

Integrating

Student Supports and Academics

Game Changers Series



**COMPLETION
BY DESIGN**

Integrating

Student Supports and Academics

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About the Cover: This concept incorporates all elements equally—which resonates with the spirit of integrating supports and instruction. The four separate units in the graphic integrate at strategic points and become a single, more structured, and stronger whole.



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This is one of a series of “Game Changers” documents for use by colleges to generate discussion about innovative models for increasing completion rates substantially. Each topic is addressed through several sections, including an overview and references. The sections are intended to be used separately or as a whole, depending on the audience and needs. Each report is available at <http://www.WestEd.org/bookstore>.

OVERVIEW

Many community colleges are working to integrate student support services (such as academic advising, educational and career planning, and academic tutoring) more closely with instruction, with an eye toward expanding student use of support systems and creating a more seamless and engaging learning experience for all students. These efforts seek to ensure that support services become a more integral part of students' ongoing experiences in courses and in other aspects of college life, rather than an option that students have to seek out actively. By providing supports to all students, this reform strategy is being viewed as a way to increase student success in courses and contribute to improved student completion overall (achieving certificates, degrees, and transfer).

The integration of student supports and academics takes many forms and might best be considered as a process along a continuum. For example, in a highly integrated model, tutoring sessions may be a required component of basic skills classes and may

occur during class time. Other examples include the integration of career and educational planning, or supporting the development of study skills, during class discussions and assignments. Even when it is not possible to provide support services as part of classroom instruction, there are ways to improve collaboration and alignment between instruction and support services. For example, faculty can require students to receive academic tutoring, suggest that students meet with an advisor, and provide students with reminders of deadlines for registration. Faculty members can also require students to attend staff-led workshops to build study skills. Colleges can support high levels of integration by promoting shared goals for student success across campus functions, agreement on specific strategies for integrating key aspects of student supports and instruction, professional development that extends outside narrow campus duties, and a process that supports ongoing problem-solving and dialogue between instructional and student support personnel.

INTERVIEWEES

The information used for this report is drawn from research materials and from interviews with the following people:

- ◇ Nicholas Bekas, Campus Dean of Academic Affairs, Valencia College
- ◇ Jack Friedlander, Executive Vice President, Educational Programs, Santa Barbara City College
- ◇ Laura Hope, Dean, Instructional Support, Chaffey College
- ◇ Rob Johnstone, Senior Research Fellow, The Research and Planning Group, California Community Colleges
- ◇ Alison Kadlec, Senior Vice President, Public Agenda
- ◇ Melinda Karp, Senior Research Associate, Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University
- ◇ Zineta Kolenovic, Assistant Director for Research and Evaluation, Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), City University of New York (CUNY)
- ◇ Donna Linderman, University Executive Director, ASAP, CUNY
- ◇ Joyce Romano, Vice President of Student Affairs, Valencia College

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR INTEGRATION

Consider starting with programs or strategies in which there is already a history of collaboration between instruction and support services. In many colleges, instructors of developmental education already have extensive experience in helping students develop study skills and in connecting students with advisement and tutoring services. Early-alert systems that enable faculty to communicate concerns about student attendance or performance to advisors may be another activity that provides a good opportunity to deepen collaboration.

Build on and strengthen a campuswide culture of collaboration and student success. Santa Barbara City College and Valencia College included student support services staff with faculty in important formal and informal governance councils, the academic senate, and cross-functional work groups. This allowed the colleges to promote joint decision-making and collaboration on key issues affecting students.

Create better opportunities for, and incentivize participation in, professional development. Colleges that have successfully integrated instruction and student support services provide related professional development for faculty and support services staff. They also offer incentives for full-time and adjunct faculty to participate in training opportunities.

How does the integration of student supports and academics fit within an overall strategy to raise completion rates?

