**Report to College Council from the Ad-hoc Advising Committee**

**April 30, 2018**

**Chair:** Maria Niswonger

**Members:** Jason Arey Brittany Heaward

Krista Cochran Jessica Masi

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**Background:** Over the last few years, student advising has been discussed at College Council, the President’s Council, Faculty Senate, Faculty Department Chair meetings, and Student Affairs meetings. Since the CCSSE (2016) and Noel-Levitz (2014) surveys indicate that YCCC students are less likely to consult with their advisors than students at cohort colleges, and have less trust in the advising system, many YCCC employees believe that changes in the advising process could increase student retention and success. The YCCC Strategic Plan’s Strategic Goal I states that YCCC will “Pursue educational excellence by promoting and measuring student success in all forms.” Achieve the Dream (ATD) is setting goals concerning increasing persistence and completion rates for matriculated students, based on research that says contact with advisors is directly proportional to increased persistence, retention and degree/certificate completion. On many levels, advising is seen as an important part of what helps YCCC students succeed.

In order to promote student success by improving student advising, College Council created this ad-hoc Advising Committee on February 6, 2018, to review current advising practices. The committee, comprised of staff and faculty, met six times during the spring semester to discuss advising practices and imagine what a better advising system could be for YCCC students. The committee makes the following recommendations to College Council for consideration, approval, and forwarding to President Finkelstein.

**Advising Committee Statement on Advising at York County Community College:**

Advising at YCCC is holistic in nature and guides students in all aspects of their academic journey. Faculty and staff advisors have complementary roles and work collaboratively to meet the needs of students. The goal of advising, both academic and programmatic, is to engage students in planning a straightforward academic experience. Students who take classes in the correct sequence, and are aware of, and able to access all necessary resources available at YCCC, will earn their degrees in a reasonable time frame, leading to transfer and/ or employment. Clear communication and coordination of resources is vitally important among students and advisors, and is a cornerstone for student success.

**Specific recommendations for Phase I during the summer of 2018:**

1. All advisors should have access to student information on Jenzabar EX and in Notepad. The Information Technology Department should have adequate resources to make this fully functional by late August of 2018. Training should be done by the end of August, 2018 so that all faculty and staff advisors know what to document and how.
2. The current Academic Advising Handbook, dated 2015-2016, should be updated by the end of August 2018. If necessary, the writer/editor should be supported with a contract over the summer. It should be distributed to all advisors before the start of the fall semester. This handbook, containing information that all advisors can use, helps everyone know what everyone else’s role is. Include:
   1. Advisor Responsibilities & Expectations for Advising
   2. Student Responsibilities & Expectations for Advising
   3. Academic Calendar
   4. General Education Core areas
   5. One-page overview of what faculty advisors do
   6. One-page overview of the Beacon Program
   7. One-page overview of the Trio Program
   8. One-page overview of the Early College for ME/ Embark program
   9. One-page overview of the Learning Center
   10. One-page overview of the Library
   11. One-page overview of Counseling and Wellness
   12. One-page overview of Student Disability Services
   13. One-page overview of Navigator roles
   14. Information about the advising screen on the portal
   15. Advising tips about the catalog year
   16. Online registration information
   17. Blackboard overview
   18. FERPA information
   19. Book voucher information
   20. Placement tests available at YCCC
   21. List of “semester-bound” courses, offered only during a given semester (These should be clearly advertised as such in the course catalog as well.)
   22. Math advising worksheet, courtesy of Jen Mallett
3. Students should be assign academic advisors at their first registration, and told how to reach their academic advisor. If programmatic advisors are assigned to a student, all advisors should make sure the student knows the role of each type of advisor.
4. The “Student Responsibilities & Expectations for Advising” worksheet should be distributed to students early, often, and in many formats.
5. An “Advising” tab should be created on the portal under Student Services with links to all advisors, all programs, the catalog, the academic calendar, and the “Student Responsibilities & Expectations for Advising” worksheet.

**Specific recommendations for Phase II, during the fall of 2018:**

1. A “Meet your Advisor” event or week should be planned and advertised, to encourage students to introduce themselves to their advisor. (Advisors could give each advisee two raffle tickets if they meet in person, and the student can be eligible to win prizes. Raffle ticket collection buckets can be located in strategic places like the Learning Center and Library. Consider alternatives for exclusively online students.)
2. Non-matriculated students should be contacted once each semester by Student Affairs to encourage them to enroll in a certificate or degree program.
3. Academic advisors should reach out to their advisees with information about advising at least three times each semester: during add/drop, before the withdrawal deadline, and before registration for a subsequent semester. In addition, advisors should attempt to meet once per semester with each advisee: in person, in a group meeting, at Advisapalooza, by phone, or if necessary as a last resort, by e-mail. In order to make this feasible, the advising load for academic advisors should be manageable and appropriate for each degree or program. Other types of advisors, such as those in TRIO, Early College for ME (Embark), and Navigator roles, should have reasonable advising loads as determined by their programs and supervisors.
4. Advisapalooza should be continued and expanded for various student populations: daytime students, evening students, online students, and non-matriculated students. A mini-Advisapalooza should be planned for the Sanford campus, possibly organized by the PMT Navigator.
5. Data should be collected during the 2018-19 academic year to evaluate the effectiveness of this new approach to advising

**Specific recommendations for Phase III, during the spring of 2019:**

1. YCCC should hire a Director of Advising for the academic year 2019-2020 to oversee all of the advising initiatives outlined in this document.

2. YCCC should look for grant opportunities to support advising.