

CAMPUS ADVISING PLAN

PENN STATE BEAVER



WHAT DOES AN ADVISER DO?

Penn State Beaver advisers help their advisees persist to graduation while encouraging exploration and leadership opportunities to enhance advisees' overall educational experience. They also facilitate referrals for disabilities, finances, mental health, and overall well-being support.

While advisees are responsible for communicating with their adviser, deciding upon a major, and successfully completing course requirements for graduation, the adviser must have extensive knowledge of policies and procedures, both academic and campus specific, to help foster their advisees' engagement and academic success.

Leveraging our unique relationships with students to positively impact student outcomes, advisers help students navigate college and avoid common pitfalls through proactive intervention. Success depends on targeted, proactive outreach to encourage students to take various actions (e.g., register for courses, schedule advising appointments). When done effectively, this strategic nudging can positively impact student outcomes by increasing awareness and helping students complete important tasks on time. Proactive outreach also improves the student experience by helping build connections with students that might not seek assistance on their own.

WHO ADVISES AT PS BR?

Full-time Staff Advising Manager - oversees all advising activities, faculty trainings, New Student Orientation, and advising of undecided students. This staff member coordinates the Division of Undergraduate Studies office on the campus.

Faculty Advisers – advise undergraduates

- all full-time faculty serve in this way
- some also serve as Program Coordinators for four-year degrees
- some serve as College Advisers for students in 2+2 programs
- some advise for an academic discipline or area

Full-time Staff Program Coordinator - triages student and faculty advising questions, manages advising appointments for Full-time Staff Advising Manager, and coordinates New Student Orientation operations.

Center for Academic Achievement Adviser – advises a group of undecided students

HOW ARE ADVISEES ASSIGNED?

Students are assigned advisers in August by the Division of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) office in consultation with the Chief Academic Officer. Transfer students are assigned advisers as soon as they are admitted. Advisers are re-assigned if a student changes their major. The DUS office reviews assignments on a monthly basis to ensure students are appropriately assigned to an adviser based on major and educational goals.

Advisers can see who they are to advise in LionPath under "My Advisees" when they launch the Advisor Home Base.

Students can view their adviser in LionPATH under "My Advisers" and in Starfish under "My Success Network".

PENN STATE ADVISING POLICY

ADVISING POLICY 32-10

Academic advising programs at Penn State will create opportunities for students to actively engage with academic advisers so that students are able to:

- Articulate their educational decisions and plans in the context of their interests, abilities, and values
- Synthesize information from various sources to set goals and make decisions
- Assume responsibility for meeting academic program requirements
- Articulate the meaning of higher education and the purpose of the curriculum
- Cultivate the intellectual habits that encourage life-long learning
- Function as global citizens who engage in the world around them
- Demonstrate integrative learning by making connections across all parts of their educational experience
- Identify and participate in engaged scholarship opportunities

ADVISER and ADVISEE ROLES

The Adviser's Roles

- To understand University procedures and the academic concerns of students
- To understand the expected standards of achievement and the student's likelihood of success
- To discuss suitable career objectives as demonstrated by student abilities and interests
- To plan a course of study and offer advice about courses, adjustments, prerequisites, etc.
- To refer students to other resources when appropriate
- To keep informed and current regarding the specific college and department curriculum changes

The Advisee's Roles

- To acquire information for course scheduling, program planning, and graduation requirements
- To seek academic and career information needed to meet educational goals
- To become knowledgeable about University and college policies, procedures, rules, etc.
- To be prepared with accurate and relevant materials when meeting with the adviser
- To consult with the adviser at least once every semester

GUIDELINES FOR ADVISER PROACTIVE OUTREACH

WELCOME EMAIL- Welcome and/or introduce yourself to your new advisees and let them know how to reach you, your office hours, and where you are located. FIRST WEEK OF SEMESTER

EARLY PROGRESS REPORT- Run a Starfish early progress report to determine what immediate outreach is needed and advise student on follow up actions (tutoring, cancellation, drop, add, disability accommodations, mental health counseling). MONDAY OF WEEK 4

NEXT SEMESTER REGISTRATION MEETING – Meet each semester with advisee to help them build a shopping cart for their enrollment target date. Take into consideration degree requirements and possible needs to re-take a course. BEFORE ENROLLMENT TARGET DATES.