Support services can increase students' chances of earning a credential or transferring by offering students additional help to succeed in courses and to navigate college policies and procedures (Weissman et al., 2009; Bahr, 2008). However, when services are optional and are not offered as part of students' college experiences, many students, especially low-income and first-generation students who tend to need the services the most, do not access them (Karp, O'Gara, & Hughes, 2008; Cox, 2009). Extensive interviews with community college students have shown that, even with support services open to all students, only the students with pre-existing college know-how tend to take advantage of them (Karp et al., 2008). In addition, students have indicated that they would like to see greater connections between support services and classroom content. According to *Connection by Design*, a study based on focus groups with current and former

students at community colleges participating in the Completion by Design initiative (Nodine, Jaeger, Venezia, & Bracco, 2012):

[Students] want to feel connected with faculty and staff who are knowledgeable about their field, informed about the college, and supportive of the students' needs. They want support services to be connected to their coursework and their majors and tailored to their needs and goals. And they want college faculty and other staff to help them understand the connections between their coursework and their career prospects. The participants' emphasis on the importance of connections across the campus reflects Completion by Design's focus on breaking down silos and linking departments and services.

Having separate administrative divisions for student supports and academic affairs may help colleges to organize services, but it can create obstacles for students if the services are not well coordinated across college functions (Weissman et al., 2009).

By integrating student support services more closely with academics, community colleges can:

- ◇ expand student access to support systems by making these systems an extension of the classroom;
 - ◇ alert students to academic problems early and get them back on track;
 - ◇ help students draw on peer support and other resources;
 - ◇ engage students more effectively in learning by offering coordinated services;
 - ◇ address students' need for support beyond the first year; and
- ◇ remove the stigma associated with accessing support by making support something that most or all students receive.

Section II of this report outlines the range of strategies that community colleges are using to create more seamless and integrated support systems for students. Section III discusses implementation challenges and opportunities from the perspectives of practitioners, using information from interviews with community college faculty and administrators. It also offers lessons learned from colleges that have successfully increased the collaboration between their academic and support functions.

STRATEGIES

College efforts to integrate support services with instruction have two overall aims: to expand student access by making services an extension of the classroom, and to increase the quality of support services and instruction by making their delivery more seamless for students. Models for integration can be characterized in four broad (somewhat overlapping) categories: embedding support, offering integrated student success centers, coordinating first-year experiences, and using technology to connect student supports and academics.

Embedding Support

Some institutions are embedding student supports in academic departments or classrooms, thus creating a direct and purposeful connection between student support services and instruction, and expanding the services to more students. Examples of how this process occurs include designating specific advisors to work with a single academic program or a limited number of academic programs, and creating curricular efforts in which faculty and advisors co-teach some aspects of the curriculum. Similarly, tutors can be scheduled to help students complete assignments during the regular class period, either in the classroom or at a different location, such as a tutoring center.

Embedding advisors in academic departments

Redesigning advising systems to assign advisors to specific academic departments allows advisors and faculty within a given department to become better acquainted with each other and helps advisors become more familiar with the requirements of that department. Faculty can provide information to advisors about academic requirements and expectations, and can direct their students to those advisors for support. In addition, this allows students to have some consistency in the advisors they see. For example, Valencia College used Perkins Act funds to hire advisors who are embedded in specific career/technical education programs and who provide specialized advising to the

“Having advisors that are embedded may be helpful in many ways. First, the advisors will know about a specific field that is of interest to students and can help students choose a major within the field and pick classes. Also, students will know who to go to and faculty will know where to refer the students to because the advisor works with them and is embedded in their program. So it is a wrap-around service. This model does not say that faculty actually do the advising, but they know how to refer students to an advisor, and students know where to go because they don’t have to choose among four or five possible places to get counseling.”

—Melinda Karp, Community College
Research Center

students in those programs. At Tacoma Community College, advisors were designated to areas of concentration such as business, liberal arts, and sciences, and they specialize in advising students in those broad topic areas (“Focusing on Student Success,” 2010). Many colleges have used this embedded approach for smaller groups of students, through learning communities such as Puente or for designated groups of students such as athletes. A study of California Community College students reported that those who had the support of a designated advisor found the approach to be very helpful as they tried to navigate the first years of college (Venezia, Bracco, & Nodine, 2010). Designating advisors to academic programs—as opposed to targeted student groups—can help a greater number of students.

