Implementing an Electronic Advising & Early Warning System to Improve UNL Student Success

Educause, November 8, 2012

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**Overview: MyPLAN.unl.edu**

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) purchased an electronic advising system in order to 1) coordinate undergraduate advising services across eight academic colleges and an undeclared student center and 2) create an electronic advising record for students that carries throughout their academic careers. The below chronology outlines various decisions points and actions involved in the implementation of this system.

**Implementation Chronology**:

* Academic Year (AY) 2010, Admissions announces plans to move to WebNow/ImageNow system
* Fall 2010 Discussions with advising community determine WebNow does not meet their needs
* Spring 2011 fall 2011
	+ Admissions-implements WebNow and announces plan to eliminate paper files by F2011
	+ Colleges develop individual solutions – some digital/electronic, others paper
	+ Outside consultant identifies lack of advising coordination/communication as retention issue
* Summer 2011, Academic Affairs brings advising community together to discuss campus options of building or buying a solution
* Fall 2011
	+ Demo various products and purchase Starfish Solutions
	+ Establish Advising Coordinating Board
	+ Establish implementation plan with a go live date of January 2012
	+ Identify core team (Information Services, Registrar’s Office/Student Information, Advising, Academic Affairs) and begin work with vendor
	+ Develop roll-out and training plan in conjunction with vendor
* January 2012 system goes live
	+ Hold advisor & faculty training (resources on myplan.unl.edu)
	+ Roll out news stories (faculty and student newspapers, posters,
	+ Promote themes of transparency, connection, engagement
	+ Notify students via email, ASUN,
	+ Hire new position – Director of Campus Advising Services to assist in coordination
* February 2012 pilot early alert features around targeted student population in learning community
	+ Train faculty/staff regarding early-alert features
* April 2012 pilot automated flag/alert for students who do not complete priority registration
* Spring 2012
	+ Consult Advising Coordinating Board on feature configuration and system implementation
	+ Request feedback from users; what works and what doesn’t
* Summer 2012
	+ Hold debrief feedback sessions for advising community with Academic Affairs and core team
	+ Identify alternative approach for early alert to be piloted fall 2012
* Fall 2012
	+ Offer refresher training sessions
	+ Pilot early alert system targeted by enrollment in key courses

**Considering Implementing Electronic Advising Systems?**

Global level questions:

* Who will lead? Which offices/units should be included?
* Build or purchase?
* Who will pay?
* What data will be used?
* Who will have access?
* Who will oversee?
* Which units will support?
* Will use be required?

In the weeds decisions:

* Who will conduct training and develop resources?
* How will the system be introduced? When?
* How will students learn to use it?
* What format should advising notes follow?
* How should early alert tools be used?
* What will the follow-up process be for early alerts?
* When and how will you collect end user feedback?

**Continuing Questions for Reforming UNL’s Advising Culture:**

* At a large and decentralized campus, how can we persuade and train faculty advisors to use this system?
* How can we better utilize early warning features to support students’ academic success?
* What other training do we need to provide faculty, students, staff about this system?
* How might this system connect with larger campus data initiatives? (e.g. Blackboard Analytics)

What UNL Students See: