

Implementing Proactive Advising Practices

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exploratory and pre-major advising at Penn
State Behrend

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World Campus

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Supporting Equitable Outcomes

- Academic advising is structured and intentional.
- Students are unique individuals who are valuable partners.
- Trust and empathy are important to the advising relationship.
- Penn State's advising policy includes proactive approaches



proactive

[proh-ak-tiv]

Phonetic (Standard) IPA

adjective

- 1 serving to prepare for, intervene in, or control an expected occurrence or situation, especially a negative or challenging one; [anticipatory](#):

The new guidelines will help industry employers develop proactive measures to keep their workplaces safe.

Proactive advising models:

“advisors address key variables of student attrition before they transpire, rather than as a reactive process” (Donaldson et al, 2016)

“participants discussed the importance of academic advisors who proactively assume a responsibility for connecting minority students with the resources (e.g., information, opportunities, and support) they need to succeed” (Museus & Ravello, 2021)

Donaldson, P., McKinney, L., Lee, M., and Pino, D. (2016). First-Year Community College Students’ Perceptions of and Attitudes Toward Intrusive Academic Advising. *NACADA Journal*; 36 (1): 30–42. doi: <https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-15-012>

Museus, S.D., and Ravello, J.N. (2021). Characteristics of Academic Advising That Contribute to Racial and Ethnic Minority Student Success at Predominately White Institutions. *NACADA Journal*; 41(2): 13-25.

Advising Tools

Welcome to Elevate!

Elevate is a Learning Analytic Integration for the Starfish Advising Platform

Welcome to
Starfish Info

[STARFISH LOGIN](#)

[WHO USES STARFISH?](#)

Panelists

Emily Artello

Penn State Behrend

Division of Undergraduate Studies
students, Education majors, Dual
Credit students

Roster of around 135 advisees

Faculty training and development,
NSO advising planning and
implementation

20th year of advising at Penn State

Kate Elias

World Campus

Roster of 150; mostly academic
warning, suspension students

Advising Disability Representative

Academic Program Liaison

26 years of higher ed experience
including advising, admissions and
communications (18 at Penn
State)

Beginning of the semester

No activity

Early Progress Reporting

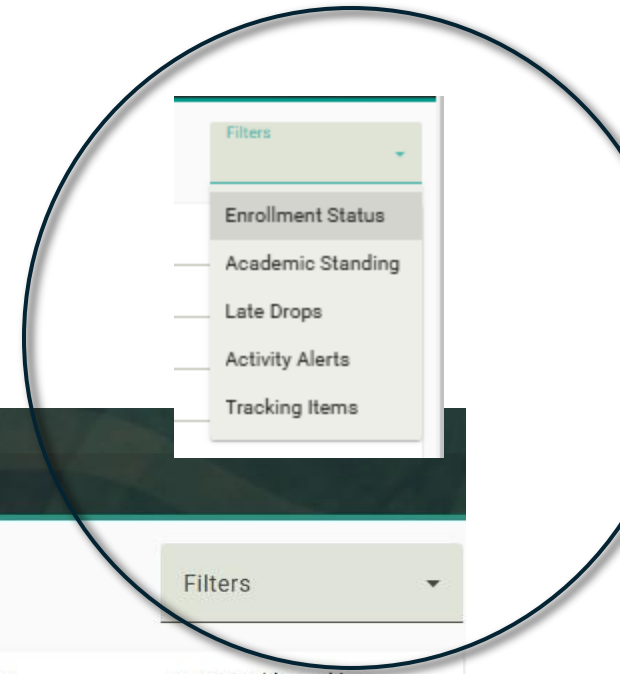
Early late drop

Elevate

Review activity over time

Check previous semester grades and activity levels

Recent changes in enrollment (campus, credits, etc.)



