



PennState
Division of
Undergraduate Studies



Advising Matters:

The importance of a shared understanding of academic advising

David R. Smith, Ph.D.

Associate dean for advising and Executive director, Division of Undergraduate Studies

Janet Schulenberg, Ph.D.

Senior director, Division of Undergraduate Studies

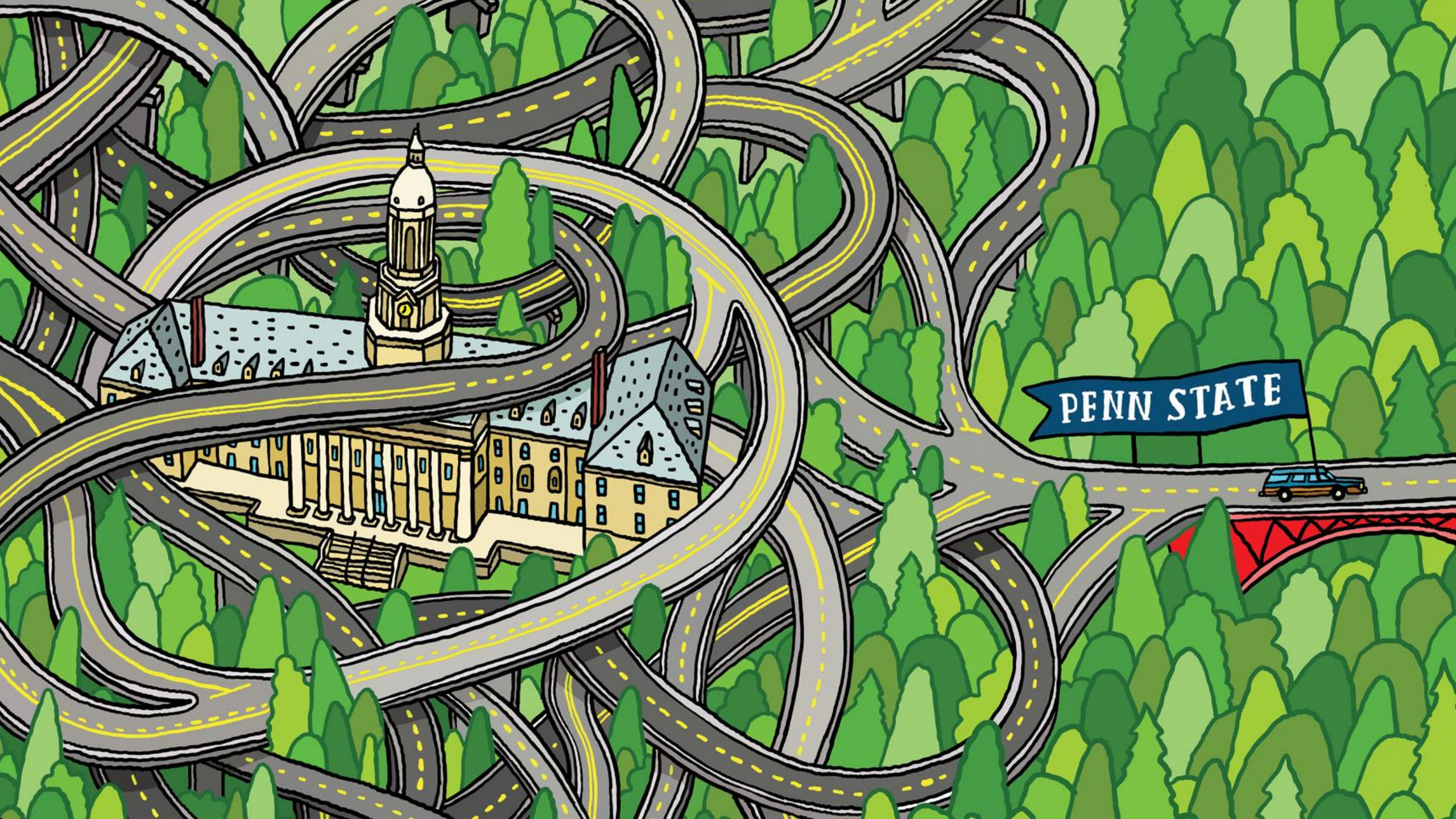
Overview

Purpose and goals of academic advising

Penn State's policy on academic advising

Administration of academic advising programs

Current-state patterns



PENN STATE

Common factors that affect student experiences with higher education

Sociocultural factors

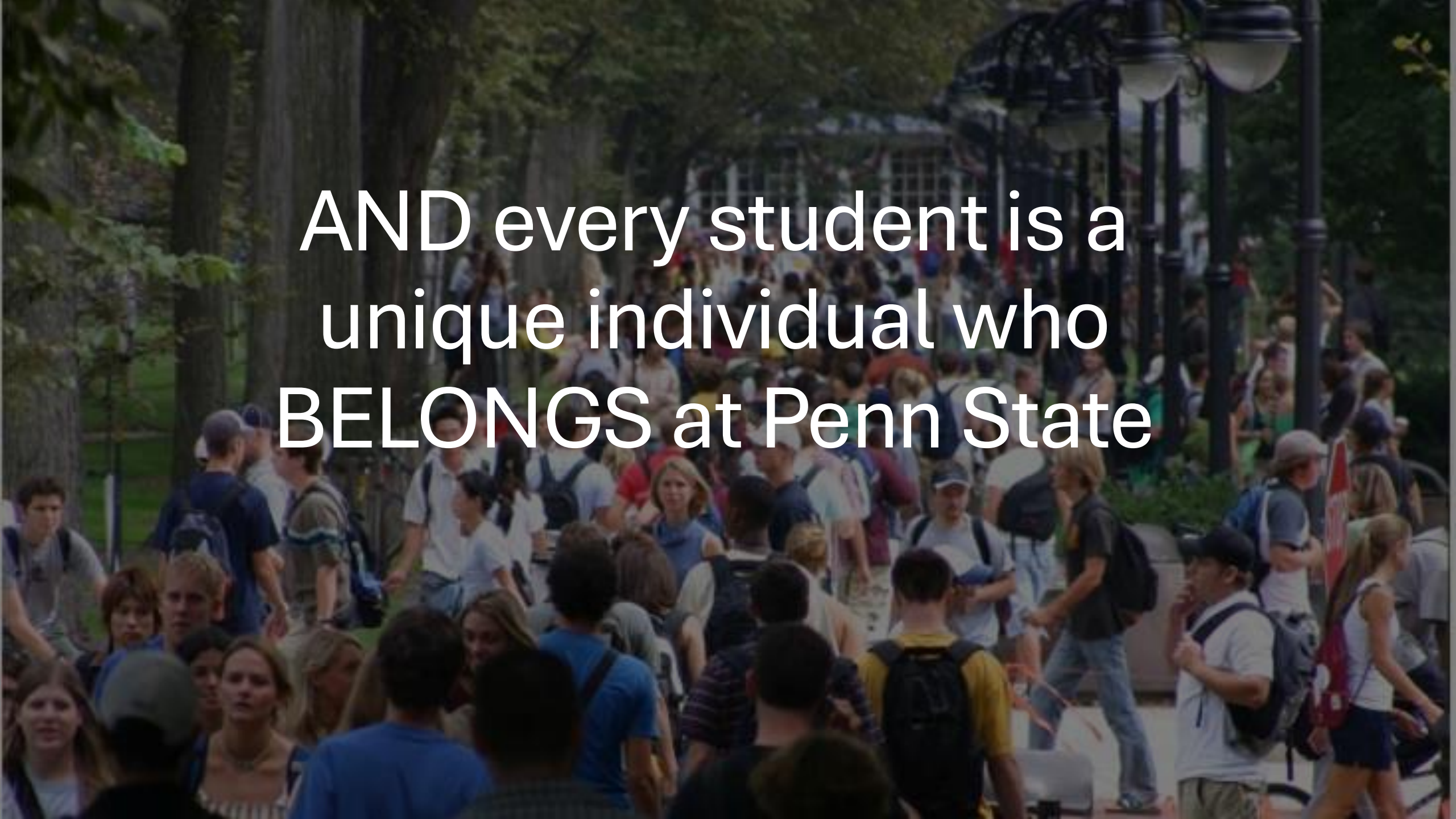
- History of systemic exclusion from education
- Differential academic preparation
- Perception of the value of higher education

Economic factors

- What students choose to study
- What colleges or programs students can access
- Cost of attending

Psychosocial factors

- Learning to learn differently
- Managing new challenges and responsibilities
- Engaging growth as a human being

A large crowd of students walking on a university campus path, with trees and a lamppost visible in the background. The students are diverse in age and appearance, many wearing backpacks. The scene is set outdoors with green trees and a paved path.

