

ACADEMIC ADVISING SELF STUDY

2024-25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DEPARTMENT AND SERVICES OFFERED

Academic Advising at Salt Lake Community College reports under the Student Success Unit under the Division of Student Affairs. For the 2024-25 Academic Year, we have been asked to perform a department Program Review to describe and assess our functions or services and identify areas where we are performing well and areas where we need to improve. We have formed a Program Review Team of three professional staff who have experience and/or knowledge-based skills that will help us in assessing our department. Academic Advising has not done a full Program Review of the department since 2015-16, apart from a review for the MySuccess platform. We look forward to the results from our review team.

Our self-study will focus on the roles and tasks for Academic Advising and Transfer Student Programming. Our office supports all students who are in degree and/or certificate-seeking programs. Academic Advisors provide in-depth guidance to help students complete their education goals, which can include completion, transfer, and/or graduation. Students can receive a 1:1 appointment for a myriad of services which include course planning, graduation progress, Academic Standards, program questions, transfer support to 4-year institutions, referrals to support offices, and so forth.

In 2023, we acquired Transfer Student Programming from the Office of Transfer Articulation. Our transfer services include coordinating campus visits from our partner and non-partner 4-year institutions, events and activities related to transfer students, transfer student cohorts, and transfer advising appointments.

To help build relationships with departments within the college and students, we participate in events and activities to share the important need for students to meet with their Academic Advisor.

DEPARTMENT PURPOSE STATEMENT AND DEPARTMENT-LEVEL GOALS

The purpose of Academic Advising at Salt Lake Community College is to help current students identify their educational goals, advise students about their program of study, and to create academic plans for successful completion (graduation and/or transfer).

Department-Level Goals

- Provide awareness and stress the importance for students to meet with their Academic Advisor at minimum once a year.
- Develop and nurture an educational relationship with students to build rapport and belonging.

- Provide students with the most up to date information about their Academic Programs and referrals to departments for support services.
- Increase engagement and outreach with students for different milestones in their time at Salt Lake Community College.

HOW THE DEPARTMENT SUPPORTS SLCC MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND GOALS, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO EQUITY

Supporting Salt Lake Community College Vision

- Academic Advising guides and supports students in their program of study (major) to align with their academic and career goals, ensuring successful graduation, transfer, and/or prepare for meaningful employment.

Supporting Salt Lake Community College Values

- **Collaboration:** our team engages in conversations and training with many departments across the college in hopes of better support for students throughout their time at SLCC.
- **Community:** we participate and attend community and campus college events to help bring knowledge and awareness of our office to support students through their academic program.
- **Inclusivity:** all current students are welcome to our office to see their Academic and/or Transfer Advisor. In more efforts to support students of all backgrounds, we gather information of services throughout the campus to share with our students based on their needs and goals.
- **Learning:** Academic Advisors participate in academic curriculum meetings to gain more knowledge about their programs to understand how best to support and prepare students. Our team also attends NACADA, NASPA and UAA professional development conferences to learn of best practices for student support. We focus our staff meetings and annual training to learn the policies of SLCC that affect students in certain circumstances such as registration appeals, drop/withdrawals, and so forth.
- **Innovation:** Recognizing our limited resources, we strive to create different platforms and opportunities for students to meet with an Academic or Transfer Advisor such as virtual option, Express Advising, extended late hours, and presence at all SLCC campuses.
- **Integrity:** Academic Advising is committed to providing students with the best service and accurate information to help them fulfill their educational goals.
- **Trust:** Our team makes a great effort to support the services of other offices to provide a positive student experience on our campus.

ASSESSMENT OF STRENGTHS (POINTS OF PRIDE), AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES

Strengths

Pathway/Program Model: Academic Advising is currently organized under a guided pathway/program model which was part of the previous strategic plan for Salt Lake Community College. By this type of organizational chart, we were able to have our Academic Advisors focus on specific programs and one area of study rather than all the academic and technical programs at SLCC. This also allowed for the Academic Advisors and their

Academic faculty, associate deans, and deans to connect and understand the curriculum to best guide students to completion/graduation.

Complex schedule for extended hours & multiple campus locations: The Academic Advising office is considered an essential service, and we are therefore asked to stay open from 8 am-7 pm and cover all 7 SLCC campuses. We have been creative in implementing schedules for academic advisors to be at the campus where their academic program is located but also create a rotational schedule to cover the smaller campuses.

Different methods of meeting with students: Academic Advisors have navigated multiple ways to meet with students which include in-person appointments, virtual appointments, email and phone communication. Given the complexity of campus coverages, not all students want to drive to the campus where their Academic Advisor is located and will request a virtual appointment or to communicate via email or phone. We recently implemented “Express Advising” at the Taylorsville Student Center office where we receive the most student traffic. Express Advising is intended to help students with immediate needs and then refer to their program advisor for follow up.

Implementation of MySuccess: Academic Advising was one of the first offices to fully implement the usage of MySuccess to schedule appointments, enter notes and appointment outcomes, create caseload student lists, program advisor assignments and cohort/organization.

Areas for Improvement

Onboarding, training & professional development: Currently, we have Assistant Directors and Academic Advisor 3s supporting the training of new staff. With the many responsibilities in their roles, each new person could receive training in different ways. We have seen some inconsistencies with Academic Advisors interpreting policy and procedure information differently. We are trying different ways to provide consistent training for all Academic Advisors but find it difficult gathering everyone together when we are asked to keep our offices open. We also have a small budget for our large staff for professional development. We are only able to send about 7-10 staff to out-of-state and local conferences, which would mean that our Academic Advisors only get that opportunity every 4-5 years or so.

Large Caseloads: Our Academic Advisors have on average about 1:536 caseloads for undergraduate programs and 1:286 (2xs effort 1:572) for Salt Lake Tech programs. Salt Lake Tech programs have complex enrollment processes and take additional effort to get students enrolled in their technical program. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) recommends that every full-time Academic Advisor have a caseload of 296. This number can fluctuate depending on responsibilities and the institution. However, current caseloads have overwhelmed our Academic Advisors, especially during peak registration times and it is difficult to do proactive outreach/case management.

Consistent documentation of student engagement: While we have fully implemented our student tracking platform, MySuccess, Academic Advisors struggle with documenting student engagement outside of a 1:1 appointment. Our students communicate and engage with us mainly through email, but also through Orientations, Express Advising, events, referrals, and so forth. We have recently created “note types” to help track some of this engagement; however, during high peak times, our Academic Advisors struggle to enter this information in hopes of providing more availability to students. This is also a new practice that will require

additional training and buy-in. We are working to create data reports that will help inform our practices and provide an overview of the students we are helping.

Opportunities

Salt Lake Community College has a new president who started in July 2024. He, along with various committee members and the college community, are developing a 2025 Vision Matrix, which is an 18-month plan that will help focus SLCC on key enrollment-related outcomes. This short-term plan (January 2025-June 2026) will give the college community time to build the Strategic Plan to begin in July 2026. One of the goals for the Vision Matrix is “Increase the number of students receiving academic & career advising.” We (AA leadership team) see this as a possible opportunity to bring awareness of the essential services our office provides to all students and be adequately resourced to meet this goal.

