

Office of
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Assessment Report No. 24

An Outcomes-Driven
Program of Academic
Advisement

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University
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An Outcomes-Driven Program of Academic Advisement

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Table of Contents

Foreword	i
Executive Summary	ii
Introduction	1
The Redefinition of Advising at the University at Albany	1
An Outcomes-Driven Program of Academic Advisement	3
The Pre-Matriculation Academic Motivation Survey	5
Focus Group Discussions	12
The Advisement Services Center Exit Survey	14
Discussion	17
Conclusion	19
References	21
Appendix A: Student Learning Outcomes	23
Appendix B: Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory	24
Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion Protocol	26
Appendix D: Exit Survey Sub-scales and Inter-item Reliabilities	27
Appendix E: Exit Survey Item Frequency Distributions	28
Listing of Other UAlbany Assessment Reports	30

Foreword

Assessment Report 24 describes the assessment agenda and activities of the University at Albany's Advisement Services Center which provides academic advisement to approximately 5,000 first and second-year students. The Advisement Services Center's supporting research program is conducted in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research. These activities are designed to improve student advisement services by: identifying students most in need of individualized attention; improving current practices; identifying and correcting students' preconceived expectations for the advisement process; evaluating the degree to which students have achieved desired advisement learning outcomes; and gauging advisor performance in important areas.

These assessments inform current advisement practices and result in a continuous cycle of improvement of day-to-day operations. This improves the advisement experience of our students and gives them the knowledge and support skills needed to succeed at the University at Albany.

The following report documents what can be accomplished when a carefully designed research program is used to evaluate the achievement of explicit assessment goals and objectives.

Executive Summary

The multi-method research design of the Advisement Services Center's assessment program has successfully informed and improved the student advisement process at the University at Albany. Major research findings and their implications for advisement at the University at Albany are presented below within this Executive Summary. The report that follows provides the specifics concerning the research methods used and the development of the Advisement Services Center's assessment program. Most importantly, the following report documents how advisement staff members have used research results to create a feedback loop between outcome and process to improve the undergraduate advisement experience. These assessment activities should serve as a model of outcomes-based assessment and accountability for other academic departments and support units.

Advisement Services Center staff have collaboratively developed a three-pronged approach to their assessment program over the past three years. The legs of this tripartite assessment research program are: 1) a pre-matriculation academic motivation survey to identify students who may be at-risk of attrition; 2) focus group research with advisees to improve advisement practices; and 3) a web-based exit survey that ascertains the degree to which students have achieved desired advisement outcomes and which also gauges advisor performance. These assessment mechanisms are mutually reinforcing as they each inform aspects of the others in addition to having their own goals and objectives.

Research findings from the Advisement Services Center's assessment program include:

- A pre-matriculation academic motivation survey has identified several promising indicators to identify and intervene with students at-risk of attrition. Early identification of these students will allow advisement staff to more effectively focus their time and resources on those students most in need of attention. As this survey instrument evolves, the next important task will be to design effective intervention strategies with students at-risk of attrition.

- Recognition of a difference between student perceptions of the role of advisors and what the University expects from advisors. While students primarily expect advisors to be “all-knowing” about course content and instructors, the Advisement Services Center sees the role of advisors more holistically. Advisors see themselves as nurturing students to develop organizational skills and self-responsibility, to develop and articulate goals for themselves, to utilize university resources on their own, and to achieve the other goals outlined in the Student Learning Outcomes developed by Advisement Services Center staff (Appendix A). Advisors now address this role discrepancy with advisees so that each knows what is expected of the other.
- In general, students have been meeting the stated advisement learning outcomes, have made consistent contact with their advisor, and have favorable perceptions of their advisor at the time they declare their major.
- Students desire advisors who are knowledgeable and caring. This underscores the need for a professional and well-trained advisement staff deserving of student attention and respect.
- Continuity in advisee-advisor relationships has improved with the introduction of fifteen full-time professionals. The resource investment that funded the shift from a mix of professional and graduate student advisors to full-time professional advisors has resulted in an increased number of contacts between advisors and advisees. Most students can now expect to have the same advisor until they declare their major. Perhaps more importantly, ratings of advisement services have improved since the transition to the full-time staffing model.
- Courses that help students adjust to college life (i.e., *The Freshmen Experience* - UUNI 100, *The Psychology of Academic and Personal Effectiveness* - ECPY 120) by letting students know what is expected of them and how they might better cope with the challenges of the collegiate experience have been positively related with successful student outcomes such as higher cumulative GPA and retention. The current advisor practice of recommending these courses to students who appear at-risk of attrition has proven to be a good strategy.

Introduction

Assessment of academic advisement and academic advisors has received scant attention in the literature (Gordon & Habley, 2000). Consequently, there are relatively few models of assessment that centralized advisement offices can adopt to examine the effectiveness of the services provided by the office or the advisors. While individual assessment by supervisors according to detailed job criteria and surveys of student satisfaction with academic advisement have been used to assess academic advisement (Srebnik, 1988; Severy, Lee, Carodine, Powers, & Mason, 1994) these two methods do not provide specific information about the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the University wants students to acquire. In order to accomplish this type of outcomes-driven assessment, and to verify its effectiveness, the University at Albany has implemented an innovative multi-method research program.

Innovative assessment efforts must include the "voices" of students (Mittler & Bers, 1994), and be reflective of the quality of interactions and the benefits of their experiences with advisement. Developing effective assessment models for academic advisement should follow a planning procedure and include two crucial components. First, supervisors need to create an environment where advisors are encouraged to participate in the development of a mission statement for advisement. Second, advisors need to be provided flexibility and opportunities for innovation so they can play meaningful roles in the development of instruments and assessment procedures. These two components served as the catalyst toward building a model of assessment for academic advisement at the University at Albany.

The first section of this Assessment Report describes the organizational context of the advisement experience in which incoming freshmen find themselves. Second, a description of the assessment model used to examine the quality of academic advising is described. Finally, the results and implications of this multi-method assessment program are discussed.

The Redefinition of Advising at the University at Albany

In order to appreciate the movement toward an outcomes-driven assessment model for academic advisement at the University at Albany it is important to set the organizational context for this evolution. The Advisement Services Center provides academic advisement to approximately 5,000 first and second-year students. Prior to the 1999-2000 academic year, the center consisted of seven full-time professional advisors and twelve part-time (20 hours per week) graduate assistants. Under this hybrid model, students typically were advised by several

graduate student advisors prior to their declaration of major, and students in academic trouble were passed on to the professional staff. In consecutive *Student Opinion Surveys*, a survey instrument developed by ACT and SUNY officials that is utilized throughout the 64 campus SUNY system, University at Albany students have historically rated academic advising services poorly. These survey findings contributed to the University's decision to invest in improving the quality of advisement services by replacing the hybrid graduate student-professional advisor model with a fully-staffed professional advisor model.¹ This process involved restructuring the leadership in the office and hiring eight additional professional advisors. The members of the search committee were charged with hiring "caring, nurturing, cosmopolitan scholars." Essentially, the goal was to hire full-time professional advisors whom students would find approachable and faculty would support. Advisors were expected to have both a "life of the mind" and a compassion for students. This cohort of professional advisors was trained using a theory of developmental advising (Crookston, 1972; Grites and Gordon, 2000) as the guiding principle. Most importantly, as explained below, advisor roles and expectations for students were redefined.

