity.

**Self-Authoring and Learning Partnerships**

"Conception determines perception, and we can know reality only by acting on it."

---Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*

Within CLASS we strive to take a developmentally sequenced approach to student support whenever appropriate. Although self-authoring might be represented in a number of ways, we typically follow Kegan’s model of constructivist developmentalism by describing student development in terms of a multi-tiered process of meaning construction ³ whereby a student moves from seeing knowledge as certain toward viewing knowledge as contextual. The resulting stages of self-authoring can be depicted thus:

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³ The tiers depicted in the figure below are adopted from the work Marcia Baxter-Magolda and her colleagues. They translate Kegan's developmental levels spanning from infancy to old age into educational tiers that are particularly relevant to undergraduate learning and development. This specific version of the three educational tiers most commonly found in undergraduate education is adapted from Kari Taylor and Carolyn Haynes, who work with Baxter-Magolda. See their "A Framework for Intentionally Fostering Student Learning" (*About Campus*, vol. 13, Issue 5, Nov.-Dec. 2008).
Of course it is important not to over-generalize from a theory or practice in ways that overlook the particular circumstances of the individual learner. This caution is especially pressing when an individual student’s situation cannot be accounted for by the model in question. Writers such as Kegan and Baxter-Magolda in fact stress that cognitive development is an iterative rather than a linear process (a feature of the model blurred by the above figure).\(^4\) And as many writers in the field of higher education have noted, iterative processes are difficult to model and justify in terms of a narrowly construed outcomes-driven agenda. Therefore iterative processes have often been ignored or underappreciated by educational planners.

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\(^4\) Kegan depicts the developmental process as a helix or spiral. He writes that “every developmental stage . . . is an evolutionary truce. It sets terms on the fundamental issue as to how differentiated the organism is from its life-surround and how embedded. It would be as true to say that every evolutionary truce . . . is a temporary solution to the lifelong tension between the yearnings for inclusion and distinctness. Each balance resolves the tension in a different way. . . . Development is thus better depicted by a spiral or a helix . . .” (The Evolving Self, p. 108).
But as a framework for understanding how the vectors of student progress typically play out at the intersection of learning and development, self-authoring provides a powerful conceptual tool for student services professionals, and it is one of the foundational models we employ when developing services, practices, and student support technologies in CLASS.

**Self-Authoring and Frames of Reference**

In our advising and student support work we stress that a key component of self-authoring practice involves paying attention to the number and type of frames of reference with which a student is working when learning or demonstrating knowledge. These models also emphasize the importance of considering whether learners are embedded within their frames of reference or have a conscious relationship with them. Learning and development occurs, says the literature on self-authoring, through a process of disembedding from a frame of reference, making it an object of reflection, and then reintegrating what has been learned through that reflective process. As Kegan writes: “Growth always involves a process of differentiation, of emergence from embeddedness, thus creating out of the former subject a new object to be taken by the new subjectivity” (*The Evolving Self*, p. 31). Kegan goes on to note:

> In fact, something cannot be internalized until we emerge from our embeddedness in it, for it is our embeddedness, our subjectivity, that leads us to project it onto the world in our constitution of reality. When the child is able to have his reflexes rather than be them, he stops thinking he causes the world to go dark when he closes his eyes.
> ---*The Evolving Self*, p. 31

In CLASS, our FYE works repeatedly through this three-step process of disembedding, reflecting, and re-integrating. We typically ask students to undertake this reflective process in the context of concrete problems like writing a resume, declaring a major plan of study or writing a capstone reflection at the end of their first year as an undergraduate.
note patterns that are the necessary precursor to prioritizing resume content, identifying resume keywords, matching experiences to objectives, and the like.

Then students must consider their potential resume material from the point of view of their prospective employer and their intended outcomes (reflection) in order to select the right resume format, compose a cover letter, craft a profile, etc. Success in this phase of the resume writing process hinges on the degree to which the learner can reflectively step outside their own perspective far enough to anticipate the questions, preferences, and values of those who will be evaluating the resume.

Crafting a compelling resume, in other words, involves more than having accumulated the right sort of experiences and credentials; it also requires an acutely developed sense of audience.

Finally, both in the job application materials and in the interview itself, the student must reintegrate this work, in a sense becoming the version of themselves they have authored through the job application process.

All incoming New High School students to CLA are guided through this resume writing cycle over the course of their enrolment in the FYE. They also undertake a different but related version of the self-authoring reflection cycle as they craft a first year capstone reflection, which is completed by the conclusion of the second semester of the FYE. Using Kegan’s levels of cognitive development and Kari Taylor and Carolyn Haynes’ tiers of undergraduate learning, the process involved in producing the FYE capstone reflection, or any other self-authoring narrative, can be depicted thus:
As the above figure suggests, the majority of first-year students begin their inaugural year of study by viewing their educational and co-curricular experience in terms of ‘facts.’ As tier 1 learners (level 3 in Kegan’s model) they tend to believe knowledge is certain, to work with externally defined value systems, and to rely on or resist authority unreflectively. If asked why they entered the university they might well respond with conformist answers such as “I came to college because my parents want me to.”

Taylor and Haynes point out that developmental learning goals at this stage include prompting students to examine and question how authorities create knowledge, and to see and appreciate the need to begin the process of crafting their own understanding. Likewise, students working at this educational tier should be given opportunities to recognize and assess the drawbacks of defining themselves on the basis of the perceptions of others.

Working with the above model, one aim of the engagement experiences and reflective exercises provided through the FYE is to facilitate the process of students disembedding from their stories. One way to advance this developmental process of loosening the grip
of fixed views is through reflective encounters with diversity and difference. Another is to challenge student to define and act on their own values through a challenge or engagement curriculum.

By undertaking such work, undergraduates moving toward tier 2 thinking typically develop an awareness of multiple perspectives and the role of uncertainty in the construction of understanding and knowledge. Such students begin to make sense of their educational experiences less by relying on authority and externally defined goods and more by considering multiple possibilities in the context of their own emergent sense of identity and values. If asked why they entered the university, they might well respond with pluralist answers such as “I came to college because it seemed like the best available option.”

Taylor and Haynes note that students working at this developmental tier should be challenged to begin choosing their own beliefs while deepening their understanding of how they determine what is valid or true within the context of multiple points of view, some of which may exist in tension with each other.

Students who successfully disembed from their learning story and move into tier 3 learning develop an understanding of the contextual character of knowledge and the capacity to articulate the relationship between referential frames and their contents. Such students are characterized by internally crafted value systems and if asked why they entered the university might well respond with expressivist answers such as “I came to college because I want to discover and develop myself.”

Taylor and Haynes suggest that tier 3 learners should be given the developmental opportunity to engage in authentic interdependent relationships with others in ways that challenge them engage and acknowledge the multifaceted identities of those with whom they interact.

