**Implementing Holistic Student Support:  
A Practitioner’s Guide to Key Structures and Processes**

This three-part framework outlines key features of holistic student support at community colleges and broad-access four-year colleges. The first section outlines *structures* or *guidelines* that facilitate the provision of student support that is sustained, strategic, integrated, proactive, and personalized (Kalamkarian, Karp, & Ganga, 2017). It addresses who receives what support, and when. The subsequent two sections focus on the *process* of engaging in holistic student support.[[1]](#footnote-1) These sections outline how advisors and student support staff reach out to students and what they teach their advisees. Engaging in outreach and advising pedagogy holistically involves moving beyond disseminating information to students to supporting their cognitive development and sense of social and emotional belonging.

**The Role of Technology**

The structures and processes identified in this framework can be enhanced by advising technologies, including degree-planning, coaching, early-alert, and predictive-analytic tools. These tools provide detailed information about students that can be used to enrich and personalize interactions between students and advisors and other student support staff. They can also help students build metacognitive skills. Finally, these tools may be used to promote strategic service delivery, enabling advisors and student support staff to more effectively triage services and spend more time focused on the students with the greatest needs. When advisors and student support staff adopt technologies with these goals in mind, advising technologies can be powerful resources for promoting sustained, holistic student support.

**How to Use This Framework**

The framework may be used as an interactive tool to support colleges’ efforts to redesign advising and student support practices. It does not represent a comprehensive list of components that must be present for a holistic support model to be in place. Rather, it outlines an extensive set of guidelines and processes that institutions may consider implementing in accordance with their institutional context and needs. Institutions can review the framework to (a) identify how the components are currently implemented at their college and (b) develop a plan for implementing or improving these components.

This document provides an interactive planning worksheet for institutions. Two columns with expandable text boxes offer space to document existing and prospective implementation of the framework’s components. In order to make the most use of this tool, we recommend noting relevant technologies in the responses.

**Who Should Use This Framework?**

The framework will be most relevant for college staff directly involved in providing or overseeing advising and student support services. Depending on the institution, this may include a variety of departments in addition to academic advising—for example, institutional research, information technology (IT), the registrar’s office, counseling, and other support services such as Federal TRIO Programs or veterans’ services. The framework can be used either individually or collaboratively (with multiple people working to complete the tool together, or with multiple people completing the tool individually and then discussing it to come to a consensus).

**Companion Pieces**

The information contained in this framework is also available in PowerPoint format. The PowerPoint is intended to serve as a resource for those wishing to lead group discussions about the state of advising and student support at their institution. The PowerPoint can be used to present core concepts while others follow along and make notes directly in the framework.

This framework is also a companion piece to CCRC and Tyton Partners’ (2017) *Technology-Mediated Advising and Student Support: An Institutional Self-Assessment*. While the current framework focuses on the specifics of designing and delivering advising and student support services, the institutional self-assessment rubric offers guidance on broader institutional structures and processes that support a holistic advising model. In addition, while this framework is designed to allow institutions to identify which pieces of holistic student support are already in place and to make plans for implementing those that are not, the self-assessment rubric is designed to help institutions assess how well they are doing in providing holistic student support. Together, these tools offer a comprehensive blueprint for redesigning advising and student support.

