

DRAFT ONLY

Student Retention Plan: Advising

Student Success is the highest priority for MTSU. As we look to the future, we should champion our unique mission and student body by creating effective and efficient pathways that ensure success throughout the student's academic career. By benchmarking the success of other institutions such as Georgia State University, we can apply those best practices and revise them to fit within our university framework and structure.

Student Success Roles and Responsibilities: MT One Stop

In the MT One Stop, admissions, financial aid, scheduling, course registration and business office functions are recognized as being integrally connected. From the student's point of view, the functions of these offices need to coordinate seamlessly to prevent barriers to ongoing registration, enrollment, and payment.

Structurally, this means that we will be utilizing functional specialists in each separate area to administer major "back of the house" operations related to financial aid disbursement, transcribing operations, and course scheduling. These areas need to continue to operate efficiently and with the highest degree of accuracy. The effectiveness of the specialists working on these operations can be optimized by separating these "back of the house" functions from the more integrated role of providing developmental enrollment counseling to students at the "front of the house." The functional folks in the "back of the house" will no longer have a primary role in direct service to students.

Therefore, the student experience in the MT One Stop will primarily take place in relationship to a staff of professional enrollment counselors who are trained regarding financial aid and other enrollment services. A specific enrollment counselor is assigned to each new student immediately upon admission to the university, and works with that student throughout the months leading to their arrival at CUSTOMS orientation and their assignment to a specific academic advisor within their college. The enrollment counselors will be communicating with newly admitted students via phone, email and text messages to ensure that enrollment, financial aid, orientation and enrollment requirements are successfully completed prior to the first semester of enrollment.

Once the student comes to campus for CUSTOMS orientation and is assigned to an academic advisor, the student is considered to be "handed off" to the advisor for the purposes of monitoring enrollment and academic success. The enrollment counselor will continue to be available as a back-up and to work with students on roadblocks related to financial aid or with other enrollment-related concerns. The enrollment counselors will not serve as academic advisors for enrolled students, but will serve as a potential referral that academic advisors can use as they work with students in their advising caseload that are experiencing unusual financial aid or other enrollment problems.

Student Retention Plan: Advising Roles and Responsibilities

College Advisors:

Academic success begins and ends with the faculty. The role of the professional advisor is to work in partnership with faculty to ensure students graduate as quickly as appropriate and are ready for the next stage of their careers. Professional advisors assume much of the tedious, behind the scenes duties such as paperwork, general education requirements, monitoring, etc., so faculty will have time to mentor students, help them with course specific challenges, make suggestions about majors courses as well as how to qualify for specific careers, etc.

Professional advisors are responsible for a variety of duties, but the overall focus is serving as the point person to assist the student in progressing from application through graduation. Advisors are responsible for monitoring each of their assigned students to ensure the student not only takes appropriate courses but also at the appropriate time, based on a Degree Map developed by the departmental faculty. Professional advisors work closely with faculty to identify when a student is struggling or is off track for graduation and provide intervention recommendations. Specific duties include:

1. Using CMS and other software, regularly monitor assigned students to track their progress and intervene, as appropriate.
2. Meet with each student regularly to assess how the student is progressing and identify any course or non-course related issues.
3. Regularly monitor the match between the student's stated career objective and the academic plan.
4. Monitor course and tutoring attendance.
5. Make personal contact with students not attending, not performing well in courses, not enrolled, or are otherwise not on track for timely graduation.

College Advising Manager:

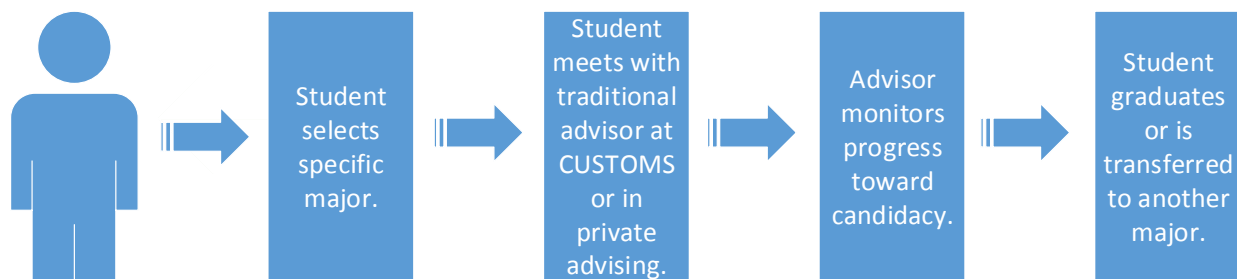
Each college will have an advising manager to oversee the daily activities of the professional advisors in the college. This person is a professional advisor but has a reduced caseload. The manager reports to the college dean or associate dean and is responsible for assigning case loads, monitoring the overall student progress of the college, as well as the progress of each student in the professional advisor's caseload. Working with the college dean or associate dean, the advising manager holds college advisors accountable for the students in their caseload. The managing advisor is also responsible for training and ensuring the college advisors are knowledgeable about the latest college specific, MTSU, and industry trends and information.