Embedding advisors in classrooms

In some cases, incorporating advisors into academic courses can be done via “paired” classes, in which a cohort of students enrolls in a student success course

taught by one teacher and a math or English course taught by a second teacher, and the two teachers work together to meet students' needs holistically. A hybrid example is where career advisors are brought into classrooms to help students understand careers that might be available to them upon completion of their program. These advisors may also help with incorporating directly into the academic courses some of the important life skills and habits of mind that students ultimately need in the world of work. According to Jack Friedlander of Santa Barbara City College, this hybrid model is used in three foundational courses at Santa Barbara City College. Student support services representatives come directly to these courses to work with students on educational and career planning. The instructors and advisors work together to ensure that students learn about career opportunities in the social sciences, business, and science fields, and discuss with the students how jobs in these fields differ.

Embedding tutors in classrooms

To ensure that students receive tutoring support in classes that have a history of low pass rates, some colleges either embed tutors in these high-risk classes or designate some class time for meeting with tutors outside of the classroom. In either case, tutors work closely with classroom instructors to ensure that the tutors' requirements are highly coordinated with the learning goals of the class. Rob Johnstone of the Research and Planning Group of the California Community Colleges notes that in some developmental education and introductory courses, scheduling meetings with tutors is part of required class time. This ensures that all students meet with tutors on a weekly basis. The format can differ from college to college. For example, some colleges dedicate class time to a tutor who works with students on completing class assignments. Other colleges require students to meet with tutors outside of class but during specific times that are allotted to the class.

Offering Integrated Student Success Centers

Student success centers have also been used by colleges as a model for providing all students, not just a small subset, with a coordinated range of supports. Student support services are integrated with classroom instruction, are often jointly developed by instructional faculty and success center staff, and can be required of all students in a class. The centers, which are sometimes linked to specific fields (such as humanities or STEM), can house dedicated academic and career counseling, leadership development programs, and student organizations. They can support service learning and community engagement. They can also provide a place where faculty and staff interact informally and formally with students (Collins, 2004).

Laura Hope, the Dean of Instructional Support at Chaffey College, notes that student success centers can be particularly effective when they are perceived as a service that everyone uses, not just those who are struggling academically. The success centers at Chaffey are organized by topic, rather than by developmental level, eliminating some of the stigma around seeking help at the centers. Hope states, "When everyone is required to seek help, it takes the stigma off. Help seeking is culturally supported. We wanted to get across that this is not where the failing students go but where successful students go. Students don't keep coming back because they have to... [but] it has to be a good product for students to come back." According to Hope, student surveys at Chaffey show that 98 percent see a connection between what goes on in the classroom and what happens in the success center. Hope adds that the success centers provide a risk-free environment for students to ask questions of people who will not be grading them in their courses.

ONLINE “DASHBOARD” SUPPORTS ADVISING: TACOMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

At Tacoma Community College, a new advising model equips advisors with an electronic “dashboard” that allows them to track student progress and intervene when necessary. The dashboard was designed to collect information from multiple parts of the college in one place, and aims to keep faculty and staff on the same page with regard to student progress. The dashboard includes early alerts, student milestones, and progress data. It alerts advisors when students begin having academic difficulty, early enough in the process to allow for sufficient time for academic intervention. Any staff member who logs into the dashboard can see a log of all advice a student has received from anyone on campus who has entered the information into the log. Advisors also use the dashboard to help students set up their own individual education plans during their first term of enrollment. (“Focusing on Student Success,” 2010)

Coordinating First-Year Experiences

Although students need support during their entire college experience, the first year may be an especially important time to build their capacity to access support in navigating the challenges of college. First-year experiences such as orientation and student success courses, when high-quality and coordinated well across academic and support functions, can offer seamless transitional experiences for students and can support them to get on track for completion. For more information on first-year experiences, please see *Acceleration in Developmental Education* (Nodine, Dadgar, Venezia, & Bracco, 2012) and *Providing Structured Pathways to Guide Students Toward Completion* (Dadgar, Venezia, Nodine, & Bracco, 2012).