**Staff Training with the Model**

Each year, CLA advisors participate in a three-day training program before the start of first-year and transfer student orientation. This training not only refreshes advisors’ knowledge about core competencies such as requirements, resources and opportunities for students; it also provides the opportunity for advisors to develop strategies and skills to assist students in becoming self-authors of their educational experience at the University. By helping students reflect on their education, articulate the purpose of their academic and co-curricular activities and set goals based on their strengths and interests, CLA advisors help students to achieve our learning and development outcomes. In addition, CLA advising has designed an advising curriculum to help students take the first steps to a successful first year and lay the foundation for the achievement of the learning and development outcomes.
Student Introduction to the Model

At orientation, students are introduced to the idea that the choices they make are informed by their goals and values, and they are asked to articulate their strengths, interests and goals so that their advisor can best assist them with course choices and goal-setting at the University. Over the summer, advisors are in contact with students via a Countdown to Campus communication that provides students with additional resources and topics of reflection. During the College Day of Welcome Week, students meet in groups with advisors and participate in activities that allow students to understand the values that motivate them and to learn from an experience where they solved a problem. In the fall, students meet as a group again with an advisor and start to set goals for their undergraduate and post-graduation plans. Later in the fall, students meet with an advisor in an individual appointment to discuss their experiences so far at the University and to assess or reassess their plans. To this end, the advising curriculum sets out specifically to assist first-year students with the following learning and development outcomes: 1) identifying, defining and solving problems; 2) locating and critically evaluating information 3) communicating effectively; 4) developing goal orientation; 5) developing self-awareness.

Working with the Student Learning and Development Outcomes:

The CLASS Learning and Development Outcomes Curriculum

We work with three Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and three Student Development Outcomes (SDOs) throughout CLASS. The SDOs are

- Goal Orientation
- Responsibility and accountability
- Self-Awareness

The three learning outcomes are:

- Can identify and solve problems
- Can locate and critically evaluate information,
- Can communicate effectively

CLA Student Services is currently engaged in an initiative to build assessment of the learning outcomes into our first year experience course (FYE), so that will be the focus of this response.

Mapping the Developmental Vector of Student Learning and Development Outcomes

Over the past six years or so, we've done a number of presentations on both assessment and the SLOs. We believe there is an intrinsic developmental vector that can be mapped across the 7 SLOs (though it is fair to say this was not planned by the drafters of the SLOs, and we are not sure everyone would agree with CLASS on this). Our developmental grounding for this assertion comes out of Kegan, Baxter-Magolda, and
other thinkers about self-authoring and student learning. We also draw on Carol Dweck's work emphasizing the importance of growth mindsets.

All first year students need to identify and solve problems, to locate and critically evaluate information, and to communicate effectively in almost every learning situation. Consequently, these three learning outcomes are incorporated into almost every level of service, together with other learning outcomes as appropriate. The learning-developmental foundation or our selection of SLOs and SDOs is grounded in self-authoring theory. Marcia Baxter-Magolda maintains that student learning and development is rooted in three overlapping arenas: epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. The relationship of these learning-developmental spheres can be depicted thus:

![Learning & Developmental Spheres of Self-Authoring](image)

*Figure 20 - Learning & Developmental Spheres of Self-Authoring*

*Adapted from Baxter-Magolda, Learning Partnerships*

We build on this understanding in our approach to working with student development and student learning outcomes.
The Internal Coherence of Student Learning Outcomes

This work is leveraged in the case of our first year New High School (NHS) students by the FYE. As mentioned above, we are incorporating and assessing three SLOs through the FYE, and this work draws on the model set out in the figure immediately below:

Tier 1 SLOs involve learning that can be completed in a single frame of reference -- whether that is a background the student brings to campus or a background that is acquired here on campus. Three SLOs belong in this tier:

- Master a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry
- Locate and critically evaluate information
- Identify and solve problems

Although students can work across several referential frames in pursuit of these learning outcomes, it is possible to pursue them while focusing on only one. Consequently, two of our three SLO goals focus on this level of learning.
Tier 2 SLOs involve learning that must engage two or more frames of reference. Three SLOs belong in this tier - including one which we focus on in the FYE:

- Understand the role of creativity, innovation, discovery, and expression across disciplines
- Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies
- Communicate effectively

We approach communication, the third SLO in this second tier, as a triadic alignment of sender's goals, receiver's expectations/assumptions, and message content. At a minimum, effective message content requires working with the sender's and receiver's frames of reference in ways that render each comprehensible to or interoperable with the other.

The theoretical background for this approach is grounded in various schools of dialogism (Bakhtin, Vygotsky, Greg Ulmer), systems/cybernetics theory (Gregory Bateson), and anthropology/ethnography (Mead and Mary Catherine Bateson) - which we will be happy to detail at greater length if that is of interest.

Tier 3 SLOs involve learning that is about frames of reference. One SLO belongs to this meta-level:

- Acquire skills for effective citizenship and life-long learning

Although we approach these tiers as if they are sequential, the learning is iterative rather than linear, and students work across different tiers for different problems.

A similar case can be made regarding the developmental vector that can be mapped across the learning outcomes. In the case of the SDOs we consider whether the referential frame is subjective in the sense of being drawn primarily from the student's self-understanding and assessment or intersubjective in the sense of taking account of the self in the context of other's values, judgments, goals etc. The figure below outlines our model of the internal coherence of the SDOs:
Two important points are made in the above figure. First, this grouping of the development outcomes can be broken into two sections – the upper half has a focus on self, the lower half has a focus on self-in-the-context of others. Development theory (Perry, Kegan, Baxter-Magolda, Pizzolato, etc.) tells us most first and second year students undertake their studies with a focus on the self. Consequently, our services for these cohorts should emphasize, at a minimum, both a goal orientation and self-awareness.

Second, we can tailor our work with undergraduate to the individual developmental level of a particular undergraduate by beginning our conversation or contact from any position on the diagram – from an external focus on goals or responsibilities, from an internal focus on one’s inner life, from an external focus on differences, or from an external focus on our connections to others.
These two points are important, because the development outcomes progress differently in each of the three developmental tiers suggested by the self-authoring developmental model used by our unit.

**Strengths**

As part of our work at the intersection of learning and development, CLA Student Services supports and advances the efforts to build a strengths-based campus. Incorporating a strengths-based approach has proven an effective way for advisors and counselors to connect with students and to work to help them align their skills, values, interests, and goals. As findings from the Gallup organization and researchers in positive psychology (CLASS uses research and models drawn from Dweck, Clifton, Gardner, and Haidt, among others) suggests, addressing academic weaknesses is a way to develop needed educational competencies. But to support the transition from competency to excellence requires a consistent focus on talents and strengths. Both the campus and the college have made significant strides in this arena.

When students complete the StrengthsFinder assessment, their top 5 Strengths are logged in APLUS. This feature allows the advisor to view a student's top 5 talent themes prior to an appointment and to consider ways to incorporate them into the advising discussion. The strengths approach is especially useful in framing advising conversations focused on learning partnerships, because the initial student work with StrengthsFinder provides him or her with personally relevant information, a readily understood conceptual model, and a common vocabulary with which to understand and use that information in the services of crafting meaningful educational plans.

Strengths are also emphasized within the FYE. PAs deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Strengths philosophy and the impact of their top 5 talent themes during their training and development activities. First-year students complete a reflective assignment about their strengths and also have the opportunity to attend a Strengths Workshop or Coaching Session with the Office of Student Engagement for credit within the FYE.