Once the advisement team was in place, the next logical step was to develop a set of learning outcomes (a working definition of "developmental advising") and a model to assess the quality of advisement. The Director knew this was important, but felt that much of it would have to wait considering the dramatic changes and multitude of responsibilities on supervisors and advisors alike. However, while it is generally considered the senior staff's responsibility to develop the framework under which advisors operate, the fully-staffed professional advisor model allowed for initiative and innovation to emerge throughout the staff. The Director and senior staff viewed the development of learning outcomes, assessment strategies, and many other office initiatives to be the responsibility of the entire staff. Similar to the model of an academic department that hires faculty/scholars to develop their own research agenda, the Advisement Services Center provided the freedom, support, and flexibility to allow staff to develop their own agenda based on their areas of expertise. This leadership philosophy provided the environment for advisors to initiate many of the innovations described below.

The center also followed a strategy of close collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research. The usual model at the University at Albany is for the Office of Institutional Research

¹ For further discussion of academic advising models, see Habley (1983).

to conduct studies of academic and support services, often utilizing surveys. In this instance, the Director of Advisement Services approached Institutional Research with partnership in mind, not a request for services. The relationship has provided for the collective sharing of time, resources, and expertise, resulting in a more sound assessment model. For example, Institutional Research has supplied summary data on student entry characteristics, previous year retention figures, and other aggregate data used to compare study samples. Staff from Institutional Research have assisted with survey design and provided feedback on the factor analysis and other statistical techniques to ensure accurate interpretation of results. Finally, Institutional Research administers the Advisement Services Center's web-based survey instruments as an independent third party that students can rely on to ensure the confidentiality of their survey responses.

As the calls for accountability and demonstrations of effectiveness grow louder, academic and support units need to take proactive steps in response.² Directors of academic units, including advisement centers, can no longer afford to simply rely on student satisfaction inventories as evidence of effectiveness. The fundamental question has moved from "how satisfied are our students?" to "how well have we taught them and what have they learned?"- and we need to prove it. In the case of academic advising, this introspection took the form of encouraging staff to develop internal measures that reflected advisement objectives within the broader context of the mission of the University at Albany.

An Outcomes-Driven Program of Academic Advisement

The research model presented here began with the development of a set of learning objectives. The Learning Outcomes Committee, staffed largely with advisors, was formed and charged with the task of creating short and longer-term outcomes students would be expected to meet as part of their experiences with advisement. Appendix A details the advisement learning outcomes and the time-frame within which students are expected to develop them. These outcomes speak to the University's commitment to developmental advising in the context of providing important logistical information and skills that students should take with them into the academic departments upon declaration of their major. The establishment of advisement learning outcomes marked the initial stages of the University's outcomes-driven program of

² Indeed, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education: Eligibility Requirements and Standards for Accreditation* (2002, p 21) explicitly calls for the "use of assessment results to improve and gain efficiencies in administrative services and processes..."

academic advisement because it established, quite specifically, that which the University sought to accomplish with its students.

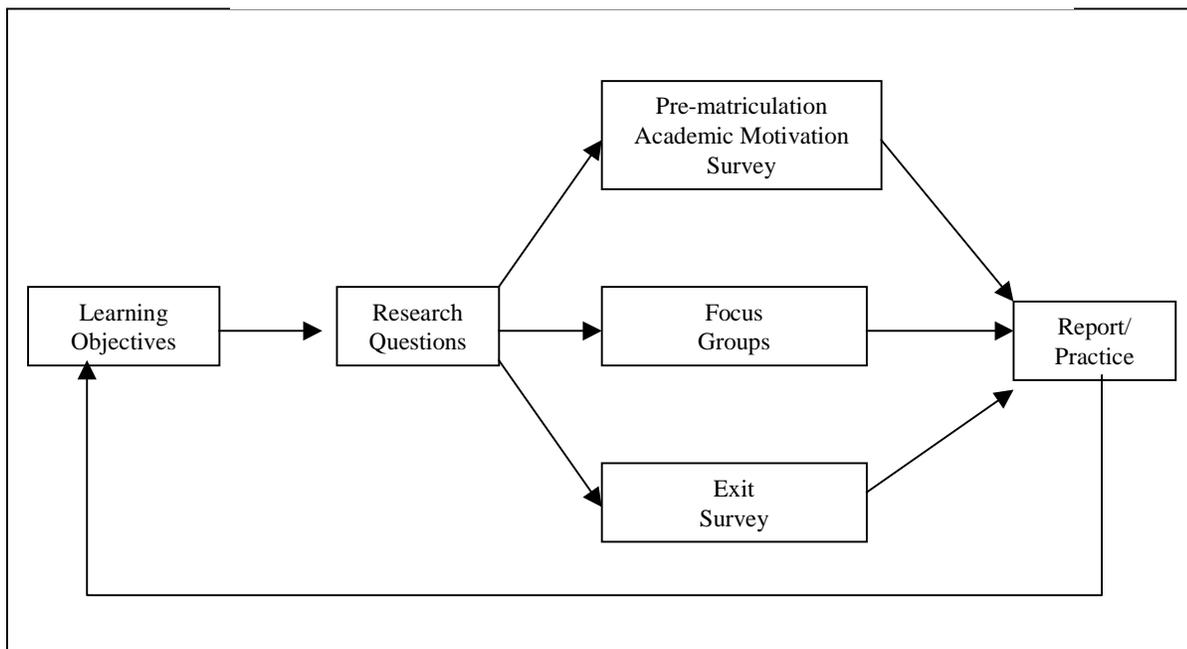
In addition to delineating the specific advisement learning objectives, three practical research or assessment questions were posed. These questions and the assessment method thought most appropriate for facilitating evaluation were:

- 1) Is it possible to identify students at-risk of attrition and improve their chances of college success by advisor intervention? (Pre-matriculation academic motivation survey);
- 2) How do first-year students describe their expectations and experiences with academic advisement? (Focus groups);
- 3) To what extent are students meeting the stated learning outcomes associated with academic advisement at the University at Albany? (Exit survey).

This three-pronged model involved data collection at three different points in the time-frame within which students were to be advised by Advisement Services Center staff – prior to their first semester, within the first-year, and shortly after they declare their major which typically occurs in the third or fourth semester. Although related in terms of contributing to evaluating the achievement of mission goals and learning outcomes, each of the assessment initiatives focused on the independent research questions noted above and targeted subsets of students at particular points in time and were not contingent on students participating in the other assessments. For these same reasons, student participation in multiple advisement assessment initiatives was not viewed as a threat to the validity of the survey results. A retrospective analysis showed that only 78 (3.6 percent) out of the 2,174 pre-matriculation academic motivation survey participants also participated in the exit survey. Identifying information about focus group participants was not collected in order to make the participants more comfortable so the degree to which these students also participated in the pre-matriculation academic motivation survey (or later in the exit survey) is not known. However, similar to the pre-matriculation academic motivation and exit surveys, the focus group initiative addressed distinct issues and stood independent from the other two initiatives, regardless of the degree of cross-participation in the three assessment initiatives.

Focus group discussions with first-year students were conducted in Spring 2000 as a way to get information about the changes students experienced as the Advisement Services Center transitioned from relying primarily upon graduate student advisors to relying upon full-time professional advisors. Concurrently, an advisor from the “Learning Outcomes Committee” created an exit survey in consultation with Institutional Research to be completed on the web to measure student achievement of the learning objectives. As the learning objectives were being formulated and their evaluation program was being designed, the University was investing in a retention management system that sought to identify students at-risk of attrition to more effectively utilize staff resources. A strategy to blend these three related approaches into a comprehensive assessment program that allows them to be mutually reinforcing was then formed. Figure 1 below depicts the Advisement Services Center’s vision of an assessment model that facilitates reflective administrative practices. The following sections in this report detail each facet of the model and the analysis results.

