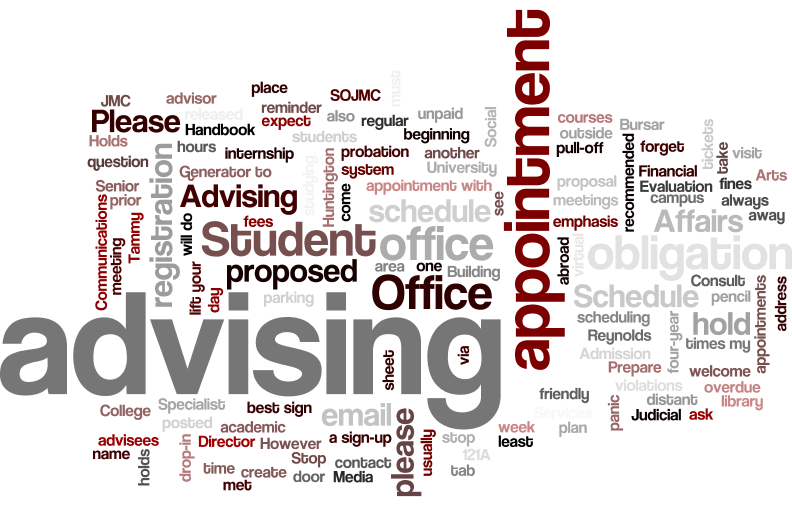
Standardizing Advising

Feasibility Study



December 5, 2018

Edmonds Community College

Project Management 270

Fall Quarter 2018

Instructor: Claudia Levi

Edmonds Community College

Students of Management 270, Project Management

Claudia Levi, Instructor

December 5, 2018

Dr. Amit B. Singh, President

Dr. Steve Woodard, Dean of Student Success

Edmonds Community College

20000 68th Avenue West

Lynnwood, WA 98036

Dear Dr. Singh and Dr. Woodard,

We, the members of Project Management 270, were tasked with the responsibility of conducting a school wide study to assess the current state of advising at Edmonds Community College. Specifically, our focus was to determine in what ways the advising department could be retooled to better serve all its stakeholders.

During Fall Quarter 2018, we developed customized questions tailored for each stakeholder group to identify their needs and expectations. Those groups were: transfer students, advising department administration, faculty union, faculty senate, student senate, professional technical students, professional technical advisors, and academic faculty advisors. After reviewing the various surveys, there are recommendations that will be explained in depth later in this document.

We are pleased to have prepared this study for your review. Thank you, in advance, for the privilege of your time and consideration of this document.

Sincerely,

Students of Project Management 270

Edmonds Community College

Fall 2018

Enclosure: Advising Feasibility Study Report

Advising Feasibility Study

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Standardizing Advising

Feasibility Study

Project Management 270

Fall Quarter 2018

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# Introduction and Background

The advising department plays a critical role in student success in higher education. Edmonds Community College has a diverse group of students, each with unique needs and requirements. A well-functioning advising department can effectively and efficiently manage each student’s educational goals and guide them to a successful college experience. Edmonds Community College is currently experiencing low graduation rates, and it has been brought to light that many students never fully utilize the advising department instead struggling or failing to complete their course of study.

The Project Management 270 class of Fall quarter 2018 has completed a feasibility study concerning the advising processes at Edmonds Community College. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the advising department. From the start of the quarter, our class was split into six groups. Each group was assigned a unique stakeholder of the advising process, which included key members of administration, faculty members, as well as current students. Over the duration of the quarter, each group interviewed or surveyed their assigned stakeholder. Our intent was to identify their requirements and needs, and to compile a report of our findings. We have discovered several areas of strengths and areas of opportunities within the advising department to better serve the student body.

# Objective

A study analyzing the advising department and its current processes is submitted to the Edmonds Community College administration on December 5th, 2018 by the Edmonds Community College Project Management students. We have explored opportunities for change to enable students to have a successful advising experience. The document puts forth recommendations to streamline the advising process for advisors and students who utilize the services of the advising department.

# Requirements

1. Provide students with an academic plan that matches their academic goal.
2. Develop and distribute a checklist for advisors to follow on what to cover in an advising appointment.
3. Implement a caseload structure in which students are assigned to advisors whose expertise match the students desired field of study.
4. Create flexible advising hours and appointment times.
5. Provide remote advising session support as well as other online and electronic appointment support.
6. Require new students to attend a mandatory Student Success Course that encompasses information on how to be a successful student and where to find information and resources.
7. Edmonds Community College must require a mandatory advising appointment within the first year of registration.
8. Train advisors on all resources and tools.
9. Develop and implement tracking measures of the advising success rate of the individual departments and advisors at the college.

