

Lions Leading Lions: Increasing Student Success Through Improving the Student Advising Experience.

Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) - Waxahachie, TX

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QEP Executive Summary

Lions Leading Lions is an initiative born of institutional research and planning processes that recognized the importance of improving retention at SAGU as a vital aspect of greater student success. The main component of SAGU's QEP is a team of peer advisors (PAs) who help new students learn the SAGU culture, choose courses wisely, and find academic or personal help when needed.

Research into factors SAGU students reported as key in determining their decision to stay at the University until degree completion led to a focus on improved advising as the means for increasing the retention rate. More specifically, SAGU's QEP equates student success with increased percentages of freshman and sophomore students retained.

The SAGU 2022 QEP establishes the following Student Success Objectives:

- SSO 1: SAGU will increase its five-year retention average among FT/FT degree-seeking students, from freshman to sophomore year, by 5%.
- SSO 2: SAGU will increase its five-year retention average among FT/FT degree-seeking students, from sophomore to junior year, by 5%.

The SAGU QEP also includes student goals for specific methods intended to improve student success by increasing retention. The Student Goals supporting increased retention are:

- Student Goal 1: (Sense of belonging) Student social involvement will progress from broad and investigative in their first semester to narrow and committed by the end of their fourth semester (attendance at multiple activities).
- Student Goal 2: (Clear understanding of degree path) Student goal setting and goal planning will be maintained from first path to graduation assignment through the end of the fourth semester as a continued clear articulation of necessary courses to complete for graduation and when the student plans to take each course.

To accomplish these student success objectives, the QEP takes a three-pronged approach, with the following components:

1. Enhancing advising by improving access to student information for advisors
2. Improving information for students about their degree programs through development of uniform *Degree Program Information Sheets*
3. Developing a team of peer advisors (PAs) to help new students learn the SAGU culture, choose courses wisely, and find academic or personal help when needed. Peer advisors will collaborate with S3 Course Coaches (SAGU's orientation course), faculty advisors, and others to give newer students a larger community of support—an "advising net"—an important factor, according to research, in improving retention and, thus, student success.