MID-SEMESTER REPORT- Run a Starfish report to see if intervention is needed. Suggest mid-semester course, late drop, tutoring, faculty office hours as appropriate. This is a critical intervention time for advisers to help students who are struggling to understand their options to course correct. MONDAY OF WEEK 7

REMINDER OF LATE DROP DEADLINE- Alert students to late drop deadline and help them understand that all grades will be permanent after this deadline. WEEK BEFORE LATE DROP DEADLINE

ACADEMIC REVIEWS- Give feedback on semester grades and upcoming semester courses. Communicate with advisee to ensure enrollment in subsequent semester. END OF SEMESTER

Who closes the loop on Starfish flags?

Flags in Starfish on student academic progress are **reported by faculty** (e.g., poor attendance, poor participation, poor grades).

Flags can be seen by 1. the student, 2. the student's adviser, and 3. the members of the PS BR Campus Student Success Committee.

Flags are primarily for the student to take action upon, to follow the recommendation to advance their success (e.g., see the faculty member during office hours, obtain tutoring, drop the class). **Our responsibility as advisers is to help make the student aware of the recommendation. Closing the loop (clearing the flag) means the recommended intervention has been promoted to the student and the student has acknowledged their awareness of the flag and the recommendation.**

Who can close the loop/clear the flag? A student, if they feel they followed up on the recommendation, providing further ownership of the process for students.

Faculty, advisers and student success committee members can also close the loop if they have spoken with the student and feel the student is fully aware of the recommendation and need to follow up in order for them to succeed.

How do you actually clear the flag in Starfish? Hover over the flag and press “close the loop” and add comments for future reference.

*The Assistant Director of Athletics can see all student athlete reports.
Full-time Staff Advising Manager and Registrar can see all student reports.*

PS BR CAMPUS ADVISING COUNCIL

The PS BR Campus Advising Council strengthens the campus commitment to undergraduate advising.

It is chaired by the Full-time Staff Advising Manager and comprised of faculty advisers, the Director of Student Affairs, a representative from the Student Government Association, and others as needed.

They meet several times a semester to review training needs and advance advising practices to be on par with best practices, and foster student success.

PS BR CAMPUS STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE

The PS BR Campus Student Success committee supports students' academic and personal success with the goal of positively impacting campus retention.

The **Full-time Staff Advising Manager**, as well as faculty advisers and additional staff engaged with student persistence, serve on this committee. This committee defines student success for the campus.

Penn State Beaver Campus Definition of Student Success (Fall 2022)

- **Creating a strong foundation for college** through early connection with campus resources like advising, counseling, and tutoring.
- **Developing a sense of community and belonging** by creating partnerships with peers, faculty, and staff through campus events, student organizations, and academic experiences.
- **Aligning academic interests with goals and potential** to find their “best fit” major.
- **Sharpening both academic and life skills** like critical and creative thinking, math, writing, digital literacy, interpersonal communication, collaboration, and goal-setting and management.
- **Contributing to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** by respecting others regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, and ability; and learning to recognize and challenge biases in themselves and others.
- **Minimizing debt** through financial literacy and purposeful persistence in their program of study.
- **Gaining marketable skills** through civic engagement, internships, research, student organizations, and jobs.
- **Graduating and entering a personally fulfilling career** with sustaining wages and upward mobility.

HOW DOES THE PS BR STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE SUPPORT ADVISING?

The PS BR Student Success Committee runs early and mid-semester progress reports, looking for patterns in students' experiences that are in need of intervention. The committee focuses on students who are at significant risk for not persisting. Once identified, committee members reach out to these students and suggest holistic approaches to improve student outcomes. **This work only compliments adviser proactive outreach and is not meant to replace advising.**

For example, the Student Success Committee would reach out to a student who has 4 or more mid-term progress reports, recommending that the student follow up with each faculty to create a plan to improve their performance in each class. **They would also recommend to the student that they meet with their adviser for a holistic academic improvement plan.** They would ask the student if there are personal obstacles they are struggling with and then, if so, provide referrals to counseling, disability services, tech support, and/or financial aid, as appropriate. The committee would not reach out to the student on behalf of the adviser. The committee members reiterate the flags, ensuring the student understands what is being recommended and providing access to resources.

The Student Success Committee would not reach out to a student with 1-2 flags as they trust that advisers and faculty who reported the flags are working with students to promote the recommendations made.