Figure 1, The University at Albany’s Advisement Assessment Model



The Pre-Matriculation Academic Motivation Survey

For two years, Fall 2000 and 2001, the College Student Inventory (CSI) (Strahil, 1998a; 2000) was utilized as the tool to help advisors identify students most in need of their attention and to help predict student motivation for success. Beginning in Fall 2002 the University

developed its own version of a pre-matriculation survey. The administration and results using the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI) instrument with the first two cohorts for this component of the Advisement Assessment Model are discussed below.

Fall 2000 Cohort

Form A of the College Student Inventory (CSI) was administered to approximately one-half (n=992) of the Fall 2000 freshmen cohort. This cohort served primarily as a pilot test, since there was not time to train advisors on the use of the CSI scoring reports and the pool of dropout prone students was not identified in time for effective early intervention by advisors. Multiple regression analysis of 3rd semester overall GPA for the 781 CSI respondents in the Fall 2000 cohort who completed three semesters of study showed that student scores on the four major sub-scales of the instrument (Dropout Proneness, Receptivity to Services, Educational Stress, and Perceived Academic Difficulty), high school GPA, and whether or not the students had taken *The Freshmen Experience* (UUNI 100) or *The Psychology of Academic and Personal Effectiveness* (ECPY 120) at the University at Albany explained 20.1 percent of the variance in 3rd semester GPA. Appendix B describes the CSI sub-scales and their properties. The regression results depicted in Table 1 show that high school GPA had the strongest influence in explaining the overall variance in 3rd semester GPA. The CSI sub-scales showed significant, but weaker effects in explaining the variance in 3rd semester GPA than did high school GPA.

Table 1

Linear Regression Results: Fall 2000 Freshmen Cohort							
Criterion = 3rd Semester Cumulative GPA							
	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Zero-order	Correlations Partial	Semipartial
(Constant)	-0.368	0.463		-0.80			
Educational Stress	0.002	0.001	0.108	2.66 **	-0.055	0.095	0.085
Perceived Academic Difficulty	-0.004	0.001	-0.189	-3.87 ***	-0.310	-0.138	-0.124
Receptivity to Services	0.002	0.001	0.110	3.24 ***	-0.020	0.116	0.104
Dropout Proneness	-0.003	0.001	-0.148	-2.65 **	-0.258	-0.095	-0.085
High School GPA	0.038	0.005	0.270	7.40 ***	0.361	0.257	0.238
UUNI 100 or ECPY 120	-0.110	0.049	-0.080	-2.26 *	-0.191	-0.081	-0.073

R-Square = .201, F 32.426, P < .01
 * P < .05, ** P < .01, *** P < .001

While predicting grade point success is helpful in validating the use of a pre-matriculation academic motivation survey, the more pressing purpose of implementing such an instrument is to identify students at-risk of attrition. Logistic regression and the Delta-P statistic described by Cabrera (1992) were employed to explore the potential of the CSI to predict student retention.³ Institutional Research data showed that 716 (72.2 percent) of the 992 CSI participants from the Fall 2000 cohort were retained into the Spring 2002 semester as of the official enrollment census date.⁴ The logistic regression results depicted in Table 2 show that CSI respondents scoring 75 or higher on Dropout Proneness scale were 19.6 percent less likely to be retained into their 4th semester than those scoring less than 25 on the Dropout Proneness sub-scale. The Dropout Proneness sub-scale, as detailed in Appendix B, is an index of risk of attrition, comprised of individual CSI items that in validation studies were associated with college dropout (Strahil, 2001). Students scoring on the lower end of this 100 point scale are believed to be less dropout prone than students who score higher.

Table 2

Logit Model Results: Fall 2000 Freshmen Cohort					DELTA-P				
Criterion = Still Enrolled in Spring 2002					Calculation for the Change from the Reference Probability				
Measure	Sample		SE	T-Value	Beta X	New Logit	New Odds Ratio	New Probability	Probability Change
	Mean	Beta							
Dropout Proneness 25-49	0.250	-0.355	0.259	1.37	-0.09	0.636	1.889	65.4%	-7.5%
Dropout Proneness 50-74	0.260	-0.444	0.293	1.52	-0.12	0.547	1.728	63.3%	-9.6%
Dropout Proneness 75+	0.290	-0.858	0.341	2.52 *	-0.25	0.133	1.142	53.3%	-19.6%
Educational Stress 25-49	0.280	-0.029	0.222	0.13	-0.01	0.962	2.616	72.3%	-0.6%
Educational Stress 50-74	0.260	-0.114	0.234	0.49	-0.03	0.877	2.403	70.6%	-2.3%
Educational Stress 75+	0.240	-0.049	0.263	0.19	-0.01	0.942	2.565	71.9%	-1.0%
Academic Difficulty 25-49	0.230	0.315	0.233	1.35	0.07	1.306	3.691	78.7%	5.8%
Academic Difficulty 50-74	0.290	0.420	0.273	1.54	0.12	1.411	4.099	80.4%	7.5%
Academic Difficulty 75+	0.250	0.265	0.304	0.87	0.07	1.256	3.511	77.8%	4.9%
Receptivity to Services 25-49	0.210	0.232	0.210	1.10	0.05	1.223	3.397	77.3%	4.3%
Receptivity to Services 50-74	0.250	0.305	0.216	1.41	0.08	1.296	3.654	78.5%	5.6%
Receptivity to Services 75+	0.260	0.670	0.226	2.96 **	0.17	1.661	5.264	84.0%	11.1%
High School GPA	87.168	0.047	0.019	2.47 *	4.10	1.038	2.823	73.8%	0.9%
Developmental Course	0.290	0.544	0.188	2.89 **	0.16	1.535	4.640	82.3%	9.3%
Intercept =	-3.321								
	0.991	= logit value {intercept + BX1 + BX2 + BX3 + ... BXn} using Sample Mean for each measure							
	2.693	= anti-log of logit or odds ratio							
	72.9%	= Reference Probability (odds ratio/1 + odds ratio)							

* p < .05, ** p < .01

³ The Delta-P statistic is the change from a reference probability attributable to the measure in question. In Table 2 the reference probability of being retained into the 4th semester, calculated from applying the logit coefficients to the sample means for each measure, is 72.9%. Increasing any independent measure by 1.0, holding all other measures constant, simply adds that measure's coefficient to the logit equation. The new logit is then converted to an odds ratio, which is the ratio of the odds of being retained to the odds of not being retained. Converting the odds ratio to a probability [1/(1 + odds ratio)] yields a new probability value that takes the increase in the chosen independent measure into account and which can be compared with the reference probability to assess that particular measure's impact. For categorical variables, Delta-P is interpreted relative to the omitted category and for continuous variables, Delta-P represents the probability change for each unit change in the independent variable.

⁴ The official enrollment census date is typically twenty-one calendar days from the first day of classes.

Table 2 also shows that CSI respondents scoring 75 or better on the Receptivity to Services sub-scale were 11.1 percent more likely to remain enrolled into their 4th semester than those scoring below 25 on this sub-scale. The higher student scores are on the Receptivity to Services sub-scale, the more likely they are to utilize campus support services and to be open to establishing a relationship with their academic advisor.

Consistent with the linear regression on 3rd semester GPA performance noted above, high school GPA was positively related to the probability of being retained into the 4th semester as evidenced by the 0.9 percent increase in probability associated with each point increase in respondent high school GPA, on a 100 point scale. As noted above, participation in UUNI 100 or ECPY 120 had considerably weaker effects than the other predictors in explaining 3rd semester GPA. Nevertheless, when analyzed with regard to its association with 4th semester retention, CSI respondents who participated in these courses exhibited a greater probability of retention than those who did not participate by 9.3 percent, after controlling for the four pre-matriculation academic motivation scales and high school GPA. Given the first year results of this particular component of the Advisement Assessment Model, the University felt it was appropriate to utilize the CSI with the Fall 2001 cohort, with some significant adjustments described below.