# Recommendations

1. Provide students and advisors a 3-year academic calendar, instead of the current practice of 9-12 months to assist them in planning their class schedule for their entire stay at Edmonds Community College.
2. Institute a checklist for all advisors to use during advising appointments. This list would include discussing majors, planning a degree track for courses, and scheduling future appointments to track the students’ success. Answer any questions the student may have about their time at Edmonds Community College and what the expectations are for completing their course of study.
3. Institute a caseload advising structure for full-time faculty. The current system of 30 hours per academic year for full-time faculty is not functioning effectively. This caseload basis allows faculty advisors to take ownership of the advising experience for a small group of students, rather than random students each with unique needs. Each student will be able to develop a relationship with their faculty advisor, who will be knowledgeable in the student’s degree program.
4. Edmonds Community College has a large online community of students that do not attend class on-campus. The administration is aware that this community will continue to grow and that it is imperative to have an online advising presence. In addition, many students are not able to attend in person appointments. Allowing flexibility in how advising is provided will promote greater participation and student retention.
5. Use technology to enhance the advising process by connecting with more students via Skype or Facetime. This will help students who are unable to physically come to campus during regular advising hours. Edmonds Community College’s Informational Technology department will need to upgrade the school website to implement these changes.
6. Each student will participate in a success course within their first two quarters, allowing for a seamless Edmonds Community College experience. This course will contain information about how to be successful in college, where to find information around campus, and assist students with networking with faculty and other students.
7. Institute a mandatory advising appointment by the end of the student's first quarter that will assist them in gathering the information needed to map out their college career at the start. This promotes student knowledge of what is required for success and what to expect from their Edmonds Community College experience.
8. Provide training to faculty and full-time advisors in specific degrees and paths that students may take. By training the advisors, students will receive more accurate information directly related to their academic interests.
9. Implement a tracking system that measures the advising success of full-time faculty with their assigned caseload of students. This system will rate advisors on the percentage of their students who are on track to complete their program on-time and if the student is taking the appropriate courses. The college then has the tools in place to identify students who are falling behind or at-risk of dropping out and intervene with assistance prior to the student leaving the college. Areas of opportunity are found if there is a department or specific advisor that records less than average performance as well as discover departments or advisors that are very successful. This allows the college to find best practices for advising and promote those practices to the rest of the college.

# Constraints

When our Project Management 270 class of Fall quarter 2018, embarked on this project, it was important to discuss the criteria for what a successful outcome would look like. The criteria discussed included what constraints may cause the outcome to change during this project.

Since, the definition of successful project management over time has become closely affiliated with the measures of cost, time and quality, the class needed to assess which of those showed possible constraints.

* The project must be completed on December 5, 2018, at the end of fall quarter. This is a hard deadline and has no room for extension, due to the quarter ending on this date. Therefore, obtaining time with stakeholders in a short period may be challenging due to possible combined scheduling conflicts of class - teams and stakeholders.
* The school administration is obligated to work within their budget. The class acknowledges that this constraint may cause the administration some difficulty when implementing our project, unless the restructure of the advising program meets low-cost benefits analyses.
* The possible limitations of a stakeholder’s availability for interviews are important to the quality of the project’s findings, scope and completion and may change accordingly. If, the measure of quality changes the scope during the process of the project, cost and time may inadvertently also become affected.

# Work Breakdown Structure

# Work Breakdown Structure Outline

* Standardizing Advising Process
  + 1 Advising Training
    - 1.1 Tools
      * 1.1.1 Train all Advisors on New Advising Checklist
      * 1.1.2 Train Advisors on E-Advising
      * 1.1.3 Train Advisors on Advising Software
    - 1.2 Advisors
      * 1.2.1 Educate all Advisors on Potential Career Paths for Degree Programs
      * 1.2.2 Review Quarterly Class Schedules Every Quarter
      * 1.2.3 Educate all Advisors on all Degree/Programs Certificates
      * 1.2.4 Educate all Advisors on Common Course Numbering
      * 1.2.5 Educate all Advisors on Available Student Resources
  + 2 Technology
    - 2.1 Electronic Advising
      * 2.1.1 Social Media Tools
        + 2.1.1.1Skype

2.1.1.1.1 Train Faculty on Skype

2.1.1.1.2 Train Advisors on Skype

* + - * + 2.1.1.2 Facebook

2.1.1.2.1 Add Facebook Advising Page

2.1.1.2.2 Train Advisors on Facebook Page

* + - * 2.1.2 Create Online Advising Scheduling Tool
      * 2.1.3 Create Electronic Advising Process
    - 2.2 Software
      * 2.2.1 Starfish
        + 2.2.1.1 Retrain Advisors on Starfish
        + 2.2.1.2 Retrain Faculty on Starfish
        + 2.2.1.3 Use Starfish
      * 2.2.2 Skype
        + 2.2.2.1 Obtain Skype
        + 2.2.2.2 Setup Skype on Computer
  + 3 Communication with Students
    - 3.1 Edmonds Community College to Student
      * 3.1.1 In Person
        + 3.1.1.1 Meet with Student
        + 3.1.1.2 Review Schedule
        + 3.1.1.3 Make Class Recommendations
        + 3.1.1.4 Visit Success Class
      * 3.1.2 Print
        + 3.1.2.1 Provide Students with Checklist
        + 3.1.2.2 Postings