Many colleges offer student success courses during the first semester or the first year of college. These courses are a relatively inexpensive method for providing advising, educational and career planning, and study-skill building to large numbers of students in a classroom format. They also can provide a learning community where students can get to know and support each other. Preliminary evaluations have found that participation in these courses is associated with greater persistence and credit accumulation (Cho & Karp, 2012). In some cases,

student success courses are developed by faculty and advisors working together. In a recent study of student success courses (College 101) in Virginia, the Community College Research Center found that integration is a critical aspect to the success of these courses, and that “explicitly relating” the content of these courses to academic offerings can “increase the likelihood that students find course content useful and know when to access and apply it” (Karp et al., 2008, p. 45).

Another area in which collaboration between the academic and support functions can improve students’ initial experience at community colleges is the assessment and placement process for developmental education. At most community colleges, one of the first contacts between the students and the college is in assessment and placement. Traditionally, it has been common for students to take placement assessments without knowing much about them or having an opportunity to prepare for them (Venezia et al., 2010). Furthermore, in most colleges, assessment and placement is the responsibility of the student support services department, and faculty who teach developmental courses often have little, if any, input in the process. At Valencia College, however, the developmental education faculty members were invited to provide input into the assessment and placement process. As a result, the faculty developed online

resources to help students prepare for the tests, and the college recommends that new students review these materials prior to the assessment process, in order to prepare. Students who are dissatisfied with their placement results can participate in a tutorial and retest one time prior to beginning classes.

Using Technology to Connect Student Supports and Academics

To increase the number of students served in a cost-efficient and expeditious way, colleges are increasingly experimenting with using technology in the area of student supports. The use of early alerts or progress-monitoring technology can also be effective in increasing the level of coordination between instruction and support services (see “Online ‘Dashboard’ Supports Advising” on page 6). These systems can help faculty and advisors monitor students’ progress

toward their educational plans, and, at the same time, serve as a communication device that allows faculty to alert advisors early on when they have concerns about a student’s attendance or performance on assignments. Similarly, advisors can alert faculty when a student has missed a registration deadline or other milestone in his or her educational plan. At some colleges, such as Tacoma Community College, the system allows all faculty and support services staff to share notes on any student’s progress and document advice the student has received from different parts of the college, which in turn allows faculty and staff to coordinate their work better (“Focusing on Student Success,” 2010). At Halifax Community College, if a student misses too many classes or has a poor performance on the homework assignments, the appropriate advisor is alerted by the early-alert system to contact the student and offer assistance (North Carolina Community College System, n.d.).

IMPLEMENTATION

The integration of academic and support services can take a variety of forms. At Santa Barbara City College, long-term collaborations among faculty and staff culminated in organizational restructuring whereby faculty and support services staff now report to the same vice president. In other colleges, integration has been achieved without formal changes in organizational structure, but has generally required the creation of common goals, strategies, and decision-making across academic and support services (such as through the development of collaborative student success centers, shared technologies, and joint first-year experience programs). All of those interviewed for this report highlighted the importance of building a *culture of collaboration* to support these efforts.

It is difficult to assess the effects of integration in isolation, partly because they often occur alongside other efforts to increase completion rates. However, interviews with administrators who have implemented integration strategies reveal that these efforts have been successful in expanding access to support services by making them part of or an extension of the classroom, and improving the quality of both classroom instruction and support services by coordinating the two. In addition, interviewees indicated that developing shared strategies and programs had, over the long run, facilitated the work of both faculty and support services staff, partly because each became more aware of the ramifications of their own decisions across campus functions. At Santa Barbara City College, where the academic and support functions had become a single unit with a single line of reporting, faculty and staff were given an opportunity to vote, after two years, on whether or not they wanted to continue with the integration; they voted unanimously to keep the integrated structure.