Fall 2001 Cohort

Building upon the first-year experiences and analyses of the CSI, a more thorough use of the CSI was implemented for the Fall 2001 semester. Once again, half (n=1,182) of the freshmen cohort completed the CSI. Advisors also participated in a training experience that provided concrete strategies for utilizing the results of the CSI for early intervention. An advisor documentation system was developed and introduced to record advisor-advisee interactions with students believed to be dropout prone⁵, advisor perceptions of student receptivity to advisor intervention, and advisor perceptions of students' greatest concerns.

⁵ Noel Levitz classifies students with Dropout Proneness sub-scale scores of 65 or higher as being dropout prone.

Multiple regression analysis revealed that 18.3 percent of the variance in 2nd semester cumulative GPA among the 1,082 Fall 2001 respondents who completed two semesters of study can be accounted for when regressed by student scores on the four sub-scales. Factoring in high school GPA and whether or not these students participated in UUNI 100 or ECPY 120 increased the total explained variance in 2nd semester GPA to 20.6 percent. Table 3 displays the regression results for the full model. Interestingly, the sub-scales for Dropout Proneness and Educational Stress, and whether or not the students took UUNI 100 or ECPY 120 did not prove statistically significant with respect to explaining the variance in 2nd semester GPA, as they had with assessing 3rd semester GPA for the Fall 2000 cohort.⁶ For the Fall 2001 cohort, the sub-scale representing student's Perceived Academic Difficulty contributed the most to explaining the variance in 2nd semester GPA, followed by high school GPA, then by weaker effects from the Receptivity to Services sub-scale.

Table 3

Linear Regression Results: Fall 2001 Freshmen Cohort							
Criterion = 2nd Semester Cumulative GPA							
	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Zero-order	Partial	Semipartial
(Constant)	0.529	0.465		1.14			
Educational Stress	-0.001	0.001	-0.054	-1.68	-0.173	-0.051	-0.046
Perceived Academic Difficulty	-0.010	0.001	-0.340	-9.28 *	-0.404	-0.272	-0.252
Receptivity to Services	0.004	0.001	0.144	5.01 *	0.027	0.151	0.136
Dropout Proneness	0.000	0.001	0.014	0.41	-0.237	0.012	0.011
High School GPA	0.029	0.005	0.186	5.73 *	0.327	0.172	0.156
UUNI 100 or ECPY 120	0.058	0.045	0.037	1.29	-0.051	0.039	0.035

R-Square = .206, F 46.511, P < .01
* P < .001

Logistic regression was employed to assess the utility of the CSI in predicting 2nd semester retention. Institutional Research data showed that 1,080 of 1,182 CSI respondents in Fall 2001 officially enrolled for their second semester. Only 102 (8.4 percent) of the Fall 2001 CSI participants had left the University prior to this point.

Table 4 shows that CSI respondents with Dropout Proneness scores of 75 or higher had a 17.7 percent lower retention probability into their second semester than those scoring less than 25 on this sub-scale. Similarly, CSI respondents scoring between 50 and 74 on the Dropout Proneness scale were 8.4 percent less likely to be retained into their second semester. Finally,

⁶ The analyses for the Fall 2001 cohort were limited to 2nd semester outcomes since these students were only enrolled for two semesters.

participating in UUNI 100 or ECPY 120 increased the probability of being retained in to the 2nd semester by 3.7 percent. While the logistic regression results for the Fall 2001 cohort appear slightly less robust than those for the Fall 2000 cohort, this may be due to the shorter time frame (into the 2nd semester Vs. into the 4th semester) for determining retention. Not only does this shortened time frame provides less opportunity for student attrition, but intervention courses such as UUNI 100 or ECPY 120 may take time to fully resonate with students and contribute to favorable outcomes. Nonetheless, the regression results for these two cohorts are generally consistent and support using a pre-matriculation academic motivation survey to identify students at-risk of attrition. Additionally, these results support the use of developmental courses such as UUNI100 and ECPY120 for students at-risk of attrition.

Table 4

Logit Model Results: Fall 2001 Freshmen Cohort Criterion = Still Enrolled in Spring 2002						DELTA-P Calculation for the Change from the Reference Probability			
Measure	Sample		SE	T-Value	Beta X	New Logit	New Odds Ratio	New Probability	Probability Change
	Mean	Beta							
Dropout Proneness 25-49	0.310	-0.612	0.392	1.56	-0.19	2.249	9.478	90.5%	-4.1%
Dropout Proneness 50-74	0.290	-1.031	0.403	2.56 *	-0.30	1.830	6.234	86.2%	-8.4%
Dropout Proneness 75+	0.140	-1.658	0.468	3.54 ***	-0.23	1.203	3.330	76.9%	-17.7%
Educational Stress 25-49	0.280	0.133	0.403	0.33	0.04	2.994	19.965	95.2%	0.6%
Educational Stress 50-74	0.280	-0.022	0.399	0.06	-0.01	2.839	17.098	94.5%	-0.1%
Educational Stress 75+	0.290	0.612	0.445	1.38	0.18	3.473	32.232	97.0%	2.4%
Academic Difficulty 25-49	0.330	0.200	0.352	0.57	0.07	3.061	21.348	95.5%	0.9%
Academic Difficulty 50-74	0.290	0.654	0.409	1.60	0.19	3.515	33.615	97.1%	2.5%
Academic Difficulty 75+	0.170	0.440	0.473	0.93	0.07	3.301	27.139	96.4%	1.9%
Receptivity to Services 25-49	0.210	0.022	0.384	0.06	0.00	2.883	17.867	94.7%	0.1%
Receptivity to Services 50-74	0.290	0.253	0.376	0.67	0.07	3.114	22.510	95.7%	1.2%
Receptivity to Services 75+	0.370	0.155	0.374	0.41	0.06	3.016	20.409	95.3%	0.7%
High School GPA	87.805	0.040	0.031	1.29	3.51	2.901	18.192	94.8%	0.2%
UUNI100 or ECPY 120	0.280	1.183	0.363	3.26 **	0.33	4.044	57.052	98.3%	3.7%

intercept = -0.936
2.861 = logit value {intercept + BX1 + BX2 + BX3 + ... BXn} using Sample Mean for each measure
17.478 = anti-log of logit or odds ratio
94.6% = Reference Probability (odds ratio / (1 + odds ratio))

* P < .05, ** P < .01, *** P < .001

Information obtained from advisors on students scoring 65 or higher on the Dropout Proneness sub-scale provided for a more in-depth analysis of these students (n=210). Following their first semester, advisors identified 156 of the 210 students scoring 65 or higher on the Dropout Proneness sub-scale as receptive to their interventions and 49 as being resistant to advisor interventions. A mean comparison of 1st semester GPA revealed that students characterized as receptive by their advisor had significantly higher GPA than those who were

resistant (GPA=2.56, GPA=2.19; $t=2.703^*$; $p<.05$). Advisors also reviewed the CSI results with 131 of the 210 students believed to be dropout prone. Advisors, seeking to foster stronger interventions with potentially dropout prone students met two or more times with 119 of these students over the course of their second semester. Although there was a concerted effort to reach out to students believed to be dropout prone, in general, advisors felt that they made only minimal impact on these students as compared with the remainder of their advisee caseload. Reasons stated by advisors included problems reaching students and the failure of students to follow-up on recommendations.

