

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

Oakwood University

Topic: *Academic Advising: Integrating Technology for Higher Student Success*

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Executive Summary

Oakwood University recognizes the critical role of effective academic advising as a tool for providing students with a holistic education, aiming to transform the lives of thousands who attend the institution. To enhance the effectiveness of advising and, consequently, the student learning experience, the university unanimously agreed to launch a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) titled “Academic Advising: Integrating Technology for Higher Student Success.” This initiative aligns with the institution's mission to shape and prepare students for service to humanity and God.

Expansive and inclusive consultations with various stakeholders and a thorough analysis of data by the QEP committees were conducted. Results from these analyses consistently highlighted the need for improvements in the quality of academic advising. Institutional data revealed a correlation between students' growing dissatisfaction with advising and periodic declines in completion, persistence, and retention rates. Institutional engagement meetings and programs with faculty and students further uncovered concerns and frustrations regarding inconsistencies in academic advising. Specifically, these concerns were related to ineffective communication channels between faculty and students, inefficient access to and/or use of technology for documenting advising sessions, and the absence of effective career planning tools for degree completion and workplace transition.

To address these identified pitfalls, Oakwood University's academic advising aims to revolutionize advising by improving access through a technology-driven platform that allows two-way engagement between students and advisors. Additionally, the program aims to provide training and embed curriculum plans in the platform, enabling students to develop individualized plans. Furthermore, it guides students in aligning academic choices, knowledge, and skills with future career goals and the demands of an increasingly competitive job market, to improve the university's persistence, retention, and completion rates.

The program sets clear learning outcomes and key performance indicators to ensure effective academic advising for higher student success. It will ensure that students can:

- a. Identify their academic and professional aspirations.
- b. Create educational plans to achieve their goals and select appropriate courses each semester toward these goals.
- c. Use the technology platform and resources to manage and achieve their academic, personal, and career objectives.

The progress of the program's outcomes will be measured using the following key performance indicators:

- a. Student-Advisor Engagement and Satisfaction (using a modified NACADA Survey).
- b. Development of Students as Self-Advisors (with milestones set for the first through fourth years, utilizing a modified NACADA Rubric).
- c. Persistence Rates of First-Year, First-Time Students from the First to the Second Semester.
- d. Fall-to-Fall Retention Rates for First-Year, First-Time Students.
- e. Four-Year Degree Completion Rates.

To solidify academic assessment achievements, Oakwood University will persist in offering extensive seminars and workshops in academic advising to promote continuous faculty and staff development in this critical area.