“I thought we did well before we did integration, but I have realized there is so much to learn if you are part of one unit. You don’t understand the ramifications of decisions for the other side unless you are integrated. Our structural shift allows for that growth and continuation and leads to much better decisions than siloed structures.... Prior to this model, transfer was the advisors’ responsibility—now it is everyone’s responsibility.”

—Jack Friedlander, Santa Barbara City College

“The key is changing the culture. You have to first build the culture that can support integration, and not the other way around; a strategy works narrowly, but if you work on culture, then you can sustain integration. To do that, you first have to bring everyone together by being inclusive in important meetings and valuing opinions of the staff in the front line. So we are saying that the perspective of the student support services staff is as important as that of the faculty.... Because of the way we treat each other and listen to the opinions from the front line, in our meetings you can’t tell who is a vice president, who is a faculty, etc.... Anyone can disagree and voice their opinion, and they are listened to.”

—Nicholas Bekas, Valencia College

“Support many times is viewed [as] less than the core of what colleges do, and it is often the first place that corners are cut, but if you make it part of what the college does, you are reinforcing the fact that support is part of learning—for example, how students manage their time is part of learning. It reinforces that these things are valuable.”

—Melinda Karp, Community College Research Center

Engaging Instructional and Support Services Staff

An important challenge in developing strategies to increase the integration of support services and academic functions is engaging staff and faculty in the process. Some faculty may be concerned that integration would increase their responsibilities without providing them with adequate recognition, compensation, or professional development. Support services staff may be concerned that integration could lessen the need for professional advisors and other support staff. In addition, interviewees said that in many colleges, the existing channels of communication between academic and student support functions is very limited, and this has led to a lack of understanding and respect for each other's work, which makes engagement efforts more challenging.

If efforts to create a more integrated experience for students are to be successful, they will likely require some changes in the traditional roles of faculty and staff. Interviewees noted, however, that the changes do not necessarily lead to increased responsibility. Interviewees said that, even in a more integrated model of advisement, faculty members are not expected to provide "deep advising." Rather, these faculty are expected to be the first point of contact for many students and, as such, to know enough about support services to refer students successfully. Melinda Karp of the Community College Research Center said:

This does not mean that all faculty need to do tutoring or advising or take on the work of the financial aid office, but it does mean that they help students figure out what kind of help they need and where to go.... Instructors need to be aware of what services are available.

Beyond advising, integration can also lead to changes in how faculty and staff work together to link classroom instruction with career planning, educational

"The heavy workload of faculty and their perception of what the workload could be is both a real and a psychological barrier.... They are worried about doing a ton of new work without being supported to do it."

—Alison Kadlec, Public Agenda

"Previously, there was lack of respect [for] the advisors. The thinking was that advisors were too lenient on the students and steered them toward easy classes. And student support services staff thought many faculty were insensitive to low-[socioeconomic-status] students and were failing them. By integrating and looking at it in terms of shared responsibilities, we broke down communication barriers, and we have dealt with the problems collaboratively."

—Jack Friedlander, Santa Barbara City College

planning, and tutoring. In these efforts, support services staff are able to be more proactive in working with classroom instructors to identify the academic and nonacademic skills that students need to succeed, and to develop the capacity of students to identify when and how to seek help, how to manage their time, and how to navigate college policies and procedures. Joyce Romano of Valencia College said that Valencia has adopted an approach that treats all faculty and staff as if they are advisors:

We redesigned student support services. We have integrated it. We have staff members that know about advising, financial aid, admissions, etc. Students can ask "quick" questions in an Answer Center. Even library staff can help students with Atlas [the registration system]; we have trained them on that. There is a lot of work with faculty development around integration,

so we are integrating in any curriculum how the course fits into the students' plans.

The experiences of interviewees in integrating instruction and support services suggest the importance of the following approaches for engaging faculty and staff.