Graduation Coach:

While each professional advisor is responsible for ensuring the timely graduation of students in his or her caseload, each college has the option of having a specific person identified to work with students nearing graduation, and those who, for whatever reason, have achieved many credit hours but do not appear to be making progress toward completing the degree.

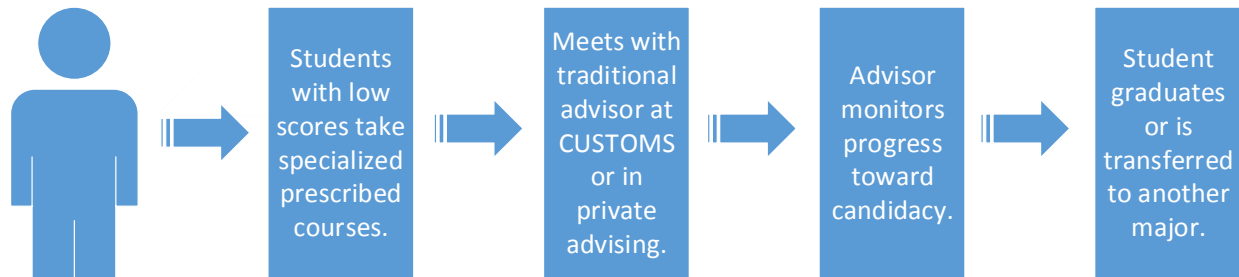
A graduation coach will meet individually with all college majors after the student earns 90 semester hours (or at another predetermined point determined by the college) to help students identify and develop strategies to overcome academic obstacles to graduation. The graduation coach will monitor and revise the computerized degree evaluation for all majors and minors in the college to make sure the extensive and complex range of undergraduate requirements is reflected and available to all advisors. The graduation coach will serve as a liaison to the dean, department chairs, academic/faculty advisors and students and will contact students who have not taken necessary actions (e.g., filing an upper division form or registering for classes).

Traditional Students—Chosen Major



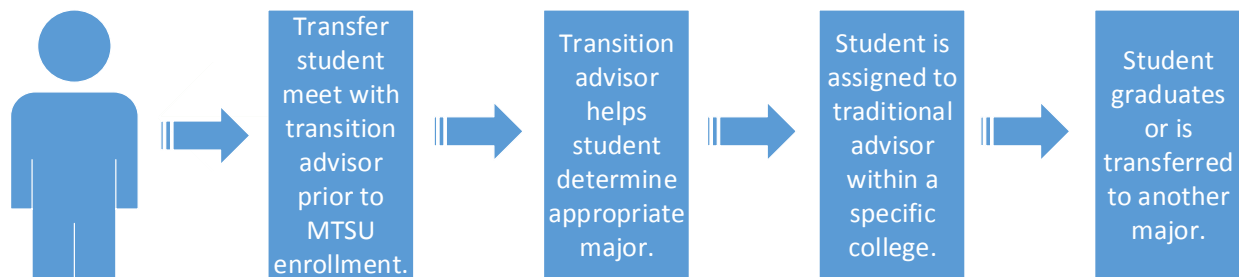
Most students enter the university with a chosen major. Those students will be assigned to a traditional advisor at the point of admission and will meet with the advisor at CUSTOMS or in a private advising session to choose initial classes (based on the Academic Map for the department), answer questions, and get the student on the correct path. Unless the student changes major, the student will stay with that advisor until graduation. In programs with candidacy requirements, the advisor will monitor the student's progress toward candidacy. If it appears likely that the student will not achieve candidacy, the advisor will work with the student to choose an appropriate alternative major.