**Structures for Student Support Practices**

| **Component** | **How is this component currently implemented at our institution?** | **How will this component be implemented at our institution if advising is redesigned?** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Administrative Support** |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for notifying students of administrative or clerical information. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for identifying students who have not completed administrative tasks. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for intervening with students who have not completed administrative tasks. |  |  |
| **Education Planning** |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for helping students create a multisemester degree plan. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for ensuring that all students have a complete degree plan. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for intervening with students who do not have a complete degree plan or who make substantive changes to their degree plan without advisor support. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for checking in with students to ensure that their degree plan still aligns with their academic and career aspirations. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for monitoring students’ progress toward completion of program requirements. |  |  |
| **Student Analytics—Risk Identification** |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for determining which students are considered at-risk and why. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for checking early-alert notifications to see which students are at-risk. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for providing actionable predictive analytic data to advisors or other support service staff. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for using predictive analytic tools to see which students are identified as at-risk. |  |  |
| **Student Analytics—Early Interventions** |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for ensuring that all at-risk students interact with advising or other support services. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for intervening with students when informed that they are deemed at-risk. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for alerting students when they are at risk of falling off their degree plan. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for differentiating intervention strategies based on risk criteria (e.g., the number of flags that students receive). |  |  |
| **General Advising** |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for recording advising notes. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for ensuring that advising and other support service staff have access to up-to-date advising notes. |  |  |
| 1. Guidelines for employing advising pedagogy that promotes student learning in three categories (information, skills, and cognitive development) (Martin, 2007) and that provides affective support (Tait, 2000). |  |  |

**Outreach Processes**

| **Component** | **How is this component currently implemented at our institution?** | **How will this component be implemented at our institution if advising is redesigned?** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Information** |  |  |
| 1. Messages to students that convey administrative information (e.g., registration dates and other deadlines). |  |  |
| **Skills** |  |  |
| 1. Messages to students that provide general strategies for academic success (e.g., messages encouraging students to visit the tutoring or writing center). |  |  |
| 1. Messages to students that provide personalized strategies for academic success (e.g., messages encouraging students to discuss their essays with the writing center for specific English courses in which they are struggling). |  |  |
| **Cognitive Development** |  |  |
| 1. Messages to students that motivate them to reflect on their educational experiences and identify areas of potential concern (e.g., via a student self-reflection survey). |  |  |
| **Affective Support** |  |  |
| 1. Messages to students that communicate support and encouragement, such as welcome messages at the start of the semester and congratulatory messages to students flagged as high-performing. |  |  |
| 1. Messages to students that connect them to social and emotional supports as needed. |  |  |

**Advising Pedagogy**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Component** | **How is this component currently implemented at our institution?** | **How will this component be implemented at our institution if advising is redesigned?** |
| **Information** |  |  |
| 1. Advisors who teach students where they can find administrative information (e.g., when a financial aid or scholarship application is due). |  |  |
| **Skills** |  |  |
| 1. Advisors who teach students academic planning skills (e.g., how to identify course requirements for their program of study and build a course schedule for the semester). |  |  |
| 1. Advisors who teach students technical skills (e.g., how to create degree plans, understand institutional policies, use the student information system[s], read a degree audit, and register for classes). |  |  |
| 1. Advisors who teach students study skills (e.g., strategies for preparing for an exam). |  |  |
| **Cognitive Development** |  |  |
| 1. Advisors who teach students how to think critically about their academic and career pathways and make academic and career decisions (e.g., by helping students understand how their current courses prepare them for their careers). |  |  |
| **Affective Support** |  |  |
| 1. Advisors who support students to feel a greater connection to the institution (e.g., by helping students identify an institutional structure such as a club or event that may interest them). |  |  |
| 1. Advisors who teach students personalized strategies for addressing social and emotional issues, including connecting students to resources that meet their specific needs. |  |  |

**References**

Community College Research Center & Tyton Partners. (2017). *Technology-mediated advising and student support: An institutional self-assessment*. New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.

Kalamkarian, H. S., Karp, M. M., & Ganga, E. (2017). *Advising redesign as a foundation for transformative change.* New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community CollegeResearch Center.

Karp, M. M., Kalamkarian, H., Klempin, S., & Fletcher, J. (2016). *How colleges use Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success* (CCRC Working Paper No. 89) New York, NY: Columbia University, Teachers College, Community College Research Center.

Martin, H. (2007). Constructing learning objectives for academic advising. Retrieved from NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources website: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Constructing-student-learning-outcomes.aspx>

Tait, A. (2000). Planning student support for open and distance learning. *Open Learning*, *15*(3), 287–299.

1. The emphasis on structures and processes emerged out of CCRC’s work on leveraging technology-mediated advising to make transformative institutional changes. See Karp, Kalamkarian, Klempin, and Fletcher (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)