Challenges

Our office struggles with the many responsibilities we are tasked with to support students and departments. We are often asked to table events, participate in processes from other offices, provide more opportunities to see students, cover all campuses, extended office hours, provide transfer programming, and respond to questions and concerns for students regarding enrollment and registration. While we strive to do our roles as best we can and provide support for all students, our limited staffing makes it difficult to maintain these responsibilities. We often see Academic Advisors burn out, and they leave the college or apply to other departments where a better work/life balance is viewed as more attainable. If we were to get additional staffing, we would need more supervisors to support this. Our Assistant Directors already supervise around 10-12 Academic Advisors, have a smaller caseload, and do all their administrative duties.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

SIGNIFICANT INSTITUTIONAL OR EXTERNAL CHANGES IMPACTING SERVICES

During the last six years, Academic Advising has played an integral role in the college’s initiative of implementing Guided Pathways, a college wide plan to assist students with linking programs to careers with livable wages. Additionally, Pathways provides early guidance with program choice to assist students with being intentional about their degree and career path. By helping students choose their program of study sooner students will make better decisions with course selection ultimately saving them money and time resulting in students getting better returns on their investment. Since a majority of SLCC students plan to transfer to four-year schools, Pathways would also benefit students by aligning them with communities to better prepare them for their intended bachelor’s program. To help facilitate student success under Pathways the college implemented a student success platform called MySuccess. The purpose of MySuccess is to allow faculty and staff to collaborate on student academic progress and proactively provide support and interventions to students throughout their time at SLCC. MySuccess also allows students to make appointments with various student affairs offices and meet with staff in person or virtually. Additionally, MySuccess allows staff to keep student notes to assist other staff in tracking a student’s progress and provide better collaboration across departments.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS REVIEWS, ASSESSMENTS, OR AUDITS

An Advising Council was recommended and implemented in 2017-2018 with representation from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and from the student body. This council was implemented and then evolved into an Academic Advising Sub-Committee of the Pathways Collaborative Work Team. This group made recommendations that included: developing a new department purpose statement that aligns with SLCC's vision and mission; develop a student appointment survey to assess advisor effectiveness; restructuring Career Services and Academic Advising; Implementing mandatory advising; developing a peer advising program; using group advising during peak times; restructuring Academic Advising's role in New Student Orientation; implementing better communication of the what, why, and when of advising; support ongoing professional development for staff; implementing advisor recognition awards; and implementing technologies to support Academic Advising.

SIGNIFICANT DEPARTMENTAL CHANGES OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS (OR SINCE PREVIOUS REVIEW)

With the implementation of Pathways, Academic Advising was tasked with providing a holistic approach to working with students which included assigning Academic Advisors to one of the nine academic pathways. Pathways grouped all SLCC academic programs under the pathways of Arts, Communication, Digital Media; Business; Computer Science and Information Technology; Construction, Manufacturing, and Applied Technologies; Health Sciences; Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences, Education and Human Services; Science, Engineering, and Math and Salt Lake Technical College. Within each of the Pathways, Academic Advisors were assigned specific degree programs to work with along with a caseload of students in those programs. As a result of Academic Advisors being assigned specific programs, it provides a greater opportunity for Academic Advisors to work directly with academic departments and faculty to collaborate on how to best support students. Academic Advisors within a Pathway also provide support to the other programs in the Pathway as a backup when needed. With MySuccess, Academic Advisors can provide proactive outreach to students who are in low academic standing or who have had an alert raised by faculty.

Career advising was also moved under Career Services. With the move, several positions were reassigned to Career Services along with the funding sources. We encounter students who are unable to be "undecided" and must see an Academic Advisor to be placed into a General Studies program. However, we are unable to provide interventions to help these students to explore different programs and we encourage them to visit Career Services. There is no mandatory meeting with a career coach and these students may change their program of study several times. Some may see their Academic Advisor, and we will do our best to help them understand the program they are changing into and the implications it may have on their graduation progress, but we do not have any funding for assessment tools or training to help.

PROGRESS REPORT ON CURRENT DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

While some of these recommendations were implemented, not all could be due to limited funding and resources to lower caseload numbers. Academic Advising was able to implement the following recommendations:

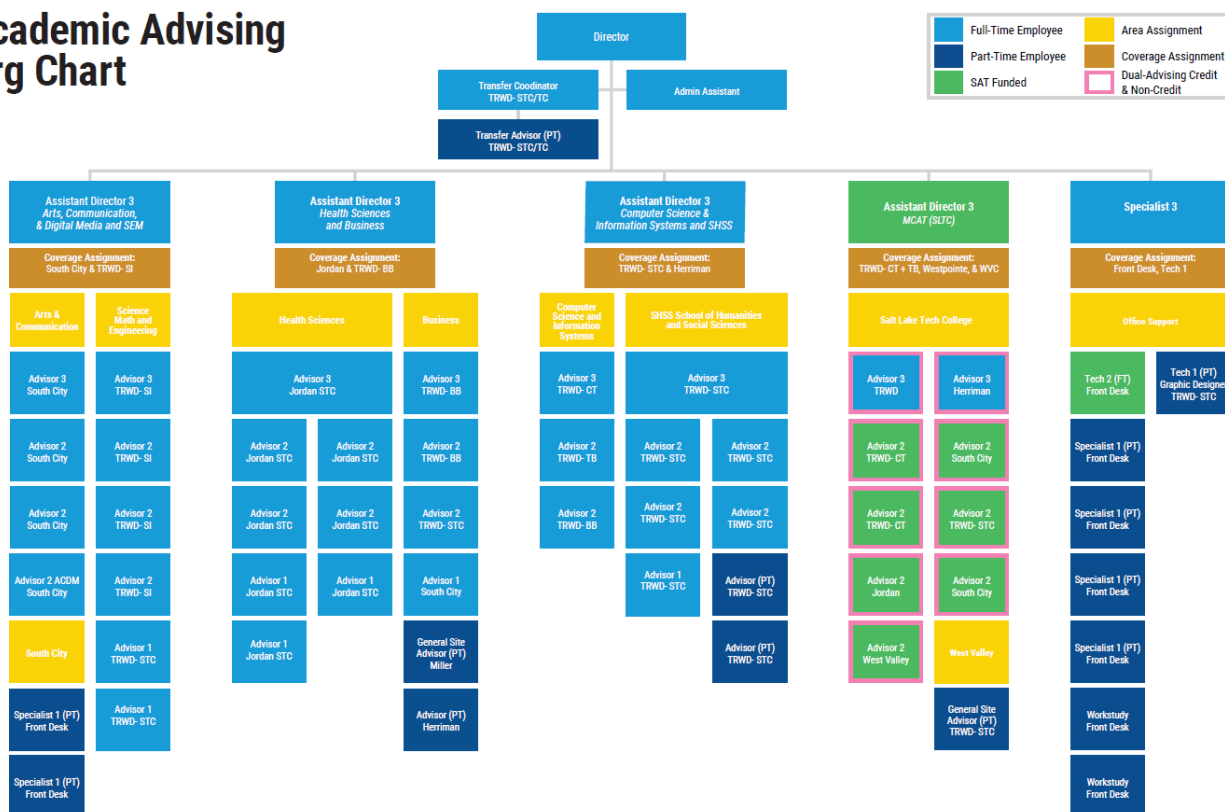
- A new purpose statement.
- A peer advising program.
- Different role in Orientation.
- Communication for the purpose of Academic Advising.