Prescribed Students



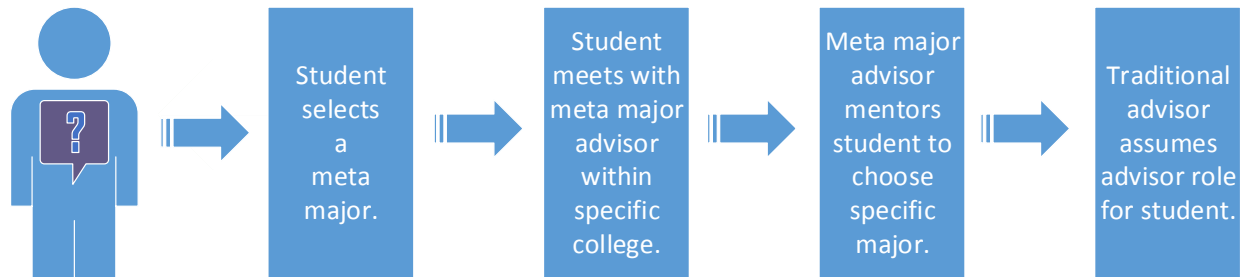
Some students are admitted to the university with low ACT or other scores. Those students will be tested and placed in prescribed courses, if needed. In the fall 2013 term 38% and in spring 58% of the entering freshman class fell into this category. While these students are considered at risk, past results indicate they can be retained and graduate at appropriate rates if they are placed into specialized classes and are advised properly. They will go through the advising process exactly like traditional students (described above), except their advisors will provide extra contact and track them to ensure they are enrolled in appropriate courses, including prescribed courses.

Transfer Students



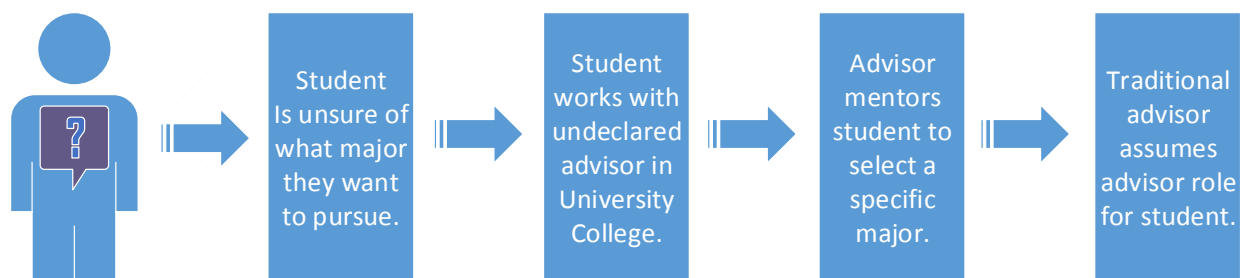
MTSU recruiters make regular visits to feeder community colleges. The objective of these visits is to initiate an MTSU relationship and start the admissions process while the student is still enrolled at the community college. Recruiters can answer general questions about MTSU and Transfer Pathways, but the student will be connected to college faculty and speak with a college advisor as soon as it is appropriate. This will help ensure the student has the necessary courses and qualifies for admission into the chosen program at MTSU. Students will meet with their college advisor at Transfer Advising Days or at another time more convenient for the student.

Traditional Students–Meta Major



1. Some students know they want a college degree in a general area but are unsure of the exact major they want to pursue. Those students will choose an appropriate Meta Major. This choice will assign the student to a specific college.
2. At CUSTOMS (or during individual advising), the student meets with a college advisor to discuss the student's choice and make an initial assessment that the student is in the correct Meta Major. First-term courses will be selected.
3. During the first term or year the college advisor will apply various predictive indices to assist the student in selecting a specific major. Because each student must choose a Meta Major at the time of admission, it is assumed that some students will end up with a major outside of their original college chosen. The college advisor will mentor the student until a specific major is chosen and will work with the next advisor to effect a smooth transition. Students assigned to a traditional adviser are handled just as students who change majors.

Undeclared Students



1. Some students know they want a college degree but are unsure of the exact major they want to pursue. Those students will work with an Undeclared Advisor in the University College.
2. At CUSTOMS (or during individual advising), the student meets with an Undeclared Advisor to choose first-term courses.
3. During the first term the Undeclared Advisor will apply various predictive indices to assist the student in selecting a specific major.
4. The Undeclared Advisor will mentor the student until a specific major is chosen and will work with the next advisor to effect a smooth transition. Students assigned to a traditional advisor are handled just as students who change majors.