



THOMAS MORE
UNIVERSITY



Connect! Empowering Students through Advising to Navigate Pathways to Success

Thomas More University selected academic advising as the topic for its 2020-2025 QEP through a comprehensive review and analysis of institutional research and stakeholder input from across campus. This analysis identified the need to improve student success measures such as persistence and timely progress towards graduation.

The mission of the Thomas More University QEP, *Connect! Empowering Students through Advising to Navigate Pathways to Success*, is to promote student success by increasing their ability to connect with, plan for, and achieve their educational goals. The QEP is designed with the following outcomes in mind:

Program Outcomes:

1. The Connect! Advising QEP will provide services in the area of faculty and professional advisor training leading to increased knowledge of policies and procedures related to engaging students in productive advising and pathways to graduation.
2. The Connect! Advising QEP will promote student behaviors leading to increased retention and academic success.

Student Outcomes:

1. Students will develop an educational growth plan based on assessment of abilities, interests, and values.
2. Students will apply at least two high impact practices to their educational growth plan.
3. Students will have knowledge and make relevant use of Thomas More University success resources.
4. Students will persist and make timely progress towards graduation.

To implement these outcomes we developed a new, shared advising model consisting of faculty and newly hired professional advisors, an educational growth plan developed by each student based on their goals, and a learning community consisting of faculty and staff to develop advising skills and pedagogy. Based on that model and an analysis of the potential for the *Connect!* Advising QEP to increase retention, a budget was developed that is financially viable. The assessment plan includes direct and indirect measures of program and student outcomes. It also includes clear procedures for “closing the loop” to make changes to advising procedures as indicated by an analysis of the data and to ensure the program becomes institutionalized. The *Connect!* Advising QEP is grounded in the idea that Thomas More wants the “. . . opportunity for all students to develop a personal, consistent relationship with someone in the institution who cares about them” (Drake, 2011, p. 10 as cited in Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2015).

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