



Student Advising & Mentoring

## Quality Enhancement Plan Nicholls State University



**COLONEI**  
**PRIDE**



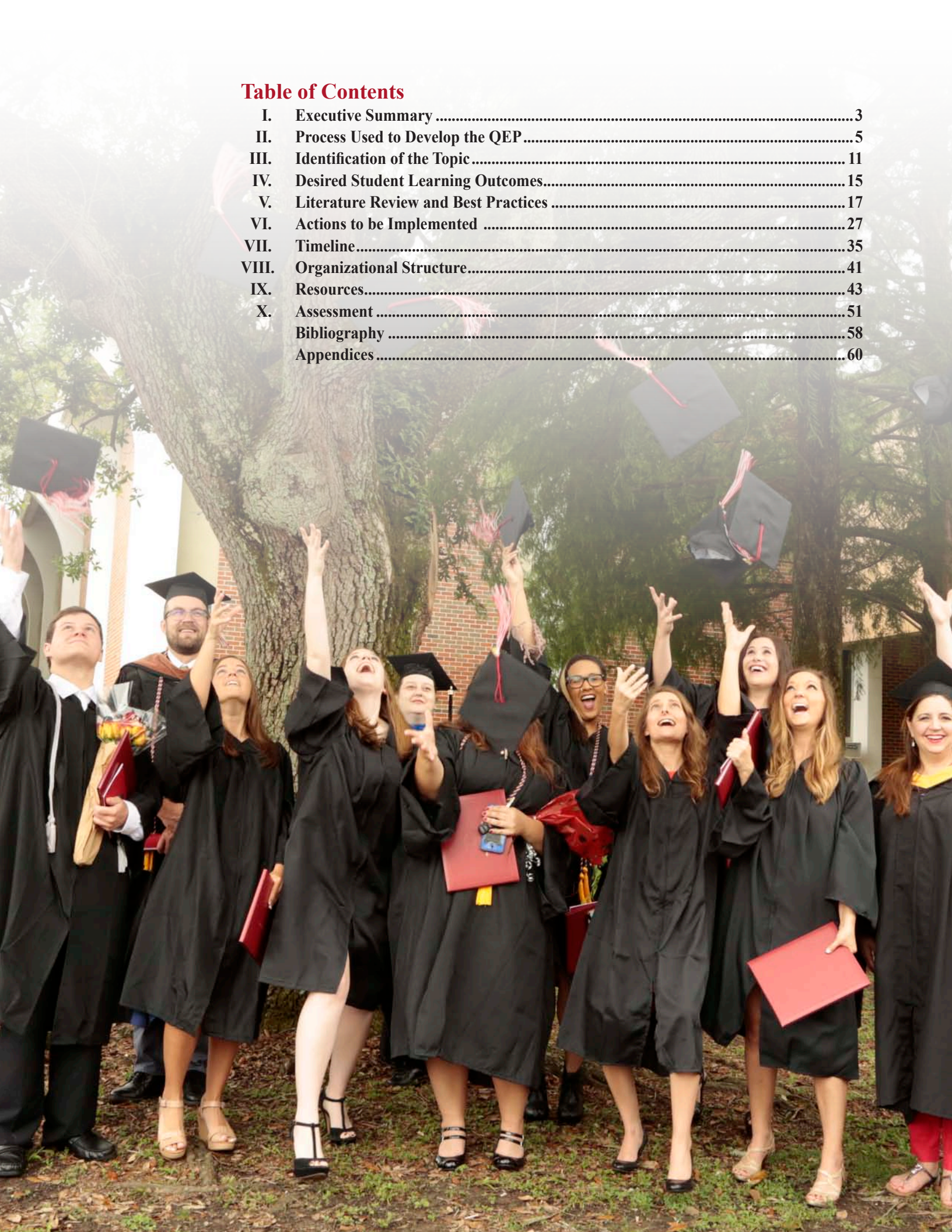
**Nicholls State University**  
**Quality Enhancement Plan**  
**March 2016**

This Quality Enhancement Plan was developed by Nicholls State University in accordance with CR 2.12 and CS 3.3.2 in preparation for reaffirmation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).



## Table of Contents

I.	Executive Summary .....	3
II.	Process Used to Develop the QEP .....	5
III.	Identification of the Topic.....	11
IV.	Desired Student Learning Outcomes.....	15
V.	Literature Review and Best Practices .....	17
VI.	Actions to be Implemented .....	27
VII.	Timeline.....	35
VIII.	Organizational Structure.....	41
IX.	Resources.....	43
X.	Assessment .....	51
	Bibliography .....	58
	Appendices .....	60





## I. Executive Summary

Academic advising should be a transformative experience that enables students to take ownership of both their academic and career goals and ignite a passion within them to achieve those goals. Student Advising and Mentoring (SAM) at Nicholls State University aims to enforce the simple notion that academic advising is teaching, as much as a lecture or lab in a classroom is teaching. For many students and faculty, academic advising provides one of the rare moments of one-on-one interaction between them. With training and preparation, an enthusiastic faculty member and receptive student can engage in advising sessions that are frank reflections on academic and career goals, personal strengths and weaknesses, and extracurricular opportunities and support. Faculty members are able to show the passion and dedication for their disciplines, and students can establish positive relationships with engaged mentors.

To counter the notion that advising involves nothing more than course scheduling, SAM seeks to exemplify the idea that “academic advising, based in the teaching and learning mission of higher education, is a series of intentional interactions with a curriculum, a pedagogy, and a set of student learning outcomes” (NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, 2006). The goals of SAM are to assimilate this concept into the fabric of the institution, to elevate the role of advising in the academic life of our students, and to improve the quality of advising so that the information exchanged during the advising process is wide-ranging and meaningful.

While many of SAM’s initiatives are broadly applicable to the entire student population, SAM seeks to most significantly impact the sophomore population, for the delivery of effective advising is especially challenging at that level. The sophomore year is a time when students are especially vulnerable because they are uncertain, confused, and are often left in a purgatory between first-year programs and full integration into their academic major departments. Research shows that sophomores benefit greatly from focused and interactive advising that helps them to solidify their academic direction and goals.

Nicholls’ first QEP, “L’esprit Engage: The Engaged Mind,” successfully addressed the needs of freshmen through the creation of the Academic Advising Center (AAC) and the UNIV 101 (University Prep) course. SAM will build upon that success and will provide a transition to advising within academic departments and demand further assessment and reflection on strengths, weaknesses, and goals. SAM will encourage sophomores to reflect upon their academic and career goals in order to better comprehend how their academic and co-curricular choices address those goals. SAM will also support advisors with training and tools to assist students on their academic journey and allow advisors to operate in a mentoring capacity.

SAM will have a significant impact on students’ academic performance, sophomore-to-junior-year retention, extracurricular engagement, satisfaction, and the student/faculty relationship. SAM will create a positive and transformative change in the campus culture while instilling a sense of ownership within students, thus fostering their success and attainment of both their educational and career goals.



## II. Process Used to Develop the QEP

**Evidence of the involvement of all appropriate campus constituencies** (*providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 “includes a broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development...of the QEP”*)

### Overview of the QEP Development Process

The QEP Steering Committee was appointed by then-Vice President for Academic Affairs Allayne Barrilleaux and the deans of the academic colleges in the fall of 2013. That committee represented a cross section of the University’s faculty and staff and was charged with developing the QEP topic. Topic development took place over an 18-month period and culminated in a white paper that was released to the campus on March 6, 2015. Early in the process, a student representative was also invited to serve on the Steering Committee.

After the completion of the white paper, the Steering Committee was dissolved, and the Implementation Committee was formed. Most members of the Steering Committee also serve on the Implementation Committee or one of the five subcommittees: Assessment, Budget, Professional Development, Technology, and Writing. The Student Government Association (SGA) was asked to appoint one student representative to the Implementation Committee and to each of the subcommittees as well.

The following faculty members all served on the Steering Committee. Because this committee worked together for over one year, it included resignations and new appointments over time. The following is a list of all Steering Committee members and their college affiliation or office:

Table II.1: Steering Committee Members Appointed by the Provost

College Affiliation or Office	Steering Committee Member
Student	Aeriale Bias
Dean of Student Services	Michele Caruso
College of Business Administration	Laura Coogan
College of Education	Fran Crochet
College of Nursing and Allied Health	Amanda Eymard
College of Nursing and Allied Health	Donna Fitzgerald-DeJean
Office of Institutional Effectiveness	Renee Hicks
College of Arts and Sciences	Ross Jahnke (Chair)
Library	Hayley Johnson
College of Education	Kimberly Reynolds
University College	Cathleen Richard
University College	Lori Richard
College of Arts and Sciences	James Stewart
College of Arts and Sciences	Ianna West
College of Arts and Sciences	Chad Young

Every constituency of the University—students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community—was engaged in topic development. Constituent groups were involved through presentations, surveys, questionnaires, and workshops organized by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee came to the topic development process with no prior topics in mind and was committed to letting the responses from the constituent groups drive the initiative.

### **Phase 1 of the Development Process**

Phase 1 focused on broad topic development and took place between October 2013 and September 2014. The goal of this phase was to identify an issue or cluster of issues that (1) were of great concern to the constituent groups, (2) directly improved student learning, and (3) could be addressed within the framework of a focused QEP.

The Steering Committee was acutely aware that QEP development must be faculty-driven in order to be effective. Faculty input was sought numerous times and in multiple ways during topic development. Surveys were administered, and the QEP Steering Committee made presentations at each semester's Faculty Institute and at the Center for Advancing Faculty Engagement (CAFE).