Strengths are also a significant part of our staff development. CLASS staff have participated in numerous training sessions about Strengths and our leadership team completed a team talent map exercise in Summer 2011 to better understand how our collective talents and gaps influence our communication, roles, leadership styles, and outcomes.

**Brief Motivational Interviews (BMI)**

As we continue to move into a new student support environment, advisors have the opportunity to have more proactive rather than reactive conversations with students. As such, BMI can be an effective approach for advisors to use. BMI’s principles of expressing empathy, developing discrepancies, rolling with resistance, and supporting self-efficacy can help advisors create effective learning partnerships with their advisees.
Furthermore, advisors may have an opportunity to expose a pattern of decision-making that is not aligned with student’s stated goals in a non-judgmental fashion.

While BMI applications in higher education are only just getting started, CLA advisors have been introduced to BMI as an advising strategy on at least two occasions: at the OSA-sponsored training in March 2011 and during our week-long summer orientation training in May 2013. For the second training in May 2013, CLA Student Services partnered with Mark Groberski in UCCS to develop a session that outlined the potential uses of the BMI technique in an advising setting. Specifically, advisors reviewed how to:

- Rely on OARS during conversations with students
  - Asking open questions
  - Affirming valuable statements or behavior
  - Reflecting what is being said
  - Summarizing what is being said

- Listen for Change Talk and Sustain Talk and how to respond accordingly
- Shift the focus if a student is “resistant” and find more common ground

The session included an opportunity for advisors to reflect on their current practice, see problems they face modeled, and came away with reference material on BMI. Example problems included:

- A student is returning from academic probation. She works 30 hours a week, says she has insufficient financial aid, and therefore must work those hours to pay for school. She also insists on taking 18 credits so she can finish school faster and make up for lost time.
- A student says he is not doing well in classes because he lacks motivation. He attributes this to not having a major picked out and no career path that he wants to follow. He is also questioning whether he should drop out of college.
- A freshman comes in to talk about her difficulties with test performance in classes. She is used to getting A’s in high school without much effort. She says she keeps track of her assignments, upcoming tests, and studying in her head. She insists she does not need to use a planner.
- A student comes in to talk about his poor performance and the likelihood that he will be on academic probation for the second time. He says he is too tired, depressed about school, worried about his parents’ reaction, and lacks motivation. You notice the smell of alcohol as he talks.

**ADVISING SYLLABUS**

*NOTE: Our advising syllabus contains periodically updated versions of the content below. The purpose of CLA Student Support Service’s advising syllabus is to begin the educational partnership between students and their advising team by outlining mutual responsibility and expectations. The Advising Syllabus is available on the CLA Student Services website and students also receive a copy when they attend orientation.*
The syllabus includes a mission statement, vision statement, learning goals for students, and advisor and student responsibilities, current versions of which can be found directly below.

**Mission Statement**
CLA Student Services assists undergraduates in the College of Liberal Arts in identifying meaningful academic and professional goals that reflect their strengths and interests and in developing informed educational and co-curricular plans to reach those goals.

**Vision Statement**
CLA Student Services develops educational partnerships with our undergraduates that help them transition to and succeed in college. We want our students to make active, effective decisions that shape their own learning. We build services and programs that help students develop sound educational plans linking their motivations for learning, their educational goals, and their life aspirations. Our goal is to assist students to develop their academic strengths by supporting their developmental needs, their academic progress, and the formation and pursuit of educational plans appropriate to their professional and personal values and goals.

**Learning Goals for Students**
CLA Student services staff members are educators who teach students to identify and connect learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom to their broader goals. By helping students to identify their strengths and interests, and by helping them discover and make use of pertinent resources, information, and options, we assist our undergraduates in making choices that will inform their educations as a whole.

Our advising team organizes the work of successful students into four content areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility and Initiative</th>
<th>Creating and Achieving Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Successful students will take responsibility for their educational experience by developing concrete academic and co-curricula plans, which incorporate opportunities that inform and enhance their educational experience while preparing them for life after graduation. Students should discuss and update these plans with CLA advisors and counselors on a regular basis.</td>
<td>Successful students will develop informed, flexible, and achievable academic and professional objectives with the assistance of their CLA Student Services team. Students will make curricular and co-curricular choices that will help them accomplish their goals through regular meetings with academic advisors and career counselors, and enrollment in major and career planning courses and workshops.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Liberal Arts Advantages</th>
<th>Learning Outside the Classroom</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Successful students will develop and articulate an understanding of the value of their liberal arts education by exploring and deepening their diverse strengths and</td>
<td>Successful students will connect knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom to their community and workplace by participating in co-curricular</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
interests through the acquisition of new skills and knowledge that are applicable to a broad range of personal and professional settings. Students will make intentional choices about their liberal arts curriculum by seeking opportunities to think critically, independently, and creatively about the world and their place in it. The value of their undergraduate degree should be articulated, among other places, in graduation plan documents, creative and academic portfolios, and resumes and applications for post-graduation opportunities.

opportunities such as research, internships, service-learning, community involvement, learning abroad, off-campus study, meaningful part-time employment, and student groups. Students will develop relationships with mentors to enrich their educational experience.
Question 20: What types of professional development opportunities and resources do you offer, or support, for staff in your academic advising offices?

**Required and Optional Training**
Required advisor training is communicated and monitored by supervisory staff. Optional training is at the staff member’s discretion.

**Professional Development Grants**
Professional advisors receive funds by submitting proposals to the CLASS professional development committee. The committee has a guideline of $1,000 for a professional development opportunity but would consider a larger amount.

**Local and Regional Conferences**
CLASS supports participation in and attendance at the local professional conferences throughout the year, including the First Year conference, the annual AAN retreat, Career Development Network (CDN) events, the Tate awards and conference, the NACADA regional conference, and the Minnesota Career Development Association. These are all opportunities for professional advisors and career counselors to stay current and network with colleagues. CLA Student Services also hosts its own internal conference which gives staff the opportunity to present on a pertinent topic and learn from their peers while building team morale.

**CLASS Training Programs**
We continually work to improve the services our advisors provide to students by providing our advisors various trainings and avenues for development. In addition to our pre-service training and our diversity trainings, we continue to provide on-going in-house trainings on various topics. We bring specialists from around the university into our staff meeting to explain services and programs that are available to our students. We engage our expert advisors in best practices discussions around internal and University policies and processes. Our health-science advisors provide training on pre-health advising to our advisors on a frequent basis. We provided training on alternative health careers. Plus, our advisors continue to serve on a wide variety of unit and campus committees and seek additional professional development opportunities. We have had numerous advisors give presentations at NACADA and other conferences and once again received the award for Best in Region at the NACADA Region 6 conference.

**Training Expectations and Opportunities**
Professional development is expressed as an expectation in both an advisor’s job description and is discussed during annual performance reviews. Professional Advisors
are expected to participate in annual pre-service orientation training intended to ensure advisors are prepared for the myriad questions and issues that arise when students are starting at the University.