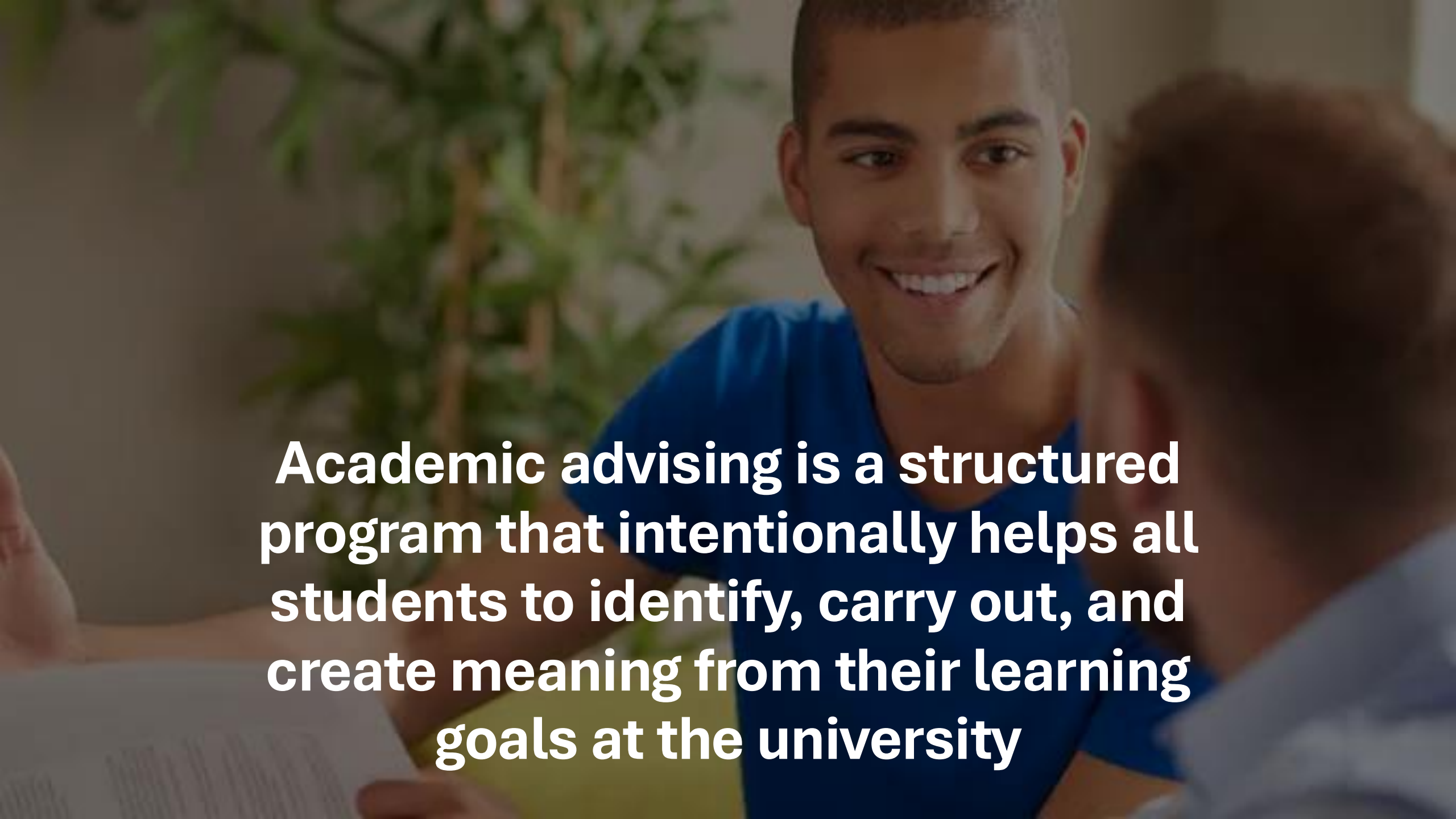
AND every student is a
unique individual who
BELONGS at Penn State

Students benefit from help in thinking about their choices

Students benefit from guidance in navigating unfamiliar systems

Institutions benefit when students benefit



A young man with short dark hair, wearing a blue t-shirt, is smiling and looking towards the right. He is holding a document. Another person's hand is visible on the right side of the frame, also holding a document. The background is slightly blurred, showing some greenery.

Academic advising is a structured program that intentionally helps all students to identify, carry out, and create meaning from their learning goals at the university

Academic advisers engage students in intentional reflection on their academic decisions and on making sense of the varied pieces of their collegiate learning experiences.

