Effective Strategies for Supporting Students on Academic Probation

Custom Research Brief

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Research Methodology
II. Executive Overview
III. Delivering Advising to Students on Academic Probation
IV. Offering Courses for Students on Academic Probation
V. Case Study of Support Services for Students on Academic Probation: University C
VI. Evaluating the Effectiveness of Support Services for Students on Academic Probation

THE ADVISORY BOARD COMPANY
WASHINGTON, D.C.
## I. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Project Challenge

A member institution approached the Council with the following questions:

- **Providing and Structuring Advising for Students on Academic Probation:** Do other institutions offer advising through individual academic departments or through a centralized office (e.g., student success or learning center)? How do other institutions intervene to assist students on academic probation and how do institutions ensure that students respond promptly to recommendations for advising? What services do advisors provide to effectively help students on academic probation succeed?

- **Offering Courses for Students on Academic Probation:** What types of classes do other institutions offer to help students on academic probation succeed? Do institutions offer supplemental courses in specific subject areas or classes to teach students appropriate study habits?

- **Evaluating the Effectiveness of Support Services for Students on Academic Probation:** What metrics do other institutions use to evaluate the success of support services (e.g., advising and remedial courses)?

### Project Sources

- Education Advisory Board’s internal and online ([www.educationadvisoryboard.com](http://www.educationadvisoryboard.com)) research libraries
- Institutional Web sites

### Definition of terms:

- **Faculty advisor:** Faculty member that advises students within a specific discipline. Faculty advisors typically maintain full-teaching loads and conduct research in addition to their advising responsibilities.

- **Professional advisors:** In this report, the term professional advisor refers to staff in a central advising office (e.g., student success center) as well as part- or full-time staff within academic colleges whose primarily role is to advise students. A professional advisor may serve as an academic coach to supplement faculty advising or may occasionally serve in the role of a faculty advisor within individual academic departments.
I. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Parameters
The Council interviewed academic affairs administrators at the following institutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Carnegie Classification</th>
<th>Approximate Total Enrollment (Total / Undergraduate)</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University A</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)</td>
<td>10,100/9,100</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University B</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)</td>
<td>6,700/5,700</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University C</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)</td>
<td>8,500/7,100</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University D</td>
<td>Pacific West</td>
<td>Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)</td>
<td>8,400/7,400</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University E</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)</td>
<td>5,800/5,400</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University F</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Doctoral/Research Universities</td>
<td>10,000/8,100</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University G</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)</td>
<td>8,600/8,100</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Center for Education Statistics
II. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Key Observations

- Across contact institutions, students on academic probation are typically required to meet with a faculty advisor to discuss factors that led to probation, identify support services, and develop an academic success plan that articulates strategies and resources a student can use to improve their academic standing. Contacts explain that students on academic probation do not typically attend advising meetings on their own accord, and thus, recommend placing registration holds on students’ account if they do not comply with probation requirements. To further encourage students on academic probation to seek advising, administrators may notify all students of their advisors via an online student information system and maintain a low advisor-advisee ratio; contacts at University E recommend that faculty advisors with full-teaching loads have no more than 20 to 25 advisees.

- Contacts recommend that professional advisors provide supplemental support for students on academic probation because faculty advisors typically have other competing demands (e.g., research and teaching). Professional advisors assist students with their academic development (e.g., completing an academic success plan) and continue to work with students after an initial advising meeting. Contacts recommend offering professional advising within individual colleges rather than at a university-wide level; this encourages faculty advisors to directly connect students with professional advisors, and helps professional advisors develop a familiarity with individual colleges.

- Most contacts recommend establishing a central advising office to provide additional support to students on academic probation and serve as a resource for faculty advisors. A central office typically employs professional advisors or works closely with professional advisors within individual colleges to ensure that students on academic probation receive additional help beyond faculty advising. Contacts explain that staff in a central advising office (e.g., student success center) may focus on students’ academic development, connect students with on-campus services such as counseling or tutoring, etc., and continue to meet with students on academic probation after students’ initial advising meeting.