Semester Activity Academic Review

Search Table: All Visible Columns Search All Visible Columns

Name	PSU ID	Academic Standing	Cum GPA	Total Credits	Term Attempted Credits	Late Drops	Low Activity	Zero Activity	Courses With Tracking Items
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Beginning of the semester

No activity

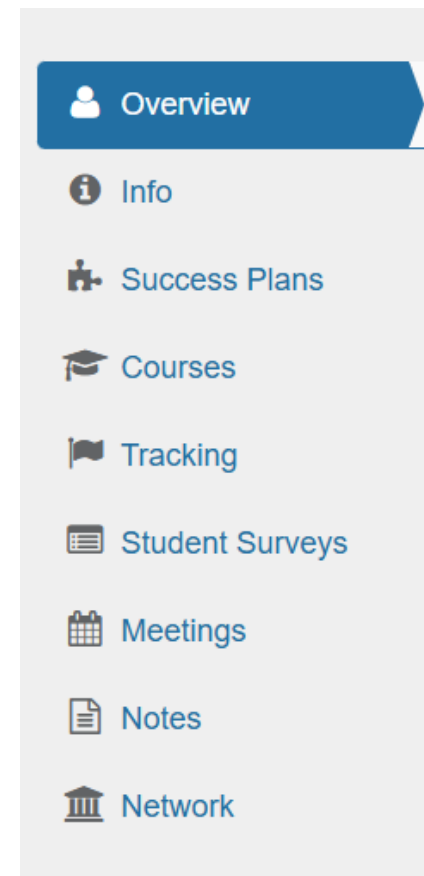
Early Progress Reporting

Early late drop

Starfish

Gather more details about the student

- ✓ Tracking item comments
- ✓ Recent advising notes
- ✓ Upcoming scheduled meetings

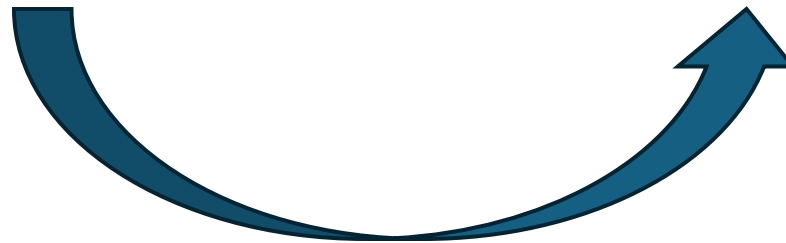


Ongoing advising appointments

1. Preparing for an advising meeting
2. Unusual patterns, such as sudden drop off in activity

Starfish

Elevate



Links to Additional Resources



Recent Canvas Activity: [Link to Elevate](#)

Elevate Activity Data

Activity and Tracking Items







ACTIVITY

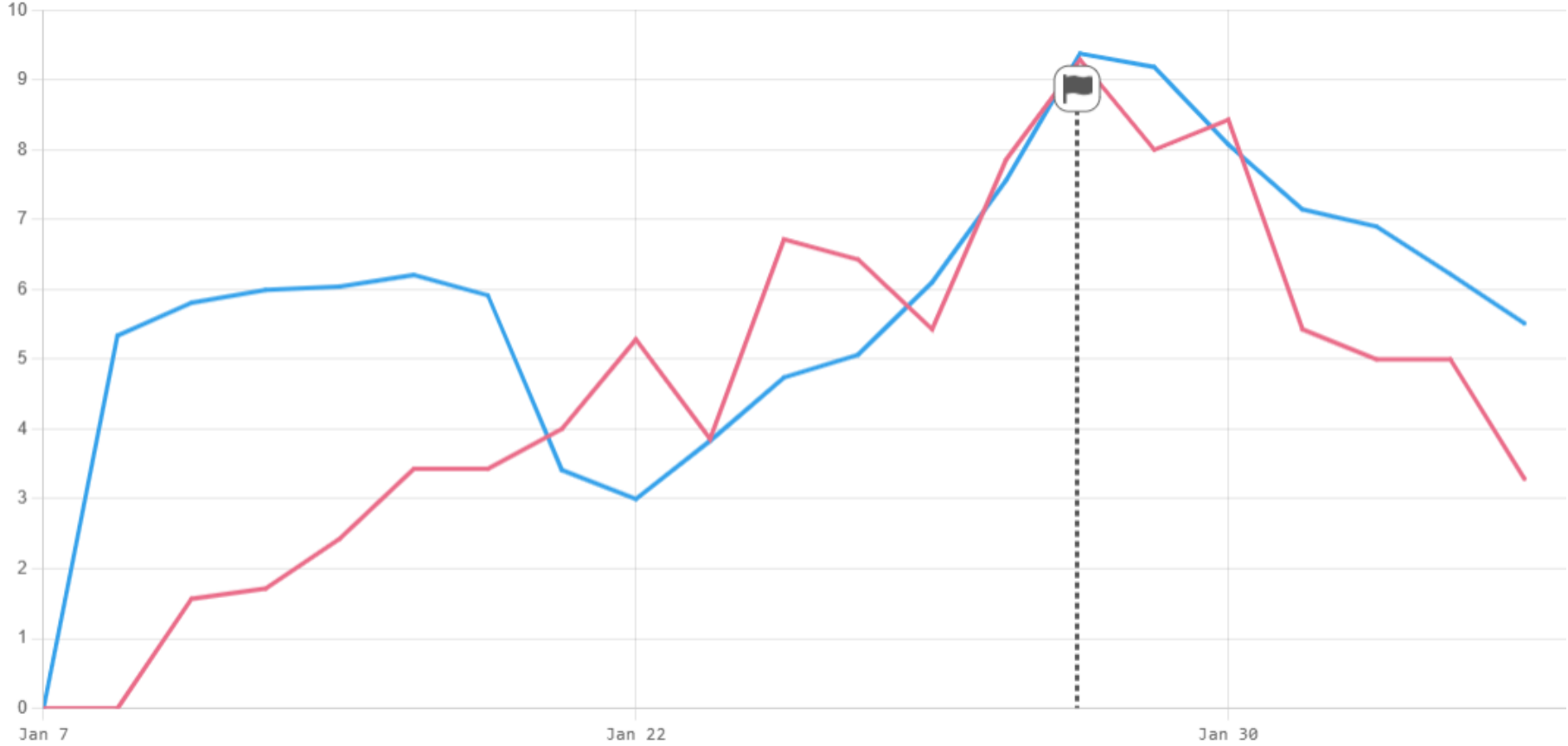
- Rolling 7-day average activity
- Cumulative activity
- Daily actions by tool

CHART CONTROLS

- Starfish Tracking Items

LEGEND

-  Low Activity Warning
-  Zero Activity Alert
-  Flags
-  Referrals
-  Kudos
-  To-Dos



— Student Rolling Actions — Course Average Rolling Actions

Intentional Communication

“The way academic advisors use language to communicate with students has a tremendous impact on students' emotional and academic outcomes” (Buchanan, et al, 2022).

“As academic advisors help students navigate academic challenges towards a degree, seemingly mundane interactions have the potential to shape students' beliefs about themselves and their abilities” (Kyte, Collins, & Deil-Amen, 2020).

Buchanan, T.M., Brown, A., Chirco, P., Klein, D., & Purgason, A.M. (2022) Messaging Matters: The Impact of Advising Micromessages on Student Affect and Behavior across Diverse University Campuses. *NACADA Journal*; 42 (2): 45–61. doi: <https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-22-04>

Kyte, S. B., Collins, E., & Deil-Amen, R. (2020). Mindset messaging: Fostering student support and confidence through micro-messaging in advisor communication. *NACADA Journal*, 40 (1), 36– 48. doi: <https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-19-08>

Effective Email Communication

Writing for Busy Readers - 6 Principles
Todd Rogers and Jessic Laskey-Fink

- Less is More
- Make Reading Easy
- Design for Easy Navigation
- Use Enough Formatting but Not Too Much
- Tell Readers Why They Should Care
- Make Responding Easy

<https://writingforbusyreaders.com/resources/>

Sample Outreach

Student on academic warning and recently assigned to new adviser.

An instructor raised an early progress report that the student has not completed any assignments yet.

Message was sent via outlook and marked high priority.

Subject: Progress Check - Your New Penn State Academic Adviser

Adviser

STUDENT NAME- I am Adviser Academic - academic recovery and we've been assigned to work together because your GPA is below 2.0 and you are in academic warning. **I write both to introduce myself and check in about the flag raised by INSTRUCTOR NAME saying you have not completed any assignments for ABC 123.**

What can I do to help?

