



VIRTUAL
24HR NACADA CONFERENCE

Building an Academic Advising Center, Three Months and Counting

Marymount University, Arlington, Virginia



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Introduction

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Members of the women's leadership team responsible for transforming MU's approach to advising and launching our new Academic Advising Center on a three-month timeline.




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Discussion

- **Presidential initiatives**
- **Data** that informed the president's decision to change our academic advising model
- **Goals** of this change
- **Marymount's new model** for academic advising vs. our previous model
- **Timeline** for implementing the change
- **Support and resources** that were instrumental to this transformation
- **Takeaways** and what we want to share with you on what we learned




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MU Profile and Student Population



- Independent, non-profit
- Founded in 1950 by Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary (RSHM)
- Located in Arlington, Virginia (6 miles from Washington D.C.)
- 2200+ undergraduates and 1100+ graduates
- Diverse: 39 states and 71 countries
- 68% female/32% male
- 66% commuter
- 30% first-gen students

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Women in Leadership at MU

- Empowering women was Marymount's early mission
 - RSHM's mission was to educate women: 2-year all female college focus on liberal arts/humanities; teachers; nurses
- Initiative was lead by women
 - University President
 - 30% of college presidents are women¹
 - Senior Academic Affairs leadership – majority women
 - Provost, Associate Provosts and Deans
 - Interim Director and Senior Academic Advisor
- MU has a large percent of female employees (68%)

¹ "American College President Study 2017" www.acenet.com <https://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/American-College-President-Study.aspx> (accessed August 1, 2019)

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Previous Advising Model

<p>First Year Experience (FYE) Program (Year 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAC&U High Impact Practice (HIP) • Started 7 years ago • Focus on First College students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising and programming • High touch advising • FYE Advisors 		<p>Faculty Advisors (Years 2-4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching, Service, Scholarship • Advising (part of service) required but not seriously evaluated • Inconsistent messages/knowledge • Multiple advisors
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Presidential Initiatives

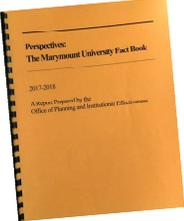


What led to this decision?

- Dr. Irma Becerra became MU's seventh president in July, 2018
- Vision: to increase
 - 4-year graduation rate to 75%
 - Fall to Fall retention rate to 90%
- Created a Graduation & Retention Committee
 - Campus-wide members meet every two weeks
 - Financial support; scheduling; rapid response team, etc.
 - Professional Academic Advising model

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Professional Academic Advising



- Data from several sources were pointing to the importance improving academic advising to support students' needs and retention and graduation rates
 - Professional Academic Advising model
 - Stand alone initiative; but works in collaboration with Graduation and Retention Committee
 - Addresses student needs
 - Urgency to implement

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MU Data

2017-18 Graduating Student Survey (undergrad only):

Faculty and Advisors

- Both undergraduates and graduates reported strong levels of satisfaction with faculty. They agreed less strongly with statements about their academic advisors.
 - Eighty-five percent (85%) of undergraduate graduating students ... that faculty members were approachable. Eighty-four percent (84%) of undergraduates ... respondents agreed that faculty members had a high level of expertise in their fields. (suggests strong teaching)
 - Undergraduate respondents agreed that advisors were knowledgeable (77%) , available at convenient times (76%), and helpful (77%), (should be mid-80s or higher; suggests improvement in advising; split model)

while a lesser percentage agreed that they discussed future education options (62%) or career options (61%) (should be mid-80s or higher; suggests focus areas for faculty mentors)

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MU Data

From the 2017 Alumni Survey:

- Marymount's overall experience, academic quality, and majors and programs received the highest ratings by both undergraduate and graduate alumni.
 - Eighty-three (83%) of undergraduate and 86% of graduate alumni respondents rate their overall experience at Marymount as "good" or "excellent".
 - Eighty-seven percent (87%) of undergraduate and 86% graduate alumni respondents rate Marymount's academic quality as "good" or "excellent".
- **Academic advising received the lowest ratings: 70% of undergraduate ... alumni respondents rate Marymount's academic advising as "good" or "excellent."**

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Peer and Aspirant Models

4-Year graduation rate for First College cohort graduates(Fall 2010);

- Peer: 18 schools on list; 3 below MU; 1 equal
- Aspirant: 13 schools on list; MU lowest

Multiple models:

- Faculty advisors are assigned to students within a major freshman through senior year
- Professional advisors assist all students with generic questions and non-traditional students enrolled in the evening program
- Three Program Counselors for a College whom advise all first year, sophomore, and undeclared students; Faculty mentors
- Professional for all first year student; Faculty mentor; Career advisor

No One Size Fits All...but all have split model

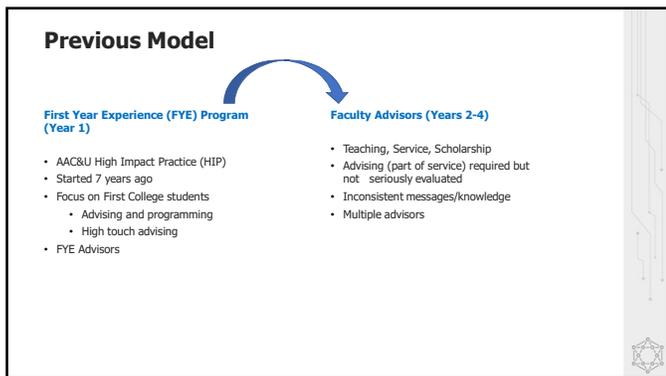
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Goals for Professional Academic Advising