In addition to this annual required training, professional advisors are required to attend on-going training offered throughout the year to further their professional development. The Diversity Advocacy Team provides periodic training throughout the year on issues that affect our students of color and, generally, our diverse student population. Their work complements our Staff Training Committee which plans and offers training and development sessions multiple times each semester to provide CLA Student Services colleagues with practical skills, theoretical knowledge, and developmental experiences to be successful in their positions.
Question 21: Do you have guidelines for promotion? (if so, please attach)

2014 Promotion Guidelines and Procedures, Academic Professional (P/A) Staff - Assistant, Associate, and Senior Academic Advisor Series

The guidelines currently in place for professional academic advisors are included below. We are in the process of revising these guidelines to be congruent with a revamped set of guidelines for annual performance evaluations for academic advisors that we began to use this year. (See material in response to question 26.)

2014 Promotion Guidelines and Procedures
Academic Professional (P/A) Staff
Assistant, Associate, and Senior Academic Advisor Series
College of Liberal Arts Student Services (CLASS)
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

This document describes the guidelines for promotion application and review for CLA Student Services (CLASS) Advisors on appointments in the Assistant, Associate, and Senior Academic Advisor series.

I. PROMOTION GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC ADVISORS
These guidelines follow the CLA P/A Promotion Guidelines and are based on the human resources description for each job classification in the series.

WHO? Academic Professional (P/A) personnel in the annually renewable categories of Assistant Academic Advisor and Associate Academic Advisor in CLASS may be promoted from one rank to the next. Assistant Academic Advisors with at least 3 years of full-time academic advising experience in CLA with an appointment of at least 75% time and at least 5 years of full-time academic advising experience total (e.g., two 12-month appointments at 50% time will equal one year of full-time experience) may request promotion to Associate Academic Advisor. Associate Academic Advisors with at least 5 years of full-time academic advising experience in CLA with an appointment of at least 75% time and at least 7 years of full-time academic advising experience total may request promotion to Senior Academic Advisor. In the rare instance that an Assistant Academic Advisor believes that he/she meets all of the criteria for promotion to Senior Academic Advisor, he/she may request promotion to the Senior classification without working in the Associate classification.
RELATIONSHIP TO ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW: Promotion from one rank to the next is separate from the annual performance review of all P/A personnel to determine eligibility for merit increases and reappointment.

WHEN? Promotion dossiers for P/A personnel may be submitted once per year. Deadlines for each step of the process for any given year will be explained in the cover letter sent each year to all Assistant and Associate Academic Advisors. If the recommendation for promotion is approved, the promotion takes effect on July 1 of that year.

II. CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION CONSIDERATION

TO ASSOCIATE ACADEMIC ADVISOR (Job Code 9708)

1. A commitment to quality academic advising in CLA Student Services.

2. A record of contributions in these three categories of activity:
   • direct academic advising service to students;
   • liaison and program development with CLA and/or other collegiate academic programs; and
   • professional development and service.

3. Evidence of increasing sophistication in knowledge and performance of academic advising.

4. A history of performing responsibilities at a high level:
   • successful annual performance review evaluations;
   • effectiveness in areas such as teamwork, judgment, communication skills, organizational skills, productivity, initiative, and independence;
   • extensive knowledge of collegiate and University requirements, opportunities, and policies; and
   • comprehensive working knowledge of degree options, resources, and support services across the University.

5. A capacity for self-renewal and for responding to future needs of CLA Student Services and CLA students.

6. A record of professional contributions that evidence participation in the field of academic advising through service in the University community.

TO SENIOR ACADEMIC ADVISOR (Job Code 9707)

1. All six of the above criteria.
2. In addition:
   - Leadership (serves in leadership roles; motivates others to support unit objectives)
   - Reliability (consistently demonstrates high level of dependability in performing responsibilities)
   - Autonomy (exercises appropriate independent judgment)
   - Collaboration (promotes cooperation with others in working toward unit, collegiate and University goals)
   - Flexibility (responds to change positively; demonstrates willingness to implement new initiatives)
   - Adaptability (demonstrates commitment to continuous improvement and innovation in CLASS)

3. Effectiveness in a broad range of responsibilities within CLA Student Services.

III. PROCEDURES FOR PROMOTIONAL REVIEW

1. See “Who” and “When” above as well as the cover letter. Academic Advisors request a review for promotion by notifying their supervisor with a letter by the established deadline.

2. The candidate prepares a dossier to demonstrate successful satisfaction of the criteria for promotion to the next rank. The dossier includes the following materials:
   a. candidate’s statement of his or her case for promotion, which should identify the candidate’s major accomplishments and contributions to the unit, emphasizing especially those accomplishments and contributions that support the requested promotion (no longer than 1500 words);
   b. current curriculum vita or résumé;
   c. two to four letters of evaluation from staff or faculty from within or outside of CLA Student Services who have worked closely with the candidate, or from students who have benefited from the services provided by the candidate; additionally, candidates may submit a one-page summary of student comments;
   d. reasons for selecting each evaluator;
   e. sample(s) of the letter(s) of solicitation sent to evaluators.

3. The candidate’s immediate supervisor writes a statement (no longer than 1500 words) providing his or her recommendation and rationale with respect to the proposed promotion and submits the letter and the candidate’s dossier to the Director.

4. The Director then adds to each candidate’s dossier the following materials:
   a. a copy of the unit’s standards, guidelines, and procedures for promotion;
   b. a position description for the candidate’s current position, including percent-time of the appointment and qualifications for the position;
c. a position description for the position to which the candidate is being proposed for promotion, including percent-time of the appointment and the qualifications for the position; and
d. annual reviews of the candidate for the current year and preceding two years.

5. The Director presents to the Assistant Dean the dossiers of all candidates.

6. The Assistant Dean presents to the CLA Dean a written statement with recommendations regarding the proposed promotions and the completed dossiers of all candidates.

7. The College’s promotion review committee reviews the recommendations of all CLA departments and forwards its recommendations to the CLA Dean.

8. The CLA Dean notifies both the candidate and the Assistant Dean of the final decision.
Question 22: How do you use technology, beyond APLUS, in advising?

Using Technology to Drive Development of our Learning Organization
At the level of unit planning, our use of technology is primarily intended to deploy resources with optimal efficiency to maximum effect. But we also incorporate technology in our research and analysis work, employing technology to further our development of CLASS as an outcomes-oriented learning organization.

![CLASS Research and Analysis Diagram](image)

The above figure provides the general framework within our technology and technology-centered processes undergird our knowledge management and analytics-driven staff training and process design.

Our most visible uses of technology, however, are in applications providing or supporting direct services to students.

Leveraging Student success with Technology
Over the past decade, CLASS has worked hard to build a comprehensive technology-supported framework. We called our larger initiative MyCLA, and we intended it to
serve as a platform from which a variety of student services applications could be developed and easily deployed. Several applications, such as the APLUS and Mid-Term Alerts (MTA), have set the bar campus-wide for high-touch outreach systems, garnering recognition from across the University.

APLUS

APLUS is bracketed by the question here asked. But inasmuch as we developed APLUS and are in the process of testing the next generation of its applications, it seems important to include some information about it nonetheless.