-Adviser

Student response came in three hours later - which tells me this was effective for this student and he is someone with hardship and likely competing priorities:

Hello Mrs. Adviser, To be completely honest, I haven't done any assignments because I haven't been able to purchase the online course yet. I get my paycheck this week so I'll be able to buy access to the coursework.

Starfish notes

Do not include:

- Medical information
- Student emails verbatim
- Academic Integrity issues
- Personal observations or perspectives

[Starfish How-To Guides](#)

[AD11](#): University Policy on Confidentiality of Student Records

[ADG06](#): Appropriate Use of Student Data



End of Semester

Late drops

A screenshot of a web application interface showing a 'Filters' dropdown menu. The menu is open, displaying five options: 'Enrollment Status', 'Academic Standing', 'Late Drops', 'Activity Alerts', and 'Tracking Items'. The 'Filters' label is at the top left of the dropdown, and a small teal triangle points downwards. The background is a light gray color.

Withdrawal

A screenshot of a web application interface showing a table with a 'Filters' dropdown menu. The 'Filters' dropdown is set to 'Enrollment Status'. The 'Filter Options' dropdown is open, showing a list of enrollment statuses: 'Not Enrolled (Summer)', 'Not Enrolled (Fall)', 'Withdrawn', 'Suspended', 'Discontinued', and 'Auditing'. The 'Withdrawn' option is highlighted. A red 'X' button is visible in the top right corner of the 'Filter Options' dropdown. The table below the dropdowns has a header row with '5', a question mark icon, and 'Fall 2025 Credits'. The table body has several rows with dashes in the second and third columns.

5	?	Fall 2025 Credits
	-	
	-	
	-	
	-	
	-	

End of Semester—Looking forward

Upcoming enrollment Academic reviews

Semester Activity **Academic Review**

Search Table All Visible Columns Search All Visible Columns Filters

Name	PSU ID	Academic Standing	Cum GPA	Total Credits	Spring 2025 Credits	Summer 2025 Credits	Fall 2025 Credits	Starfish Review Note
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14	!	OPEN	-	Jan 2, 2025
0	!	OPEN	-	Jan 2, 2025
12	!	OPEN	-	Jan 2, 2025
13	!	OPEN	-	Jan 2, 2025
13	!	OPEN	-	Jan 2, 2025
15	!	OPEN	-	Jan 2, 2025
16	!	OPEN	-	Jan 2, 2025
16	!	OPEN	-	Jan 2, 2025

Create Note Never Mind Submit

Note Type: Academic Review

Note: Academic Review
Advisers should use this note type when communicating formal assessments of degree progress at semester transitions.
**Disclosable under FERPA*

Note Sharing: FERPA Notice: Behrend Academic Review
Template AR used by academic advisers at Behrend
**Disclosable under FERPA*

Note Permissions: Academic, Adult Engagement Coordinator, Advising Records and Support, Assigned Adviser, Campus Athletic Director

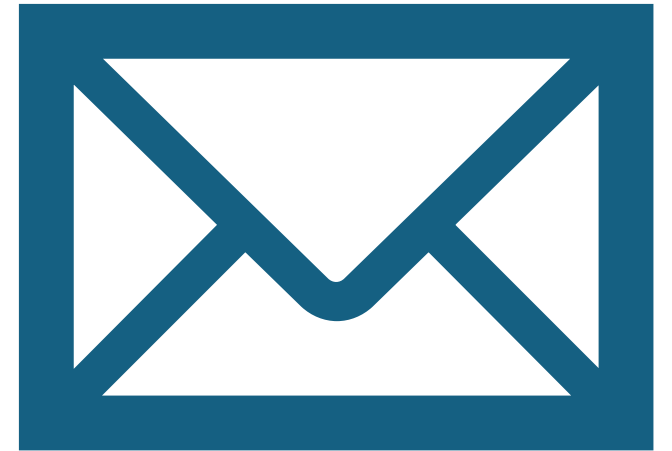
Required fields: Never Mind Submit

Thank you!

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Hilleary Himes, hxs220@psu.edu



Discussion

- There are lots of effective ways to be proactive. What strategies do you use?
- What challenges have you encountered in proactive strategies?
- How do you adjust communication or strategies for students based on previous contacts?