



Final Recommendations of Presidential Task Force on Advisement: Sub-Committee on Technology and Assessment

Sub-Committee Membership:

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PART I. TECHNOLOGY

DEFINING MISSION:

NACADA asserts, wisely, “Advising is part of the education process, not simply a ‘service.’”¹ It is in the spirit of this statement that we address the role of technology in Advisement at Kean, and the Assessment of the Advisement experience at Kean. Advising should not be divorced from the academic and broader learning experience of college. Rather, it is part of the process, and should be seen as a vital part of student growth. Advising is central to a meaningful and productive student academic experience, and in the 21st century, technology is more essential than ever in facilitating this academic journey.

Importantly, advising technology can do 3 things in supporting successful advising and positive student experiences:

- First and most vitally, it can empower the student to understand, take charge of, and seek help regarding their academic journey by connecting students to 1) necessary information and systems regarding their academic curriculum and courses, 2) essential people including their advisors and broader success team, and 3) resources available to support them when help is needed.
- Second, it allows the advisor(s) to track student progress, anticipate and identify problems, and support intervention when a student is struggling.
- Third, it can generate student success data useful for identifying equity gaps, patterns and trends in student performance that can assist in eliminating those barriers to success.

¹ Rich Robbins, “Assessment of Academic Advising: An Overview,” 2017 NACADA Summer Institute, <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Portals/0/Events/SummerInst/2017/PowerPoints/Green%20Bay/F2-Assess-RR.pdf>.

The three points raised above are central to the experience of three essential but distinct users: 1) students, 2) advisors, and 3) student success/registrar administrators. The third category, student success/registrar administrators are those who examine the data behind the scenes. It is hoped that our platforms facilitate the gathering and analysis of data, as it can play a vital role in developing systems, procedures, and programs to support our students. But we cannot lose sight of the fact that our most important and most frequent users of our technologies, and the ones who must matter the most to us in this process of review and renewal, are our thousands of students and hundreds of advisors (CAPS, Faculty, Supera, ESL, EOF, Bridge to Success, Veterans) who use these technologies on a daily basis. These are our End Users. And the experience of the End User must guide our recommendations. For these End Users, technology should never create hurdles or barriers in supporting students and those who advise them. And it should never become a hurdle in and of itself in the student experience.

Therefore we need to aim to deploy technology in a way that supports success and enhances the student experience, that facilitates self exploration in context of curriculum, goals, careers, and that facilitates the navigation of curriculum content, and university administration necessary to meet financial obligations and register for courses. As these are central to the student experience, it is essential that we use technology with intentionality and clarity towards facilitating their ability to persist to graduation.

STATE of CURRENT TECHNOLOGIES at Kean

No software platform is a substitute for thoughtful, informed, trusted, and caring advisement. But technology, well deployed and configured to provide ease of use and clarity of information for the end users—our students and their advisors—can contribute meaningfully in supporting student persistence and success. Configured poorly, (as we know from our chaotic potpourri of platforms, portals, paper) students and advisors spend all their time seeking information and attempting to navigate bureaucratic tasks necessary to assist students in registration.

It is thus imperative that as we anticipate a transition to new technologies and/or revise old ones that we evaluate carefully the functionalities needed by both students and advisors, the integration of platforms, and the creation of an effective interface between our students and advisors, and the tools they need to progress to graduation.

The overview of current technologies and recommendations below are intended to support this transition by outlining the needs of the end users (students, professional and faculty advisors).

As Table 1 demonstrates, we employ a broad range of technologies in advisement and registration that are hosted by and used by multiple communities across campus.