We first deployed APLUS in fall 2008, and as is true in all the colleges and units using this technology, it is a near real-time web-based application used by academic advisors and student services professionals to monitor the progress of their assigned students. Every 10 minutes, APLUS looks for potentially problematic student behavior, such as dropping below 13 credits or not enrolling for the following semester after a student’s registration queue time has passed, and notifies the assigned advisor should anything be found. Users can then log into APLUS, review the student’s record, follow up with the student, record notes, and set a reminder to contact the student again should he/she fail to follow-up on their advisor’s recommended next steps. APLUS is no longer just for academic advising either, and is now used by over 1,000 staff/faculty in 190+ units/colleges on 4 of the University’s campuses, who in total record between 800 to 1,900 student contacts per day.

APLUS provides a rich suite of features to facilitate the student services operations, including Google Mail/Calendar integration, customizable email templates, custom alerts, custom filters, virtual subunits (e.g., Pre-Law advising), web-based appointment scheduling with customizable intake processes, UCard-enabled check-in kiosk functionality, and much more.

That said, there is much in the way of future development for APLUS, and the next generation of features are on their way, including:

- New mobile device-compliant user interface to allow for access from tablets and smartphones of all kinds. Responsive design.
- Real-time messaging integration for instant notification of drop-ins or students checking in for appointments, alerts/warnings, etc.
- Drop-in queue management for managing small to large scale drop-in appointment processes, including automated staff/student assignment rules.
- High volume contact recording for front-desk operations, including the ability to work on any number of incomplete contacts during high traffic situations.
- Student degree progress data integration (in collaboration with Academic Support Resources), including the ability to create alerts/warnings based on degree progress issues and course-taking history annotation with which courses did or did not count towards a declared program.
**Midterm Alerts**

Another system, which was recently integrated into APLUS, is **Midterm Alerts (MTA)**. First deployed in spring 2003, MTA monitors the flow of negative mid-term alerts issued by PeopleSoft between the 4th and 8th weeks of each term and provides a highly customized utility for advisors to follow up with their students. Based on the course(s) the student’s mid-term alert was issued for, as well as any applicable risk factors (i.e., previous term gpa between 2.0 and 2.3, probation, etc), MTA builds a personalized email message to the student the advisor can alter before sending, vastly reducing the effort in conducting mid-term alert outreach while ensuring a high level of personalization.

**Chronos and Schedule Builder**

More recently, CLA deployed the Chronos scheduling engine, which forms the core for the University’s Schedule Builder tool and is also integrated into APLUS. Chronos allows students/advisors to generate schedules based on hard or soft course/requirement constraints and iteratively prunes away “bad” schedules, such as those which are too geographically/temporally spread out or do not meet liberal education requirements (for wildcard searches), using a genetic algorithm. Chronos is invaluable for advisors during orientation, cutting schedule creation time from 20-30 minutes to only 1 or 2 minutes, allowing the focus of the conversation to be on the student’s goals rather than the creation of a workable schedule.
Question 23: What tools do you use?

To be successful, advisors rely on a variety of technological tools and current and accurate information. Advisors rely on APLUS, PeopleSoft, APAS, Chronos/Schedule-Builder, GradPlanner, Transfer Databases (Admissions Lib Eds, Other UM colleges transfer pages, and USelect – formerly MNCAS), OneStop, University Catalogs, Class schedule, Class search, PCAS, ECAS, Departmental websites, collegiate websites for other colleges and service providers on campus, ImageNow, and Math, Chemistry, and Second Language Placement scores. In addition to these tools, direct advisor support service staff also rely on the CLA language testing program website, the Commencement RSVP website, Crimson, DARwin, Data Warehouse, Google Calendar, a variety of Microsoft Access databases (13-credit, Open List, Probation, etc.) Moodle, MyU Portal, New Student Check List, Orientation Database, Orientation First Year Program’s NGOT database, Placement Testing Administration Database, Proxy administration, Transfer Evaluation System (TES), UM Reports, and uSelect.

Advisors also need appropriate office space to meet with students and sufficient technological support.

A closer look at some of these resources would include:

**PeopleSoft**
Viewing detailed real-time information on individual students, updating student records, recording/viewing student notes via PS Comments interface.

**APAS**
Interface used for generating degree progress reports for individual students and recording course exceptions. Also, used to check for accuracy of program requirements with PCAS.

**ImageNow**
Document imaging system used for scanning, indexing, and storing documents to student records.

**DARwin**
Program used to review program coding when troubleshooting APAS exceptions and used as part of the process to identify transfer equivalencies and extend course expiration dates.

**MyCLA**
MyCLA is the CLASS the tools and technology environment for student support services. It includes the following:
APLUS
Comprehensive near real-time and semi-automated student caseload monitoring, outreach, and reminder framework.

Major/Minor Declaration System
Completely paperless application used by departmental and college advisors when students declare their major/minor, including program requirements form, exception/equivalency capture, custom form approval routing processes, and automatic export to ImageNow (the University’s enterprise document imaging system). Currently used for 104 major/minor programs and degree tracks in 37 academic departments.

Staff Development Training Repository
Electronic archive of over 160 advising and career counseling training videos and support documentation. Includes assignment functionality for new/existing staff, coordinator access to verify training completion, and dedicated high-definition video streaming technology. We have not updated this repository since the loss of the staff position responsible for its upkeep (2011), but we continue to draw on it when training “off-cycle” new hires.

Orientation Administration Database
This is a tool used by the Student Information Office staff to manage orientation planning and implementation for incoming students, the advising team, CLA departments and Orientation First Year Programs. This includes tracking all incoming students, tracking students’ interests in majors, assigning orientation dates, tracking major distributions, and meeting room tracking.

UM Reports
Web-based reporting application for ad hoc list generation, such as degree recipients, advisee lists, etc. Includes export functionality.

Graduation Planner
Web-based degree program planning application used by students and advisors to create 4-year graduation plans.

GoldPASS
This is a tool used by advisors to help students realize the internship and career options available to them.
Question 24: What tools would you like to have, but don’t?

Toward a More Integrated and Robust Advising Environment
Our current tools/systems are functional, but significant improvements could be made in the areas of capacity, reliability, interoperability, coordination, and timeliness of tools/systems, data, and communications.

Physical Facilities
In order effectively to use the tools with which they are provided, advisors need to have better office space which enables them to meet privately with students. We have made progress on this front. But more remains to be done.

Systems & Hardware
Regardless of the size and scope of our technological resources, it is essential that advisors have readily available technological support and enough computers for staff and students to make reliable use of the available tools. Additionally, when systems go down, it is difficult for advisors to do their job. Several times during orientation, for example, vital enterprise systems, such as PeopleSoft, have crashed. This brings critical advising processes to a sudden halt. System uptime improvement, including the minimization of downtime during Sunday maintenance windows, should remain a University priority in order to ameliorate negative impacts to advising and student services operations.