In yet another strategy for using the pre-matriculation academic motivation survey to make a difference with students, summary information provided by the CSI precipitated the formation of a Retention Team consisting of representatives from Student Life, Academic Support Services, the Career Development Center, and the Advisement Services Center. The team met four times in the Fall 2001 semester, sharing information about services provided by the respective offices and strategies to reach first-year students. Each team member was provided with information from the CSI summary planning report regarding activities, study skills, academic needs, and other information team members could use in the marketing of their programs and services. For example, the Career Development Center called approximately 100 first-year students who stated an interest in exploring career options. This resulted in 30 appointments and seven follow-up appointments with Career Development Center professional staff. Three workshops designated specifically for first-year students received modest attendance by 21 students. The Office of Academic Support Services reached out to students who had indicated that they would like to be partnered with a mentor. Although specific documentation was not available, it was reported anecdotally that only a few of the 50 students called actually followed up and registered with the Mentoring program. While the efforts of the Retention Team have not been directly assessed with respect to increasing student retention, they may very well contribute to bringing about successful advisement learning outcomes by making students more aware of the various campus resources at their disposal.

As discussed above, the strategy of instituting a pre-matriculation academic motivation survey (the CSI) promoted proactive advisor interventions as well as collaboration and coordination among the Advisement Services Center, Academic Support Services, and the Career Development Center. The Advisement Services Center will no longer utilize the Noel-

Levitz CSI. Rather, in consultation with Institutional Research and Dr. David Dai, Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Methodology, a campus-developed pre-matriculation academic motivation survey is being administered to the Fall 2002 entering class. The University at Albany continues to view the early identification of students at-risk of attrition as a high priority.

Focus Group Discussions

The second phase in the outcomes-driven model involved focus group discussions with first-year students. Advisors in the Advisement Services Center worked in conjunction with the Resident Assistants (RAs) in each of three residence halls where first-year students live to identify participants for the focus groups. The focus groups began with a rather informal greeting by the discussion facilitator and an assistant. The assistant handed out a demographics form for each participant to complete and the facilitator explained the purpose of the discussion. The facilitator generally followed a protocol that asked students to comment on three specific areas including: their expectations of academic advisement; their experiences with academic advisement; and any suggestions for improving the way advisement is conducted. Under each of the three areas, there were several follow-up questions and the facilitators attempted to maintain consistency across discussions. The discussions lasted approximately 45 minutes each. Appendix C outlines the discussion session protocol.

In Spring 2000 a total of 52 students participated in four focus group discussions. The focus group sessions were tape recorded and analyzed by thematic analysis (Aronson, 1994). Verbatim transcripts of the discussion were analyzed for emerging themes and patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The sample of participants was representative of the freshmen on campus in terms of gender and race. The four major findings that emerged from this particular assessment initiative were: 1) identification of a discrepancy between students' and advisors' views on the role of advisors; 2) students believed that advisors were caring individuals; 3) advisor errors, whether real or perceived, negatively impacted student perceptions of their advisor; and 4) some students raised concerns about advisor caseloads and availability. These findings are described below and student comments that reflect the themes are presented.

An unexpected focus group finding was that there are vast differences in student perceptions of the role of an academic advisor and what the University expects of its advisors. This role discrepancy emerged time and time again, and speaks to the importance of clearly

defining for students the role of the advisor and the expectations or outcomes for students. Several students wanted to know "What professors are the hardest and kind of stuff like that." They also held the belief that advisors should know the detailed content of each course and whether it is "good or not." The statements below suggested that students expected very specific answers to questions such as "what is that course about?"

"I thought my advisor would have more knowledge as to what courses to take, especially for in-coming freshman."

"When asked if this class is ok for me, she knew that it satisfied the requirements, but she didn't know anything about the class or if it was a good class, or their opinion."

The results also confirmed advisor beliefs that students perceived advisors to be caring individuals who were interested in students' well being. One student discussed her belief that her advisor advised the whole student, not just academics.

"I would say that they showed an honest concern, but other than just class wise, they ask how life outside of academics was. So she seemed like genuinely concerned and interested in me."

Although the results were generally positive, students nevertheless pointed out advisor errors. Students were justifiably concerned when advisor mistakes affected them. Most errors were oversights only to be discovered after transcripts arrived or information was clarified. But to students, this was a sign of incompetence or lack of experience.

Students in the focus group were cognizant of the caseload of advisors and several commented on the lack of accessibility to their advisor. Although the advisors in the Advisement Services Center ensure students they will return calls or emails within 24 hours, even during the advanced registration period when they are especially busy, some students were upset that they could not meet or speak with their advisor immediately. One student noted that

"I called my advisor on Monday, because I had to register on Tuesday and I had a question, but she didn't get back to me until Tuesday afternoon until after I registered"

The focus group research has continued into the Spring 2002 semester. This past Spring one undergraduate and one graduate student were trained and facilitated an additional four focus group discussions in the residence halls. Thematic analysis is now being performed on the verbatim transcripts for emerging themes and patterns. Research findings will once again be used to evaluate current services and procedures, as well as to identify problem areas.

The Advisement Services Center Exit Survey

The third stage of data collection involved students completing an on-line exit survey, developed collaboratively between Advisement staff and Institutional Research, shortly after students declare their major. Upon declaration of the major, students receive subsequent academic advisement in their major department. The Advisement Services Center Exit Survey measures the extent to which students have achieved important student advisement learning outcomes, and also gauges student perceptions of advisor effectiveness.

A pilot study of an earlier version of the exit survey conducted with 55 participants was used to test the psychometric properties of the instrument. A factor analysis revealed five factors which largely reflect dimensions encompassing Academic Procedures (4-items), Student Responsibility (5-items), Utilizing Campus Resources (2-items), Evaluation of Advisor (6-items), and Contacts with Advisor (4-items). Items that did not load onto one of the five factors were removed or edited. Appendix D details the sub-scales and their respective alpha-reliabilities.

The final version of the Advisement Services Center Exit Survey includes 18-items scored on a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree and four additional items measuring nominal contacts with advisors. Student's scores on the items comprising the sub-scales are summed to arrive at an overall sub-scale score for each student. The Academic Responsibility sub-scale sums four items and measures the extent to which students have knowledge of specific procedures related to the logistics of advising. The Academic Growth sub-scale sums five items that measure students' more general academic development. The Academic Resources sub-scale only sums two items and examines the extent to which students utilize two important sources of academic information, the Undergraduate Bulletin, and portals in the campus computing system that can be used by students to check their grades, course schedules, holds, and financial aid information. The Contacts with Advisor sub-scale sums four items that ask students the frequency and type of interaction (i.e., face-to-face, listserv, e-mail, phone) they have with their advisor. The Evaluation of Advisor sub-scale sums seven items and evaluates student perceptions of selected advisor characteristics. In addition, there are two dichotomous items, one measuring whether students remained with the same advisor throughout their experience in the center and one asking if students had registered with the Career

Development Center. Finally, there is a space for open-ended comments where students can discuss aspects of the advisement process or comment on their advisor.

In October 2001 all students from the Fall 1999 and Fall 2000 entering freshmen cohorts who declared their major in the previous 6 months were mailed a letter inviting them to complete a survey on the world wide web. The letter described the purpose of the survey, listed the URL for students to go to, and was signed by the Director of the Advisement Services Center. In addition, an e-mail was sent to students' campus e-mail address from the Director.

Approximately 1,000 letters were mailed and the e-mail was sent to 1,500 e-mail addresses. While only 269 out of 1,518 newly declared majors participated in the exit survey, calculating a response rate is difficult because of an inability to verify the number of successful correspondence deliveries. However, an Institutional Research analysis showed that respondent demographics generally matched those of the newly declared majors targeted for canvassing in terms of sex, ethnicity, and newly declared program of study.