TABLE 1: Current Technologies Used in Advisement and Registration:

TECHNOLOGY	HOST/SPONSOR	USERS
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual by advisors ● Through ADVISE (Enrollment Management; CAPS; Speciality programs) ● By Registrar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students ● Advisors (Faculty and Professional) ● Registrar

Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through ADVISE • Through Enrollment Management 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff
Chatbot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through CAPS 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students
PDF Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrar’s Office 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Advisors • Admin Staff • Registrar
Video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrar “How to” videos explaining student registration processes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students
Software Platforms	Ellucian/Colleague (OCIS)	OCIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Advisors (Faculty and Professional Advisors) • Admin Staff • Registrar • Institutional Effectiveness
	KeanWise or WebAdvisor	OCIS/Registrar	
	Student Planning	Registrar	
	ADVISE	Institutional Effectiveness	
	SLATE	Enrollment Management	
	Trac Cloud	NTLC	
	RNL	Enrollment Management; Institutional Effectiveness	
	SADI	Institutional Effectiveness	
Website	University Relations and OCIS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Advisors • Staff

As Table 1 demonstrates, a wide range of University stakeholders deploy an even wider range of technologies to support advising and registration. The complexity of the processes we ask End Users to undertake is complicated by the many platforms, points of entry, clicks, technologies needed in the process.

We also do not consolidate information related to curriculum, advising, and registration and related processes in a single place. As a result, students and advisors cannot locate key information or accomplish basic tasks. In addition, for a number of crucial processes, we rely on paper forms or fillable PDFs that are cumbersome and inefficiently necessitate the circulation of

multiple emails, scanning technologies that many of our students do not have access to, all of which must be manually triaged, sorted, and then acted upon in the Registrar’s office.

Finally, we also know that different advisors use our platforms and technologies differently. Once the advisor survey is administered, we will have additional data on how widely this differs, and the extent to which practices need to be standardized or consolidated..

But as Table 2 illustrates, in a typical advising meeting between student and advisor, an advisor could easily **need to use 8 different technologies** necessitating multiple sign-ins and using multiple media.

Table 2: Typical Advising Appointment:

Advising Activity in Typical Advising Appointment	Technology/Platform Used
Consultation of Curriculum Sheets & 4-Year Plan	Kean Website and Kean SmartCatalog
Consultation of Minor Curriculum Sheet	Only on Kean Ocean Website and Kean SmartCatalog (in narrative form)
Review of student progress to degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree Audit or Program Evaluation on KeanWise (its clarity is preferable to Student Planner) • “Progress” on Student Planner
Review of student progress to Minor	Manual review on paper curriculum guide
Consultation of Course Selections	Self-Service/Student Planning via KeanWise
Selection of Courses and Sections	Student Planning
Make course substitutions	Email to Registrar
Removal of Advising Hold	KeanWise /Colleague
Confirm additional Holds	ADVISE
Put on Petition	KeanWise
Grant an overload	KeanWise
Permit credits at another institution	Fillable PDF emailed to Registrar
Permit course registration for more than 19 credits	Fillable PDF emailed to Registrar
Permit course registration with time conflict	Fillable PDF emailed to Registrar
Late Add/Drop	Paper form to emailed to Dean then Registrar

Declaration of Major	Fillable PDF signed by Dept Chair and emailed to Registrar
Change of Major	Fillable PDF signed by Dept Chair then emailed to Registrar
Addition of Minor of Content Area	Fillable PDF signed by Dept Chair and emailed to Registrar
Consultation of transfer evaluation/transcript	KeanWise/Webadvisor
Review Early Alerts or Warnings	ADVISE
Memorialize Advising Meeting (note taking)	ADVISE
File KUBIT in extraordinary cases	KUBIT web portal

The complexity and clumsiness of these systems hinders effective advising and intrudes on valuable time for conversation between student and advisor.²

In addition, we make crucial information difficult to locate within our collective technologies and websites. Assessment of advising and registration systems generally begins with measuring the number of “clicks” required by a student to 1) access necessary information; 2) complete the registration process.³ As Table 3 illustrates, by this simplest of measures, we are failing our students.

