



MISSION: Provide dynamic learning for living, working and serving. VISION: A success story for every student and stakeholder.

NACADA Consultation

Executive Summary

At the invitation of Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State), Dr. Chuck Lepper and Kathy Stockwell visited the College to conduct a program evaluation of advising services on September 11-12, 2017. We are members of the National Academic Advising Association's Consultants and Speakers Service, and we base this report on consideration of initial information provided to us prior to the visit and the two-day consultation which involved in-depth interviews with various and relevant administrators, faculty, and staff at M-State.

As a result of the documentation and conversations provided in advance of the visit and the meetings with individuals from all areas of the institution, we gained an understanding of current academic advising policies and procedures. Our overall observations cover what we believe are the strengths and challenges/opportunities facing the College associated with advising. This report then offers recommendations for consideration intended both to create a comprehensive academic advising program and to enhance students' advising experiences.

Among the many strengths observed are the dedicated primary-role advisors who want to be effective advisors with accurate and timely information. Also apparent is the administration's commitment to improving advising and communicating the important role it plays in student success. There is a strong desire on the part of all those involved in advising to provide students with the best advising experience and to create an institutional commitment to an advising mantra, perhaps "advising as teaching." The College expressed the need to create more consistency in the advising experience provided by all advisors on the four campuses, define the roles of advisors and students, clarify what constitutes an effective advising session, recommend how to deliver effective professional development experiences for advisors, and any additional suggestions to enhance advising.

Improvement is accomplished through effective change, and change is a process that requires intentional and thoughtful efforts. Such efforts are often guided by shared vision. An effective advising program requires a mutual understanding of what advising is, and the lack of shared understanding calls for a systematic process to define advising and what constitutes an efficient and effective advising session at M State. It is important that all advising stakeholders be involved in defining advising at M State and developing a consistent mantra for what advising is that is clearly communicated to all, most importantly, to the students. Advising needs to be seen as integral to student success and as "developmental" and "teaching" rather than registration and scheduling. Vision, mission, goals, and outcomes for advising will help to guide the creation of a comprehensive program and a clear organizational model for advising.

The administration, staff, and faculty at the College expressed a sincere desire to take advising to the highest level. The College is currently well-positioned to look critically at existing advising practices and plan strategically for improvement. Recommendations in the report include the

following which are explained in more detail, including resources, in the comprehensive report that follows.

1. Develop a strategic plan for academic advising.
 - a. Form an advising council
 - b. Create a vision and goals statement and revisit advising mission statement
 - c. Develop student learning outcomes (SLOs) and process delivery outcomes (PDOs)
 - d. Revisit the advising syllabus
 - e. Develop program and advisor assessment
2. Revise and strengthen the academic advising structure.
 - a. Unify leadership for academic advising
 - b. Identify and implement a clear organizational model for academic advising
 - c. Revise the job description for academic (primary-role) advisors
 - d. Implement an intentional and comprehensive First Year Experience (FYE) program for all students
 - e. Revisit the mandatory advising policy
 - f. Review academic suspension policy
 - g. Establish a protocol for effective and consistent advising sessions
 - h. Develop a peer advising program
 - i. Create a group advising process
3. Design a professional development plan for all advisors.
 - a. Schedule team training in developmental/holistic advising practices for all primary-role academic advisors
 - b. Offer ongoing professional development opportunities
4. Develop a more robust flow of communications to enhance student success initiatives.
 - a. Improve internal communications
 - b. Communicate more clearly the what, why, and when of advising
5. Establish an advisor recognition and reward process.
6. Review and adopt appropriate advising technology.

This report comes with our high regard for the leadership, administrators, faculty, and staff of Minnesota State Community and Technical College and their commitment to academic advising and student success.