Results of this particular assessment initiative indicate that, in general, students were meeting the stated learning outcomes, made consistent contact with their advisor, and had favorable perceptions of their advisor at the time they declared their majors. The results also indicate that students are not using their e-mail accounts or registering with the Career Development Center adequately. When asked to indicate whether they had made meaningful and useful connections with at least one faculty member, only about half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed, about a quarter were neutral on this question, and about a quarter expressed disagreement. Two-thirds of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the purpose of the General Education program, 21 percent were neutral, and 12 percent indicated that they did not understand the purpose of the General Education program. Appendix E displays the frequency distributions and univariate statistics for each survey item appearing on the October 2001 administration of the Advisement Services Center Exit Survey.

Table 5 presents the overall scores on the five sub-scales formed from the individual survey items. The average sub-scale response scores, when juxtaposed to those of the maximum possible sub-scale score, suggest that students largely agreed or strongly agreed that they have met the spirit of the learning outcomes. In particular, the mean on the Academic Resources sub-scale approached the ceiling in terms of the highest possible total score on that sub-scale (8.72

out of a maximum possible score of 10). The Academic Growth sub-scale also exhibited high student goal attainment (21.12 out of a maximum possible score of 25).

Table 5

Exit Survey Results, October 2001				
Sub-scale	N	Mean Score	Max Score	Std Deviation
Academic Responsibility	264	15.41	20	2.94
Academic Growth	260	21.12	25	2.99
Academic Resources	268	8.72	10	1.44
Contacts w/Advisor	261	6.40	16	3.80
Advisor Evaluation	261	27.73	35	12.00

There was wide variety in the number of contacts with their advisor, and some of the variance may be due to the particular question regarding the number of contacts via *Listserv*. Students who do not use their University at Albany e-mail account or who do not forward their University at Albany e-mail address to their private internet service provider, if they have one, do not receive or read any of the messages sent from their advisor. The average number of face to face contacts was 1.63, with 111 students indicating that they met with their advisor two or more times per semester.

In order to examine whether there were any significant improvements from one year to the next, the scores of students who entered the University at Albany in consecutive years were compared. Table 6 presents the mean comparison between respondents who entered the University in the Fall 1999 and those who entered in the Fall 2000 on the five sub-scales. It is important to remember that the Fall 2000 freshmen cohort was the first group of students to be advised under a formal advisement program organized around achieving specific student learning outcomes. The results in Table 6 show exit survey participants who entered in Fall 2000 reported considerably more contact with advisors, and reported higher scores on the sub-scales of Academic Growth and Evaluation of Advisors. There was no difference in the Academic Responsibility and Academic Resources sub-scales, with both cohorts reporting equally high scores. Three-quarters of Fall 2000 cohort respondents reported that they remained with the same advisor they were originally assigned to at the Summer Orientation program versus 64 percent of Fall 1999 cohort respondents. This last finding is particularly important, as the Advisement Services Center has a stated mission to maintain consistency throughout students' experiences with the center, although students may still initiate a change in advisors

should they so choose. This continuity was lacking under the hybrid graduate student-professional advisor model discussed earlier in this report. Many students had previously complained that their advisor kept changing and that they received contradictory advice from semester to semester as their graduate student advisors changed.

Table 6

Mean Comparison of Fall 1999 and Fall 2000 Cohorts				
Sub-scale	N	Mean	Std Deviation	T-test
Academic Responsibility				
Fall 1999 Cohort	160	15.51	2.88	0.682
Fall 2000 Cohort	104	15.26	3.04	
Academic Growth				
Fall 1999 Cohort	157	20.59	3.04	-3.3611***
Fall 2000 Cohort	103	21.93	2.74	
Academic Resources				
Fall 1999 Cohort	161	8.69	1.48	-0.427
Fall 2000 Cohort	107	8.77	1.38	
Contacts w/Advisor				
Fall 1999 Cohort	158	6.01	3.32	-2.620*
Fall 2000 Cohort	103	6.99	3.42	
Advisor Evaluation				
Fall 1999 Cohort	157	26.85	6.85	-2.781*
Fall 2000 Cohort	104	29.06	5.27	

(*p < .01; ***p < .001)

Discussion

The results of each academic advisement assessment (i.e., pre-matriculation survey, focus groups, exit survey) were documented, used to inform staff training, and contributed to subsequent improvement efforts. It is clear that these three initiatives have formed a synergistic coupling in which their collective impact is greater than the sum of their parts. For example, the focus group results heavily influenced a two-hour training session for the entire staff of the Advisement Services Center. The training session provided an opportunity for the staff to hear what advisees were saying about their expectations and experiences with advisors. These discussions led to introducing and explaining the student advisement learning outcomes at Freshmen Summer Orientation. Thus, not only would the advisor-advisee role be clearly defined

early in the relationship, but students would also be exposed to the advisement learning outcomes expected of them sooner.

The adoption of the pre-matriculation survey has challenged advisors to contact and intervene with those students most in need. Using the survey results for effective early intervention is a demanding task at the beginning of the semester. Advisors have to make difficult decisions regarding where and on whom energies need to be focused. Students on academic probation, students at risk of attrition, students just getting by, and students who have yet to register all vie for assistance. Significant portions of several staff meetings have been spent reviewing the research on the College Student Inventory and giving advisors an opportunity to discuss its potential usefulness in the advisement process. The idea of utilizing a pre-matriculation academic motivation survey, particularly a home grown version, to identify students at-risk of attrition has strong support among the Advisement Services Center staff. The Retention Team intends to create a more effective outreach system to increase the availability and effectiveness of University services for first-year students.

The focus groups have allowed advisors to “hear the voices” of students without the power dynamics often associated with a one-on-one appointment in an advisor’s office. The addition of two research assistants to administer the focus groups has further tightened the methodology, increasing the validity of the results. Focus group results have already been shared with staff and used to alter advising practices. Finally, the focus group results have also been used to influence the questions posed on the pre-matriculation and exit survey instruments.

The exit survey allows the University to assess the extent to which students obtained knowledge and skills deemed essential in the advisement process. Students need logistic skills (e.g., understanding major’s requirements, knowing the requirements to graduate, and using the DARS report for academic planning) as well as developmental skills (e.g., understanding how their major prepares them for the future, time management and study skills, self-responsibility, and developing and articulating goals). The results of the exit survey have been used to document the degree to which students believe they acquire these skills and to identify areas in which they fall short. For example, students are meeting most of the stated learning outcomes, maintain consistent contact with their advisor, have favorable opinions of their advisor, and have generally stayed with the same advisor until they declared their major. It is also apparent that students are not using their university e-mail accounts or registering with the Career

Development Center to the degree the University would like (although freshmen and sophomore usage has increased recently, possibly in response to the combined efforts of the Advisement Services Center, the Career Development Center, and Academic Computing). Based on the survey results, it appears that close to a third of new majors generally do not understand the purpose of the general education program. Finally, the exit survey results document that about half of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they have formed meaningful and useful relationships with at least one faculty member by the time they declare their major. Advisors and University leadership now need to reflect on these findings, address weaknesses, and continue to improve in those areas where successful outcomes have been found.