3.1.2.2.1 Make and Place Table Tents

3.1.2.2.2 Make and Place Posters

* + - * 3.1.3 Electronic
        + 3.1.3.1 Website Information

3.1.3.1.1 Provide Skype Access

3.1.3.1.2Provide Advisors Text Numbers

3.1.3.1.3 Provide Advisors Email Address

3.1.3.1.4 Build Advising Page

3.1.3.1.5 Provide Online Schedule Link

3.1.3.1.6 Post Student Expectations

* + - * + 3.1.3.2 Program Reader Boards
    - 3.2 Student to Edmonds Community College
      * 3.2.1 Electronic
        + 3.2.1.1 Schedule Appointment Online
        + 3.2.1.2 Access Website for Information
      * 3.2.2 In-Person
        + 3.2.2.1 Meet with Advisor Subject Expert
        + 3.2.2.2 Review Schedule
        + 3.2.2.3 Come to Mutual Acceptance About Schedule
      * 3.2.3 Print
        + 3.2.3.1 Print and Bring Advising Checklist
        + 3.2.3.2 Print and Bring Transcript and Schedule
  + 4 Appointment Process
    - 4.1 Student
      * 4.1.1 Schedule Mandatory Initial Advising Appointment
      * 4.1.2 Obtain and Complete Advising Appointment Checklist
      * 4.1.3 Access Centralized Student Advising Information
      * 4.1.4 Obtain Customized Academic Plan
      * 4.1.5 Create Follow-up Appointment
    - 4.2 Staff
      * 4.2.1 Standard Process
        + 4.2.1.1 Intake

4.2.1.1.1 Create Advising Checklist

4.2.1.1.2 Update Advising Checklist

4.2.1.1.3 Students

4.2.1.1.3.1 Create Follow-up Appointment

4.2.1.1.3.2 New Student

4.2.1.1.3.2.1 Schedule New Student Class

4.2.1.1.3.2.2 Provide New Student Packet

4.2.1.1.3.3 Provide Personal Enrichment Opt-Out Option

* + - * + 4.2.1.2 Documents

4.2.1.2.1 Electronic Documents

4.2.1.2.1.1 Email Advising Information Documents

4.2.1.2.1.2 Approve Advising Information Documents

4.2.1.2.2 Hardcopy

4.2.1.2.2.1 Create Advising Information Packet

4.2.1.2.2.2 Approve Advising Information Packet

* + - * 4.2.2 Advising Appointments
        + 4.2.2.1 Types of Appointments

4.2.2.1.1 Use E-Advising

4.2.2.1.2 In-Person Advising

4.2.2.1.2.1 Allow 45 Minute Appointments

4.2.2.1.2.2 Provide Evening or Weekend Appointment Times

* + - * + 4.2.2.2 Send Email or Text Appointment Reminders
        + 4.2.2.3 Topic Coverage

4.2.2.3.1 Send Advising Survey

4.2.2.3.2 Complete Advising Checklist

4.2.2.3.3 Create Advising Survey

4.2.2.3.4 Approve Advising Survey

# Appendices

## Group 1

* Target stakeholders: Advising department, Administration (President, Dean of Student Success, VP of Student Services)

Data Collection Method: In Person or Email Interviews

Interviewees Names:

Dr. Amit Singh - Edmonds Community College President

Elizabeth Bonjean - Assistant Director of Academic Advising

Gina Certain - Career Action Center

Linda Pendergraft - Career Action Center

Nate Goodman – Advisor

Questions:

1. What does advising success mean to you? How do you determine success?
2. How do you determine a student’s path?
   1. How does the academic calendar influence your decision?
   2. How do you handle roadblocks with your plan for the student?
3. Does faculty confer with the advising department? Are there metrics that determine faculty and student success?
4. How does advising differ for prof/tech vs. academic students?
5. What do you think about requiring new students to meet with an advisor?
6. Do you find that there is a correlation between advising and the rate of program completion?
7. We will be polling students to find out about their advising experience. How would you rate the students’ satisfaction level with their advising process?
8. What do you think about a system that mandates new students must meet with an advisor? When should this advising take place?
9. Do you have an opinion on changing the advising requirement for faculty from 30 hours annually to a caseload of students?
10. How does the school determine how many advisors are necessary?
11. Are there any obstacles the school faces that hinder the advising experience for the student? Is there a way these could be overcome?
12. Nearly half the students take online or hybrid classes. Should there be a separate advising process for these students?
13. What would your ideal advising process look like and does that differ from the current one?
14. If you could change one thing about how advising is done what would it be? Where do you think advising could improve?