Consider starting with programs or strategies in which there is already a history of collaboration between instruction and support services

Interviewees suggested that colleges seeking to integrate support services and academic functions consider beginning with programs or strategies for which there is already a history of collaboration. In many colleges, for example, instructors of developmental education already have extensive experience helping students develop study skills and connecting students with advisement and tutoring services. Similarly, programs that create common first-year experiences for large numbers of incoming students may be able to build on existing faculty/staff collaborations. Using technology to alert advisors about classroom performance has been another natural place of collaboration among faculty and student support services staff.

At Valencia and Chaffey Colleges, developmental education was at the center of integration efforts because faculty and staff recognized the importance of advising and support services in contributing to student success in developmental education. Boylan (2002) writes, “[i]t is essential that all courses and support services connected with developmental education be viewed as a system rather than as random activities.” He continues by stating that developmental education courses and student support services should be well integrated and that it is particularly helpful if the support services are in close proximity to the classroom.

“Knowing what goes on in the classroom helps advisors and faculty alike. If we ask students to reach out to receive support services, we leave out many students who may be on the verge of failure.”

—Rob Johnstone, The Research and Planning Group of the California Community Colleges

“We never expect faculty to do deep advising and counseling on behavioral issues or financial aid, but it is mostly about career goals that they can advise. So, if you narrow the focus and tell them ‘you guys are doing this anyways,’ it is more convincing....In reality, if faculty can talk with the students and help them realize [their] goals, it will actually help [faculty] in the classroom.”

—Nicholas Bekas, Valencia College

“Our developmental education faculty members are already doing advising because of the needs of the students. The next step is to help them understand that by doing advising they can actually teach more because developmental advising equips students with the tools necessary to be independent learners.... I think you will always have a group of faculty who will not get involved, but you usually start with the willing and build a critical mass.”

—Nicholas Bekas, Valencia College

Build on and strengthen a campuswide culture of collaboration and student success

Interviewees also suggested that college efforts at integration should build on and strengthen a campuswide culture of collaboration, improvement, and student success. This means that faculty and staff on the front lines should be included in planning processes early on and continually. For example, Santa Barbara City College and Valencia College included student support services staff with faculty in important formal governance structures, including governance councils, the academic senate, and cross-functional work groups. In addition, informal collaborative spaces have reinforced the formal structures. For example, Valencia College has “reading circles” in which faculty and staff from different functions gather to read and discuss the most recent literature in the field. This, according to Joyce Romano, Vice President for Student Affairs, has allowed faculty and staff to “develop shared vocabulary and understanding, and big ideas have emerged from that.”

“I spent a year meeting with the student support services teams individually and collectively to make sure that [integration] will benefit them.”

—Jack Friedlander, Santa Barbara City College

“The thing that helps is that all advisors are faculty, so they are involved in the same committees, governance councils, and initiatives as academic faculty.”

—Nicholas Bekas, Valencia College

Create better opportunities for, and incentivize participation in, professional development

Colleges that have successfully integrated instruction and support services provide extensive professional development for both faculty and support services staff. They also provide incentives for full-time and

A LONG-TERM COLLABORATION: SANTA BARBARA CITY COLLEGE

Santa Barbara City College’s experience with integration is a success story that highlights the importance of a long-term process to strengthen collaboration. Jack Friedlander, who was the Dean for Academic Affairs when the process began, led a gradual yet persistent process of integration that culminated in uniting the instructional and support functions under his supervision. As a first step, he created a Deans’ Council that was comprised of student support services staff and instructional deans. The Deans’ Council met every other week and discussed strategies to improve student completion. Friedlander believes that the formal structure allowed the two sides to develop an understanding of each other’s work, which led to formal recognition of equal status for student support faculty in the Academic Senate, which in turn facilitated the organizational restructuring. According to Friedlander, “having student support services faculty be represented [in the academic senate] was a huge structural change that increased understanding, appreciation, and collaboration, and after two years it led to creating instructional programs all integrated under one unit.” Currently, most decisions are made by cross-functional work groups. “I call together a group of faculty and student support services staff when there is a challenge or opportunity.... Once people started trying it out, it was effortless. I only orchestrate at a high level, because people themselves decided to work collaboratively, and over time, it got better.”

adjunct faculty to participate in training opportunities. According to interviewees, an important source of concern for many faculty members is that they lack information about and experience in providing advising and other support services for students.