Real-Time, Accurate Information
Similarly, it is vital that all relevant websites, programs, and data sources be updated as quickly as possible. We do a disservice to students when advisors are not provided with immediate up-to-date and accurate information. Faulty information increases advising error and erodes the foundation of trust between student and adviser. As such, we are strong advocates for the incorporation of real-time (or near real-time) data in crucial operational systems like APLUS and Chronos/Schedule Builder.

Gaps remain for existing data sources, however, the most notable being the lack of timely degree progress information. This gap is the underlying cause necessitating time-consuming large-scale batch jobs for APAS report generation and per-student manual verification of degree progress by individual academic advisors, and in-progress course grade/attendance information. We could improve efficiency and advance key student outcomes by better sharing currently available information and by building on that foundation to develop a more robust degree progress tracking and support processes system.

Incorporating Current Tools and Data Sets into an Integrated System
Along these lines, it would also be helpful if we worked more generally toward crafting our currently available student support tools into an integrated student support system. For example, we would greatly enhance advisor efficiency and accuracy if we could
integrate Moodle data and ImageNow documents into APLUS or some other unified system such that advisors do not need to be in 4-5 different systems each time they are helping a single student. Such integration would enable us to build on each data source to deliver new or greatly-improved functionality.

With some modification, Moodle possesses the potential, for example, to act as the official University repository of all in-progress course gradebook information (i.e., the common gradebook). In this upgraded role, Moodle could provide systems such as APLUS with real-time data and the ability to move from reactive alerts (e.g., student dropped all their courses) to proactive alerts (e.g., student is failing two or more courses).

Likewise, ImageNow’s core service – document imaging and storage – can be extended via integration with systems like APLUS to better facilitate collegiate/unit transitions to paperless processes. Automated optical character recognition (OCR) for full-text search of imaged documents could greatly improve metadata collection, and it would allow us to incorporate data currently locked away in static documents into APLUS’s rich alerts/warnings/notification engine. Such a transition from static date to actionable information would significantly enhance our ability to drive outcomes, leverage strengths, and mitigate weaknesses in our current student support efforts.

Interwoven with the integration of tools/systems is the need to continue our efforts to coordinate and align work process within and across institutional boundaries. In order to facilitate such coordination and alignment, advising units need to continue our emphasis on cross-training and professional development, improved communication with departments and campus and intercollegiate partners, and a shared approach to implementation of campus-wide policies. Central administration can help to advance these and related efforts by driving greater coordination of the work of admissions, Financial Aid, UCCS, tutoring, etc. with the larger student support enterprise. A more robustly integrated student support system will incorporated both centrally and collegiately developed sources of domain-specific and campus-wide process data into a 360 degree view of students’ academic careers.
Question 25: If you had additional resources, what would you use them for?

The Need for Additional Career Services Support
Our most pressing need for additional resources is in the area of career services support. If not otherwise constrained, we would use additional resources to expand and systematize career planning opportunities and experiences across all four years of the CLA undergraduate career, coordinating and integrating them with our other student support services in CLASS and in the departments and programs. We would love to have the resources necessary to establish and support the expectation that all CLA students should undertake at least one signature career engagement experience such as an internship, job shadowing, independent research or creative project, or service learning course. Currently, however, this is not possible.
Question 26: What additional information would be useful for us to know that we didn’t ask?

Revising Performance and Evaluation Guidelines for Advisors

This year we are implementing a new set of performance evaluation guidelines for academic advisors in CLASS. We were eager to build on previous materials to include all the elements we believe are essential to effective advisor performance. This will be an important building block in revising our promotion guidelines and in improving on our ongoing training to make sure we address all aspects of Advisor success.

College of Liberal Arts Student Services
Academic Advisors Annual Review: Guidelines for Preparing Summary Reports

Section 1

The annual performance review, as mandated and structured by the College, provides an opportunity for an advisor and supervisor to assess and reflect upon the advisor’s work over the course of the review period (January – December). Each advisor provides a “summary report” to his or her supervisor. The supervisor reviews the report and provides a written evaluation, and the advisor and supervisor meet for an evaluation conference.

These guidelines describe what is expected in the summary report submitted by academic advisors. The report is a narrative statement regarding the previous year’s work as seen in the context of the following:

- CLA Student Services’ mission and vision statements
- Advisor role and responsibilities
- Advisor expertise or development in five key competency areas

This narrative statement will not simply be a list of tasks accomplished, but will rather provide the advisor an opportunity to situate his or her work in terms of the broader frame of our collective student services work in the College of Liberal Arts. Section 3 of this document provides reflection questions to assist advisors in thinking about and preparing the content for the narrative statement.

While the advisor’s updated resume provides a historical account of responsibilities, accomplishments, and contributions, the narrative statement should include:
• Reflection on achievements in the last year, including what the achievement was, how it was accomplished, and what the advisor learned or will do differently in the future based upon the achievement
• Assessment of changes in performance or service due to implementation of goals set in the prior review period
• Areas for growth in the coming review period
• Goals and strategies for accomplishing goals set for the next review period

In response, supervisors will provide feedback and coaching on advisor performance both in written format and in a personal discussion with each employee. Supervisors will support advisors in developing strategies to achieve goals that foster individual development and promote the foundational components of academic advising in the College of Liberal Arts, noted above and outlined in detail in Section 2, below.

Section 2
CLA Student Services Mission and Vision Statements.

Mission Statement
Our Mission Statement reflects our key goals and objectives.

CLA Student Services assists undergraduates in the College of Liberal Arts in identifying meaningful academic, engagement, and professional goals that reflect their strengths and interests and in developing informed educational and co-curricular plans to reach those goals.

Vision Statement
Our Vision Statement reflects our values and our pathway for attaining our unit-wide goals.

CLA Student Services develops educational partnerships with our undergraduates that help them transition to and succeed in college. We want our students to make active, effective decisions that shape their own learning. We build services and programs that help students develop sound educational plans linking their motivations for learning, their educational goals, and their life aspirations. Our goal is to assist students to develop their academic strengths by supporting their developmental needs, their academic progress, and the formation and pursuit of educational plans appropriate to their professional and personal goals.

Roles and Responsibilities for CLA Academic Advisors
These expectations are central to a CLA academic advisor’s work with individual students, and more broadly, as a representative of our unit to faculty, parents, and other College and University staff members.

They include but are not limited to the following:

Academic Advising
• Working with students during orientation, welcoming them to the University and the College, planning initial coursework, and discussing follow-up advising requirements.
• Meeting individually with students to help them clarify their major and/or career plans by exploring their unique interests, values, abilities and personalities.
• Communicating to students and other stakeholders the value and benefits of a liberal arts education.
• Understanding and communicating to students the liberal education requirements and how they contribute to the students’ education.
• Understanding and communicating to students the curricular requirements unique to their declared program(s), being able to explain how the requirements are structured for that program.
• Understanding and communicating to students the value of engagement opportunities, including study abroad, internships, community service-learning, research. Assisting them in learning about and exploring these opportunities.
• Understanding the unique career-related concerns of liberal arts students and assisting them in accessing resources such as CLA Career Services.
• Providing timely and accurate information.