The committee developed a series of surveys targeting each of the institution's constituent groups. These surveys were formulated by the Steering Committee in order to determine the most pressing concerns of stakeholders. Though the surveys primarily consisted of multiple-choice questions, the committee believed that it was important to offer opportunities for written responses to obtain a more accurate assessment of need. Most of the surveys were distributed online through the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (AIR); in addition, paper surveys were distributed to faculty and students in various campus locations in order to achieve the highest possible response rate. Paper surveys were scored and merged with online data for the same survey by the AIR staff. The written responses to open-ended questions were scored by the Steering Committee.

#### ***Faculty Survey***

The first faculty survey was administered both electronically and by paper in spring 2014. More than any other survey, it relied on a series of open-ended questions. Due to the number and the breadth of responses, the Steering Committee spent a great deal of time reading, interpreting, and grouping the responses. The survey data appears in Appendix 2.1.

#### ***Student Survey***

The student survey was administered online using Survey Monkey in April 2014. In order to insure the largest possible sample, paper surveys were administered in the Donald G. Bollinger Memorial Student Union on April 28 and 29 and on May 1, 2014. As an added incentive, candy bars, paid for by the Nicholls Foundation, were given to students who filled out a survey in the Student Union. Several committee members and other faculty also administered the survey in their classes during the third week of April. Over 1,200 surveys were returned, representing 20% of the student body. Although it was possible for students to fill out the survey multiple times, no evidence suggests that this practice was widespread or that it affected the quality of the data. The survey data appears in Appendix 2.2.



### ***Staff Survey***

The staff survey was administered electronically during the week of April 28, 2014, the week following spring break. This survey was sent to all staff members whether or not their jobs require them to work directly with students or faculty. Because most staff members indirectly interact with students and faculty, they have important insights into the issues facing the institution. The survey data appears in Appendix 2.3.

### ***Alumni Survey***

A survey was distributed to members of the Nicholls Alumni Association, with the help of the alumni director and staff. Because alumni provide insight regarding their academic experiences and how those experiences impacted their success as productive members of the community, they comprise an important constituent group. The survey data appears in Appendix 2.4.

### ***Community Survey***

The Steering Committee developed a community survey, which was sent to several persons in the campus community who are in regular contact with community and political leaders. Unfortunately the Steering Committee received no feedback from this survey.

### ***Other Topic Development Data***

In addition to generating its own data through this series of surveys, the Steering Committee took into account existing data from a variety of sources, including nationally normed surveys administered to Nicholls students, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), and the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI). This data is available on the Assessment and Institutional Research page: <http://www.nicholls.edu/institutional-research/assessment/>.

## **Phase 2 of the Development Process**

The second phase of topic development began at the end of the spring 2014 semester. The responses from all constituents collected in Phase I were analyzed by the Steering Committee. The committee identified a cluster of fifteen issues that warranted further investigation and input from campus constituents. These issues were organized under four broad topic headings:

### ***Advising and Student Support***

- Improve the transition from University College to student's major
- Improve support for transfer students
- Improve student satisfaction in sophomore & junior years
- Improve non-academic student support (psychological counseling, financial aid, etc.)

### ***Research and Mentoring***

- Improve mentoring
- Improve applied learning
- Improve/increase internship opportunities
- Improve career preparedness/career counseling

### ***Instructional Effectiveness***

- Improve classroom technology
- Improve professional development (for faculty)



- Improve student-learning-focused teaching
- Improve faculty/student engagement

### ***Writing Skills***

- Improve/increase undergraduate research
- Improve instructional effectiveness
- Improve writing across the curriculum

These topics were presented to the entire faculty at the fall 2014 Faculty Institute in a breakout session in which all University faculty members were invited to participate. This session was based largely on a topic selection model used by South Florida State College and described in the article, “From Silos to Bridges: Collaborative Tools to Select a QEP Topic” (Christensen & Heston, 2013). One hundred ninety-four faculty members (86%) participated in this event. The results of this exercise appear as Table III.1.

The breakout session consisted of four parts: brainstorming, consensus building, presentations, and voting. The room was organized into four color-coded areas, corresponding to the four categories listed above. Each color-coded quadrant of the room contained eight tables, each seating eight faculty members. Members of the Steering Committee served as facilitators for the event. Faculty name tags were preprinted with one of the four color codes randomly assigned in order to prevent departments from sitting together and to insure that each of the four large groups contained a cross section of faculty representation.

Faculty began by working in groups of four to brainstorm solutions to address the issues listed under their category. For instance, if a group of four was sitting in the quadrant addressing “Advising and Student Support,” they were tasked with brainstorming solutions to the problems of (1) improving the transition from University College to student’s major, (2) improving support for transfer students, (3) improving student satisfaction in sophomore and junior years, and/or (4) improving non-academic student support (counseling, financial aid, etc.). By allowing the small group to select which aspect of student transitions it would tackle, this first stage served to both develop solutions and shed light upon issues about which faculty were most concerned.

Four brainstorming groups were then organized into a group of sixteen people, who were charged with building a consensus and presenting a solution to the entire assembly for consideration. In their oral presentations, some of the groups combined ideas from several of the brainstorming sessions, others found that the brainstorming sessions all pointed to similar solutions, and others selected one idea that seemed to resonate with the larger group.

Four oral presentations were given for each of the four color-coded groups. While each presentation was given, members of the Steering Committee took notes on large sheets of paper located on the back wall of the room. These notes would serve as “ballots” for voting in the final phase of the session.

Following the oral presentations, each faculty member was given six red dots, each dot representing one “vote.” Faculty participants were instructed to place their dots on the ballots at the back of the room. They could vote for any solution that was presented, regardless of which group originated the idea. Because all faculty members had six votes, they could endorse multiple solutions or show strong endorsement for one or two.

Analysis of the results from Faculty Institute pointed clearly to what became the broad framework for the QEP but also raised many new questions. The Steering Committee began to research literature on

the topics of academic advising, the “sophomore slump,” and undergraduate research. In addition, AIR administered two surveys on advising: (1) a student satisfaction survey about advising (based upon an assessment instrument already in use in the College of Education) and (2) a survey requesting department heads to provide information about faculty advising loads, advisor/advisee meeting requirements, advisee records, and other advising and mentoring practices.

A broad outline of the goals and outcomes for an advising- and mentoring-based QEP was presented to the faculty at the spring 2015 Faculty Institute. In March 2015, the Steering Committee released a white paper outlining all of the desired elements of the proposal to the campus community, including the Faculty Senate and the Student Government Association (SGA). This white paper was a “wish list” of sorts, representing the final effort of the Steering Committee and the beginning framework for the work of the QEP Implementation Committee.

### Phase 3 Implementation Committee

In order to create the final QEP proposal, the Steering Committee was dissolved, and an Implementation Committee formed. The Implementation Committee consisted of several members of the Steering Committee and several new members from the campus community. Supporting the Implementation Committee were four subcommittees: Assessment, Budget, Professional Development, and Technology. Later, a fifth subcommittee—Writing—was charged. In addition, the SGA provided a student representative on each committee.

Below is a table of committee members and the college or office they represent. Again, every effort was made to insure that each college was represented in the process.

*Table II.2: Implementation Committee Members*

Committee	College Affiliation or Office	Committee Member
<b>Implementation Committee</b> SCC= Subcommittee Chair	Arts & Sciences	Ross Jahnke (Chair)
	University College	Amy Hebert (SCC)
	Arts & Sciences	Keri Turner (SCC)
	Library	John Bourgeois
	University College	Ray Giguette (SCC)
	University College	Lori Richard
	Dean of Student Services	Michele Caruso
	Office of Research and Sponsored Programs	Debi Benoit (SCC)
	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	Renee Hicks (SCC)
	Student Government Association (SGA)	Mary Sauce
<b>Assessment Subcommittee</b>	Arts & Sciences	Keri Turner, Chair
	Business	Shari Lawrence
	Education	Megan Medley
	Nursing & Allied Health Sciences	Rebecca Lyons
	Library	Sarah Dauterive
	Athletics	Lori Richard
	Student Government Association (SGA)	Lawrence Arceneaux
	Office of Institutional Research	Tucker Handley

<b>Budget Subcommittee</b>	Office of Research and Sponsored Programs	Debi Benoit, Chair
	Business	Laura Coogan
	Education	Larry Stout
	Nursing & Allied Health Sciences	Shane Robichaux
	Library	Hayley Johnson
	Controller's Office	Colette Lagarde
	Purchasing	Terry Dupre
<b>Professional Development Subcommittee</b>	University College	Amy Hebert, Chair
	Education	Fran Crochet
	Nursing & Allied Health Sciences	Amanda Eymard
	Arts & Sciences	James Stewart
	Library	Sarah Simms
	University College	Cathleen Richard
	University College	Rebecca Fontenot
	Business	Lori Soule
	Student Government Association	Peyton Chaisson
<b>Technology Subcommittee</b>	University College	Ray Giguette, Chair
	Education	Cynthia Vavasseur
	Nursing & Allied Health Sciences	Angelique Allemand
	Library	Helen Thomas
	Computer Services	Charles Ordoyne
	Office of Records and Registration	Melanie Benoit
	Student Government Association	Charles Jones
<b>Writing Subcommittee</b>	Office of Institutional Effectiveness	Renee Hicks (Chair)
	University College	Amy Hebert
	University College	Lori Richard
	University College	Robert Alexander
	Library	Sarah Dauterive
	Library	Sarah Simms
	Library	Hayley Johnson
	Arts & Sciences	Ross Jahnke

In November 2015, a draft proposal for the QEP was presented to University Council. This proposal was then discussed and amended in meetings with the provost and college deans. In December 2015, a complete draft of the QEP was given to the provost for review and further comment. Following review and comment by the provost, the QEP was sent to the president, deans, Faculty Senate, SGA, and all serving members of the QEP Implementation Committee and subcommittees. A final presentation about the QEP was given at the spring 2016 Faculty Institute on January 13.