As noted earlier, these research endeavors are on-going activities. The pre-matriculation academic motivation survey has been re-developed in-house and its psychometric properties and usefulness in predicting student dropout proneness will need to be evaluated. Evaluating the success of advisor interventions with dropout prone students calls for a new research design and would strengthen the University's knowledge base about how to best meet student needs. The focus groups continue to clarify student expectations for advisement and how the Advisement Services Center is meeting those expectations. Although more qualitative in nature, focus group research has the benefit of providing opportunities for students to raise issues important to them, regardless of whether or not they are on advisors' radar screens. The exit survey continues to be refined in order to assess student achievement of advisement learning outcomes. The development of additional metrics that gauge the degree to which students achieve advisement learning outcomes, distinct from student self-reported perceptions, would strengthen the assessment of advisement learning outcomes.

Conclusion

This Assessment Report describes an outcomes-driven program of academic advisement at the University at Albany. Implementation of this program involved a planning process that began with the hiring of additional full-time professional advisors. Advisors were then engaged in the development of a mission for advisement in the form of specific learning outcomes. From there, individual advisors were given the flexibility and support to create research designs and instruments to measure the extent to which students have achieved the stated mission and outcomes.

The Advisement Services Center's assessment model is comprehensive, in that it involves collecting information from students at three points in time: pre-matriculation; during the first-year; and as they leave the Advisement Services Center to enter their major field of study. This assessment model has transferability and can be utilized with a range of advisement models (faculty advising, professional advising, and part-time advising), as well as academic settings (two-year colleges, four-year colleges, and universities). While other research designs might be offered to evaluate student potential for being at-risk of attrition, for soliciting student opinion concerning their advisement experiences, or for documenting how well students achieve advisement learning outcomes, the key component in the University at Albany advisement assessment program is the use of assessment findings to continuously reinforce and reformulate on-going interaction with students. We believe we have closed the feedback loop between outcome and process by employing reflective administrative practices.

Perhaps most importantly, the Advisement Assessment Model described in this report provides an exemplary model for other academic departments and support units. As calls for increased accountability and outcomes-based assessment continue, all university departments must demonstrate their effectiveness. As stated previously, it is not enough to measure student satisfaction. Academic departments and support units must be willing to explicitly state the learning outcomes they wish students to achieve and to measure their effectiveness in helping students do so.

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Appendix A

Student Learning Outcomes

The outcomes are divided into groups of early, mid-range, and longer range. The intention is that all students will show progress toward attainment of these outcomes by the time they leave ASC-US, yet they will move along at their own pace. The time references are a general way to summarize the order in which the outcomes should be met. Generally the early stage refers to the Summer Planning Conference and the first few meetings with a student, the mid-range refers to the first few semesters, and longer range refers to things that should be accomplished by the time a student declares a major.

Early

Developing Organizational Skills

- Learn skills for time management
- Understand the importance of timeliness
- Learn to make & keep appointments
- Understand successful classroom behavior (sit in front, converse with professor, take good notes)
- Read mail/email
- Learn how to begin to keep/ organize University information.
- Learn to get names of people spoken with
- Learn to build a schedule

Negotiating Academic Procedures

- Understand how to register
- Know how to read schedule of classes
- Set up e-mail & listserv
- Know how to use UACCESS & PAWS
- Learn how to read an audit
- Become familiar with Academic calendar
- Become familiar with U. Albany acronyms (SKN, AVN)- what they are and how to get them)
- Understand the structure for requirements for a degree (Gen. Ed, Major, Minor, Electives)

Developing Student Responsibility

- Understand responsibility & expectations as a student (go to class, buy books, study, show up for exams)
- Begin to make University at Albany connection

Utilizing University Resources

- Be introduced to campus resources (Academic Support, Student Life, Counseling Center)

Developing and Articulating Goals

- Take courses of interest & have a reason for taking each course
- Be able to articulate why one is here
- Choose courses of interest
- Develop an understanding of why we have Gen. Ed. (liberal arts requirements)

Mid Range

Developing Organizational Skills

- Follow through on referrals
- Keep Advisor informed

Negotiating Academic Procedures

- Become aware of University procedures & deadlines
- Become skilled in using the Undergraduate Bulletin
- Learn how to choose courses which meet specific requirements
- Keep and maintain an updated copy of audit
- Maintain computer account

Developing Student Responsibility

- Develop university level study skills & strategies
- Come to advising appointments prepared
- Develop decision-making skills
- Ask for help
- Be pro-active
- Make a U. Albany connection

Utilizing University Resources

- Make connection with the Career Development Center
- Utilize relevant academic, personal, social, and technological resources
- Be able to navigate the University & ASC-US homepage
- Develop a relationship with professors and advisors and understand why this is important

Developing and Articulating Goals

- Develop a long range academic plan
- Choose a major
- Understand major's admission criteria
- Be able to describe goals and the value of one's education

Longer Range

Developing Organizational Skills

- Keep University updated/ informed (address)

Negotiating Academic Procedures

- Understand major's requirements
- Be able to self-advise

Developing Student Responsibility

- Identify with academic discipline
- Serve as a positive student role model

Utilizing University Resources

- Have a strong connection with CDC
- Begin to develop a connection with their major department
- Take advantage of resources
- Continue to be involved with University

Developing and Articulating Goals

- Acquire self-knowledge (strengths, weaknesses, interests, goals, expectations)
- Think about self (college work as a reflection of self at graduation). Begin to articulate.
- Begin to make informed decisions & have the ability to articulate long range plans.
- Understand reason for choosing major/academic path
- Be able to relate what student has done & what student hopes to do
- Understand that major does not limit one to specific fields
- Consider and Research a minor

Appendix B

Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory (CSI)

The CSI-Form A includes 194-items containing 17 sub-scales that are further organized around five major categories: academic motivation; social motivation; general coping skills; receptivity to support services; and initial impression of the institution (Strahil, 1988a). Advisors are provided information on four indices (dropout proneness, perceived academic difficulty, educational stress, and receptivity to services), ranging from 0-100. Students scoring higher on the first three scales have been shown to be at higher risk of attrition and students reporting high scores on receptivity indicates their openness to institution and advisor intervention.

Studies of the test-retest reliability of the CSI-Form A have demonstrated moderate reliability for the major scales ($r=.80$) and the instrument has been reported as a reliable predictor of enrollment status ($r=.61$) (Strahil, 2001; Allen, 1999). The CSI-Form B has 100-items and early examination of the instruments' reliability and validity has demonstrated similarly strong psychometric properties (Strahil, 2000).

CSI Sub-Scale Construction

The CSI sub-scales used in Assessment Report 24 are proprietarily constructed scales created by USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc. for use in the Retention Management System service marketed to colleges and universities. The following information regarding the construction of the sub-scales is adapted from the RMS Advisor's Guide (USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc., 2000, pp 11-13).

The Noel-Levitz's RMS Advisor's Guide indicates that the **Dropout Proneness** sub-scale measures a student's "overall inclination to drop out of school before finishing a degree" Noel-Levitz also points out that there are numerous mediating factors that complicate predictions of student dropout behavior and cautions that "students with high scores on dropout proneness should be considered as having a pattern of intellectual and motivational traits that is loosely associated with dropping out, but which may or may not lead to actual dropout in any given case."

The **Academic Difficulty** sub-scale was designed to predict which students are more likely to have lower college grades. Although it is unclear exactly how Noel-Levitz constructs this sub-scale, CSI questions regarding student study habits, academic confidence, desire to finish college, attitude toward educators, openness, admissions test scores, and high school GPA are cited as contributing to this sub-scale. This scale also carries a caution regarding its ability to "actually" predict the GPA of particular students due to the considerable number of mitigating factors.

The **Educational Stress** sub-scale is believed to capture "student's susceptibility to anxiety, discouragement, and feelings of inadequacy regarding the total school environment, including peer relations." CSI questions regarding students academic confidence, attitude toward educators, self-reliance, sociability, leadership, ease of transition, family emotional support,

sense of financial security, and other non-specified items are factored into estimating student stress levels.