TAKING ADVISING NOTES

For all advisers and members of the Student Success Committee, documentation of recommendations is essential to student success so that we can effectively and holistically advocate for students. Relying on word of mouth and memory instead of documentation often causes students to misrepresent recommendations and can put the University in a compromised position. Documentation provides clarity for all involved.

Even if your documentation documents an error, that is preferred, as it is easy to recover from errors that are documented. Undocumented errors are particularly difficult to recover from as we have no record to move forward from.

These records protect both the student and the university by allowing mistakes to be corrected and students to be held accountable to instructions provided by university personnel.

Notes maintained in Starfish are part of the student's educational record and are viewable by individuals in particular roles and educational connections with the student.

How do you document your advising session in Starfish?

- add a note in Starfish, select advising note

What do you document from your advising session in Starfish?

- note student's major preference or declared major, if they are a student athlete, general responsibilities, honors...and any other obligations the student may have that provides a more holistic advising context
- note general types of challenges (mental health, financial, family tension) and thus referrals
- if they express more personal and private details about their challenges those details should not be documented (suicidal ideation, family income amounts, pregnancy,)
- learning disabilities should **not** be documented in Starfish and students should be referred verbally to the Center for Academic Achievement
- note your discussion on current classes they are taking
- note your discussion on courses for the following semester as they related to their career goals
- note your recommendations for next steps the student needs to take (reach out to Career Services, Personal Counseling, enroll during their appointment date window, watch for emails regarding intention to graduate, etc.)

When creating a new note in Starfish, users can see which other Starfish roles are permitted to view this note. Users can choose to email students a copy of Starfish notes they create. Students may request to see their Starfish notes under their FERPA rights.

FERPA & STARFISH NOTES

Use of Starfish notes should be consistent with all federal and university policies, as well as the ethical standards of the advising field:

- FERPA is the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and all Starfish notes fall under the act. Therefore, all advisers are only to access student information only when relevant to the educational process.
- Advising course work, progress to graduation and career possibilities, and referring students to mental health, financial support and disability accommodations are all relevant to the educational process.
- If there is a student conduct issue outside of the classroom, Starfish notes may be consulted to best understand the student holistically. **The student conduct process would not be documented in Starfish and instead documented through conduct channels.**
- **Academic Integrity is not documented in Starfish** as it is a separate process to guarantee confidentiality and due process.
- If a student is a student work study and underperforming in their job, **Starfish is not to be used to document challenges in their job performance.**
- **If a student is interning with a local company and the company wants to know how the student is doing academically, Starfish notes are not to be shared,** as well as any other academic information, unless the student shares the information themselves.

SELF-CHECK & DISCLOSURE

When accessing student records, ask yourself:

Do I have a specific, job-related need to access this record?

When entering notes, ask yourself:

- Is this something another Starfish user connected with this student would need to know?
- Is this something the student would want other people to know?
- Are the details in my notes based on fact? Or are they observation and personal perspective?
- Is the distinction clear and written in a non-judgmental tone?
- Are my notes interpretable by someone else? Did I provide enough information for another to understand the substance on context? Did I avoid using acronyms?

Always assume other people will read your notes.

SENSITIVE SUBJECT MATTER

Caution should be exercised when documenting topics that contain sensitive subject matter, including disabilities, religious and/or political affiliation, sexual orientation, medical diagnoses, or information that could be potentially detrimental to the student if it were revealed to a third party. Penn State's policy AD11 excludes records of the Police Services Records Division, records related to an individual's employment, and records made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist from the educational record. **Care should be taken to avoid positing diagnoses or revealing specific diagnoses in the educational record.**

Official documents related to these topics are not to be kept in Starfish notes, even if necessary for legitimate academic business. **Records with medical or judicial content that are included in petitions to the University Faculty Senate should be kept separately from the educational record, in a different location.**

ASSESSMENT OF ADVISING

Advising Assessment Objective for AY 23/24: Students will be able to access and navigate LionPATH and Starfish.

Strategy:

- All students will receive instruction on how to use LionPATH and Starfish during New Student Orientation.
- First year students will enroll in PSU 8 *First-Year Seminar University College* where they will continue to develop skills to use LionPATH and Starfish.
- Advisers will continue to teach students how to use both tools during one-on-one advising sessions throughout their first semester at PS BR.

Measurement: Students are able to enroll themselves in the upcoming semester.