

On Time and On Target: Improving Student Learning Through Blended Advising

University of North Georgia

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University of North Georgia (UNG) is a regional multi-campus institution with more than 18,000 students and is one of 28 institutions within the University System of Georgia. UNG is one of the six senior military colleges in the United States and has approximately 750 students in the Corps of Cadets. With multiple admissions pathways within its mission (e.g., access and selective undergraduate, military, and graduate), UNG is committed to serving the educational needs of the region and state by providing a range of degree programs (associate through doctoral levels) that produce highly qualified graduates for the region's major employers, improve the region's quality of life, and contribute to the region's economy.

Academic Advising was selected as the QEP topic for the University of North Georgia in January 2015. Following a review and study of best practices related to academic advising, the QEP Design and Implementation Committee developed a blended advising model intended to improve student learning through the institution's advising processes. The overall model is designed to enhance the academic environment supporting students, while seeking improvement in student learning through specific outcomes. UNG's QEP uses intentional advising and faculty mentoring to develop students' confidence in their ability to achieve their educational goals and to support student responsibility for the actions leading to those educational goals. The development of advising tools that support institutional efforts to increase student retention and progression is included in the QEP.

UNG's QEP is designed to achieve three goals by expanding the institution's advising resources. The QEP will promote students' ability to:

1. Define academic goals and take personal responsibility for developing educational plans.
2. Utilize appropriate campus resources to support educational goals.
3. Engage in appropriate learning experiences to achieve educational goals.

The QEP goals will be achieved through measurable development of six student learning outcomes. Students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of UNG core curriculum and major requirements.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of impact to time to graduation and cost as a result of multiple major changes, changes to plans of study, and course withdrawal.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of advisor/advisee responsibilities.
4. Articulate an understanding of how the student's interests, strengths, and weaknesses relate to the choice of major and career.
5. Identify and use institutional, academic, and program resources to support/advance educational goals.
6. Utilize career/educational opportunities related to major/pathway of interest.

Through the implementation of a blended advising model using both professional advisors and faculty mentors, it is anticipated that UNG's QEP will transform the learning environment for students by teaching them to define and take responsibility for educational goals, and utilize high-impact learning opportunities to maximize their majors.