- While most contact institutions do not offer supplemental courses solely for students on academic probation, a few institutions require students on academic probation to enroll in skill-building workshops to improve study habits and time management skills. Skill-building courses serve as an extension of students’ advising meetings and provide students on academic probation with the necessary tools (e.g., study skills) to succeed. Some contacts caution, however, that skill-building courses may not address the needs of all students on probation, especially students on probation for personal reasons. Contacts suggest that administrators should set requirements for students to attend skill-building sessions on an individualized basis (e.g., as a component of a student’s academic success plan).

- Contacts at University C explain that students on academic probation typically benefit from intrusive academic support; administrators require students to attend skill-building workshops and tutoring sessions, document study hours, and meet with peer and faculty advisors. Administrators at University C provide continuous individual advising for students on academic probation and offer several avenues of support through peers, advisors, and faculty members.

- Contacts recommend that administrators evaluate the success of support series by recording and correlating students’ grades and participation in support programs throughout their
II. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

tenure at the institution. This allows administrators to determine the impact of probationary programs on students’ academic success and retention. Across contact institutions, some administrators evaluate how many students on academic probation eventually transition to “good academic standing” and the length of time it takes to transition to assess the value of support services to students on academic probation. Administrators at University G use TutorTrac to record student attendance at tutoring sessions and correlate students’ grades with the number of tutoring sessions they attend.
III. DELIVERING ADVISING TO STUDENTS ON ACADEMIC PROBATION

Across contact institutions, administrators typically require students on academic probation to meet with a faculty advisor to discuss factors that led to probation, identify support services, and develop an academic success plan. An individualized academic success plan articulates coursework, resources, and strategies that students can pursue to improve their academic standing. Contacts explain that students on academic probation sometimes require additional academic support and oversight to ensure that they utilize available resources (e.g., tutoring) and follow through with their academic success plan. Contacts recommend that administrators hire professional advisors to meet with students on academic probation after students’ initial meeting with their faculty advisor and track students’ academic progress throughout probation.

Requiring Students on Academic Probation to Seek Advising

Though most contact institutions require students on academic probation to meet with an advisor one to three times during probation, administrators at a few institutions strongly recommend but do not mandate advising. Contacts explain that it is important to require students on academic probation to meet with advisors because students do not always schedule advising meetings on their own accord. At several contact institutions, administrators place registration holds on students’ accounts if they do not meet with their academic advisor or fail to comply with probation requirements.
III. DELIVERING ADVISING TO STUDENTS ON ACADEMIC PROBATION

Advising Models

Administrators deliver advising services through three primary models:¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centralized Model:</th>
<th>Professional advisors in an advising center (e.g., the student success center) provide academic advising to all students.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid Model:</td>
<td>Faculty advisors provide academic advising for students across an institution, and professional advisors within a centralized office (e.g., student success center) may offer administrative support to faculty advisors or provide supplemental advising for students on academic probation. Faculty and professional advisors may offer services through one of four forms of hybrid advising:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. <strong>Supplementary Model:</strong> A faculty advisor advises students, while professional advisors in a centralized office provide administrative support and training to faculty advisors.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. <strong>Shared-Advising model:</strong> Professional advisors in a central office advise undeclared students and provide supplemental support for academically at-risk students. Once students declare their major, students are assigned to faculty advisors within their respective disciplines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. <strong>Dual Advising Model:</strong> Both faculty advisors and centralized professional advisors advise students concurrently throughout students’ tenure at the institution.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. <strong>Credit-Based Advising Model:</strong> Professional advisors advise students until students complete predetermined requirements such as a minimum number of credits or general education course. Faculty advisors subsequently assume all advising responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Delivering Advising to Students on Academic Probation

Decentralized Model:

Advisors within individual disciplines are solely responsible for advising students.