### III. Identification of the Topic

**A topic that is creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning**  
*(providing for compliance with CR 2.12 “focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning”)*

Topic identification resulted from analysis of data generated from surveys given by the Steering Committee; data from nationally normed surveys such as NSSE, BCSSE and SSI; review of literature on the topics of advising, high-impact practices, and their effects on persistence; the sophomore slump and related topics; and career services and its importance to sophomores. This data identified problems in advising and retention. Only through exhaustive analysis of this information did the topic reveal itself.

Topic identification, like topic development, can be broken into three phases. Each phase provided a progressively clearer and more detailed framework for the QEP. Phases 1 and 2 were carried out by the Steering Committee. Phase 3 was conducted by the Implementation Committee and five subcommittees: Budget, Technology, Professional Development, Assessment, and Writing. In each phase, effort was made to be transparent, to involve constituents, and to inform constituents on progress toward completion.

#### Phase 1 of Topic Identification Process

Phase 1 began with multiple surveys of relevant constituencies, analysis of data collected by the University, and discussion sessions in the Center for Advancing Faculty Engagement (CAFE). Each constituency brought forward a different set of concerns in this phase of topic identification.

As discussed in Section II (“Process Used to Develop the QEP”), all of the constituent populations of the institution were surveyed during this phase of topic identification. Data from all of these surveys appear in Appendix 2.1-2.4. Four major topic areas rose to prominence as a result of analysis of this data: research and mentoring, instructional effectiveness, advising and student support, and writing skills. Within those categories a number of subcategories were prominent. This list of concerns was used as the basis for Phase II.

#### *Advising and Student Support*

- Improve the transition from University College to student’s major
- Improve support for transfer students
- Improve student satisfaction in sophomore and junior years
- Improve non-academic student support (psychological counseling, financial aid, etc.)

#### *Research and Mentoring*

- Improve mentoring
- Improve applied learning
- Improve/increase internship opportunities
- Improve career preparedness/career counseling

#### *Instructional Effectiveness*

- Improve classroom technology
- Improve professional development (for faculty)
- Improve student-learning-focused teaching
- Improve faculty/student engagement

### **Writing Skills**

- Improve/increase undergraduate research
- Improve instructional effectiveness
- Improve writing across the curriculum

### **Phase 2 of Topic Identification Process**

Phase 2 began with the breakout session during Faculty Institute in August 2014. Using data from Phase 1 noted above, faculty participated in a comprehensive interactive session. The format of this session is described in Section II. Figure III.1 shows the top five initiatives developed in that session and the number and percentage of votes they received:

*Table III.1: The Initiatives Developed in the Breakout Session and the Number and Percentage of Votes Received*

Transitions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transition students from the AAC to departmental advisor</li><li>• Move AAC advisors into departments</li><li>• Advising for transfer students</li><li>• Advising available online</li></ul>	Frequency 295	Percent 25%
Writing Across the Curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create major specific ENG 101 &amp; 102</li><li>• Improve exams in ENG 101</li><li>• Administer writing proficiency test to enter 300 level courses</li><li>• Improve writing through UG research</li><li>• Teach faculty how to teach writing</li></ul>	275	24%
Mentoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create peer mentoring/employer mentoring/alumni mentoring opportunities</li><li>• Increase internship opportunities</li><li>• Create a freshman “Tide” course focused upon faculty mentoring or faculty-student engagement</li></ul>	256	22%
Undergraduate Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create sophomore-level UG research course</li><li>• Implement research across the curriculum</li><li>• Improve internship support</li><li>• Create student-workplace matching program</li></ul>	138	12%
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Upgrade classroom technology</li><li>• Create flipped classrooms (student lead learning)</li><li>• Improve instructional effectiveness</li></ul>	200	17%

The results of the breakout session were as follows: “transitions for advisees moving into their major” and “improved writing” each received about 25% of the votes, and “mentoring” received 22%. These results pointed strongly to an advising- and mentoring-based QEP.

During analysis of the results from the breakout session, there was concern on the part of the Steering Committee that the suggestions to improve writing were focused on the ENGL 101 and 102 courses, courses which were central to the institution’s first QEP. In addition, discipline-specific ENG 101 and 102 courses, as suggested in the results, would not comply with general education requirements.

The Steering Committee began a broad literature review that included readings about advising, mentoring, student engagement in the college experience, and the sophomore slump. The goal was to integrate academic advising, improve faculty-student interaction, and encourage greater participation in high-impact practices.

A 2004 Noel-Levitz report on academic advising commissioned by Nicholls State University came to the attention of the Steering Committee during this time. (The report is available upon request.) This report assessed the state of advising on campus and made recommendations for improvement. Many of these recommendations were applied to freshmen in the Academic Advising Center (AAC) with good results, but none of the initiatives had been applied broadly to faculty advising of sophomores, juniors, and seniors. A number of faculty members and faculty advisors had completed the Master Advisor training program, but with the development of the Center for Advancing Faculty Engagement (CAFE) through the University's first QEP, the program was integrated into the broader mission of the CAFE and subsequently has lost much of its initial focus.

In order to assess the current state of advising on campus, two surveys were administered by the Steering Committee. In the fall of 2014, just after the completion of early registration, students at the sophomore, junior, and senior levels were surveyed about their advising experience, with 817 students participating. Department heads were also asked to provide information about advising practices within their academic units. Data from both surveys is in Appendix 3.1.

The student survey revealed that students were highly satisfied with their advising experience 60% to 65% of the time; over 80% had prepared for advising sessions by reviewing the *University Catalog* and by making a list of desired courses. Distinct differences became evident when the data was broken down by department but negligible differences when broken down by student classification. These high scores confounded anecdotal evidence. In hindsight, the survey itself may have led to this result, as it focused on very basic and prescriptive advising functions. Additional baseline data using the Academic Advising Inventory (Winston & Sandor, 2002) will be gathered in the fall of 2016.

The Steering Committee sought information from department heads regarding departmental advising practices. These practices showed great variability in the allocation of advisees, the percentage of faculty who advised, advisor training, advisor expectations, and advisee expectations. Only three of sixteen departments who responded required students to see an advisor each semester, two departments required students to see an advisor once in their academic career, and the rest only recommended seeing an advisor.

The white paper, "Student Advising and Mentoring," circulated by the Steering Committee in March 2015 outlined a broad list of goals, outcomes, and initiatives forming the framework for the QEP. The document was intentionally broad in anticipation that the final QEP proposal would have to be more focused in scope and scale. Feedback from the constituents of the institution, particularly the administration and faculty, helped to narrow the scope and scale before finalization.

### **Phase 3 of Topic Identification Process**

Following release of the white paper, the Steering Committee dissolved and reorganized into an Implementation Committee. Under that committee were four subcommittees: Assessment, Budget, Professional Development, and Technology. These new committees also had broad-based representation from the campus community, including student members from the SGA. Individuals with specific expertise



were asked to serve on the subcommittees. A fifth subcommittee—the Writing Committee—was formed in the fall semester to write and assemble the document for submission.

Development of the final plan was very systematic, working from the student learning outcomes and programmatic outcomes, to actions, to assessment. Necessary resources were identified to address each action, and a detailed timeline was created for implementation. Baseline data was identified for each assessment item, and benchmarks for improvement were established.

The plan was presented to University Council on November 10, 2015. This was followed by consultation with the provost and college deans. In December, a complete draft of the QEP was given to the provost, associate provost, and president for review and further comment. Following review and comment by the provost, the QEP was printed, and a digital copy sent to the deans, Faculty Senate, SGA, and all serving members of the QEP Implementation Committee and Subcommittees. A presentation about the QEP was given at the spring 2016 Faculty Institute on January 13, 2016. In preparation for the site visit, meetings with constituent groups followed the release of the document.



## IV. Desired Student Learning Outcomes

**Specific, well-defined goals related to an issue of substance and depth, expected to lead to observable results** (*providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 “identifies goals”*)

### Goals

The Implementation Committee identified two broad goals for the QEP. The following goals serve as the framework for the student learning outcomes and the programmatic outcomes:

- improve student ownership of their academic experiences with a focus on the sophomore level; and
- improve the quality of advising and mentoring.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Sophomores will be able to:

- SLO1: identify high-impact learning practices such as internships, service learning, undergraduate research, studies abroad opportunities, and associate these practices with their academic and career goals;
- SLO2: analyze the requirements of their degree program as a path to their academic and career goals;
- SLO3: reflect on their personal interests, strengths, and challenges to develop a strategy to achieve academic, career, and personal goals;
- SLO4: utilize extra-curricular opportunities and student services and associate these experiences with their academic and career goals; and
- SLO5: establish a positive relationship with their academic advisor and program faculty.

### Programmatic Outcomes

This QEP will:

- PO1: elevate the priority of advising at Nicholls State University;
- PO2: create continuity in advising for sophomores transitioning from the AAC to their major;
- PO3: improve quality of advising at Nicholls State University; and
- PO4: improve course availability.