- Advisor recognition awards.
- Utilizing MySuccess, Banner, and Degreeworks (technology).
- Career advising was moved over to Career Services.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM AND SERVICES

DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (ORG CHART)

Academic Advising Org Chart



Academic Advising
11/18/24

SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THEIR CONNECTION TO STUDENTS

1:1 Student/Advisor appointments (all current undergraduate and technical students)

- Academic Advisors dedicate 60% of their work week to a 1:1 student appointment. This includes:
 - Course planning.
 - Graduation course planning.
 - MySuccess alerts from instructors.
 - Academic Standards discussions.
 - Referrals to resources.
 - Understanding the structure of a degree or program.
 - Transfer information.
 - Program major and career discussions.
 - Group advising for ESL and in demand Health Science programs.

Orientation Pathways Presentations

- Academic Advisors from each guided pathway are required to attend Orientations for the incoming new students to present on their area of study.
- Academic Advisors are required to stay to the end of orientations to assist students to register for their courses.

College wide events & activities

- Academic Advising is asked to participate in departmental and academic activities in the various ways:
 - Outreach tabling for campus and community events.
 - Classroom visits.
 - Student celebrations.
 - ESL Open Houses.

Student Engagement via Emails & Phone Calls

- Academic Advisors respond to a large amount of student emails and phone calls. 50% of students engage with their Academic Advisor via email (per DSA 2023).

Academic Department Meetings

- Academic Advisors are asked to attend their program's departmental curriculum meetings to maintain communication and share potential student issues if there are changes to curriculum.
- Academic Advisors participate in the review process as a non-voting partner in reviewing curriculum changes.

Student Transfer Programming

- Our Transfer Coordinator and part time Transfer Advisor coordinate campus visits from 4-year university partners and non-partners, host National Student Transfer Week at SLCC, and offer 1:1 transfer advising appointments.
- Collaborate with the Transfer Articulation office to stay up to date on partner approvals and program/course articulations.
- Oversee transfer cohort for "Pathway to the U" for the University of Utah.

Peer Mentor Program

- Academic Advising supports a peer mentoring model where we have current SLCC students (both undergraduate and technical) assist with triage and events. The purpose is to create support for current students and a place where they can build relationships learning about the purpose of Academic Advising.

Administrative Departmental Support

- Academic Advisors support departments in processes that are related to students and their academic history to help with persisting at SLCC.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEPARTMENTAL FUNCTIONS, ESPECIALLY THOSE BEING ASSESSED

Student Engagement

Academic Advising has a multi-purpose function to assist students with course planning, overcoming obstacles, connecting students to various departments, and holistic educational/academic support for students. Academic Advisors are often the first point of contact for information, program enrollment assistance, orientation, and registration issues for their programs.

Academic Advisors are assigned to guided pathways which may include both undergraduate, certificate, and technical programs. Each of the guided pathways have similar processes but there are some variances between undergraduate programs and technical programs. The technical programs have unique and sometimes complex requirements for enrollment and possible differing completion outcomes.

Academic Advisors assist students for the entire lifecycle of their educational journey at SLCC and/or refer the student to the University Transfer Center if their next step is to attend a 4-year university or to Career Services for work opportunities.

Express Advising/Triage

Students often come to us with concerns or issues that are not necessarily within our access to address. Academic Advisors work with students and various departments to assist them in overcoming registration holds and restrictions, error messages, course restrictions, international requirements, payment issues, program change/exploratory and completion issues. Some of these students may have already been sent to multiple offices before they reach us and express their frustrations. Due to our limited staffing capacity, we can offer Express Advising to our Student Center Advising Suite on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 am-7 pm.

Advisor Scheduling/Availability

Although Academic Advisors dedicate on average of 60% of their week to student appointments and our Student Center Advising Office Suite is open from 8 am-7 pm, students have lamented how difficult it is to get an appointment with their Academic Advisor during high peak times. Our team will increase appointment availability during high peak times, but even so, students may not be able to get in until 3-4 weeks later. In this case, we offer Express Advising and/or Group Advising to help students with their immediate needs and then refer to their program Academic Advisor.

HOW THE DEPARTMENT CONTRIBUTES TO REDUCING EQUITY GAPS

The Academic Advising office contributes to reducing equity gaps with the following:

- Offering a variety of modalities for meeting with students including in person, video chat, or phone appointment along with emails, phone calls, and text messages.
- Express Advising for quick question advising.
- Establishing an outreach plan to contact students on academic standards for all three semesters (fall, spring, summer).
- Collaboration with Student Engagement, Experience, and Achievement (SEEA) for outreach and support for students on academic standards (P1 & P3/4).
- Hire peer mentors to assist fellow students (registration, understanding holds, referrals to other departments for assistance).
- Professional development and training for Academic Advisors to remain updated on practices and procedures within the college along with recognizing the diversity in all students, staff, and faculty.
- Referrals to proper departments for resources in both student and academic affairs.

- Hire Academic Advisors with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- Establishing connections with Academic Affairs counterparts to support the whole student journey.

REVIEW OF RESOURCES

FINANCIAL RESOURCES SUPPORTING THE DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET

Academic Advising operates on a \$4.3 million Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget. Funding sources are from Education and General (E&G) and Salt Lake Technical (SLTC). This year, Academic Advising received two one-time funded positions along with one-time programming funding for transfer and peer mentors. We also received one-time funding for a remodel of the main Academic Advising Student Center suite.

Each fiscal year, Academic Advising requests funding of all one-time funded positions and programming but also includes requests for additional advisor/staffing positions through the Internal Budget Process (IBP). The last couple of budget cycles have depended on the financial resources allocated to the college through State Legislature, which has been limited for all institutions of higher education.

ACADEMIC ADVISING STAFF

Academic Advising currently has a team of 49 full-time staff and 12 part-time staff for a total of 61 Academic Advising Staff. 8 of our full-time staff are 100% funded by Salt Lake Tech budget funds, and the full-time front desk staff is partially funded by Salt Lake Tech (37%). Refer above to the organizational chart.

ACADEMIC ADVISING RESOURCES

Up until the 2023 fiscal year, Academic Advising oversaw MySuccess as the platform for tracking and noting interactions with students. MySuccess was implemented in Academic Advising as one of the initial departments that would document advisor and student appointments. This position now resides in the Office of Orientation and Student Success (OSS).