1. Faculty-Only-Model: Faculty members provide advising within individual departments.

2. Satellite Model: Central advising offices within each department or college employ professional advisors to advise students. In this model, professional advisors assume the responsibility of faculty advisors, allowing faculty to focus solely on research and teaching.
## III. DELIVERING ADVISING FOR STUDENTS ON ACADEMIC PROBATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages and Disadvantages to Advising Models</th>
<th>Centralized Model</th>
<th>Hybrid Model</th>
<th>Decentralized Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong></td>
<td>❖ <strong>Accessibility:</strong> Students can easily use advising and support services because of its central location.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Services for special populations:</strong> Professional advisors, responsible primarily for advising, provide continual support for students on probation; faculty advisors typically cannot provide sufficient support due to competing demands on their time.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Accessibility:</strong> Students can easily contact advisors and take advantage of services because of services’ proximity within individual colleges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ <strong>Consistency:</strong> Students are assigned the same advisor throughout their tenure.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Faculty interaction:</strong> Students with a declared major meet with faculty advisors who specialize in individual disciplines. This allows students to build relationships with faculty outside of the classroom.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Consistency of advisor:</strong> Students are assigned to the same advisor throughout their tenure at the institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ <strong>Expertise:</strong> Professional advisors typically have the necessary training and experience to support students with academic difficulties and encourage students’ academic development.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Coordination:</strong> It can be difficult for faculty and professional advisors to distinguish responsibilities, which may result in disorganized advising services.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Minimal cost:</strong> Administrators do not need to employ additional personnel to serve as advisors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disadvantages</strong></td>
<td>❖ <strong>Expense:</strong> It can be costly to employ a sufficient number of staff in a central advising office to adequately advise all students.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Coordination:</strong> It can be difficult for faculty and professional advisors to distinguish responsibilities, which may result in disorganized advising services.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Coordination:</strong> It can be difficult for faculty and professional advisors to distinguish responsibilities, which may result in disorganized advising services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ <strong>Lack of faculty interaction:</strong> A central advising model fails to provide students with faculty interaction outside the classroom.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Lack of services for special populations:</strong> Faculty advisors are sometimes unable to provide adequate support for students on academic probation because of competing faculty demands.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Coordination:</strong> It can be difficult for faculty and professional advisors to distinguish responsibilities, which may result in disorganized advising services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>❖ <strong>Lack of expertise in specific disciplines:</strong> Professional advisors do not typically specialize in a specific discipline and thus, cannot provide students with insights specific to particular majors.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Shared-Advising model:</strong></td>
<td>❖ <strong>Competing demands:</strong> Faculty members face competing demands and do not always have sufficient time to advise students on probation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supplementary model:</strong></td>
<td>❖ <strong>Lack of services for special populations:</strong> Faculty advisors are sometimes unable to provide adequate support for students on academic probation because of competing faculty demands.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Transition:</strong> Once students declare a major, they transition from a professional to a faculty advisor. It can be difficult for students to adjust to a new advisor.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Satellite model:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared-Advising model:</strong></td>
<td>❖ <strong>Transition:</strong> Once students declare a major, they transition from a professional to a faculty advisor. It can be difficult for students to adjust to a new advisor.</td>
<td>❖ <strong>Lack of expertise in specific discipline:</strong> Professional advisors lack the expertise in specific disciplines and cannot provide advice, internship recommendations, or career advising specific to disciplines.</td>
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### III. Delivering Advising to Students on Academic Probation

When selecting a model, administrators must consider the ultimate goal of advising. Administrators may provide advising for students through several different models depending on the size and type of the student population and the purpose of advising:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal of Advising:</th>
<th>Recommended Advising Model:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serve a large student body</td>
<td>Decentralized Model, Satellite Model: Provide advising through professional advisors within each academic department or college. A satellite model includes professional advisors who are primarily dedicated to advising students. This allows advisors to serve a large student body and permits faculty members to focus on teaching and research rather than advising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve a small student body</td>
<td>Decentralized Model, Faculty-only-model: Assign students to faculty advisors within academic departments. At institutions with a small student body, faculty members can advise students within specific disciplines while maintaining research and teaching loads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cater to many undeclared students</td>
<td>Centralized Model: Provide advising through a central advising office to address the needs of students without declared majors. Contacts, suggest that administrators at institutions with many students without declared majors provide advising through a central office rather than through academic departments to ensure that advisors first year students’ needs, such as completing general education requirements are met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide support for students on academic probation</td>
<td>Hybrid Model, Supplementary or Shared-Advising Model: Establish a central advising office to provide additional support for students on academic probation and served as a resource for faculty advisors. Contacts explain that staff, typically a director and professional advisors, in a central advising office (e.g., student success center) can provide administrative support to faculty advisors, while serving as resources for faculty and students on advising techniques and on-campus services such as counseling or tutoring, etc. Centralized professional advisors can supplement faculty advising for students on academic probation who need additional support (e.g., writing assistance, tutoring, skill-building workshops, etc.).</td>
</tr>
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III. Delivering Advising to Students on Academic Probation