## V. Literature Review and Best Practices

**Evidence of best practices related to the topic** *(providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 “institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP”)*

### Definitions of Terms

- Academic advising: According to Gordon, Habley, Grites, and Associates (2008), Academic Advising, based in the teaching and learning mission of higher education, is a series of intentional interactions with a curriculum, a pedagogy, and a set of learning outcomes. Academic advising synthesizes and contextualizes students’ educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities, and lives to extend learning beyond campus boundaries and timeframes. (p. 524)
- High-impact learning practices: High-impact learning practices, such as first-year seminars, learning communities, service learning, and internships, share traits that make them effective with students. These practices demand high levels of time and effort, require meaningful interactions between faculty and students on substantive issues, promote diversity, provide frequent feedback, and highlight the applicability of learning both on and off campus. As a result of participation in these activities, high-impact learning practices can be life changing for students (Kuh, 2008).
- Professional staff academic advisors: Gordon et al. (2008) described this group as individuals who have been hired to focus primarily on academic advising that promotes the academic success of students, with additional attention to general student development at the institution. While some teaching responsibilities may be included in a general job description, professional academic advising staff spend the majority of their time meeting with individuals and groups of students regarding academic curriculum requirements of one or many academic majors or areas of study and general academic and personal success strategies, and addressing overall developmental issues with students in their pursuit of a college education. (pp. 267-268)
- Retention: Sometimes called institutional retention, this method is widely used in order to calculate the percentage of students who return to the same institution in subsequent years (Roberts & Styron, 2010).
- Sophomore: This classification applies to students who have earned 30-59 credit hours.

### Introduction

Sixty-three percent of students at a four-year institution will complete a bachelor’s degree, while about 40% of students at a community college will complete a bachelor’s degree, an associate’s degree, or a certificate (Tinto, 2012). Although time to graduation will vary from student to student, universities need to acknowledge that the institution has an obligation to help the student persist and graduate (Tinto, 2012).

In order to increase persistence and graduation rates, higher education institutions need to review their policies and create an environment that will encourage students to obtain a degree (Tinto, 2012). Vincent Tinto (1993) suggested the use of transition programs to help students stay and graduate. These programs are designed to reduce student stress and improve student study habits and skills (Tinto, 1993). Transition programs can also help students acclimate to use of the university library and other university resources, as well as help strengthen the students’ writing skills (Tinto, 1993). Tinto (1993) indicated that students are susceptible to academic and social difficulties when transitioning within an institution; with use of transition assistance programs, universities are able to help students cope with academic and social

difficulties when needed. Tinto (1993) also recommended that universities utilize counseling and advising programs to assist with transition during the early part of the student's academic career.

Research showed that structured professional development programs for faculty and staff who advise students are the most critical components of successful academic advising on college campuses (Gordon et al., 2008). Givans, Miller and Neste identified the essential components of advisor training and development programs as including conceptual, relational, informational, personal, and technology-related content areas (Givans, Miller, & Neste, 2010). These components should serve as an advisor training and development model on our campus. The campus advising syllabus will form a foundation for advising relationships and help students and advisors to understand their place in the advising process. The possible topics to be included in the development program are presented later in this section.

## **Academic Advising**

### ***Advising Structure***

Universities and colleges design an advising structure using several factors, including, but not limited to, institutional mission, level of educational degree offered (associate, baccalaureate, and/or graduate degrees), types of programs offered, the academic selectivity of the institution, population of students, and budget (Gordon, et al., 2008). Gordon et al. (2008) described three popular academic advising models: decentralized, centralized, and shared. The Total Intake Model, an example of a shared model, occurs when professional advisors, faculty advisors, or other university employees located in a centralized location conduct all initial advising of students, until the students are ready to transition to faculty advisors in an academic department or other academic areas once the student meets predetermined conditions (Gordon, et al., 2008).

### ***Advising as Teaching***

While an institution may select the type of institution-wide advising model it will utilize, individual advisors may also integrate their own advising theory into their advising practices. NACADA has embraced Crookston's (1994) view that advising is teaching (Drake et al., 2013). Crookston (1994) explained that advising can be much more than a "prescriptive relationship" based on authority between the advisor and the student (p. 5).

Other researchers have also linked advising as a teaching function. For example, Campbell and Nutt (2008) explained that, when viewed as an educational practice, academic advising serves a vital role in providing students with opportunities for engagement, success, and attainment of key learning outcomes. Bean (2005) echoed these sentiments:

Good advising should link a student's academic capabilities with his or her choice of courses and major, access to learning resources, and a belief that the academic pathway a student is traveling will lead to employment after college. Advising should be done well so students recognize their abilities and make informed choices. (p. 226)

Marc Lowenstein (2005) described three different types of advising philosophies: "(a) advising as bookkeeping, (b) advising as counseling, (c) advising as the coaching of learning" (p. 65). In Lowenstein's (2005) description of the bookkeeping model, the advisor is the sole provider of knowledge and gives directions that the student must follow. Then, the advisor documents the student's compliance with the advice given (Lowenstein, 2005). Another approach suggested by Lowenstein (2005)—advising as counseling—occurs when the advisor and student communicate about the student's curriculum

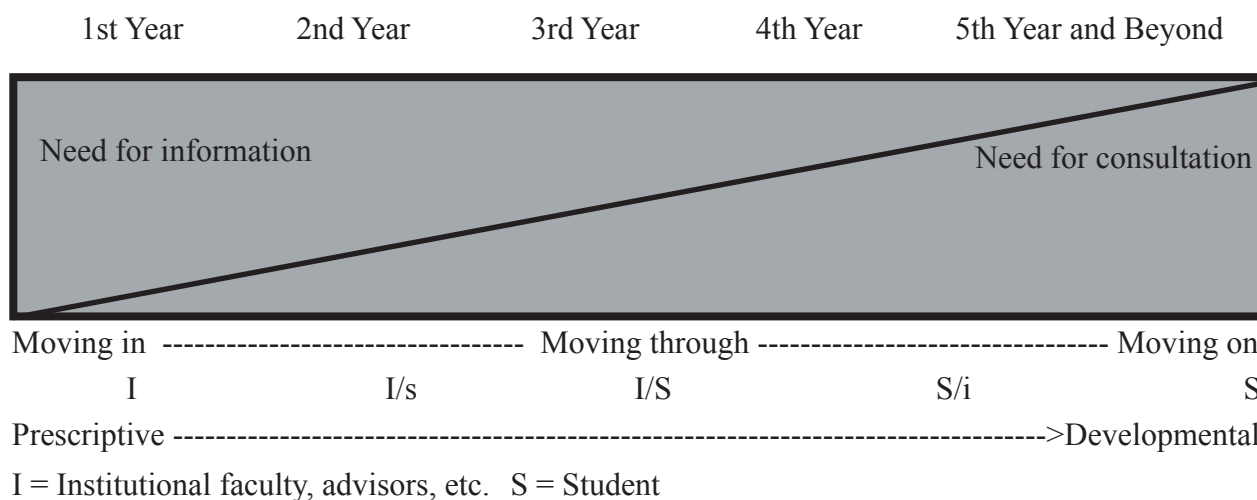
requirements, and the student is an active participant in the advising process. Lowenstein (2005) modeled his advising as counseling approach using Crookston's (1994) model of developmental advising. Finally, Lowenstein (2005) defined coaching of learning as occurring when the advisor coaches students through the curriculum planning process and allows students to make decisions so that both understand the reasoning behind educational and academic requirements. When using the coaching as learning model, the advisor becomes the "most important person in the student's educational world" (Lowenstein, 2005, p. 72).

### **Advising Theory**

Researchers Grites and Gordon (2000) suggested that many frameworks, theories, and models should be considered when putting academic advising into practice. They suggested that advisors should take into consideration students' readiness to make lasting academic decisions, as well as their interests and abilities when creating students' educational plans.

NACADA presented a model of shared responsibility for the academic advising process (Gordon et al., 2008). The model of shared responsibility, as depicted in Figure V.1, demonstrates the need for institutional advisors to take the lead at the beginning of the advising relationship (freshman and sophomore years) and work to identify informational student needs while fostering a transition and encouraging students to be partners in the advising relationship and eventually to take the lead themselves.

*Figure V.1. Model of Shared Responsibility (Gordon et al., 2008)*



The model demonstrates a higher need for the institutional advisor to be more prescriptive than developmental at the sophomore level. The Model of Shared responsibility supports the suggestion by NACADA that if advising is to be viewed and valued as more than a clerical activity of scheduling classes, advisors must incorporate more conceptual and relational elements in the advising process (Gordon et al., 2008).

In order for students to have an opportunity to learn from advisors, they must have access to them. Grites and Gordon (2000) explained that faculty and staff advisors must be accessible to students who seek their advice. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) echoed this sentiment, as they also found that students were more likely to persist and complete their degrees when faculty were accessible and the students perceived that the faculty members cared about them.



In addition to their findings about the value of faculty accessibility, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) concluded that faculty who are prepared and organized have positive impacts on student learning. They explained that faculty who are adequately prepared and organized, available and helpful, give quality and frequent feedback, and have a concern for the student have a positive correlation with student mastery of course content (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

### ***Advising Syllabus***

Advisors can help organize their advising experiences with students through an advising syllabus. NACADA advocated that the development of an advising syllabus is an important gesture in securing academic advising as a way to support an institution's mission (Gordon, et al., 2008). The advising syllabus is a useful tool that helps students “understand the nature, purpose, and chronology of the advising process; comprehend the advisor-advisee relationship; and become aware of the positive changes they can experience during the advising process” (Gordon, et al., 2008, p. 91). In the same way that a course syllabus helps to communicate all facets of a course to students, the advising syllabus provides structure and consistency to the advising activities at an institution. The advising syllabus contains much the same information as a traditional course syllabus, including contact information, student learning outcomes, expectations and responsibilities of students and advisors, a list of advising resources, and tips to prepare for advising sessions (Gordon, et al., 2008).