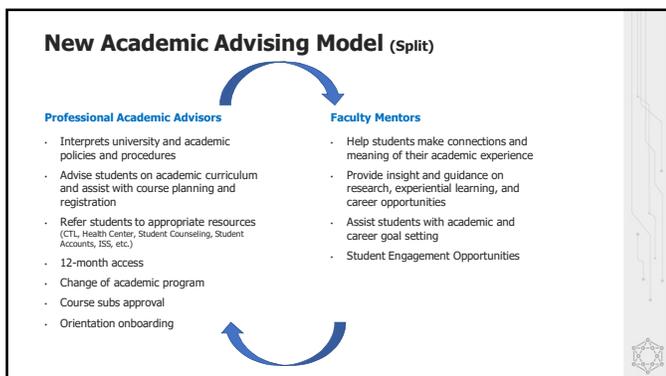


- Proactive advising
- Improved retention and graduation rates
- Addresses student needs
 - 12 month access to advisors
 - More standard advising processes
- Student-centered approach
 - providing appropriate referrals to campus resources
 - help students understand university policies and procedures
 - 'Go to place' for school resources
- Positive student experience

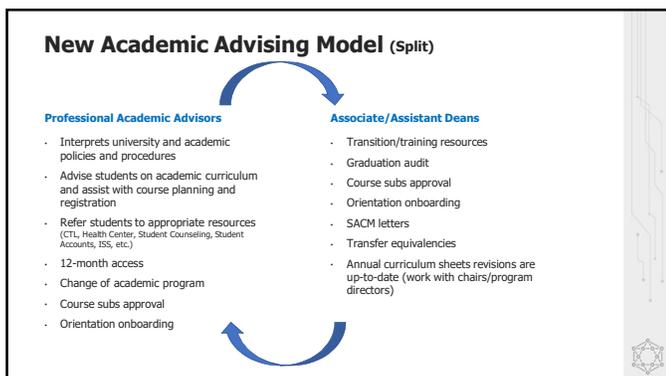
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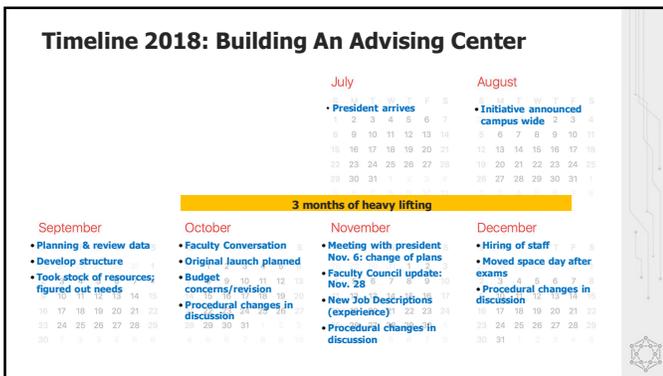
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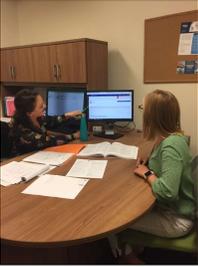


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Establish Process for Change



- Structure first
- Staffing needs
- Budgetary needs
- Space/facility reallocation
- Inform community 'along the way' as much as possible
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
 - Academic advisor
 - Faculty mentor (still in progress)
 - Associate Dean
- Campus wide communication plan

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Inform Campus Along the Way



- Faculty and staff
- Proposed implementation plan
- First Year Experience Program on hold/shared
- Develop communication plan
- First Year required course (DISCOVER) course management reassigned
- Budget implications
- Timeline of proposal
- **Feedback via discussions, emails, meetings**

Needed to address many campus-wide concerns

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Time to Reflect



- Campus-wide comments and concerns
 - Calling back our current sophomores means they will have had minimum 3 advisors in 2 years
- More data needed

First College:

- 23% students leave in the first year
- Additional 13% leave second year

Transfer:

- 19% leave first year at MU

Focus on student experience first and second years

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Revised the Approach

- Revise the professional advising proposal
- Meeting with President and Provost:
 - Determined a couple critical factors from additional data that will affect the student experience:
 - Pareto principle (80/20): Year 1 and 2 we lose the most students;
 - Need to target the high risk students first and build on this to support a 4-year graduation rate
- Negotiated new plan
- Opt-in option
- Student and campus announcement: December 2018

Must be a POSITIVE student experience



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Develop Final Communication Plan




- Brand development
 - Messaging; new logo; office rearrangement
- Additional messaging in January 2019
 - Opt-in after the last day to add
 - When faculty left or became part time moved into AAC
 - Ultimately we want faculty-advised students to have a choice
 - Once in AAC/stay in AAC
 - Re-opened opt-in for summer

Congratulations to the team – we are ½ way there



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Feedback and Assessment



- In-house resources
 - Mini Graduating Student Survey (GSS) to focus on advisors
 - Faculty requested data
 - Service Quality Goals
 - Mini Marymount at Your Service (MAYS) questions: piloted in Aug 2019
 - Short term metric and not wait for 2 years
 - Anecdotal: emails from students
- Retention and Graduation Committee
- Administrative Review has an external reviewer requirement
- Ongoing feedback



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Four Leadership Takeaways

- 1. Establish a process for change**
 1. Do your research
 2. Use data
- 2. Team approach**
 1. Use connections to collaborate
 1. President and Cabinet support
 2. Human Resources
 3. Faculty Council
 4. Staff
 2. Became part of new Strategic Plan: *Momentum*
- 3. Transparent communication**
 1. Listen to constituents
 2. Respond to feedback
- 4. Be flexible/agile**



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Please take a minute to complete a session eval using the link or QR code below:
<http://bit.ly/24hrEval>



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