Providing Faculty and Professional Advising to Support Students on Academic Probation

Most contact institutions offer advising for students on academic probation through faculty advisors in individual academic departments. However, contacts explain that faculty advisors have competing demands (e.g., research and teaching), and thus, recommend that professional advisors provide supplemental support for students on academic probation. To provide efficient and effective support for students on academic probation, administrators should:

- **Require students on academic probation to meet with faculty advisors.**

  Provide students on academic probation with academic advising specific to their major: Because faculty advisors specialize in individual disciplines, they can provide students with detailed information on discipline-specific requirements. Faculty advisors can suggest courses within a student’s major that are necessary to improve a student’s understanding of the material and that may help students improve their GPA.

- **Provide additional support through professional advisors.**

  Ensure students on academic probation receive continual support and individual advising following their initial advising meeting: Students on academic probation require additional support that faculty advisors may not always be able to provide due to competing demands on their time (e.g., teaching and research). Since professional advisors are typically only responsible for advising, they are well positioned to provide additional, continued support for students on academic probation.
III. Delivering Advising to Students on Academic Probation

The following diagram illustrates the respective roles of faculty advisors and professional advisors and outlines the process through which students on academic probation receive support across institutions.

Student is placed on academic probation:
At most contact institutions, students with a cumulative GPA below 2.0 are placed on academic probation and are required to meet with their advisor. Students typically receive notification via email, mail, and an online student information system, if applicable.

Student meets with faculty advisor:
Faculty advisors meet with students to identify why a student is performing poorly and how a student may improve his/her GPA. A faculty advisor:

1. **Refers student to the appropriate support services:** Faculty advisors refer students on academic probation to support services on campus that address their specific need (e.g., counseling services to address personal issues or tutoring to assist students with academic difficulty).

2. **Creates an academic success plan:** Advisors outline individual academic success plans with students that address students’ individual needs such as learning disabilities or a personal tragedy. Success plans may require students to attend writing or tutoring sessions, implement new study habits, repeat a course, attend skill-building workshops, or meet with a professional advisor.

Contacts recommend offering professional advising within individual colleges rather than at a university-wide level; this encourages faculty advisors to directly connect students with professional advisors, and allows advisors to develop a familiarity with specific colleges. By connecting students directly with professional advisors, faculty advisors ensure that students on academic probation follow through with their academic success plan and receive the necessary continual support. Contacts advise that a central advising office promote collaboration between professional advisors and provide training or support when necessary.

Student meets with professional advisor:
Professional advisors serve as an extension of faculty advisors and continue to work with students on academic probation beyond students’ initial, required session. Academic coaches:

1. **Ensure students use support services:** Professional advisors work with students on a continual basis to ensure that students are making use of the available, such as tutoring.

2. **Supervise students’ completion of their academic success plan:** Professional advisors serve as an extension of faculty advisors and assess students’ academic progress.
III. Delivering Advising to Students on Academic Probation

Hiring Academic Coaches for Students on Academic Probation: University A

Administrators at University A plan to hire recent college graduates or graduate students studying counseling or student affairs as academic coaches at the academic success center. Coaches will serve as an extension of faculty advisors and help students on academic probation implement their academic success plan. Contacts explain that hiring graduate students and recent college graduates will help administrators minimize personnel costs.