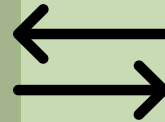


The Student-Adviser Relationship:

A partnership of shared expertise

Student

- Knowledge of their own strengths, interests, and goals
- Experience encountering successes and failures
- Preconceptions about help-seeking and its relationship to success



Academic Adviser

- Experience in higher education
- Experience with other students
- Expertise with curricula
- Knowledge of policies, procedures, resources, and how to navigate

Foundational things happen during academic advising, along the way to that larger sense-making goal, including:

Navigation of university policies and procedures



```
graph TD; A[Navigation of university policies and procedures] --> B[Identification of appropriate university resources]; B --> C[Identification of areas of study]; C --> D[Navigation of degree progress]; D --> E[Understanding the logic of degree requirements];
```

Identification of appropriate university resources

Identification of areas of study

Navigation of degree progress

Understanding the logic of degree requirements

Ultimately, academic advising should result in students making meaning of the entirety of their learning experiences, which has implications for important areas of growth, including:

Intellectual
growth

Developmental
growth

Integrative
thinking skills

Sense of
belonging

Sense of
ownership



32-00 Advising Policy

32-00 Advising Policy

The policies of Section 32-00 define the goals and purposes of the University's academic advising program.

Academic advising plays a central role in enhancing student success at Penn State and is integral to the teaching and learning mission of the University. Through active engagement with academic advising, students can identify and challenge their assumptions while developing thoughtful academic plans to meet their educational and career goals. Advising programs across the University promote intellectual discovery, help advisees articulate the value of higher education, and encourage students to take advantage of both curricular and co-curricular learning. Advisers also advocate for students, as needed, but empower them to be self-directed learners. Academic advising at Penn State is accomplished as a partnership between faculty and staff who serve as primary-role advisers. Therefore, the careful documentation of advising interactions is an important responsibility of academic advisers and should be completed in the University's formal online advising note system to ensure support of students' successful navigation of the University's academic opportunities, policies, systems and procedures. Overall, academic advising is a collaborative relationship among academic advisers, students, faculty, and the many other units that support student success at Penn State.

Revised: 12/18/79

Revised: 4/22/97

Revised Editorially: 4/10/07

Revised: 1/29/19

32-00 Advising Policy

32-10 The University's Advising Program

32-30 The Nature of the University Advising Program

32-30 Responsibilities of Advisers and Advisees

32-40 Assignment of Adviser

Current State at Penn State

~2,000 advisers

Min: 33 advising structures

1 – 800
students/adviser

Avg: 50% of
students seen

32-30 The Nature of the University Advising Program

Each academic unit will establish an academic advising program designed to meet the broad goals set forth in 32-00.

An effective academic advising program possesses the following elements:

Organizational structure

- Designed to meet the outcomes outlined above
- Structure that allows students to access advising

Advising Delivery

- Student-focused
- Promote engagement
- Proactive attention from adviser
- Appropriate ratios of student to adviser

Academic Advisers

- Professional development
- Recognition and reward

For us to be accountable, we need to:



- Monitor the progress of advisees towards satisfactory completion of all graduation requirements
- Ensure appropriate communication and relevant interventions in accordance with other University policies designed to promote student success

How are advisers organized?



- Self-contained
 - All advising occurs in a center staffed primarily by professional advisers
- Shared Split
 - Faculty provide advising in academic discipline while professional staff are responsible for a subset of students (e.g., undecided, pre-majors)
- Shared Supplementary
 - Professional staff in a center support advisers (usually faculty) by providing resources/training
- Faculty Only
 - All advising is done by a faculty member, usually in the student's academic discipline