Table 3: “Click” Test for normal Advising and Registration Activities (conducted by our student representative):

Activity	Number of Clicks (from www.kean.edu)
Locate curriculum	7 +/- 3 (including navigating through the undergraduate majors before history e.g., dependent upon majors. Some majors also have the curriculum on the dept page, while others do not, and you have to dig more; also varies if you start in academics or if you go search for major in the search bar.)
Locate Late Registration Fee Deadline	3 if you look directly in the search bar. 4 if you go through info for students and student accounting policies.
Fulfill Financial Obligation Agreement	8 (9 If you accidentally click the financial obligation agreement link instead of the

² It was hoped that we would have quantifiable data on how our End Users utilize these technologies through the planned Student and Advisor Surveys finalized by Sub-Committee leadership; these surveys have yet to be administered.

³ See Chronicle of Higher Education, [The Future of Advising](#))

	complete link below it).
Locate courses in major offered in upcoming semester	<p>5 minimum if you know what you are doing.</p> <p>More if you don't</p>
Locate the name of your Advisor(s)	<p>This is somewhat confusing for students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If you search, it takes you to Admissions website of overall advisors for Transfer or New Admit students or by the department in some cases in only 2 clicks. ● 3: To find your own individual advisor, your options include Student Experience>Contacts. ● 4: Keanwise> student planning>plan and schedule> Advisement.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

As the above survey of Kean systems demonstrates, our systems are not simple, information is not accessible, and we fail repeatedly to serve the End Users. Kean students, especially with its high percentage of first generation college students and ESL students, are easily intimidated by, put off by, and flummoxed by institutional bureaucracies. And when they run up against what they perceive as administrative or bureaucratic hurdles, they all too often fail to persist in resolving their questions or challenges. By failing to provide clear and consistent and easily accessible information about, and systems enabling students to seek, advising, registration, and support services, we have created additional and unnecessary and indeed harmful hurdles. It is incumbent upon us to eliminate these hurdles and provide the clearest possible information and systems needed by students to move through their careers at Kean.

In addition, the hurdles described above make the advising meeting all about navigating “paperwork” and “bureaucracies” to enable a student to register. As a result, there is little time for advisors and students to focus on the meaningful questions about choice of major, picking a minor, plotting a career path, figuring out an internship, and so forth.

Finally, our platforms are not in alignment with evolving curricular changes. Most importantly, the degree audits built into KeanWise and Student Planning can only track academic majors. They cannot track double majors or minors. This is particularly problematic moving forward as Provost Birdsell is calling for the reapportionment of credit requirements to degree to facilitate each student completing a major and two minors. It is imperative that minors be shown in the degree audit/progress to degree so that Kean students graduate with as many credentials as possible. This is a matter of equity. .

If we succeed in implementing a better system and eliminating those barriers to student success, we will **enable meaningful advising and mentorship** that will 1) increase

persistence; 2) improve retention; 3) shorten time to degree; 4) enable students to earn multiple credentials.

Since the convening of this Task Force Sub-Committee, the executive committee of Kean University adopted EAB Navigate as a replacement for ADVISE. As this sub-committee is not aware of the features of Navigate, our recommendations are broad and not platform or software specific. The following caveats should be noted:

- If Navigate does not integrate with Student Planning, it, like ADVISE, will be little used.
- If Navigate/Student Planning do not allow for uniform and seamless integration with advisor google calendars to make advising appointments, it will be little used by students and advisors to manage advising appointments.
- New software that fails to eliminate the technological hurdles that currently exist will NOT be a net gain.
- Similarly, in many ways the KeanWise/WebAdvisor interface is preferable during the advising meeting to Student Planning due to its visual clarity for End Users. As we phase out systems, this must be done with the recommendations below in mind so that we do not compromise informational clarity..
- Finally, it is apparent that multiple units on campus external to this sub-committee are in discussion about multiple software systems including Navigate and CourseDog, with no apparent conversation or planning across units, suggesting that the complexity and confusion will continue to reign if allowed to continue.