HUMAN RESOURCES—ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT STAFFING LEVELS AND NEEDS

As mentioned previously, we have a total of 61 staff in Academic Advising. We are comprised of the following:

Director (1 full time)	Academic Advisor 3 (8 full time)
Assistant Director (4 full time)	Academic Advisor 2 (25 full time)
Administrative Assistant 1 (1 full time)	Academic Advisor 1 (7 full time)
Front Desk Specialist (2 full time)	Part Time Advisors (7)
Transfer Coordinator (1 full time)	Part Time Front Desk Specialists (5)

Along with our staffing, we also have 2 work study students, 20 peer mentors, and 15 ESL Legacy Mentors.

NEEDS

Academic Advising is one of the largest departments for Student Affairs, but our caseload per Academic Advisor is 1:536/1:286 and our Assistant Directors supervise 10-12 Academic Advisors which is challenging for them to dedicate an adequate amount of time to helping their team feel connected, trained, and valued. Our Assistant Directors also have a smaller caseload and often take on appointments for their team when there is no advisor availability. The Director is currently supervising 7 direct reports, including overseeing the Student Transfer Programming. Adding two to three more Assistant Directors would help alleviate the efforts needed to efficiently supervise and train Academic Advisors and Student Transfer Programming. This last year, the Director position was reclassified to Senior Director (per CBIZ) due to the increased responsibilities to the department and college, and how large the department is.

Along with additional administrative roles, to help decrease the caseload for each advisor, the department will need to add more Academic Advisors, preferably Advisor 2 or 3 level.

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Databases

MySuccess

In 2018, Academic Advising was one of the very first departments to begin utilizing MySuccess for their scheduling & note features. Prior to this, MySuccess was used for Early Alert Progress Surveys that were deployed to faculty. Eventually, Academic Advising was included in the Early Alert Progress Surveys process to help respond to flags raised by faculty. Currently, we use the MySuccess platform for scheduling student appointments, group advising, notes, flag alerts, referrals, student lists, and pulling reports.

Banner

Academic Advisors utilize Banner for multiple reasons such as accessing student course information, viewing student holds, removing academic holds, student demographic information, prior transfer courses, and so forth. Many of the banner screens are essential for our team to have access to and to understand how to help students enroll or overcome barriers preventing registration.

DegreeWorks

The DegreeWorks Coordinator manages a platform that is also another essential tool for our Academic Advisors. DegreeWorks is built to have the curriculum/course requirements in that platform for students and Academic Advisors to use to help students track their progress towards graduation. If we see any discrepancies, Academic Advisors will work with the curriculum office and DegreeWorks Coordinator to provide additional options or information to the student.

ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY/CAPACITY OF STAFF, WORK ENVIRONMENT, PHYSICAL AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Staff

- Academic Advisors have a caseload of about 1:536/1:286, which varies between programs.
- Some guided pathways have more frequent appointments than other areas (i.e. Health Sciences, SLTC).

- Academic Advisors serve all current students but are asked to help with prospective students as needed.
- The Front Desk team has a higher turnover rate due to extended hours, complex questions, language barriers, the high number of phone calls and emails sent to our office, and non-competitive wages.
- The Academic Advising team is consistently asked to be part of many conversations and with the expectation of retaining all information for all students.
- Our Student Transfer Programming has great momentum, but we need to be cautious about what services we provide as we only have 1 full-time and 1 part-time staff.

Work Environment

- We have assigned Academic Advisors offices to be on the campus where their programs are mainly delivered. However, with the addition of smaller site campuses, the Academic Advising team has created campus rotations to ensure each campus has an Academic Advisor present at least 2-3 days a week on the smaller campuses. This can get complicated during times when we are asked to support orientations and academic departmental events & activities.
- We currently operate on a hybrid model and have seen that many of our students have expressed the virtual option as beneficial. We do require all our Academic Advisors to offer in person options when they are on campus. We do require at certain times of the academic year that our Academic Advisors be on campus 100% of the week for an “all hands-on deck” approach to accommodate students who were not able to get appointments.
- In the past, having the “Academic Advisor career ladder” helped with morale and career development. We currently do not have a true career ladder within Academic Advising and have seen disparities among Academic Advisors doing the same responsibilities but others getting paid more because they moved up in the prior career ladder model.
- Several Academic Advisors will leave because they do not see upward career mobility within our department. Or they can get paid the same in another department with lower job responsibilities & expectations.
- Lastly, our lead Academic Advisors (3s), help our Assistant Directors with leading, training, and mentoring the Academic Advisors 1s & 2s but receive no additional compensation and are unsure how to address performance issues when they are not the official supervisor.

Physical Resources

- Some of our office spaces and furniture are due for some upgrades. We recently were awarded the remodeling of the Student Center Academic Advising Suite which will provide our team with new office furniture, paint, carpet, and areas for our front desk and peer mentor team. But we still have multiple offices where new furniture would be a physical benefit to our Academic Advisors.
- If we are to expand our Student Transfer Program to other campuses, we will need additional student space.

Technology Resources

- Laptops are a required computer device that our team needs. During Covid, we received funds to get all our team laptops. Prior to Covid, much of the team used desktops. We have since changed to replace and/or provide staff with laptops. However, in one year, we received 40 laptops, but we are now at the point of replacing them and we do not have the budget to replace all of them at once.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN EFFICIENCY OR COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICES

Re-evaluate the Alpha designations of Advisor caseloads

- The current advisor assignment for MySuccess only allows for one Academic Advisor per program, therefore, when multiple Academic Advisors advise for one program, we need to split it by alpha designation.
- Students have expressed confusion and frustration when they can only make an appointment with one Academic Advisor, but their availability is limited, and they would like to meet with another Academic Advisor. They can do so by calling our office, but it is an additional step.
- In collaboration with the MySuccess Coordinator, we are looking at a more streamlined and functional way to update student/advisor assignments. This task is 662 on IT's project list. The current way of doing this off a spreadsheet is becoming more and more encumbered and is very tedious.

Re-assess how Academic Advisors present & interact with New Student Orientations

- Each New Student Orientation takes about 6 Academic Advisors to present on similar topics but add some points about their area of study.
- Some of the orientation groups vary with the # of participants. Outside of peak times, they can be as little as 0. Our Academic Advisors need to block out their time to attend and cannot take student appointments. If there are 0 students in their group, they will help with registration and/or go back to their office/campus.
- The Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships has asked us how they can be more involved with orientation because we currently take about 45 min with group.
- We would like to meet with the Director for Orientation and Student Success to see if we could potentially alter the model we currently have for Academic Advising in orientation.

Look into best practices for "Max Timeframe Audits"

- Max Timeframe Audits is a financial aid process where students who are reaching or have reached the maximum credit limit for their program but have not graduated yet. The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarship will have the student fill out the form that is sent to Academic Advising. Each Academic Advisor will get the form based on the student's program and they will need to review each student's academic record. They will calculate the number of credits that are applicable and those that are not and then determine the number of credits needed to graduate. They will submit that to Financial Aid and refer students to speak with them for additional information.
- Many students are confused about this part and are unaware that we do not have access to financial aid records.
- During high peak times, Academic Advisors are limited in being able to do these max timeframe audits because they are meeting with students back-to-back, are responding to hundreds of emails, and are expected to attend orientations and curriculum meetings. Students have expressed frustration that these audits are not done in enough time for when tuition needs to be paid.