Since efforts to provide a more integrated experience for students affect the traditional roles of faculty and staff, professional development is an essential part of integration efforts. Professional development can provide information that faculty and support services staff need to understand their roles in supporting student learning, not just in their classrooms or in their advising sessions, but also in meeting students' overall goals for completion. It can also help to ensure that service delivery is consistent across departments and that all faculty and staff feel supported in addressing students' nonacademic and academic needs.

Interviewees said that the creation of formal incentives can help to encourage faculty participation in professional development. At Valencia College, faculty members receive training on the various campus services that are available, and adjunct faculty members are given monetary incentives to complete relevant training certifications. The certification process involves taking required modules on topics such as how to advise developmental education students and how to promote college success skills. There are also elective courses on topics such as how to motivate students and how to promote student development of affective skills.

In addition, interviewees suggested that consistent and standardized professional development is necessary to improve the quality of the support services provided both by instructional and support services staff. This sentiment is echoed by students who have stated that they are frustrated by receiving different advice depending on which advisor or faculty member they approach (Nodine et al., 2012). According to Donna Linderman, the Director of the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) at

"This work can sometimes require an identity shift for the faculty. They should see their role as more than just imparting information. Creating incentives like promotion and tenure can help."

—Melinda Karp, Community College
Research Center

the City University of New York (CUNY), "Everyone who provides advising should be trained not only in what classes are available but also in how to access different services.... Standardized curriculum for training advisors is needed—a curriculum that is based on learning outcomes for advising."

Data Use

According to interviewees, community college faculty and student support staff should meet together regularly to strategize about how they can collaborate to more effectively support student completion. In most cases, this requires the creation of cross-functional teams, including institutional research staff. These teams need to be directed toward campuswide targets for student completion, with clearly established intermediate goals, so that conversations and priorities on campus—across departments, offices, and functions—emphasize student completion. At the same time, the teams need to develop specific strategies for integrating support services and instruction for students, such as through embedded advisement, student success centers, or common first-year experiences.

Engaging faculty and staff in strategic and open conversations about data is important both for tracking overall completion goals and for developing and analyzing the effects of integration strategies. For example, faculty and staff need to examine the following questions:

- ◇ What do we know about those who received support services across campus and those who received services aligned with specific courses? How did they access the service? At what phase of a course, or along their educational pathway, did they receive the service? What do students say about the service? What do we know about student progress for those who did and those who did not receive the service?
- ◇ What do we know about those who do not receive support services—particularly those who were targeted for services but did not receive them?
- ◇ In key developmental education or gatekeeper courses, is there a tipping point at which students on the brink of failure need to receive specific support services? If so, what are those services? Which students receive them, and which students do not?
- ◇ Along the educational pathway of students, are there key points where support services need to be provided? If so, what are those services? Which students receive them, and which students do not?

In discussing data use, interviewees also emphasized the importance of creating and nurturing a supportive campus culture for information sharing, self-reflection, and risk tolerance.

Zineta Kolenovic, Assistant Director for Research and Evaluation at ASAP, suggests that staff and faculty teams “look to see who meets with advisors,” to make sure those who need advising are receiving it. Although all students in ASAP are mandated to meet with an advisor, staff and faculty have found that students from low-income families and those with lower grade point averages met with their advisors more frequently than did students from higher-income families and those with higher grade point averages. Kolenovic said, “Unlike what you would expect, in ASAP, we see that it is not the

higher-performing students who seek out advisement at highest rates, but rather the students who need additional support. I think that is because of the nurturing and encouraging environment our advisors provide for all students.”