We therefore make the following recommendations::

- Kean must overhaul **all** technologies used in advising and registration to provide for clarity and simplicity; updated functionality; seamlessness between platforms to better serve the End Users. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Essential integration of note taking with platforms used in registration (in other words, EAB Navigate must seamlessly function with Student Planning)
 - Essential integration of advising appointments with google calendars utilized by advisors for uniform and simpler scheduling
 - Essential integration of degree audits for majors AND minors
 - Transition of forms (paper and PDFs) to electronic approval processes
- Kean must overhaul all technologies and platforms to provide easy access to necessary (and current) curriculum and student support information.
- Curriculum software and degree audits (Student Planning through Navigate?) **MUST** be able to track student majors AND minors as a matter of equity for Kean students an to accommodate pending curriculum revisions..
- Kean must assign oversight and/or periodic program review/assessment of End User technologies to a single entity/stakeholder to ensure they meet the above stated goals.

- It is recommended that the overhauled technologies and functionalities be accessible through a single portal or landing page with the following functionalities, essential to the End Users, as outlined in Table 4, below:

Table 4: Functionalities needed by End Users on single portal:

Portal/Dashboard Functionality Needed	
STUDENTS	ADVISORS
Access major curriculum	Access major curriculum
Access minor curriculum	Access minor curriculum
Track progress to degree	Track progress to degree
Request course substitutions	Request/approve course substitutions
Search for and plan courses	Search for courses and review student plan; review enrollments
Register for courses	Review student registration/schedule
Add/drop courses	Approve Add/drop courses
Identify advisor(s)	Identify advisor(s)
Contact advisor(s)	Communicate with student(s)
Schedule appointment with advisor(s)	Manage appointments with students
Review advising notes/recommendations from advisor(s)	Post advising notes/recommendations to students; review advising notes/history
View holds	View and remove holds
View academic alerts	Post and review academic alerts
Request change of major; declaration of major; addition of minor; declaration of content area	Approve change of major; declaration of major; addition of minor; declaration of content area
Request course petition and overloads	Approve (or reject) course petition and overloads
Access information about and calculator for grade recalculation; request grade recalculation	Access information about and calculator for grade recalculation; approve grade recalculation
Access support services (academic, wellness, financial)	Refer student to support services (academic, wellness, financial)

View syllabi and textbooks	Post syllabi and textbooks
Locate Financial Aid information	Refer students to Financial Aid support
Locate Career Services Support	Refer students to Career Services
Locate Internships	Locate Internships
View grades	Submission of grades
View information related to academic probation and dismissal; instructions for appeal	Be notified of students on academic probation or dismissed; instructions for appeal; review of progress

PART II.

ASSESSMENT:

In considering models for the assessment of advising, we again follow NACADA's assertion that advisement is part of the educational experience. To that end, assessment should be modeled on academic assessment in assessing what students know, what they do, and how they value advising.⁴ More specifically, we need to assess:

Object of Assessment	Method of Assessment
1) What students know and understand about advising and registration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review what students are taught about advising and registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indirect Measure: Course assessment of GE 1000/3000 content/learning outcomes pertaining to advising and registration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure student knowledge of advising and registration processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct measure
2) What students do in advising and registration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure student scheduling of advising appointments through platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct measure: quantitative analysis of scheduling metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure student keeping appointments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct measure: quantitative analysis of scheduling metrics

⁴ Rich Robbins, "Assessment of Academic Advising: An Overview," 2017 NACADA Summer Institute, <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Portals/0/Events/SummerInst/2017/PowerPoints/Green%20Bay/F2-Assess-RR.pdf>.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure student retention, persistence, and time to degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect measure: Longitudinal analysis of student retention and graduation rates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure efficiency of degree completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect measure: Statistical analysis of credits earned to identify extraneous courses taken
3) Assess student valuation of advising relationships	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure student satisfaction with advisor and advising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit survey
4) Assess clarity, simplicity, and accessibility of technologies used	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure student use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor platform metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure simplicity of technologies used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct periodic “click” count testing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure advisor use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor platform metrics