Salt Lake Technical College Academic Advisors

- The process for enrollment in the Salt Lake Tech programs for students differs quite a bit from regular undergraduate programs.
- Academic Advisors are confused by the expectations for their role as each program and Associate Dean has asked them to complete tasks not within their role (i.e. update website for program, keep a waiting list, track who has completed all pre-requisites, etc.)
- President Gregory Peterson has asked all the Directors for Student Services to begin re-evaluating how Salt Lake Tech funded positions are directly supporting Salt Lake Tech students and how we can change our processes to better serve this population.

ANALYSIS OF RESOURCE NEEDS FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS (NEXT FIVE YEARS)

- Support for redesign of Academic Advising Website
- Laptops: for a large team, we are consistently trying to replace laptops that are over 3 years old (recommended by IT). We are currently behind in replacing 2020 laptops.
- Staffing: funding for 2-3 additional Assistant Directors, funding for 5+ new Academic Advisors, upgrades to all Academic Advisor 1's to 2's. Ideally, funding for a director to assist in all departmental concerns and support to the Executive Director.
- Furniture: some of our offices have furniture that is over 20 years old or are pieces of previous furniture put together to make it a workstation.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER FUNCTIONAL UNITS IN SLCC

OVERVIEW OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER SLCC DEPARTMENTS

Academic Advising is uniquely tasked to develop and sustain relationships with many other functional areas across the college. Generally, the relationships are positive both with the department and individual Academic Advisors. We both select which areas to engage with, as well as are directed to participate and form relationships with other areas by institutional leadership. Within the context of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) we would be defined as serving more than one functional area- given our roles and responsibilities.

The subsequent section will highlight how and which functional units we engage with primarily to allow us to successfully meet advising core values as defined by our professional body NACADA. Please see the diagram below which delineates our core values as a profession that we strive to uphold in our department and institution. It not only relates to what we do, but who we are which impacts our relationships with other functional units.

NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. (2017). NACADA core values of Academic Advising. Retrieved from <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Pillars/CoreValues.aspx>

CORE VALUES



COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS TO ADVANCE SLCC STRATEGIC GOALS (SPECIFIC EXAMPLES)

In our united goals to support student success as a Division of Student Affairs (DOSA), and support our institutional Strategic Objectives of Engage, Complete and Thrive there are many shared responsibilities. As such, collaboration is essential. The following is a brief description of Academic Advising's relationship with other functional units with specific examples included:

Admissions:

- Assist students with navigating challenges around the admissions process, particularly the Admissions Application Update Form.
- When determined that the students' informational needs exceed that of an overview from an Admissions Advisor, the student is connected to an Academic Advisor to provide context and information especially for selective admissions programs.
- Attend events to assist students to admit and enroll.

Orientation and Student Success (OSS):

- Academic Advisors from each pathway attend every in-person orientation and outline the different programs of study, ways to connect with our staff, use of the DegreeWorks audit tool and provide recommended first courses to register for that day.
- Academic Advisors participate in the High School Orientation Days, where OSS brings in graduating seniors from many of the local high schools to visit the school and get enrolled.
- Academic Advisors table during the Mega Fairs at the beginning of the semester.

- Provide updated information for on-line orientations.
- Occasionally present at Orientation Advisor trainings or with Bruin Scholars.
- Academic Advisors refer students to OSS primarily for assistance with registration after we help students with course/class planning.
- Continually connect with the MySuccess Coordinator, who responds to our department's questions and requests.

Office of the Registrar and Academic Records (ORAR):

- Inter-departmental training to ensure that we (both) are current with changes that affect students that we need to direct to ORAR.
- Under the ORAR umbrella, we communicate a great deal with the following areas: Transcript Evaluation, Graduation, Registration Appeals and Academic Renewal and the Guest Student Process.
- The number of students transferring in take a significant amount of shared information to accurately advise. When giving students a "guestimate" as to what courses may be transferring in, Academic Advisors use the transcripts uploaded by TEO in Etrieve to guide students to potential appropriate and non-duplicative courses to register for while awaiting a formal evaluation.
- As a community college dealing with a high percentage of first-generation students, Academic Advisors spend time explaining processes in ORAR and across the institution.
- As part of our Academic Standards process, ORAR trains our Assistant Director to use banner to help set up the "rules" to place academic registration holds for students.
- In the student facing portion of Academic Standards, we may direct students to the Registration Appeals and Academic Renewal options.
- Include various members of the ORAR team to provide context over process and/or policies that are affecting the student experience. For example, invite the Associate Registrar over graduation to be part of discussions as to why students are being denied graduation that may tie into a curriculum change.
- While most of Banner is under the purview of ORAR, Academic Advisors assist students with registration holds, beyond the ones that our department manages regarding Academic Standards using the SOAHOLD banner screen.

Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (OFAS):

- Complete and submit Maximum Timeframe Audits (MTF) for students who have/or are close to exceeding allowable credits with 2–3-week turnaround time.
- We previously were a required part of the Satisfactory Appeal Process (SAP) – the students had to meet with us to secure a current academic plan. Now that part is optional which has helped lighten our load during rush (open registration for each semester).
- A member of our staff participates in the Appeals Review Committee that meets weekly.
- Financial Aid (FAFSA) and scholarships come up regularly during advising sessions, both individual and group.
- The CPAS project now being put into motion will include us engaging in even more communication regarding shared students.

Career Services (CS):

- Academic Advisors regularly refer students to CS for exploratory assistance with their platforms.
- Inter-departmental training and collaborations on positions in smaller site campuses (i.e. Herriman Career Coach trained to do general advising).
- Academic Advisors continue to refer students to the tools used by CS and the website they developed on career exploration.

Testing Services:

- They provide us with updated information for placement guides for how the scores in testing result in classes for the students when assisting them in developing a plan.
- Provide Testing Services feedback on changes based on shifts that we see in the outcomes with new testing platforms such as the number of students placing in Math 0920 after switching to Mobius.
- We also engage in regular communication and referrals to other assessments they offer such as Challenge and CLEP Exams.

TRIO:

- Refer eligible students to our TRIO grant programs for first-generation and/or low-income students as they can provide more individual and holistic services to this student population.
- Collaboration with hosting a first-generation student celebration event, along with other SA departments.
- Academic Advising generates the academic plans that the students need, and TRIO supports the students in staying on track.

Student Engagement, Experience and Achievement (SEEA):

- SEEA team members have recently assisted us in conducting some of our skills workshops that enabled students to get their holds removed more quickly so they could register before classes were full.
- SEEA team members attend some of AA staff meetings to stay current on advising processes to help their student cohorts.
- Academic Advising and SEEA are working on a project/pilot to train some of their team members to support Academic Standard student groups, such as P1 (students whose CGPA fell below 2.0 for one semester) and P3/P4 (students whose CGPA have been below 2.0 for more than 3 semesters).