In preparing an advising syllabus, faculty members benefit by being able to compose and commit to an advising philosophy and communicate this to their students and other stakeholders (Trabant, 2006). In return, students benefit by gaining an understanding of how the advising process fits into their educational experience. The largest benefit of an advising syllabus by far is the connection of learning principles to the academic advising process; it is a tool to help foster and support student learning (Drake, et al., 2013). Clear learning goals and expectations, such as those on an advising syllabus, help communicate to students that advising encompasses much more than scheduling and registration (Drake, et al., 2013).

### ***E-Portfolio***

As of 2012, 77% of Association of American Universities (AAU) member institutions were implementing e-portfolios (Mayowski & Golden, 2012). Increased usage of e-portfolios is important because the e-portfolio acts as a tool that assists students “in becoming more intentional and active learners by helping them take ownership of their academic progress” (Ambrose, Martin, & Page, 2014).

E-portfolios have the ability to “catalyze new learning, actively engaging students in making sense and meaning of their learning experiences so that they approach these experiences with a greater sense of purposefulness, agency, and accomplishment” (Kahn, 2014). According to Kahn (2014), e-portfolios put “students at the center of building knowledge and meaning, urging instructors off the podium and turning them into intellectual mentors and guides.”

Eynon, Gambino, and Torok (2014) advised that the implementation of e-portfolios can make three significant differences. Implementing e-portfolios advances student success which can be measured through GPA and retention rates, makes student learning visible through reflection, and promotes learning-centered institutional change. Eynon et al. (2014) found that “data suggests that reflective e-portfolio pedagogy helps students make meaning from specific learning experiences and connections to other experiences, within and beyond the course. Ultimately, students recursively connect their learning to consideration of goals and values, constructing a more intentional and purposeful sense of self.” Reflection is a cornerstone of e-portfolios within higher education because reflective practices can enhance both teaching and learning (Landis, Scott, & Kahn, 2015).

Some even posited that e-portfolios can be viewed as a meta-high-impact practice. Bass (2012) argued that the high impact practices should take place outside of the formal curriculum and advocates for a “greater fluidity and connection between the formal curriculum and the experiential co-curriculum” (p. 26). One way to do this is through the use of e-portfolios because e-portfolios allow students to organize learning around the learner rather than courses and curriculum (Bass, 2012). According to Bass (2012), “Once intended for assessment or employment presentation, e-portfolios are being reinvented as integrative spaces across the undergraduate experience. They are being used in learning communities and first-year experiences, sometimes spanning from general education to internships and capstones” (p. 26).

## **Sophomore Transition**

Research suggested, for many reasons, that institutions should pay special attention to sophomores, as they can be a vulnerable group who are susceptible to being lost in the shuffle or, even worse, leaving the university (Drake, et al., 2013; Hunter, Tobolowsky, Gardner, & Associates, 2010; Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson, 2012). One term that has been coined, the “sophomore slump,” has been defined by Furr and Gannaway (1982) as a time when second-year students experience “confusion and uncertainty” (p. 340). Coburn and Treeger (2003) explained that sophomores are faced with new problems they did not experience in their first year because the world of the college sophomore is drastically different from that of a first-year student. They went on to explain that sophomores are expected to understand the workings of the university and are embarrassed to let others know they need help. Hunter et al. (2010) echoed Coburn’s and Treeger’s findings in their concluding that sophomores may feel invisible, as they often no longer qualify for support systems offered to first-year students but do not yet feel settled in the academic department of their major.

Schreiner et al. (2012) explained that in the sophomore year students experience (1) a lack of motivation for previously avoided general education courses, (2) difficulty interacting with faculty, and (3) increasing pressure to select a major and stay on track for a timely graduation. Kelly (2010) suggested that sophomores are preoccupied with solidifying their choice of major and planning out their next two years of courses in order to remain on track to graduate, indicating that the sophomore year is a critical period in their college experience.

Graunke and Woosley (2005) echoed this sentiment as they explained how sophomore success can be increased when institutions create programs that help students explore both their academic and career interests. An example of this includes faculty assisting sophomores in the transition to their major (Graunke & Woosley, 2005).

Graunke and Woosley (2005) also found that “faculty interactions were a significant predictor of sophomore success” (p. 7). Sophomores were satisfied when given the opportunity to interact with faculty, and, in turn, faculty seemed concerned about the student’s academic success (Graunke & Woosley, 2005). They went on to explain that due to the timing of sophomores transitioning to their academic major, faculty attitudes and positive student experiences with faculty play pivotal roles and potentially have a greater impact on student success, thereby leading to a decrease in students experiencing the sophomore slump.

Because of this sentiment, Hunter et al. (2010) asked administrations to consider developing a “comprehensive, intentional, academic, and co-curricular approach to the second year on their campuses” (p. 10). The need for a program designed for sophomores at institutions who use the Total Intake Model has also been acknowledged by Gordon et al. (2008). They stated that institutions who used this model were able to provide a “strong start for students,” but “attention needs to be paid to transitioning the

students from that initial contact to the assigned advisor” in the student’s academic department of their major (Gordon, et al., 2008, p. 248).

### ***High-Impact Practices***

During the sophomore year, institutions should consider the ways they support sophomores in their intellectual development using curricular and co-curricular activities (Hunter, et al., 2010). These types of activities can aid students in their “ability to make choices about majors and individual courses, and one hopes, accelerate degree attainment” (Hunter, et al., 2010, p. 114). When students arrive on campus, institutions can offer them both curricular and co-curricular opportunities to enhance their experiences in the classroom and around campus, which, in turn, can help them successfully move through their curriculum (Hunter, et al., 2010).

George Kuh (2008) coined these curricular activities as high-impact learning practices. Examples of high-impact practices given by Kuh (2008) include first-year seminars, learning communities, service learning, and internships, all of which share traits that make them effective with students. These practices demand high levels of time and effort, require meaningful interactions between faculty and students on substantive issues, promote diversity, provide frequent feedback, and highlight the applicability of learning both on and off campus. As a result of participation in these activities, high-impact learning practices can be life changing for students (Kuh, 2008).

Hunter et al. (2010) echoed Kuh’s (2008) examples of meaningful curricular activities, as they listed such activities to include service learning, studies abroad, on-campus employment, and undergraduate research. They explained, for sophomores, the sophomore year “is a particularly important year to support their intellectual development and provide cohesion within the classroom and with other experiences” (Hunter et al., 2010, pp. 116-117).

### **Integrating Career Services and Academic Advising**

Career services were defined by Reardon and Lumsden (2003) to “include career planning and development interventions, cooperative education and experiential career education programs, and job placement and employment services” (p. 167). The major purpose of career advising and services is to assist students in understanding the complex relationships that exist between their academic experiences and career fields: “Career advising promotes self-exploration, the acquisition of academic and career information, and decision-making” (Gore & Metz, 2008, p.104). In a 2015 study conducted by Georgetown University, Carnevale, Smith, Melton, and Price (2015) noted that college enrollment had increased from two million to twenty million in sixty years. This growth in postsecondary enrollment is “partly a function of the growing demand for educated workers and the reality that jobs and the opportunity to earn middle-class wages are increasingly tied to postsecondary credentials” (p. 20).

Collaboration between academic advising and career services is extremely important in the advising process. Ledwith (2014) noted, “as higher education officials are asked to provide more data on student graduation rates and subsequent career paths, the need for a more collaborative partnership between academic advising and career services for college students grows” (p. 49). Furthermore, students do not view academic advising and career advising as separate entities (Hughey, Nelson, Damming, McCalla-Wriggins, & Associates, 2009). Because students do not see the separation between these services, institutions need to explore ways to integrate academic and career advising to better serve students. Students need help to tie their postsecondary education choices to a complex and growing set of career options: “Transparency between postsecondary programs and labor markets has become more important



because of the growing diversity among postsecondary programs of study, credentials, and modes of delivery that are aligned with an increasingly complex set of career pathways” (Carnevale, et al., 2015, p.17).

The sophomore year is pivotal for students. Sophomores often struggle to solidify their career decisions, and, if not yet in an academic home, they receive less academic guidance and support than in their first year and are at greater risk for attrition (Gore & Hunter, 2009). In the sophomore year, academic integration is imperative so that students have meaningful interaction with faculty, feel connected to their college major, and begin to incorporate the values of their academic discipline (Gore & Hunter, 2009). Many theorists, such as Super and Tinto, have touted the benefits of academic integration. Donald Super’s work suggested that academic integration helps students learn the values and culture associated with a career path and develop a sense of purpose (Gore & Hunter, 2009).

The foundation of career advising and its relation to academic advising have been discussed throughout the professional literature. Hughey et al. (2009) noted that a “learning-centered approach facilitates career and academic advising and contributes to student learning relative to academic, career, and personal goals” (p. 5). Ledwith (2014) explained that academic advisors are key in providing educational options that relate to a student’s career goals and that, functionally, both academic and career advisors share a common goal of helping students with career concerns within an educational framework.

According to Hearin (2013), establishing faculty partnerships with career services professionals helps career services establish itself within the fabric of the university and reinforces the legitimacy of the function of career services. Hearin (2013) further argued that developing faculty partners is key to the success of career services initiatives as faculty assist career services in understanding the key tenets of their disciplines along with the key skills, insights, and perspectives that students develop through the study of those disciplines. Hearin (2013) also stated that faculty partnerships with career services are important because those relationships give career professionals “valuable context for assisting students in identifying allied career opportunities, but also because it helps us [career services] to translate the skills, insights, and perspectives students bring with them to the workplace” (pp. 67-68).