Employing Peers to Assist Students on Academic Probation

While several contacts acknowledge the benefits of peer tutoring for students, most are hesitant to use peer advisors for students on academic probation. Contacts explain that peer advisors are inexperienced and thus, unskilled on how to cater to the complex needs (e.g., personal needs, learning disabilities, etc.) of students on academic probation. However, some contacts recommend using peer advisors to minimize personnel costs on condition that they receive adequate training. Across contact institutions, administrators hire upperclassmen students in good academic standing to:

- **Serve as academic tutors.**
  - Encourage students to seek tutoring: Contacts suggest that students on academic probation are less intimidated by and more receptive to meeting with peer tutors than faculty members. Peer tutors can assist students across subject areas, relate to the undergraduate experience, and facilitate informal advising interactions. By awarding credit to peer tutors or paying tutors through work study, administrators minimize personnel costs.

- **Offer advising or coaching to students on academic probation.**
  - Provide continued academic support at minimal cost: Most contacts are hesitant to offer peer coaching because of the time and resources required to train students to qualify as advisors and adhere to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) restrictions. However, other contacts recommend using peer coaches to provide students on academic probation with individualized support; contacts explain that it is sometimes financially infeasible to hire professional advisors and suggest that peer coaches provide similar support at a lower cost. Peer coaches at University C undergo a three day training to learn about on-campus services (e.g., counseling services), understand techniques to motivate and engage students on academic probation, and adhere to FERPA requirements. Peer coaches at University C receive compensation at negligibly higher levels than work-study students.
IV. OFFERING COURSES FOR STUDENTS ON ACADEMIC PROBATION

Across contact institutions, administrators offer supplemental and skill-building courses to assist students who struggle academically. Supplemental courses teach students fundamental skills in math, writing, reading, etc., while skill-building courses focus on study habits and time management skills that students need to succeed academically.

Providing Supplemental Courses to Assist Students on Academic Probation

While supplemental courses are typically available to students of all academic statuses, some administrators market supplemental courses primarily to students on academic probation. Through an academic success plan, advisors may require students on academic probation to attend supplemental courses depending on a student’s needs.

Simultaneously offer supplemental and gateway courses: Some contacts recommend offering optional classes to supplement gateway courses and provide students with additional explanation of course material. University D offers one-credit math and science TRIO courses that students can take in tandem with applicable gateway courses. Contacts suggest that the supplemental instruction may be particularly beneficial to students on academic probation who might need additional academic support.

Offer supplemental instruction in historically challenging course: To supplement course instruction and ensure that academically at-risk students understand course material, administrators may establish additional opportunities for students to ask questions outside of the classroom. At University G, upperclassmen students lead group sessions for students to further explore class topics or ask questions. Student session leaders attend the respective course and collaborate with the professor and staff in the student success center to effectively offer supplemental class sections.
Offering Skill-Building Classes Assist Students on Academic Probation

Across contact institutions, administrators provide skill-building classes primarily to support students on academic probation and provide students with the necessary tools (e.g., study skills) to succeed. Typically, staff from the student success center teach a skill-building workshop, which may span a few hours, to educate students on:

- On-campus resources (e.g., counseling center, tutoring, writing center, etc.)
- Time management skills
- Course registration requirements: At University E, students on academic probation cannot enroll in more than 15 credits a semester to ensure that students do not overextend themselves and can dedicate ample time to each course.
- Required GPA to transition to “good academic standing”

Advantages and Disadvantages of Requiring Skill-Building Classes for Students on Academic Probation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provides students with the foundation for academic success:</strong> Contacts explain that skill-building classes assist students on academic probation to develop the fundamental skills (e.g., study habits, time management, etc.) to succeed across academic disciplines. Many first-year students who are unfamiliar with the rigor of college life lack these skills and thus, struggle in their academic transition to college.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assumes that all students are on academic probation because of insufficient study habits:</strong> Contacts attribute students’ academic challenges to a variety of factors, including insufficient study skills, learning disabilities, personal tragedy, etc. Students struggling academically because of personal issues, for instance, may not benefit from a skill-building course.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contacts recommend that administrators require students to attend skill-building courses on an individualized basis to ensure that students on academic probation receive the appropriate types of support depending on their circumstance. Faculty advisors may require a skill-building course as a component of an academic success plan.