Thayne Center for Student Life, Leadership, and Community Engagement:

- Academic Advisors refer students to their student events, activities, and leadership roles.
- Serve as Club Advisors.
- The ESL Legacy Mentors, focused on community for English Language Learners, applied to be a club to help with retention and community building efforts.
- Academic Advisors also encourage students to engage with the Thayne Center volunteer opportunities to explore fields or add heft to scholarship applications and gain leadership skills.

Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS):

- With our office team side by side, service referrals are based on the needs students disclose to Academic Advisors.

- We also request periodic updates on services and seek consultation on how to best get a student to engage with their services.

International Student Services (ISS):

- Tabling at new international student orientations.
- Academic Advisors also engage with our shared students in standard ways such as course planning and Academic Standards.
- Processes that we engage with are specific to this student population, being part of special processes like: Curricular Practical Training (CPT), Optional Practical Training (OPT), and country specific forms.
- On occasion we are asked to provide a full academic plan for students to submit to their native countries for funding/scholarship purposes.

Veterans Services (VS):

- We have designated an Academic Advisor to serve as a liaison with their department and who sees their students one day a week for 4 hours.
- Our liaison serves as a point of contact when the Veterans Advisor has questions or brings information back to our department about criteria that need to be met regarding VS student plans dependent on funding source.
- We have also had VS as guests at our all-staff meetings to update us on trending topics or needs in their area that we may be seeing with our shared students. For example, helping us to understand how certain courses cannot be funded if not required for a program of study.

Center for Health and Counseling (CHC):

- Refer students to the services in their office such as counseling, health, and wellness.
- As part of our Academic Standards program, we have provided counseling vouchers for students in need of counseling services.
- CHC has participated in our retreats and training. Providing both professional and personal information to aid in healthy lifestyles for our students and ourselves.

Dean of Students:

- Academic Advising will respond to a request/concern regarding a student that has been relayed by their office to us or notifying the BIT committee about concerning students.
- We also often refer students to this area for assistance/review with the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities with a myriad of issues students may disclose during an academic advising session.

Prison Education Program:

- We provide one to two of our Academic Advisors to assist with advising students out at the prison in the evening hours.
- We collaborate with other Student Affairs offices to do joint visits to the students.

Online Success Coaches:

- Our areas enjoy open communication, cross referrals, and sharing information/updates. We also share notes in the MySuccess platform which allows us to see what each area may be involved with.

Academic Systems, under an Associate Provost on the academic side:

- Academic Advisors engage with all the departments in this area to assist the students we are advising.
- The Transfer Coordinator collaborates with the Director of Transfer Articulation to gain knowledge and understanding of articulation agreements with our 4-year USHE partners, which includes 2+2 articulation agreements.
- Clarification about updates and maintaining the websites with information from Academic Advising and Student Transfer Programming.
- Collaborate and communicate with the Coordinator over Catalog and Degree Audit.
- Academic Advising participates in Curriculum reviews via the Technical Analysis and Compliance (TAC) Committee and by having non-voting positions on the General Education and Senate Curriculum Committees.
- Interact with the office of Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) to understand their processes and updates regarding AP credits, and other options for credit through work experience or prior learning environments.
- Provide an Assistant Director and lead Academic Advisor to sit on the committee that provides feedback and recommendations.
- Engage with Salt Lake Technical College (SLTC) curricula processes, dean, associate dean, and other Salt Lake Tech staff to re-evaluate processes to provide students a more streamlined enrollment along with a positive student experience.

Faculty/Academic Affairs:

- Academic Advisors work regularly with our Deans, Associate Deans, faculty, and School staff in each of the nine pathways in both passive and proactive ways. Moving to a guided pathway model has resulted in the need for greater departmental communication.
- Academic Advisors attend School Curriculum Meetings.
- Academic Advisors participate proactively in different ways with different schools. For example, the School of Business hosts a semesterly “Jam Session” to assist students with successfully completing the current semester and leaving the upcoming one well ordered. Also, our School of Humanities and Social Sciences Academic Advisor recently tabled with their department in a high traffic area in our Administration Building promoting a departmental effort.

While Academic Advising interacts and collaborates with other institutional areas the preceding is the most significant. We do engage regularly with the Office of Information Technology and do referrals back and forth. For the most part this interaction is like that of the rest of the institution.

ORGANIZATIONAL OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENTING DEPARTMENTAL INITIATIVES

- Requests from various departments throughout the college during our high peak of student traffic.
- Expectations from Academic Advising higher than currently resourced, such as extended hour coverage at 3 main campuses, plus office coverage at smaller campuses.

- Academic Advising tries to meet the initiative driven by senior leadership and often find limited capacity and resources to set our own departmental initiatives.
- Academic Advising does not have the appropriate organizational structure to function as effectively if given positions to establish an appropriate organization with more leaders/supervisors. According to information and descriptions relayed by People, Workplace, & Culture (PWC), effective supervisors should only have between six-nine employees.
- Understanding what Guided Pathways is going to be for the college with a new President and Senior Leadership.
- High assigned caseloads for Academic Advisors; and certain areas have a consistent booked out schedule for most of the academic year, which leads to student frustration about advisor availability.
- Academic Advisor turnover due to burn out and/or low morale and respect for work efforts.
- Office space is spread throughout the multiple campuses and can make it difficult to connect as a team. There is a limited mileage budget, so the team is not always able to meet in person and do meetings virtually and in person.
- Loss of positions/funding that has been shifted to other areas in the past ten years but has not taken any of the workload from the team.
- The transfer evaluation process (while being impressive how well they manage it given the limitations) impacts the students and their ability to get the classes needed in semesters they are hoping to attend.
- Employees across the institution and especially the Division of Student Affairs have “advisor” in their title. This creates challenges as student feedback is often around what an “advisor” told them, and those issues get attributed to the department and Academic Advisors.

PEER AND BEST PRACTICE COMPARISONS

COMPARISON OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES WITH THOSE AT PEER INSTITUTIONS AND NATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

The institution was in the process of transitioning to the guided Academic Pathway Model, which had major implications for our department. The basis for this shift was around the book, *Redesigning America's Community College, A Clearer Path to Student Success*. Thomas R. Baile, Shanna Smith Jaggars, Davis Jenkins. This book was a guide for how to make this shift at SLCC. The book outlines moving from more of a “cafeteria” style model to structured academic pathways. The book contains significant research from the Community College Research Center (CCRC) and cites many studies and best practices nationally with those successfully moving to this model. Over the last quarter century, Academic Advising at Salt Lake Community College has continuously evolved the advising team from carrying the title of Academic, Career, and Transfer Advisors to Academic Advisors. The team has gone from a combined Centralized/Decentralized model, with a combination of appointments for Academic Advisors and walk-ins for new and undecided students, to the Pathway model that promotes students engaging with the same Academic Advisor via appointment in a set program of study. As stated earlier, this has helped Academic Advisors become content experts for their areas of advising. Thus, providing students with more consistent, and nuanced information and guidance. It has reduced the margin of error and improved outcomes for students and confidence in Academic Advisors.