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) conducts an annual survey on employers across the country through which they are asked to rate the top qualities and skills they look for in new college hires. According to the 2014 survey, leadership skills and ability to work within a team were the top two responses with 78% of respondents. Written communication skills, problem-solving skills, and strong work ethic rounded out the top five qualities and skills desired (NACE, 2014). Gore and Hunter (2009) suggested that “by promoting the development and use of attitudes, skills, and behaviors that promote student success, higher education professionals are simultaneously preparing their students for future workplace success” (Gore & Hunter, 2009, p. 104). Gore and Metz (2008) stated, “By providing career advising interventions that draw on theory, are developmentally and contextually appropriate, make use of evidence-based techniques, and promote the acquisition or development of academic and workplace success skills, attitudes, and behaviors, advisors are promoting the long-term academic and career success of their students” (p. 113).

Hughey et al. (2009) asserted that “academic advising empowers students to navigate their college experience to achieve learner outcomes and develop leadership competencies that enhance critical thinking and attributes of success necessary for citizens” (p. 20). They also noted that academic advisors who perform career advising should depend on campus referrals if they are not trained in career advising interventions or self-exploratory or career resources on campus.

The Council for the Advancement of Professional Standards for Higher Education (CAS) has established standards for the important elements within an effective academic advising program (Gordon, 2006). CAS (2005) stipulated that effective advising programs must identify student learning and development outcomes. One learning domain included in the CAS guidelines is “career choices.”

Gordon (2006) detailed the achievement indicators for this domain:

- [a]rticulate career choices based on assessment of interests, values, skills, and abilities[;]
- [d]ocument knowledge, skills, and accomplishments resulting from formal education, work experience, community service, and volunteer experiences[;]
- [m]ake the connections between classroom and out-of-class learning[;]
- [c]onstruct a resume with clear job objectives and evidence of related knowledge, skills, and accomplishments[;]
- [a]rticulate the characteristics of a preferred work environment[;]
- [c]omprehend the world of work[; and]
- [t]ake steps to initiate a job search or seek advanced education. (Gordon, 2006, p. 17-18)

Gordon (2006) underscored the value of these indicators: “These student learning and development outcomes as defined by CAS endorse the necessity for career advising and can be used as a guide for advisors as they work to refine and rethink this important part of their advising expertise” (p. 18). Gordon (2006) went on to explain that “academic advisors are not expected to be career counselors, but as career advisors they can assist students in gathering information and providing advice that leads to informed and realistic academically related career planning” (p. 22).

Hunter et al. (2010) presented the following list of recommendations for academic advisors of sophomores:

- Advisors should encourage their advisees at the beginning of the sophomore year to reflect on their previous year’s academic experiences and help them review the goals they want to accomplish their second year.
- The sophomore year is a critical time to review with students their academic plan for graduation and revise it to reflect any changes or additions.



- Advisors should discuss with their sophomore advisees early in the year their past study habits, time management, writing, and other academic skills, identify any areas that need to be improved, and refer them to appropriate campus resources.
- Advisors should identify at the beginning of the sophomore year students who are in competitive majors and who are not performing well. A frank discussion of their academic standing may motivate them to take steps toward improvement, or if change is indicated, the decisions made might save the student disappointment and time.
- Special attention should be paid to the reasons sophomores give for changing their majors. They often have different concerns than first-year major changers, and they have a year or more of course credit that might influence their identification of new majors to consider.
- Advisors working with students who are still undecided in their sophomore year need to question the students' approaches to decision making and the amount and type of major and career-related opportunities. Advisors need to help students begin to prepare for their areas of special interest, such as graduate education, studies abroad, or internships.
- Advisors are in an excellent position to encourage sophomores to participate (or continue to participate) in co-curricular activities. Advisors can help students understand the importance of using co-curricular or volunteer experiences to develop academic and career-related skills.
- Advisors need to be especially sensitive to special groups of sophomores, such as transfer students, and their needs. The second year may bring new challenges to students who are still adapting to the campus environment.
- Special advisor training programs should focus on the needs, problems, and concerns that are unique to sophomore students. (pp. 97-98)

Hunter et al. (2010) followed this list with the following key summation: “The role of the academic advisor remains a critical one in the second year of college, whether a student is at a two-year or four-year campus. Advisors provide invaluable assistance for students in the second year regarding their choice of major, academic planning, and readjustment to campus” (pp. 97-98).







## VI. Actions to be Implemented

**Evidence of careful analysis of institutional context in designing actions capable of generating the desired student learning outcomes** (*providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 “institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP”*)

The actions to be implemented tie directly to student learning and program goals. In designing these actions, the QEP Implementation Committee and the Professional Development Subcommittee considered institutional needs (see “Process Used to Develop the QEP”), best practices (see “Review of Literature”), and resources (see “Resources”). The action plans were refined and matched to student learning and program outcomes. The implementation plan is intertwined with the University’s mission and needs, which results in institutional capability of implementing SAM.

In order to achieve the goals and outcomes of SAM, actions must be taken by the major constituents of the institution; students, faculty, academic units; and the University as a whole. The greatest improvements in student learning will be achieved when every group fully implements each action. Due to the complexity and scope of SAM, it will take several years to fully implement every action; the SAM and Office of Career Services directors, Implementation Committee, and Professional Development and Assessment Subcommittees will review each action after implementation and assessment for its effectiveness and adjust, if necessary.

Ultimately, SAM will empower students to increase ownership of their education. SAM will enable students to feel meaningfully involved in the advising process and extracurricular activities. The actions to be implemented through SAM will result in a significant change in the advising culture on campus, students’ academic performance, sophomore-to-junior-year retention, extracurricular engagement, and the student/faculty relationship.

To implement the QEP, the SAM director will monitor the completion of the following initiatives using tools such as NSSE and SSI (see “Assessment”). The section below provides the actions to be implemented to meet the Student Learning Outcomes and Program Goals.

### Student Learning Outcomes

**Goal:** Empower students to have more ownership in directing their academic career through developing their skills to use the tools and resources and teaching them to value their academic and co-curricular experiences.

#### Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- SLO1: identify high-impact learning practices such as internships, service learning, undergraduate research, studies abroad opportunities, and associate these practices with their academic and career goals;
- SLO2: analyze the requirements of their degree program as a path to their academic and career goals;
- SLO3: reflect on their personal interests, strengths, and challenges to develop a strategy to achieve academic, career, and personal goals;
- SLO4: utilize extra-curricular opportunities and student services and associate these experiences with their academic and career goals; and
- SLO5: establish a positive relationship with their academic advisor and program faculty.

Students will complete the following actions to meet the outcomes for the Student Learning Outcomes:

**1. Establish a positive student/teacher relationship with an academic advisor. (SLO5)**

Freshman advisors and SAM advisors will work together to:

- introduce students to the University advising syllabus in UNIV 101 to ease the transition into working relationships with advisors in their majors;
- introduce and expand upon events offered by the Office of Career Services, extra-curricular activities, and high-impact learning practices to the student's academic and career goals; and
- develop workshops and/or events to educate students on the role of advising.

Students will:

- meet with advisors and program faculty as specified on the advising syllabus or timeline of academic events;
- participate in discussions with advisors, program faculty, and other students regarding academic and professional goals;
- complete the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) and the Academic Advising Inventory (AAI); and
- complete the e-portfolio as specified.

**2. Create the e-portfolio in LiveText. (SLO1) (SLO2) (SLO3) (SLO4)**

During the freshman year in UNIV 101:

- UNIV 101 faculty will guide students in creating the e-portfolio in LiveText to document their career research. The e-portfolio will contain reflection and analysis on the following topics:
- personal assessment of goals, skills, abilities, and values relative to an intended career;
- career research (level of education required, job outlook, workplace characteristics, etc.);
- degree information;
- evaluation of a possible minor; and
- identification of high-impact learning practices.
- Students will create the Freshman Reflection Piece that will align with the student learning outcomes of SAM and serve as a baseline for a sophomore-level reflection piece assessment. Students will upload their Freshman Reflection Piece into their e-portfolio.

The SAM Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed in part by reviewing student portfolios. (See "Assessment" in Section X for further explanation of the e-portfolio.) These portfolios will be stored in LiveText, an assessment software used by the Academic Advising Center and some colleges on campus, and assessed using a rubric designed specifically for the e-portfolio.

**3. Create the Sophomore Reflection Piece in the e-portfolio. (SLO1) (SLO3) (SLO4)**

In the sophomore year, students will:

- analyze the requirements of their degree program;
- document their research of high-impact learning practice opportunities, such as those through internships, service learning, undergraduate research, and studies abroad programs;
- document and reflect on their own participation in high-impact learning practice experiences that meet their academic and career goals.

In the sophomore year, students will extend personal career assessment, research, and reflection as part of their portfolio. In addition, this portfolio will contain information relevant to the QEP regarding academic accomplishments, extracurricular activities, and interactions with advisors, as well as reflections upon these experiences. A rubric for evaluating the Sophomore Reflection Piece is included in the Appendices.

## Program Outcomes

**Goal:** Increase one-on-one faculty contact with students and create more meaningful interactions to increase student persistence and retention and also to enhance students' experiences and commitments to the University.

### Outcomes:

The University will:

- PO1: elevate the priority of advising at Nicholls State University;
- PO2: create continuity in advising for sophomores transitioning from the AAC to their major;
- PO3: improve the quality of advising at Nicholls State University; and
- PO4: improve course availability.

The following action plans will be implemented by the SAM director, the Office of Career Services director, and supporting committees (see organizational structure for more details) to meet the program outcomes.

### 1. Train full-time faculty to be SAM-certified advisors. (PO1) (PO3)

The SAM director's primary role in the first three years is to provide advisor training. This training will include the following activities:

- develop workshops/events to educate advisors on the role of advising;
- provide training in GradesFirst advising management software to all advisors;
- develop resources for advisors, communicated through advisor-training initiatives, to help advisors probe students about what they want to get out of their academic careers; and
- establish advisor training workshops at the Center for Advancing Faculty Engagement (CAFE) to offer SAM Advisor Certification.