Advising Techniques and Strategies
• Using developmental advising techniques while guiding students to progress toward their degree.
• Understanding intercultural context and applying inclusive advising strategies with students from a variety of cultures and communities.
• Guiding students to set realistic goals and assisting them in the process of achieving those goals.
• Encouraging self-reliance by helping students make informed and responsible decisions.
• Participating in training and professional development opportunities as appropriate to stay abreast of current trends in academic advising.

Advising Support and Services
• Being available to students in-person, electronically, and by phone during business hours.
• Keeping calendar up-to-date with available appointment times.
• Responding to student emails and concerns in a timely fashion.
• Monitoring assigned advisees and intervening when necessary.
• Using technical tools necessary to advise students, including APAS, APLUS, PeopleSoft and Graduation Planner.
• Keeping accurate and timely records on student contacts.

Campus Resources
• Referring to campus resources such as financial aid, counseling services, career services, disability services, co-curricular programs, multicultural student services, etc. based on an accurate understanding of their roles.
• Understanding the inter-connectedness of the campus resources and how they contribute to the student experience.
• Respecting the opinions and professional roles of colleagues.
• Developing and fostering relationships with faculty and departments, knowing whom to contact for questions regarding undergraduate programs. This is especially the case for regional advisors in relation to their assigned department.

Campus and College Policies and Procedures
• Being knowledgeable about and sensitive to federal, state, and institutional policies and procedures (e.g., privacy laws, equal access, equal opportunities, etc.).
• Upholding the integrity of academic and curricular policies established by the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and by the College of Liberal Arts.
• Understanding the university’s mission, vision, and goals, including the Student Learning and Development Outcomes and advise with these in mind.
• In the case of regional advisors, being knowledgeable about the policies, practices, and goals of the relevant department, at least insofar as these have an impact on the student experience.

Committees and Special Projects
• Providing service to the Unit, the College and the University by serving on committees and working on special projects as assigned.

Five Competencies of the Advising Profession
The five competencies listed below represent the core competencies of the academic advising role in CLA Student Services and should provide guidelines for your response. It is expected that advising staff will be working effectively in all five competency areas, but that challenges will also be present as we continue to grow and adjust to the academic environment.

Conceptual - Models that guide practice related to the context in which we work

a) Theoretical Knowledge: An understanding of student development theory, advising theory, and/or social theories as it is related to the direction and initiatives within the office, department, College, and University.

Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:
• Maintain working knowledge of different and current advising theories and approaches (e.g. Strengths-based advising, Self-Authorship, Brief Motivational Interviewing, Learning Partnerships, etc.);
• Develop and maintain knowledge of culturally appropriate and inclusive advising practices and manage differences with skill and sensitivity;
• Maintain working knowledge of student learning and developmental outcomes to implement advising that guides students to create conditions for engagement in opportunities inside and outside of the classroom.

b) Application of Theoretical Knowledge to Student Needs: An understanding of the foundational knowledge relevant to academic advising and the ability to apply theory to enhance student learning and development.

Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:
• Identify and understand student characteristics, identity development, needs, goals, experiences of students in CLA and how these factors influence each student’s holistic growth and learning;
• Apply organizational, student learning, and developmental theory appropriately as is necessitated for each student contact;
• Guide students to reflect and make informed decisions through challenge and support.

Informational - Knowledge advisors need in order to help students succeed

a) Job Knowledge: An understanding of position responsibilities and how they relate to the direction and initiatives within the office, department, College or Unit, and University.

Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:
• Apply knowledge and skills in a reliable, responsible, and responsive manner;
• Maintain a high standard of conscientious, courteous, and enthusiastic service;
• Adhere to applicable professional ethical standards and practices.

b) Professional Academic Advising Resource Knowledge: An understanding of university and collegiate student resources and services available on campus and knowledge of student communities within CLA Student Services. For regional advisors, knowledge of assigned department.

Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:
• Help students understand curricular and policy requirements, develop and realize their full academic potential, achieve learning and development outcomes, and graduate in a timely manner;
• Maintain a high level of knowledge about University and collegiate resources and services;
• Be knowledgeable about and sensitive to federal, state, and institutional policies and procedures (e.g., privacy laws, equal access, equal opportunities, etc.);
• Refer students to campus resources such as financial aid, counseling services, career services, disability services, multicultural student services, co-curricular programs, etc.;
• Understand the inter-connectedness of the campus resources and how they contribute to the student experience;
• Actively engage in information gathering to stay on top of new information and changes.

c) Professional Academic Advising Curriculum and Process Knowledge: An understanding of university and collegiate curriculum, procedures and policies and the ability to establish clear guidelines and communications with students on degree requirements, course planning, and deadlines.

Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:
Understand and communicate to students the liberal education requirements and how they contribute to the students’ education;
Understand and communicate to students their declared program(s) requirements, including course sequences, prerequisite course work, as well as whom they should talk to in their department(s) and how to best plan for completing their requirements;
Prepare for and complete degree clearance, probation/suspension, academic petitions, etc. in timely manner while observing University and College policies and procedures.

Advising Relationships - Interpersonal competencies needed to do work with students (learned in a variety of ways, including role-playing, shadowing, case studies, etc.)

a) Advising Skills: The ability to assist students in their intellectual and personal development through assessment of interests, competencies, values, experiences and desired lifestyles.

Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:
• Assist students in defining their academic, career, and personal goals, and the development of an educational plan that is consistent with those goals;
• Build meaningful relationships, using active listening, empathy, and intervention skills.
• Assist students in actively reflecting on their interests, values, and competencies through various means of individual or group assessment using standardized tools, or in-person consultation;
• Encourage students’ exploration of a range of experiential opportunities, including service learning, directed research, and co-ops or internships;
• Advise students on resources available to them to help them establish short- and long-term career goals based on self-knowledge and accurate information about the world of work.

b) Equity and Diversity Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills: An understanding of how cultural history, contexts, and differences and institutional/social barriers influence students’ experiences and the ability to serve as an advocate for students.

Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:
• Create connections with diverse students and support their growth and development;
• Develop a commitment to improving the climate for historically underrepresented communities in higher education (e.g. people of color, those with disabilities, those of different sexual orientation, religion, values, etc.) and understand diverse ideas and differing viewpoints to exhibit respect for all;
• Model culturally appropriate and inclusive work practices; challenge and support individuals, groups, and organizations to respectfully work across difference; and advocate for students when appropriate;
• Identify areas for personal growth and engage in an ongoing commitment to improving one’s own intercultural competence;
• Understand University policies and procedures that support equity and diversity on campus.

**Technological** - Tools advisors need to do our work

**a) Technology Knowledge and Skills:** an understanding of how campus systems operate and interact; and the ability to navigate and teach students how to operate within each system.

*Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:*

- Apply and develop skills in Peoplesoft, APAS reports, APLUS, Graduation Planner, and schedule builder tools;
- Respond to APLUS Alerts/Warnings within one week of issue; and enter APLUS contact notes within 48 hours of contact with students;
- Empower students to utilize APAS and Graduation planner to make satisfactory academic progress and take primary and increasingly active responsibility for their education and career planning;
- Complete probation/suspension and degree clearance according to unit-publicized deadlines;
- Think about accessibility needs when using technology and ensure it’s inclusive of all communities (e.g. e-mail or written communications, power point presentations for workshops and orientation, creating accessible documents, etc.);
- Identify areas for personal growth and engage in an ongoing commitment to improving one’s own technology competence.