As previously mentioned, while not necessarily having the NACADA recommended caseload, counterparts at other institutions- local and national are managing smaller caseloads. Like the college structure prior to

pathways, many of our surrounding institutions have centralized models, with others having a combination of centralized/decentralized. An Academic Advising Center that serves exploratory students and then program specific professional Academic Advisors housed within departments/Schools. The University of Utah has this structure. Academic Advising does engage in an annual transfer conference with the University of Utah to respectively assist shared students with a more seamless process. Utah Valley University has a similar structure to the U of U as well. Weber State University has a similar structure to the other universities but in addition has “Navigational” Academic Advising and program specific faculty advisors. Given that the community college has a high number of adjunct faculty, the ability to train and retain would be especially challenging and lead to possible inconsistencies in academic advising, particularly when unable to provide additional salary for such services.

When attending/presenting at the Utah Advising Association (UAA) and other local conferences, NACADA, NASPA, and other regional and national conferences, Academic Advisors generally find that they are engaged in high impact practices. In Utah, specifically Salt Lake County, SLCC is essentially the only community college. This results in sometimes having different areas of focus and limited resources that must be spread out over a broader base of students. SLCC Academic Advisors consistently hold a seat on the UAA Board/Committee that plans/produces the statewide conference. Academic Advisors may only attend something locally every other year. Recently, one of the Advisors developed a committee to recognize our Academic Advisors. He was inspired by a session at a conference. He has rolled it out this year with a small committee of other Academic Advisors. They have developed a wonderful recognition process for AA staff that is monthly and yearly. It provides opportunities for broad recognition, not the same person or thing every time.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

DESCRIPTION OF DEPARTMENTAL IMPACT ON STUDENTS

With the implementation of pathways, Academic Advisors become experts in their assigned programs of study (POS), which in turn assists students in making a more informed decision on the appropriate POS that suits their needs. Students receive more accurate, timely, and complete information to make the best decision. Academic Advisors can guide students to finish programs more proficiently; whereas students take less courses that do not count toward their degree and complete in a timely manner. Likewise, each pathway has a team of Academic Advisors that work collaboratively to support the students, help cover appointments when the primary Academic Advisor is on leave and offer more support options for students. Students meet with an Academic Advisor in the desired pathway and are assisted to determine which POS they would like to pursue.

MySuccess allows Academic Advisors to take historical notes of student academic lifecycle, record pertinent information from meetings, send mass messaging to caseloads, and address “flags.” Flags can be sent to or from various departments as a referral for assistance with students, which in turn allows the Academic Advisor to better support the student to overcome obstacles for success and completion. My Success can collect data on appointments and student interactions, which assists Academic Advising in projections, planning, and focusing advisor efforts for each POS and the department. MySuccess data also assists in creating focused and intentional support for students through filtering (ex: academic standards; academic standing/faculty flags) throughout the semester.

Program specific pathways were created for the ability for Academic Advisors to adopt case management style responsibilities of their assigned students, which develops relationships between the student and their specific program Academic Advisor. Trust is built and students feel more comfortable with their Academic Advisor and have access to more immediate responses. Pathways has brought about better collaboration with other faculty and staff. Academic Advisors are invited to curriculum meetings, PAC meetings, and school or pathway events to build relationships. Academic Advisors maintain working relationships with faculty and staff to stay up to date with program information and changes to provide the most up to date information for students. Collaboration also assists students in navigating SLCC systems to overcome obstacles and get support when they have flags raised by any staff member. Staff also work collaboratively with other departments to streamline processes and improve services.

Academic Advising created an environment of accessibility for students through Express Advising on set days and times to address quick questions and needs. Business hours at the main campus create support for working students until 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday. There are a variety of modalities to access Academic Advisors and get referrals to other departments through the front desk as well as the texting application. Access to Academic Advising has also been expanded to outlying campuses such as Herriman, West Point, and the West Valley campuses with program specific Academic Advisors.

DATA FROM SURVEYS, ASSESSMENTS, AND OTHER FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

Beginning the Spring of 2020 through the Fall of 2022 an appointment survey was regularly conducted to determine student satisfaction with their Academic Advising appointment. The survey included the following questions related to the student's experience with their Academic Advisor –

- The Academic Advisor was knowledgeable and able to explain the requirements of my program of study?
- After meeting with the Academic Advisor, I felt more prepared to meet my goals?
- The Academic Advisor was able to explain how to find information about the resources and support services on campus?

The survey responses were based on a Likert scale that included responses of 1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neither Agree nor Disagree 4) Agree 5) Strongly Agree and 6) Not Applicable. The student response to these questions was 83% Agree or Strongly Agree. Additionally, students were asked if they would return to see Academic Advising or would recommend to other students to meet with an Academic Advisor, from which 87% or higher of students responded with Agree or Strongly Agree. These positive ratings were especially noteworthy given they happened at the time when Academic Advisors transitioned to working fully remote during the COVID-19 pandemic and they were learning how to do Advising appointments over Zoom and better utilize other technologies to support students.

An opened ended question was included in the survey which stated “Do you have additional questions or comments that were not addressed? What went well? What could be improved?” Some responses from this question included:

- My Advisor took time to explain everything I need to know for my major. Thank you!
- She was amazing and helped me feel like I could meet my goals!!
- I have gotten a ton of help through this, it's nice to have a helpful phone call. She is wonderful.

- A couple of audio issues connecting via zoom.
- Very smooth process. He answered all of my questions before I asked them!
- I was assigned the wrong advisor on my SLCC page. He was very friendly and knowledgeable in his field and was able to answer a few things for me. He was able to direct me to the correct advisor and made sure that I was taken care of.
- She did an amazing job giving me resources and guidance towards my future goals. I was feeling anxious about the future and some upcoming changes in my life, but she made me feel reassured that I can still continue my education. She exceeded my expectations of the meeting and I definitely feel comfortable reaching out to her in the future for any questions or support in my academic goals.
- I love working with my advisor, she was very understanding and patient. It was a very enjoyable experience.
- My advisor was friendly, attentive, and addressed all of my concerns down to every detail. I am extremely satisfied with my meeting with him.
- She was amazing! She was very informative and patient and helped me understand and plan out my goal so that I can be more successful.

Results and feedback from the survey have been used in pathway meeting discussions to look for ways to improve services to students and develop ongoing training for Academic Advisors. Since the survey was conducted manually there was an effort made to investigate automating the survey before it was decided by the college administration to stop distributing the survey as the college worked on developing a survey that would be more comprehensive for all of Student Affairs.

In a recent survey from the college regarding the vision matrix plan that is currently being worked on, students have indicated that Academic Advising was frequently accessed and that it played a role in their timely completion plans (49.8% of those surveyed). However, when asked "If you could change one thing about Salt Lake Community College that would improve your experience, what would it be?" Academic Advising was in the top 5 categories for this question. Students indicated negative sentiment towards our office providing feedback about scheduling appointments and having more interactions with advisors (65% of those surveyed). The Academic Advising office would like to delve more into this to gain perspective from students and understand the pain points. In prior conversations with students, it is seen that Academic Advising is valuable to their experience, but they may not have all the understandings of the functions of other departments and express frustration when time is taken to find a possible solution or help the student find other options or alternatives to their completion plans.