The following learning outcomes will be applied to advisor training and development activities.

Academic advisors will be able to:

- identify and describe the components of advisor training and development;
- articulate their role as advisor and compose an advising philosophy;
- improve their knowledge of University policies, services, and resources as these apply to their work as advisor; and
- practice and improve on relational skills such as interpersonal communication and interviewing skills.

The following five components of advisor training, based upon the Givans model (Givans et al., 2010), is the foundation of the SAM professional development plan. These components, as they apply to the training and development activities, will be presented as determined by the SAM director or other personnel who are facilitating the development programs.

- The conceptual component:
  - establishes the role of the advisor and helps the advisor develop an understanding of advising; and
  - nurtures a shared culture with student- and advising-focused topics that allow advisors to better understand their students and to better understand the theory and philosophy of advising in higher education.

- The relational component:
  - helps advisors develop their skills in interpersonal and communication, rapport building, problem solving, and interviewing.
- The personal component:
  - helps advisors learn to self-assess and self-regulate to grow as advisors.
- The informational component:
  - teaches new advisors (and continuing advisors) the facts about the institution and its programs to correctly guide students to the completion of their degree program.
- The technology component:
  - incorporates training in the use of campus technology and advising record keeping systems (GradesFirst, Banner, Moodle, LiveText).

The training and development program should be offered in a variety of delivery formats. NACADA recommended taking into consideration the type of advisors participating in training and development programs as well as the format of these activities. The three main delivery formats recommended by NACADA are lecture/presentation, panels, and workshops (Givans et al., 2010).

As a supplement to the professional development activities and to provide advisors with a “tool kit,” an advisor resource website will be developed. This handbook will serve as a companion to the training activities, providing a compilation of resources that will assist advisors. The advisor resource site will also allow for the sharing of literature on advising theory and best practices in advising. The website would include any information covered in training and development sessions, as well as other information that advisors need to possess. The web format would allow content to stay current and relevant; changes could be made as new information becomes available. The SAM director will be responsible for keeping the website current as well as assessing content and adding new content when necessary. The SAM director will also be responsible for disseminating any information related to changes or updates to appropriate campus personnel. For an outline of the content to be included on the advisor resource website, please see Appendix 6.1.

## **2. Create uniform, campus-wide advising standards. (PO2) (PO3)**

The Implementation Committee has developed an advising syllabus template for the institution. During the spring 2016 semester, this template will be circulated for input from the faculty. Once this template is approved, departments will be able to add advising information relevant to them. All syllabi need to be completed for the fall 2016 semester.

Departments will also identify a member of the faculty (it may be the department head) who will serve as a liaison between the department, the SAM director, and the Academic Advising Center.

A template for the University advising syllabus is provided in Appendix 6.2. The advising syllabus will be introduced in the UNIV 101 course, which is taught by professional advisors.

The advising syllabus will include the following:

- a description of the relationship between the University’s mission and the SAM mission;
- student learning outcomes of academic advising;
- a definition of advising as it relates to our campus environment;
- student and advisor expectations in the advising relationship;
- tools, resources, and recommendations for students (calendar of important yearly academic events, how to prepare for an advising session, reflection questions); and



- identification of University-wide high-impact learning practices.

The departmental advising syllabus will build on the campus advising syllabus and possibly include, but would not be limited to:

- a letter or introduction from department head or departmental advising coordinator;
- the mission of the department or other similar information;
- a listing of departmental resources for advising and academic information;
- a listing of departmental advisors (with contact information) and instructions for students to determine their advisor;
- a listing of advisor and students expectations, if different from the University advising syllabus;
- instructions to prepare for an advising session, if different from the University advising syllabus;
- academic calendar or listing of degree program milestones for students to follow;
- course listings and descriptions and instructions on elective options;
- any other content deemed important by the academic department; and
- identification of program/department-specific, high-impact learning practices.

### **Departmental Advising Plans and Transition Plans**

The development of department advising plans and transition plans will help address continuity in advising for sophomores transitioning from the AAC to the department of their major. The departmental advising plan, developed by each academic department, will demonstrate the priority of advising in the department as well as establish a consistent structure of advising for all department advising activities. The following components will be included in the departmental advising plans and transition plans.

### **Departmental Advising Plan**

The Departmental Advising Plan documents will contain, but will not be limited to, the components listed below. Each department may express flexibility in designing a plan that meets their unique advising needs.

Components of advising plans will include:

- a statement about the priority of advising in the academic department and an explanation of the advising structure in the department to include:
  - identification of a departmental advising liaison responsible for working with the SAM director and the coordinator of the AAC;
  - identification of departmental advisors;
  - an explanation of how students are assigned to advisors once they exit the AAC;
  - an advisor/advisee ratio to establish equity among faculty advisors within the department;
  - a plan to use a virtual advising protocol for students who are enrolled in Nicholls Online programs or who are distance education students; and
  - a plan, or designated department faculty advisor, to work with students in between common semesters outside of normal faculty contract dates, but during normal University operating days (example: transfer students needing assistance after semester is over, students needing help with financial aid appeals);
- a communication plan to guide advisors as they initiate contact with their assigned students;
- a listing or flowchart outlining important departmental milestones where advising is critical to students' successful progress through their academic program;
- an assessment plan for the departmental advising activities or an explanation of how a process of assessment and improvement will be implemented;

- a plan to identify, assist, and monitor students who are at-risk (GPA below 2.00) or who are not progressing towards degree completion;
- an identification of advisors in each department who are designated to advise special populations, such as student-athletes, veterans, non-traditional, etc.;
- a plan to provide mentoring to new hires (outside of the SAM advisor training and development initiatives); and
- identification of a point of contact or designated departmental advisor (can be departmental liaison) who works with the AAC for students who need extra help with advising.

### **Transition Plan**

The Departmental Transition Plan document will contain, but will not be limited to, the components listed below. Each department may express flexibility in designing a plan that meets their unique advising needs.

Components of transition plans will include:

- an explanation of the departmental procedure for handling the transition of students from the AAC to the academic department;
- an outline or semester timeline of student contacts transitioning from the AAC;
- identification of a person or advisors who are responsible for coordinating the initial contact of students in transition; and
- a plan to outline the interactions of other students in transition, such as transfer students, returning students, and students changing majors.

### **3. Incentivize Advising. (PO1) (PO4)**

The opportunity for early registration and the ability to assess their advising experience will incentivize sophomores to participate in advising in a timely manner, perhaps even earlier than when they normally would. Elevating the value of advising in the faculty evaluation rubric will serve as an incentive to faculty to receive SAM certification and follow best practices in advising. Incentivized advising will allow faculty advisors to:

- provide early registration for those sophomores who attend early advising sessions;
- create the Advising Report in GradesFirst;
- implement AAI Advising Survey;
- utilize the faculty evaluation rubric to receive points on faculty evaluations for completing advisor training and development;
- utilize the faculty evaluation rubric to receive a quantitative score for positive advisor reviews from AAI survey; and
- utilize the faculty evaluation rubric to receive a quantitative score for positive administrative reviews for advising.

A valuable incentive for students to participate in advising every semester is to give them priority registration. An early registration period will be created for sophomores who advise with a SAM-certified advisor. Currently, registration periods begin at midnight, forcing proactive students to register in the middle of the night. This incentive would allow a sophomore to register 8-12 hours earlier, at noon or at 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon. In order to earn the incentive, a student must meet with a SAM-certified advisor and complete the Academic Advising Inventory (AAI) survey. The advising session will be documented with an Advising Report in GradesFirst. The SAM director will query GradesFirst to attain a list of students who have been advised for the purpose of allowing them access to early registration.

SAM will move advising to the teaching section of the annual faculty evaluation and increase its weight in the evaluation. Faculty will be incentivized to participate in SAM training and engage in best practices. Advising has been included in the service portion of the faculty evaluation and is a quantitative assessment of the number of advisees seen by a faculty member. Advising will be removed from the service section. The section in italics in Table VI.I below is the proposed revision to the teaching portion of the faculty evaluation rubric. It requires that a minimum percentage of the teaching score be an assessment of advising and requires that the advising survey be part of the score, just as the SIR II is a required portion of the Delivery of Instruction score.

Table VI.1: Proposed Revision to Faculty Evaluation Rubric for Teaching

TEACHING/LIBRARIANSHIP	% Allocation Allowed
Allocation to Teaching	50-80%
A. Delivery of Instruction a. Student Evaluation (25-75%) b. Administrative Evaluation (25-75%) a Rating (a%) + b Rating (b%) = A Score	
B. <i>Advising and Mentoring</i> a. <i>Student Evaluation (25-75%)</i> b. <i>Administrative Evaluation (5-25%)</i> c. <i>Level of Advisor Training (5-25%)*</i> d. <i>Number of advisees (5-25%)</i> e. <i>Performance of duties assigned in lieu of advising (100%)**</i> List duty: _____ a Rating (a%) + b Rating (b%) + c Rating (c%) + d Rating (d%) + e Rating (e%) = B Score	10-30%
C. Currency in Field	0-20%
D. Professional improvement	0-20%
E. Innovation in Teaching	0-20%
F. Accessibility/Interaction with Students	0-20%
G. Other	0-20%
TOTAL % for A+B+C+D+E+F+G	=100%

Table VI.2: Scoring Section B.c, and the Requirements for Section B.e

*B.c. Level of Advisor Training	
SAM Advisor certification + additional advisor training or SAM Trainer	9.0
SAM Advisor certification	8.0
SAM Advisor training in progress	7.0
No SAM Advisor training	6.0
**B.e. Performance of duties assigned in lieu of advising (100%)	
Advising is part of the job for every full-time faculty member. If a Department for whatever reason chooses not to have all full-time faculty advise students, then those faculty must be assigned specific duties in lieu of advising by their Department Head, and will be evaluated on their performance of those duties for the purpose of merit.	

