

Program Description:

Although the crux of this program is to provide an advising experience outside traditional times and locations, we also provide crucial informational reminders to those who utilize the parking structures on campus. For instance, we will remind students to check for any holds they may have in order to benefit from early registration. We wish our fellow Owls the very best of luck during midterms and finals. We toss a bottle of water to a thirsty Owl passing us on a skateboard. The needs met by this program are far larger than traditional advising services.

Originally, advising was offered two nights a week in different parking garage locations (Mondays in Garage 1 from 5-7pm and Thursdays from 5-7pm in Garage 2). The days, times and locations are typically tailored to the semester course offerings and the likelihood that our Owls will utilize one garage more than another. This semester, the Get Wise: On the Go service is provided once a week in Garage 1 from 5-7 p.m. based on data for the term and previous use trends. The advisor On the Go is able to provide the same assistance with academic questions, concerns and referrals without the strain of making an appointment during traditional office hours.

For most of the time Get Wise: On the Go has been in existence, the funding has been wrapped into pre-existing structures and has not resulted in any additional requests or lines of funding. By working in collaboration with campus stakeholders, costs have been relatively small and shared. Our collaborators in Commuter Services have supplied this program with snacks and drinks (granola bars, chips, pretzels, juice and bottled water, etc.). The maximum amount spent on these items has been \$500 a semester. In addition, the initial outlay for signage and business cards was just shy of \$500. We have been fortunate enough to receive promotional items from around campus that had already been purchased as well. Once our partners knew what we were doing in the garages, most were more than happy to gift items they were already using for promotions as we offered to promote in a location that was previously an untapped resource.

The use of funds and resources were justified by the connection to the mission, vision and values of Florida Atlantic University. We are all about students! Joe Murray, our University Advising Services Assistant Dean posed a question to his staff: how can we reach more students in an innovative way while utilizing the currently available facilities and resources? Through collaborative efforts and some light hearted, possibly in jest suggestions, Advising on the Go emerged. Our parking garages had originally been built with a ‘guard gate/customer service’ booth. However, the gates were removed and the booths went unused. Knowing that about 83% of the 21,000 students on the Boca Raton Campus are commuting to school coupled with the institution’s focus on increasing quality, appreciative advising, the justification to position advisors in our garages seamlessly connected to the strategic plan for FAU.

This program reached out to many departments on campus to provide resources (such as pamphlets and cards) and free items (such as promotional bags and posters). This program has specifically worked with campus dining, athletics, veteran’s affairs, tutoring and supplemental instruction, dean of students, counseling, and others to provide up to date information for students to obtain.

Additionally, this program has begun to work with both orientation and transfer student services as well as commuter life professionals within the Office of Student Activities and Involvement. These meetings discussed how programs held between these three units can be integrated and provide even stronger outreach to this population.

In total for Fall 2016, 393 students were seen as part of this program. Specific students cannot appropriately be determined but largely assumed to be commuter students. Quantitatively, this program reached nearly 400 students who often self-reported they had difficulty reaching traditional advising offices. This program also provided many students with information they otherwise were not privy to locate which encourages and fosters student involvement and engagement, which has been shown to increase retention efforts. This advising program is extremely unique in nature and as such allows this institution to provide a service nearly every other institution does not.

Additionally, this program affords students to build rapport with a strong resource on campus in an academic advisor. Students self-reported to the advisor in the garage that they felt a stronger connection to the institution as a result of having someone available to talk to them. Advising on the Go is truly an example of meeting students where they are which is an important initiative for institutions across the country. Further, this program is easily adaptable for other institution. This program utilized as discussed previously unused space in a central area for students. Even if an institution does not have an exact space to the program at FAU, there are a myriad of ways this program could be implemented. For example, it has been considered to rotate the location of this program to such areas as popular bus stops or student meeting spaces. An institution as such could easily identify these high volume areas in which to meet students.