INCORPORATION OF EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY LENS IN SERVICES PROVIDED TO STUDENTS

With the creation of pathways, it provides every student at SLCC to have access to Academic Advisors specializing in their assigned program/major. For students, an assigned Academic Advisor helps create that relationship because they know who to reach out to if they need assistance. This is very important for students, especially those from underserved areas, because these student populations are initially assigned an Academic Advisor who can help direct them through their educational goals. The struggle is the limited capacity to initiate conversations and provide multiple follow ups. Academic Advisors strive to make sure underserved students are referred to departments that have more capacity to provide multiple follow ups throughout each semester. Students can also reach out in various modalities when it is convenient to them, which is beneficial especially for students with

transportation issues. Some pathways, such as Salt Lake Tech, provide bilingual Academic Advisors specifically for ESL students.

To support equity and inclusivity, Academic Advising created a planning committee consisting of multiple Student Affairs offices to host a First Gen Student Celebration Conference where students could feel that the division supports all first-generation students at SLCC. Academic Advising has also initiated a collaboration with the ESL department, Student Affairs offices, and ESL student registration events to help this student population have all the support needed to navigate the enrollment process and begin taking classes. Group advising for ESL students in Spanish is offered to better support this population of students. Academic Advising supports a Peer Mentor program which includes students from various backgrounds that mimic the student population at SLCC and supports peer-to-peer relationships. Many of the peer mentors are bilingual and can support a variety of student populations and relate to their needs.

There is an intentionality of hiring bilingual staff to better support students, and to also support the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) initiatives. Academic Advisors also collaborate with various departments to maintain a knowledge base of bilingual staff in the other departments that can support as needed. Express Advising is provided to assist students that have various needs to access Academic Advisors.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARIZE CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SELF-STUDY

Academic Advising has done a great job incorporating pathways into the department organization. The office has taken the initiatives of the college in the last 5-7 years and implemented the strategies with best practices, but with limited positions and funding. With the needs of students and the expectations of the college, Academic Advisors have expressed the toll it is starting to take on team members. However, Academic Advisors along with support staff and AA leadership, strive to continue doing their best to get students to meet their educational outcomes.

It is apparent in the voices of students that Academic Advising's role at the college is valuable but would like more engagement and interactions with them. The Academic Advising team would like to be more engaged with students in supporting them to meet their educational needs and outcomes. It is a challenge for the office to keep morale up when they understand why students are encountering barriers to enrollment, but do not have the stake hold to implement changes outside of the advising purview. All the team can do is find opportunities to understand the multiple offices and guide students through those processes.

Academic Advising needs to re-think some of the work tasks, caseload assignments, and different ways to communicate with students given that students would like more accessibility and availability to their Academic Advisor, and rightfully so.

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION ON CHALLENGES AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **Academic Advising Organization:** an organization restructure for Academic Advisors and leadership to help support and maintain a sustainable team, where focus can be on training and developing best practices for Academic and Transfer Advisors. This can also include a compensation change for the team

provided that their skills and ability exceed those of their colleagues in other departments who are in the same pay grade.

- **Professional Development & Training opportunities:** currently there are not sufficient funds to send an appropriate portion of our team to professional development conferences (NACADA, NSITS). Currently, when we have part-time positions vacant, we will use those funds to help cover professional development costs. There are limited in-person trainings to keep student appointment availability and keep mileage reimbursements low. Staff meetings (virtual and in person) are part of the training, but virtual meetings are limited to what can be trained online. There is a need to develop a more effective onboarding and training model for the team.
- **Relationships with Academic Programs:** With Academic Advising and Student Transfer programming housed under Student Affairs, there are some inconsistencies in communication between Academic Advisors, Academic Deans and Associate Deans. Great strides have been made to re-establish communication since covid with Deans, Associate Deans, and faculty but there is still more work to build that relationship and find collaborative efforts to support students.
- **Continuous Inter-departmental training and relationships with Student Affairs:** as mentioned above, since covid, Academic Advising finds opportunities where they can collaborate with other Student Affairs offices and provide training context to support one another roles.
- **Re-evaluate and lower caseload assignments:** unfortunately, this area is difficult to manage because there are only so many Academic Advising positions. There are initiatives to look at position upgrades for Advisor 1 to Advisor 2 so they can take a higher caseload. The caseloads will still not be realistic to do case management advising, but it will provide equity amongst the Academic Advisor 1's as they are getting paid less but have the same skills, abilities, and work expectations as their colleagues who are Academic Advisor 2 and 3. There is also consideration on how to make the process easier for students to find their Academic Advisor on MySuccess and the website.
- **Team Morale:** This area is difficult to address because Academic Advising understands why students want more interactions, and at times when they feel more is needed, it is not as readily available or accessible. For the most part (based on the AA student survey), there is positive feedback when students do see an Academic Advisor. But, from the larger college surveys, the negative feedback about our department brings mixed feelings to the team. They are told that Academic Advising is an "Essential Office" which is why the expectations are higher than other departments, yet the sentiment is that they are not funded as an "Essential Office." We have high hopes that this could change with new senior Leadership and President.

POTENTIAL GOALS AND ACTION STEPS FOR DEPARTMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Upgrade Advisor 1 to 2.
- Add additional leadership roles to the department.
- Develop an onboarding and training plan for Academic and Transfer Advisors.
- Re-develop student satisfaction surveys to improve services to students and understand their needs more clearly.
- Re-evaluate caseload assignments to make the student experience more streamlined and accessible.
- Establish a clearer expectation of appointment availability for Academic Advisors, along with goals and milestones to aim for when working with students.

- Utilize the data from MySuccess to help Academic Advisors focus on the areas we see progress in and need to change.
- Continue improving relationships around the college and participating in committees where Academic Advising can share the impact changes may have on students completing their educational goals.

WAYS THE DEPARTMENT CAN ADVANCE SLCC MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND GOALS

Salt Lake Community College Mission Statement:

Salt Lake Community College is your community college. We engage and support students in educational pathways leading to successful transfer and meaningful employment.

Essentially, all Academic Advising work efforts are directly tied into the college mission statement. The services and efforts are to create meaningful relationships with students to help them meet their educational and career outcomes, which can be anything from completing pre-requisite coursework to transferring to 4-year institutions and/or finding meaningful employment after graduation. The extended office hours, the coverage at multiple campuses, the development of course planning, intervening for students who are on academic standards, participation on curriculum committees, supporting various college initiatives, and building relationships and knowledge of departments across the college is all to be able to holistically support students when they are at Salt Lake Community College.

SLCC 2025 Vision Matrix Goals

Recently, the college has been in the process of developing an 18-month plan that will help focus on key enrollment outcomes. One of the goals is to *Increase the number of students receiving academic and career advising*. The Director and one of the Assistant Directors are included in these conversations as plans are being created to help meet this goal. This goal has been very well received in the Academic Advising office as they feel that Senior leadership and the President find value in their services to students.