

Plan. Connect. Succeed: Personalized Academic Plans and Help Every Step of the Way

Brightpoint Community College

Academic advising is a key component in achieving successful student outcomes, and the student's advisor is integral to this. Students who consistently engage with their advisors graduate at significantly higher rates than students who try to navigate their higher education journey on their own. The intention of Brightpoint Community College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is to help the college shift from a prescriptive advising approach of placing students in classes to a proactive advising model, which is centered on a holistic view of the student and employs enhanced advising techniques. Broad institutional support was established for this QEP topic and plan.

To support the transition from prescriptive advising to proactive advising, faculty and staff will receive training to provide more flexible scheduling options for students, document and communicate advisee interactions, and proactively reach out to advisees at different times during the semester to form a concrete personal connection. Communication nudges will be designed to encourage interaction with the student's advisor. Additionally, faculty and staff will be trained in customer service, and the use of proactive interventions for at-risk students. This should result in improved retention and graduation rates, as students gain greater connection to the college, improved student understanding of their academic journeys, and improved satisfaction with advising services.

The new QEP seeks to promote a proactive advising environment, with all professional and academic advisors receiving additional professional development in enhanced advising practices. Changing the institutional culture of advising will occur slowly through following a deliberate action plan with measurable goals.

The expected outcomes of the QEP are to –

- Outcome 1: Improve student satisfaction rates with academic advising services.
- Outcome 2: Improve fall-to-fall retention rates.

The impact of the QEP will be measured through student surveys, advising reports, retention rates, grade point average, credits accumulated, and graduation rates.

A literature review found that colleges continue to experience low retention rates and students who enroll but do not finish are responsible for paying for their college experience, may incur debt, and do not reap the socioeconomic benefits of earning a credential. For example, Virginia has more than 3,788 community college students drop each year before earning a credential. Mitigating this loss translates to roughly \$30 million in salary gains, a \$4.5 million increase in federal taxes, and \$1.7 million in additional collected state income. These values do not consider increased revenue via sales tax or gains made through spending in the local economy. By increasing college graduation and credentialing rates, students, colleges, and the community benefit from successful student outcomes.

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