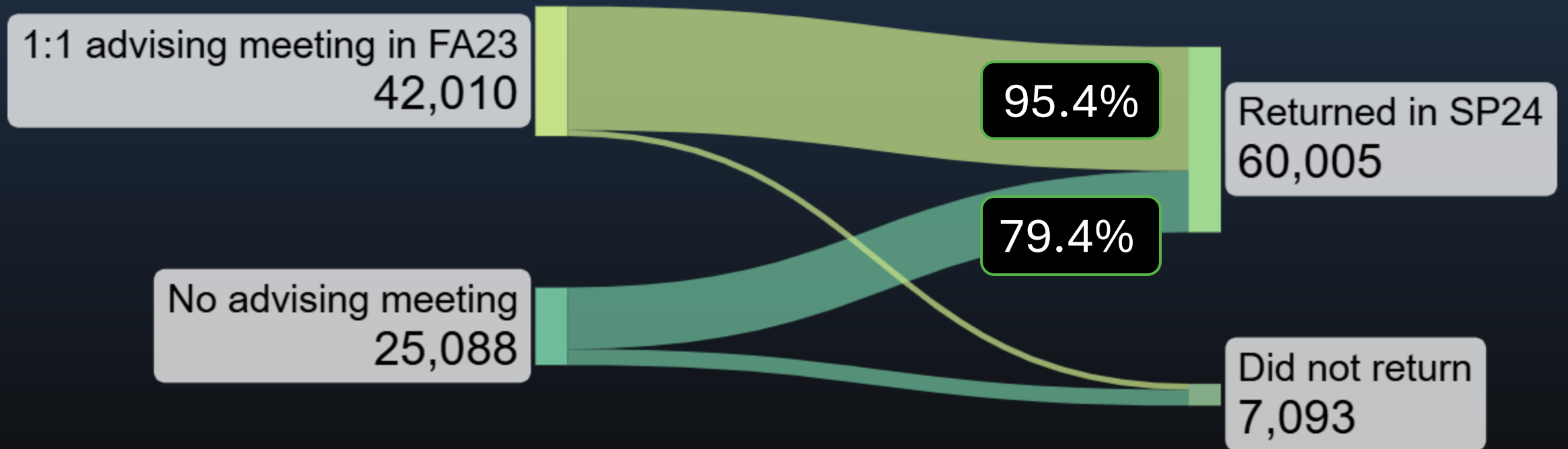
Academic Advising Models at Penn State

Centralized, self-contained	Decentralized, self-contained	Decentralized, shared split	Shared supplementary
Advising center with primary-role academic advisers	Departments house primary-role academic advisers	Departments house faculty and primary-role academic advisers	Campus houses primary-role academic adviser who supports faculty advisers
<p>World Campus University Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellisario College of Communications • College of Education • College of Information Sciences and Technology • Division of Undergraduate Studies • Nese College of Nursing • Smeal College of Business 	<p>University Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College of Engineering • College of the Liberal Arts • College of Health and Human Development • College of Arts and Architecture 	<p>University Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earth and Mineral Sciences, • Eberly College of Science • College of Agricultural Sciences 	Most commonwealth campuses

How we organize ourselves has a
direct relationship to whether
students use advising

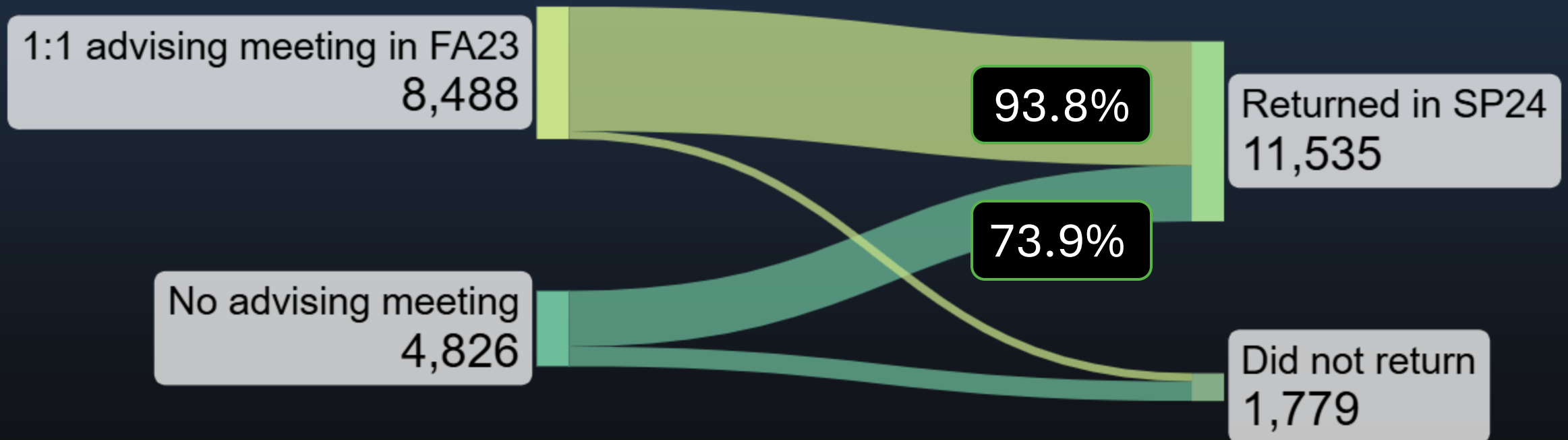
All UGRD students in FA23

When students have a 1:1 advising meeting, they tend to return at significantly higher rates than those without



Under-Represented Minority UGRD students

When URM students have a 1:1 advising meeting, the equity gaps shrinks, but when they don't it widens





“When academic advisers get to know a student as an individual, help them think through their aspirations and interests, help them make learning choices that matter, and demonstrate that they are trustworthy partners in navigating challenges, we are making a powerful act of inclusion.”