**Professional Development & Engagement** - Knowledge and skills needed to enter, contribute to, and thrive in our communities of practice

**a) Self-Assessment and Professional Growth:** The ability and willingness to engage in on-going reflection regarding effectiveness, and desire to improve skills and knowledge base.

*Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:*

- Engage in self-evaluation and seek out opportunities to challenge one’s self (e.g. shadow another advisors’ appointments, have colleague observe appointments and provide feedback, etc.);
- Improve professional practice through seeking out opportunities to expand one’s skills;
- Check in with supervisor as appropriate regarding projects, challenges, or work tasks;
- Make appropriate modifications to behavior based on constructive feedback.
b) Flexibility and Adaptability: The ability to anticipate and respond effectively to new situations and challenges within the department and support the implementation of new initiatives.

*Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:*
- Maintain professionalism and a positive outlook during times of change;
- Anticipate alternative ways to accomplish work and promote effectiveness;
- Use time well, set appropriate priorities, and follow through with work plans;
- Manage time away from office with timely vacation/medical requests, acknowledging and respecting busy times, and ensure work is covered/completed;
- Promptly communicate with office/supervisor when needing to be out of the office due to illness or other factors.

c) Individual, Group, and Organizational Communication: The ability to establish effective communications and partnerships with students, colleagues, faculty, and the external community.

*Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:*
- Communicate information and ideas in an effective and professional manner across a variety of cultures and communities;
- Maintain a high standard of conscientious, courteous, and enthusiastic service;
- Students and staff feel welcomed, safe, valued, and cared for in the student community office;
- Collaborate with others and foster a comfortable climate for the expression of ideas;
- Demonstrate leadership in motivating others to meet unit goals and objectives;
- Deal with problems and conflict in a direct manner and work to improve situations.

d) Initiative and Problem Solving: The ability to demonstrate creativity, initiative, and innovation while seeking out opportunities to improve department practices.

*Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:*
- Proactively seek out assignments, and respond effectively to emerging priorities;
- Take responsibility for problems that arise and resolve them appropriately;
- Manage problems and conflict in a direct manner and works to improve situations;
- Work effectively with pressure, deadlines, and in ambiguous situations.

e) Presentation, Teaching, Research and Publication: The ability to integrate and disseminate scholarly work through practice and public forums.

*Performance meets expectations when staff are able to:*
• Engage in scholarly activity in the fields of Advising, or student development through services to the profession (e.g. presenting at conferences, serving in a leadership capacity, or publishing articles or research in the professional literature).
• Participate in activities which reflect a genuine concern for students, the University of Minnesota community, and the student affairs profession;
• Conduct programmatic research to affirm current practices or suggest improvements;

Section 3
Advisor Summary of Performance and Goals
Below are suggested prompts to direct the advisor’s reflective narrative statement regarding work over the review period. The prompts are intended to help shape the advisor’s narrative; however, the narrative need not follow the order of the prompts presented, and it is not intended that each individual prompt be addressed. The advisor narrative should include reflection on goals from last year, projected goals for the coming year, and comments relating to the five competency areas. This should reflect an individual’s development during the review period, including challenges, improvements, achievements and areas for growth.

1. Please reflect on the goals you identified in your previous review.
   a. Discuss which goals were met and how you accomplished them as well as what you learned from them and/or are able to apply from them to your advising role.
   b. For the goals not met, identify the barriers to achieving them, personal and/or institutional, and describe your plans, if any, for carrying them forward.

2. Using the guidelines for meeting expectations in each competency area above and keeping in mind the Roles and Responsibilities for Academic Advisors, describe your accomplishments, strengths, and challenges for each competency area. The reflection questions below can be used to help guide your response. You do not need to answer every question, but be sure to illustrate in your narrative response how you are working within each competency area.

Conceptual
   a. What strategies have you used in the past year to ensure that you have met these expectations, and that your knowledge is current and accurate?
   b. Which theoretical models, or aspects thereof, have proven most useful in the past year and which seem less useful?
   c. Which theories or advising models would you like to learn more about?

Informational
   a. Which resources have proven most useful to you?
b. Which resources do you wish were available or would like to learn more about?
c. Which of these knowledge areas have presented the greatest challenge when it comes to meeting expectations, and what strategies you plan to use in the future to meet that challenge?

Advising Relationships
a. What strategies do you find most useful in establishing relationships with various populations as well as maintaining them?
b. Which relationships do you find most challenging and how do you work through them?
c. What strategies you have noted from observing colleagues that you hope to emulate?

Technological
a. Which systems have presented the greatest challenge when it comes to meeting expectations, and what strategies do you plan to use in the future to meet that challenge?
b. What systems or processes within the systems do you want to learn more about or wish were available to you to provide better advising service to students?

Professional Development and Engagement
a. What area(s) of professional practice have you identified in the past year that need more development and how do you plan to work on this in the coming year?
b. How have you responded to change in the past year, what you found most challenging, and what strategies you will use going forward?
c. In which type(s) of communication do you feel you are most proficient, which do you find most challenging, or which would you like to further develop?
d. How you have shown initiative in the past year, and what projects do you hope to work on in the coming year?
e. What scholarly activity have you engaged in this past year, and what programs and presentations you hope to develop/make?

3. Add new or continuing goal(s) in each competency area as appropriate and explain how they relate to:
   a. Direct service to students;
   b. Promoting equity and diversity (e.g. intercultural and diversity trainings, creating an inclusive and accessible environment, etc.)
   c. Professional development (e.g. attending trainings, membership and participation in professional associations, presenting at professional conferences or meetings, etc.); or
d. Service to the University of Minnesota, the College of Liberal Arts, or to CLASS (e.g. Committee work, volunteering at events, etc.).

**Section 4**

**Supervisor’s Summary Comments**

The designated supervisor will respond to the employee’s written performance review and, in conjunction with the personal interview, summarize comments on the employee’s performance, achievements, areas for improvement, and goals for the coming year. The summary will include the following information:

1. Employee name, ID, and title, Review Period and Supervisor name.
2. General performance of the employee. Discuss how the employee performed their job duties to meet expectations described considering their strengths and accomplishments as well as any challenges during this review period.
3. Performance improvement. Review and discuss areas in which there is potential for growth and possible improvements in performance. List, if any additional training or development this advisor needs to meet any emerging changes.
4. Goals. Review the employee’s previous year's goals and whether they were met. Review goals which may not have been met and why. Determine if any of these goals should be added to the next year’s goal list.
5. Next year’s goals. List the final agreed upon goals for the following year, both individual and in relationship to the plan and goals of the unit. Supervisor will discuss any anticipated adjustments or changes in relations to job duties or unit changes.
6. Supervisor and Employee Signatures. The signatures will note that the summary has been read and reviewed.
7. Additional Comments. The employee may attach any additional comments that will become part of their permanent personnel file.
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