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Contacts at University C explain that students on academic probation typically benefit from intrusive academic support; students on academic probation may require additional support to succeed academically but do not always use available resources or attend advising meetings on their own accord. Unlike at other contact institutions, at University C, administrators require students on academic probation to attend skill-building workshops and tutoring, document study hours, and meet with peer or faculty advisors. Outlined below are the multiple avenues of support provided for students on academic probation at University C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Requirement for Students on Academic Probation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If students lack effective study habits or time management</td>
<td>Attend a skill-building workshop offered at the beginning of each semester: Through a skill-building workshop, students on academic probation learn fundamental study, test preparation, and time management skills necessary to succeed academically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If students require individual academic counseling support</td>
<td>Document study hours: Students enrolled in onsite courses complete some of their course work in monitored, onsite centers conducive to studying (e.g., no social media). Students enrolled in online courses must submit a timesheet documenting study hours. Contacts observe, however, that students find this requirement cumbersome and thus, are less willing to complete and document study hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If students struggle with academic coursework</td>
<td>Meet with faculty advisor twice during academic probation: Students and advisors discuss factors that led to probation and outline an academic success plan to guide students’ academic progress. Students and advisors also complete program forms to ensure that students enroll in the appropriate number of credits. Program forms ensure that advisors document student attendance.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meet with peer or professional advisor: Students on academic probation are required to meet with a peer advisor and have the option to meet with a professional advisor as well to supplement faculty advising. Peer advisors connect students with appropriate on-campus resources (e.g., counseling) and ensure that students follow through with their academic success plan. Contacts find that the number of peer advising sessions a student attends correlates with higher course grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attend at least two tutoring sessions: Students on academic probation must meet with a peer tutor to receive academic assistance in specific subject matters. Students can also interact with live-tutors through Blackboard to receive immediate, virtual assistance. Contacts suggest that interactive tutoring is extremely beneficial for non-residential students or those enrolled in online programs since students can access tutoring services from any location.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VI. EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS ON ACADEMIC PROBATION

Contacts recommend that administrators evaluate the success of support series by recording and correlating students’ grades and participation in support programs throughout their tenure at the institution. This allows administrators to determine the impact of probationary programs on students’ academic success and retention. However, contacts recognize that it is difficult to attribute student retention to specific programs or advising as student performance may be influenced by a variety of factors.

At some contact institutions, academic affairs administrators monitor the number of students on probation, the number of students that transition from probationary status to “good academic standing,” and the length of time it takes students to transition to “good academic standing” to measure the effectiveness of support programs to promote sustained improvement in student academic performance.
VI. EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS ON ACADEMIC PROBATION

Assessing the Effectiveness of Support Services for Students on Academic Probation: University G

Administrators at University G review students’ use of support programs and grades to evaluate the impact of probationary programs on students’ academic success. Administrators compare the academic success and improvement of students who enroll in the skill building course and use tutoring services with those who do not. To track students’ use of tutoring services, administrators use TutorTrac to record student attendance at tutoring sessions and students’ grades.

**Administrators measure:**
- Length of academic probation and transition to “good academic standing”
- Rate at which students submit an appeal for reconsideration of academic status (e.g., dismissal)
- Likelihood that administrators grant students’ appeal for reconsideration of academic status (e.g., dismissal)
- Student drop/withdraw/fail rate
- Course grades

**Students who utilize the support service or enroll in the program:**
- Transition from academic probation to “good academic standing” at a higher rate than students who do not enroll in the course.
- Are more likely to submit appeals for reconsideration. However, students’ likelihood of submitting an appeal may reflect students’ level of motivation rather than the effectiveness of the course.
- Are more likely to have their appeals granted by administrators. Contacts acknowledge that administrators may be more likely to grant appeals merely because students enrolled in the course and not because of the efficiency of the class.
- Drop, withdraw, and fail classes at a lower rate than students who do not use tutoring.
- Earn higher grades than students who do not use tutoring. The number of tutoring sessions a student attends correlates with higher grades.
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