## Group 2

* Target stakeholders: Faculty Union, Faculty Senate, Student Senate

Data Collection Method: Survey

Questions:

1. In your experience do you think that the Advising Department at Edmonds Community College is doing a good job when guiding students on their educational path? If, so – Why? Or why not?
2. In your experience, do you believe that the Advising Dept. has improved over the last five years? If, so – Why? Or why not?
3. During our course work we have learned that a change in how Instructors are to assist students with advising will possibly undergo a change. Do you believe that the way that Instructors are assisting students currently needs to change – like say from hourly to becoming caseloads instead? If, so – Why? Or, why not?
4. If, you are an instructor – do you believe that a change in the way that you advise students now, will be beneficial for the process in general? If, so – Why? Or, why not?
5. Right now, there are 4 advisors handling 10,000 students and a high turn-over rate among the advisors; do you see a solution to this issue? If, so – Why? Or, why not?
6. Edmonds Community College has a graduation rate of about 28%; Do you think this is directly correlated to the case overload in the Advising Department or do you think it is due to other issues in general at EDCC? If, so – please, elaborate at your discretion.
7. From your position’s perspective, what do you think could add an improvement to the any negative experiences that students may have with the Advising Dept.?
8. Do feel free to add any comments or ideas you may have regarding abovementioned issues, please:

## Group 3

* Target stakeholders: Prof/Tech Students (do not include ISS students)

Data Collection Method: Survey

Questions:

1. I know how to access, utilize and interpret degree and certificate requirements on my own
   * Yes
   * No
   * Maybe
2. Do you have any experience with Edmond Community College advising department?
   * Yes
   * No
3. Follow up question: how was your experience?
4. Rate the following factors based on your experience with advising program here at Edmonds Community College where (1) is the most important and (5) is least important.
   * Meeting with an advisor each term is mandatory event, regardless of your student status
   * Have student control over scheduling appointment with advisor
   * Advisors should be more knowledgeable about college policies
   * Increase number of academic advisors
   * Reduce wait time to meet with an advisor
5. My academic advisor is knowledgeable about careers that apply to my field of study/major. If you chose 'No' please explain
   * Yes
   * No
   * Other
6. How do you prefer to contact and schedule time with an advisor? If you chose other please specify on what you would preferred.
   * Walk-in
   * Email inquiry
   * Online portal to request an appointment
   * Direct with faculty advisor
   * Other:
7. I am given the time I need during my academic advising appointment session and do not feel rushed.
   * Strongly disagree
   * Disagree
   * Neutral
   * Agree
   * Strongly agree
8. I believe that I need to have academic advising to help plan for my courses and degree \*
   * Strongly disagree
   * Disagree
   * Neutral
   * Agree
   * Strongly agree
9. What would you like to see changed to Edmond Community College academic advising?

## Group 4

* Target stakeholders: Academic Transfer Students (do not include ISS students)

Data Collection Method: Survey

Questions:

1. Are you planning to transfer to a four-year college or university following your time here at EDCC?
   * Yes
   * No

If you answered “Yes” please continue with the survey. If you answered “No” you may complete the survey if you wish.

1. Have you met with an EDCC Faculty and/or Advisor regarding your academic plan?
2. Did you follow the plan outlined for you? Why or why not?
3. What were your expectations regarding Advising?
   * Which expectations were met?
   * Which expectations were not met?
4. How satisfied were you with the advice provided?

Not Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

* + 1 2 3 4 5
  + Explain your selection

1. How could your Advising experience be improved?
2. My questions were answered to my satisfaction
   * Not Satisfied Extremely Satisfied
   * 1 2 3 4 5
   * Explain your selection
3. Have you had a follow appointment with your Advisor? Why or why not?

## Group 5

* Target stakeholders: Faculty Advisors – Academic divisions

Data Collection Method: Survey

Advising Survey

1. What does advising mean to you?
2. Please describe a current advising session.
3. What do you see as the main problem with the current advising system?
4. What do you see that is working well in the current advising system?
5. What tools do you feel are needed to improve the advising process?
6. If you were given the choice, would you want a Set number of hours or Set number of students and why?
7. Based on your answer above, why?
8. Other than hiring more staff, how would you improve the advising process?

## Group 6

* Target stakeholders: Faculty Advisors – Prof/Tech divisions

Data Collection Method: Survey

Questions:

1. Please describe the current advising process?
2. What is your role in the advising process?
3. What do you find challenging about the current advising process?
4. How do you balance your advising responsibilities with your other duties?
5. What changes to the advising process would you like to implement?
6. Have you made improvement suggestions in the past? If so; to whom?
7. What additional resources would you like to have?