The **Receptivity to Services** sub-scale (Noel-Levitz calls this scale “receptivity to institutional help”) is believed to indicate “how responsive the student is likely to be to intervention.” “This scale is based on how strongly the student expressed the desire for help in a wide variety of areas, such as career counseling, personal counseling, social enrichment, and academic assistance.

Appendix B References

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Appendix C

Focus Group Discussion Protocol

1) What is the role of an academic advisor?

Prompts:

- What are the characteristics of an excellent academic advisor?
- Before you came to orientation and met your advisor, what did you think he/she would do?
- What did you expect the first meeting to be like?
- What questions did you have about the University at Albany?
- What kinds of information did you think they would have?
- Did you expect them to be similar or different from your guidance counselor in high school?

2) Describe your experiences with your advisor up to this point.

Prompts:

- Up to this point, have your experiences with your academic advisor been positive or negative?
- Since summer orientation, how many times have you seen your advisor?
- How many times in Fall semester and for what reasons? (*each response to the following questions should include an example, clarifying their answer; e-mail, listserv, AVN, problems, etc.*).
- How many times in the Spring semester and for what reasons? (*each response to the following questions should include an example, clarifying their answer; e-mail, listserv, AVN, problems, etc.*).
- Was she/he particularly helpful in selecting courses?
- Do you consider your advisor knowledgeable about academic requirements?
- Is your advisor available when you need her/him?
- Is your advisor personable and/or easy to talk to?
- Does your advisor care about you as a person, beyond academics?
- Does your advisor encourage you to talk about yourself and your college experience?
- Would you recommend your advisor to a friend?

3) Now that you have had some experiences with advisement, what are your expectations of academic advisement?

Prompts:

- What other services or qualities do you think your advisor should offer/have?
- Should academic advisement be mandatory for all students? Freshmen only?
- What would you change about the process of advisement here?

Appendix D

Exit Survey Sub-scales and Inter-item Reliabilities

	<u>Alpha</u>
Academic Responsibility	
I understand the requirements to graduate	.654
I use the DARS audit report	.714
I understand the purpose of general education	.695
I know where to go to inquire about internships	.705
Academic Growth	
I know what it takes to be academically successful	.651
I can create a class schedule that meets my academic needs	.688
My major reflects my personal qualities, skills, abilities, and interests	.687
I have considered how my education will impact my future ambitions	.676
I have formed a meaningful and useful relationship with at least one faculty member	.734
Academic Resources	
I use the undergraduate bulletin	.833
I use PAWS and/or UACCESS for information	.863
Contacts w/Advisor	
How often were you in contact via phone?	.647
How often were you in contact via e-mail?	.784
How often were you in contact face-to-face?	.665
How often were you in contact via listserv?	.636
Advisor Evaluation	
I contacted my advisor when I had questions or concerns about my academics	.658
Advisor was helpful with course selection	.895
Advisor was knowledgeable of academic policies/procedures and campus resources	.805
Advisor was available when I need him/her	.830
Advisor showed concern for personal growth	.905
Advisor encouraged me to talk about myself and my college experience	.875
Advisor was easy to talk with	.882

Appendix E

Exit Survey Item Frequency Distributions

Student Learning Outcomes Questions

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Total	Mean	Std Dev
I understand the requirements needed to graduate	0 0.0%	12 4.5%	18 6.7%	110 41.0%	128 47.8%	268 100.0%	4.32	0.79
I use the DARS audit report for academic planning	15 5.6%	26 9.7%	38 14.2%	75 28.0%	114 42.5%	268 100.0%	3.92	1.21
I use the Undergraduate Bulletin to find out information about academic policies & course descriptions	2 0.7%	5 1.9%	30 11.2%	90 33.6%	141 52.6%	268 100.0%	4.35	0.81
I use PAWS and/or UACCESS for information on course offerings & availability	4 1.5%	10 3.7%	20 7.5%	84 31.3%	150 56.0%	268 100.0%	4.37	0.89
I contacted my ASC/US advisor when I had questions or concerns about my academics	9 3.4%	24 9.0%	37 13.8%	94 35.1%	104 38.8%	268 100.0%	3.97	1.09
I know what it takes to be academically successful	2 0.7%	6 2.2%	20 7.5%	96 35.8%	144 53.7%	268 100.0%	4.40	0.78
I can create a class schedule that meets my academic needs	4 1.5%	3 1.1%	22 8.3%	80 30.2%	156 58.9%	265 100.0%	4.44	0.81
My major reflects my personal qualities, skills, abilities, & interests	2 0.7%	5 1.9%	21 7.8%	95 35.4%	145 54.1%	268 100.0%	4.40	0.78
I understand the purpose of the General Education program	12 4.5%	20 7.5%	57 21.3%	113 42.2%	66 24.6%	268 100.0%	3.75	1.05
I have considered how my education will impact my future ambitions	2 0.7%	1 0.4%	20 7.5%	91 34.1%	153 57.3%	267 100.0%	4.47	0.72
I know where to go to inquire about internships, job opportunities, & grad school	14 5.3%	56 21.2%	50 18.9%	91 34.5%	53 20.1%	264 100.0%	3.43	1.18
I have formed a meaningful & useful relationship with at least one faculty member	20 7.6%	47 17.8%	63 23.9%	70 26.5%	64 24.2%	264 100.0%	3.42	1.24

Advisor Evaluation Questions

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)	Total	Mean	Std Dev
My advisor was helpful in assisting me w/course selection	15 5.6%	28 10.4%	54 20.1%	81 30.2%	90 33.6%	268 100.0%	3.76	1.19
My advisor was knowledgeable of academic policies/procedures & campus resources	7 2.6%	19 7.1%	46 17.2%	98 36.6%	98 36.6%	268 100.0%	3.97	1.03
My advisor was available when I needed him/her	2 0.8%	13 4.9%	43 16.2%	105 39.5%	103 38.7%	266 100.0%	4.11	0.90
My advisor showed concern for my personal growth & development	12 4.5%	19 7.2%	42 15.8%	84 31.7%	108 40.8%	265 100.0%	3.97	1.12
My advisor encouraged me to talk about myself & my college experience	18 6.7%	27 10.1%	54 20.2%	68 25.5%	100 37.5%	267 100.0%	3.77	1.24
My advisor was easy to talk with	6 2.2%	11 4.1%	43 16.1%	77 28.8%	130 48.7%	267 100.0%	4.18	0.99

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Advisor Contacts

	0 times (0)	1 time (1)	2 times (2)	3 times (3)	4+ times (4)	Total	Mean	Std Dev
How often in contact w/advisor by phone per semester	105 39.3%	87 32.6%	54 20.2%	12 4.5%	9 3.4%	267 100.0%	1.00	1.04
How often in contact w/advisor by e-mail per semester	92 34.6%	54 20.3%	51 19.2%	34 12.8%	35 13.2%	266 100.0%	1.50	1.41
On average, how often met face-to-face w/advisor per semester	8 3.0%	146 55.1%	66 24.9%	28 10.6%	17 6.4%	265 100.0%	1.62	0.95
How often did your advisor contact you through listserv messages each semester	55 21.0%	30 11.5%	49 18.7%	43 16.4%	85 32.4%	262 100.0%	2.28	1.53

Other Items

	No	Yes	Total	Mean	Std Dev
Same advisor first assigned to	73 31.3%	160 68.7%	233 100.0%	0.69	0.47
I am registered w/JobTRAK or MonsterTRAK at the Career Dev Ctr	201 76.1%	63 23.9%	264 100.0%	0.24	0.43

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