Questions About Cost

Many colleges expect that the integration of support services and instruction will lead to higher costs, primarily because a key goal of integration is to provide substantially more students with support services. In addition, many past integration models that have been implemented, such as learning communities and one-on-one supports, are expensive to replicate and expand. Interviewees said, however, that their colleges had not seen substantial cost increases, primarily because better integration of services had also been accompanied by better strategic thinking about how to meet the needs of larger numbers of students across the college, and by collaboration to promote efficiency and reduce duplication of services.

Donna Linderman said that the City University of New York was looking into holding down costs of providing advising by being more strategic in determining how to deliver different kinds of information to different groups of students: online, in groups, and individually. She added that campuses are getting more efficient in providing advisement in groups and are considering the use of call centers where students can get some common questions answered promptly. To meet student needs for expanded services, she said that the ASAP program has adopted a triage advisement model so that student advisement levels are based on student needs (see “A Triage Advisement Model” on p. 14).

At Santa Barbara City College, Jack Friedlander stated that the college’s integration model—having student support services and instructional staff report to one dean—has saved money because of better streamlining of functions and less duplication:

We do all our planning and software services together. We have become more efficient because we don't replicate services.... Our perception is that we have reduced costs.... How we do counseling and tutoring is more intentional.... We save money by making good decisions, much better than if we were separate units.

Laura Hope at Chaffey College suggested that it is important to fund integration efforts through the college and district budgets, not through grant funding, so that faculty and staff understand that the changes are permanent.

Policy Issues

Interviewees suggested that policy, at both the state and institutional levels, can be important in supporting the integration of services on campus. Some states restrict the share of state funding that can be used for nonacademic services; this can be a barrier for colleges seeking to expand the number of students who receive support services. However, it may be that providing student support services in the classroom can provide institutions with greater flexibility. For example, the teaching of non-cognitive skills has typically been the domain of instructional support.

Faculty may find that these skills can be taught more effectively within the instructional function—that is, embedded within an academic curriculum.

Some states have policies that restrict colleges from mandating orientation, advising, or the creation of educational plans. In some states, faculty do not have credentials that are required for advising students, which can limit colleges' plans for embedding advisement in classrooms.

Finally, some interviewees indicated that many community colleges can do a better job of developing local policies that emphasize the importance of student supports. Currently, many institutional policies de-emphasize academic support functions. For example, Laura Hope of Chaffey College said that many colleges offer faculty 50 percent release time to work in a student success center, but that is insufficient to actually run the center. According to Hope, "With that much time, you can only provide services; you cannot be expected to take the time to build relationships across departments or to lead innovations. This partial assignment demonstrates that the institution does not value the service enough to put faculty in charge of it. At Chaffey, faculty members are not pulled out of the classroom. Instead of re-assigning faculty, we actually recruit people who

A TRIAGE ADVISEMENT MODEL

"Under the triage model, we treat every student when they start as high-need: They are required to meet with the advisors twice a month. After three months, based on a specific rubric (including academics and other features), ASAP sorts the students into groups. Students who are identified as having high needs continue to get that level of experience. Those in the medium-need group see advisors once a month. They can also do a phone or electronic follow-up, or could contact advisors during their ASAP seminar. If the student has shown resiliency, their minimum requirement involves meeting with an advisor twice a semester, as well as other contacts that are scoped out—for example, they could be assigned to a faculty mentor in the major they are interested in. Students who are doing very well academically can be nominated to become ASAP representatives and get training to work for the college ASAP program. Students are re-sorted and triaged each semester, so high- and low-need students are identified. An advisor at any time can decide a student needs to come more often."

—Donna Linderman, ASAP, CUNY

have the experience of providing academic support. We had the commitment to have full-time people.”

A more general policy challenge is that institutions and state systems often have separate budgets for instructional and support services functions. This often results in student support services budgets being cut first at the times of budget crisis. This issue may be exacerbated by the traditional state funding formulas that incentivize enrollment and access to courses rather than completion.

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