#### 4. Improve Course Availability. (PO4)

Course availability is one of the most frustrating roadblocks for Nicholls students, particularly freshmen and sophomores. No matter how good an advisor is, the student will be dissatisfied with the advising experience and discouraged if needed courses are not available. Often, all available sections of a general education course are filled during the early registration period, leaving no space for students who register late in the summer, for transfer students, and for others. The lack of course availability has been discussed at Nicholls State University for years and continues to be one of the biggest issues students and faculty cite in polling data from QEP surveys and other studies. Studies of this campus have suggested that improved needs-analysis based on data about the current and historical student cohort could mitigate the problem.

SAM will replace ad hoc scheduling methods with data-driven course and section creation, based on cohort data from The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (AIR). The AIR reports and their application are described in Section IX. Though this data is already available, SAM, with the help of academic deans, will enforce its use to determine the courses and number of sections needed and to make sure enough sections are opened during early registration to meet the needs of 90% or more of the predicted incoming cohort.

Another initiative that will address course scheduling is the formation of a University committee and/or task force to propose recommendations to course schedules as needed after analysis of student needs. This committee/taskforce will:

- suggest changes in proposed course offerings after analysis of prior semester enrollment and course progression;
- offer recommendations to deans/department heads on predicting future course needs; and
- present a system for departments to predict possible course needs in future semesters.





## VII. Timeline

**A logical calendaring of all actions to be implemented** (*providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 “institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP”*)

### Student Learning Timeline

#### 1. Establish a positive student/teacher relationship with an academic advisor. (SLO5)

The SAM director, Implementation Committee, and academic departments will be responsible for implementing the University advising syllabus. This syllabus, which will help introduce students to a working relationship with the advisors in their majors, will be implemented in fall 2016.

The SAM director and Professional Development Subcommittee will begin SAM-certified advisor training for 20% of faculty advisors in fall 2016. Some sophomore students will have an opportunity to meet with a SAM-certified advisor beginning in spring 2017. One hundred percent of eligible advisors will be trained by the end of spring 2019.

The Office of Career Services director will begin offering career-focused events and/or workshops for student participation in fall 2016. Examples of career-focused events may include Career Day and on-campus interviewing. SAM-certified advisors will encourage students to attend more sponsored events and to integrate career services resources in their reflective pieces.

#### 2. Create the e-portfolio in LiveText. (SLO1) (SLO2) (SLO3) (SLO4)

In spring 2016, the UNIV 101 faculty will develop the structure and template for the e-portfolio. In fall 2016, the first group of first-time freshmen enrolled in UNIV 101 will create their e-portfolio in LiveText. Every semester thereafter, all new first-time freshmen enrolled in UNIV 101 will create an e-portfolio to include the Freshman Reflection Piece.

#### 3. Create the Sophomore Reflection Piece in the e-portfolio. (SLO1) (SLO3) (SLO4)

Department faculty will assign the Sophomore Reflection Piece as an extension to the e-portfolio that students have already begun in the freshman year. Sophomores will submit their Sophomore Reflection Piece once they have earned 45-60 hours and have met with a SAM-certified advisor one year. Departments who have SAM-certified advisors will be able to implement the Sophomore Reflection Piece beginning in spring 2018. In it, students will primarily focus on identification of and plans to participate in high-impact learning practices.

### Program Outcome Timeline

#### 1. Train full-time faculty to be SAM-certified advisors. (PO1) (PO3)

Training resources will be assembled by the SAM Professional Development Committee in spring 2016. The SAM director and SAM Professional Development Committee will be responsible for training faculty, beginning with 50 faculty members in fall 2016. SAM-certified advisor training will continue with 50 more faculty each semester until all are trained by the end of fall 2018. Thereafter, training will be for new hires and for the continuing education of SAM-certified advisors.

## **2. Create uniform, campus-wide advising standards. (PO2) (PO3)**

The SAM director, Implementation Committee, and academic departments will be responsible for implementing the University advising syllabus. The University advising syllabus, which will help introduce students to a working relationship with advisors in their majors, will be implemented in fall 2016. Academic departments will be able to supplement the University advising syllabus with items specific to their academic degree programs.

The SAM director, the Implementation Committee, and the academic departments will implement the department advising syllabus and the departmental advising plan by fall 2016. As part of the departmental advising plan, each department must identify a departmental advising coordinator by fall 2016.

The SAM director and Professional Development Subcommittee will create the Advising Handbook in fall 2016 and continue to update this web-based handbook each spring in preparation for the following fall semester. A framework for the advising handbook is included in Appendix 6.1.

## **3. Incentivize advising. (PO1) (PO4)**

The SAM director and Implementation Committee will develop a process to allow sophomores who participate in advising with a SAM-certified advisor access to early course registration. Early registration for this student population will be implemented in spring 2017.

The SAM director and Implementation Committee will pursue changes to the faculty evaluation form to include advising activities in the teaching section. Attaining the level of SAM-certified advisor will result in the opportunity to earn merit points on the updated faculty evaluation form. This process will be implemented in spring 2017.

## **4. Improve course availability. (PO4)**

The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (AIR) will track seat availability in courses when semester registration first opens and compare it to seat occupancy on the published University census date. Tracking will begin in the spring 2016 semester to establish a baseline and will be conducted each semester thereafter. This data will be shared between the SAM director, the provost, and the task force charged with improving course availability. Baseline data will be collected on the fall 2016 course schedule to determine which courses and sections need resources for better availability going forward. AIR will continue to track this data every semester. The goal is to have the capacity of courses at early registration equal to or greater than 90% of filled seats at the census date. This should significantly reduce waiting lists for certain courses, reduce the number of unnecessary courses students take in order to retain full-time status, and speed progress towards degree attainment.





Table VII.1: Implementation Timetable 2016-2021

Action	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021
SAM Director	Initiate Search	Hire										
<b>Establish Positive Student/Teacher Relationship with an Academic Advisor</b>												
% sophomores advised under current advising system	100%	100%	80%	60%	40%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
% sophomores advised by SAM Certified Advisors	0%	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
AAI Advising Survey		Baseline	Implemented 20%	Implemented 40%	Implemented 60%	Implemented 80%	Implemented 100%	Implemented 100%	Implemented 100%	Implemented 100%	Implemented 100%	
SSI	Administer	Gather Data			Administer	Gather Data			Administer	Gather Data		
<b>Create the E-Portfolio in Live Text</b>												
Freshmen Reflection Piece	Developed	Assignment Implemented	Assignment Implemented	Assignment Implemented	Assignment Implemented	Assignment Implemented	Assignment Implemented	Assignment Implemented	Assignment Implemented	Assignment Implemented	Assignment Implemented	
<b>Create the Sophomore Reflection Piece in the E-Portfolio</b>												
Sophomore Reflection Piece		Developed	Pilot	Implemented in 50% of Departments		Implemented in 100% of Departments						
High Impact Learning Practices List	Developed		Updated		Updated		Updated		Updated		Updated	
Sophomore Level Benchmark Course		Identified for 100% of Departments		Implemented in 50% of Departments		Implemented in 100% of Departments						
High Impact Learning Practice Participation			Administer NSSE	Gather Data from NSSE			Administer NSSE	Gather Data from NSSE		Gather Data from NSSE	Administer NSSE	Gather Data from NSSE
Career Services Events		Baseline	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	
Career Services Student Participation		Baseline	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	Gather Data	
<b>Create Uniforms, Campus-Wide Advising Standards</b>												
University Advising Syllabus	Created	Implemented	Implemented	Implemented	Implemented	Implemented	Implemented	Implemented	Implemented	Implemented	Implemented	
Departmental Advising Syllabus	Created in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	
Departmental Transition Plan	Created in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	
Departmental Advising Coordinator	Identified for 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	Implemented in 100% of Departments	
Develop Advising Handbook		Developed	Updated		Updated		Updated		Updated		Updated	
<b>Train Full-time Faculty to be SAM Certified Advisors</b>												
SAM Certification Resources and Workshops		Developed		Updated		Updated		Updated		Updated		
SAM Training	0%	50/20%	50/40%	50/60%	50/80%	50/100%	25	25	25	25	25	



Action	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2018	Spring 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Fall 2021
<b>Incentivize Advising</b>												
Early registration for Sophomores	No Early Registration Period	No Early Registration Period	Early Registration Period Implemented	Early Registration Period Implemented	Early Registration Period Implemented	Early Registration Period Implemented	Early Registration Period Implemented	Early Registration Period Implemented	Early Registration Period Implemented	Early Registration Period Implemented	Early Registration Period Implemented	
Advising Report in Grades First		Developed	Administered by SAM-Certified Advisors	Administered by SAM-Certified Advisors	Administered by SAM-Certified Advisors	Administered by SAM-Certified Advisors	Administered by SAM-Certified Advisors	Administered by SAM-Certified Advisors	Administered by SAM-Certified Advisors	Administered by SAM-Certified Advisors	Administered by SAM-Certified Advisors	
Revised Availability Monitoring		Ratified	Implemented	Implemented	Scored		Scored		Scored		Scored	
<b>Improve Course Availability</b>												
		Baseline	Report to Provost	Report to Provost	Report to Provost	Report to Provost	Report to Provost	Report to Provost	Report to Provost	Report to Provost	Report to Provost	



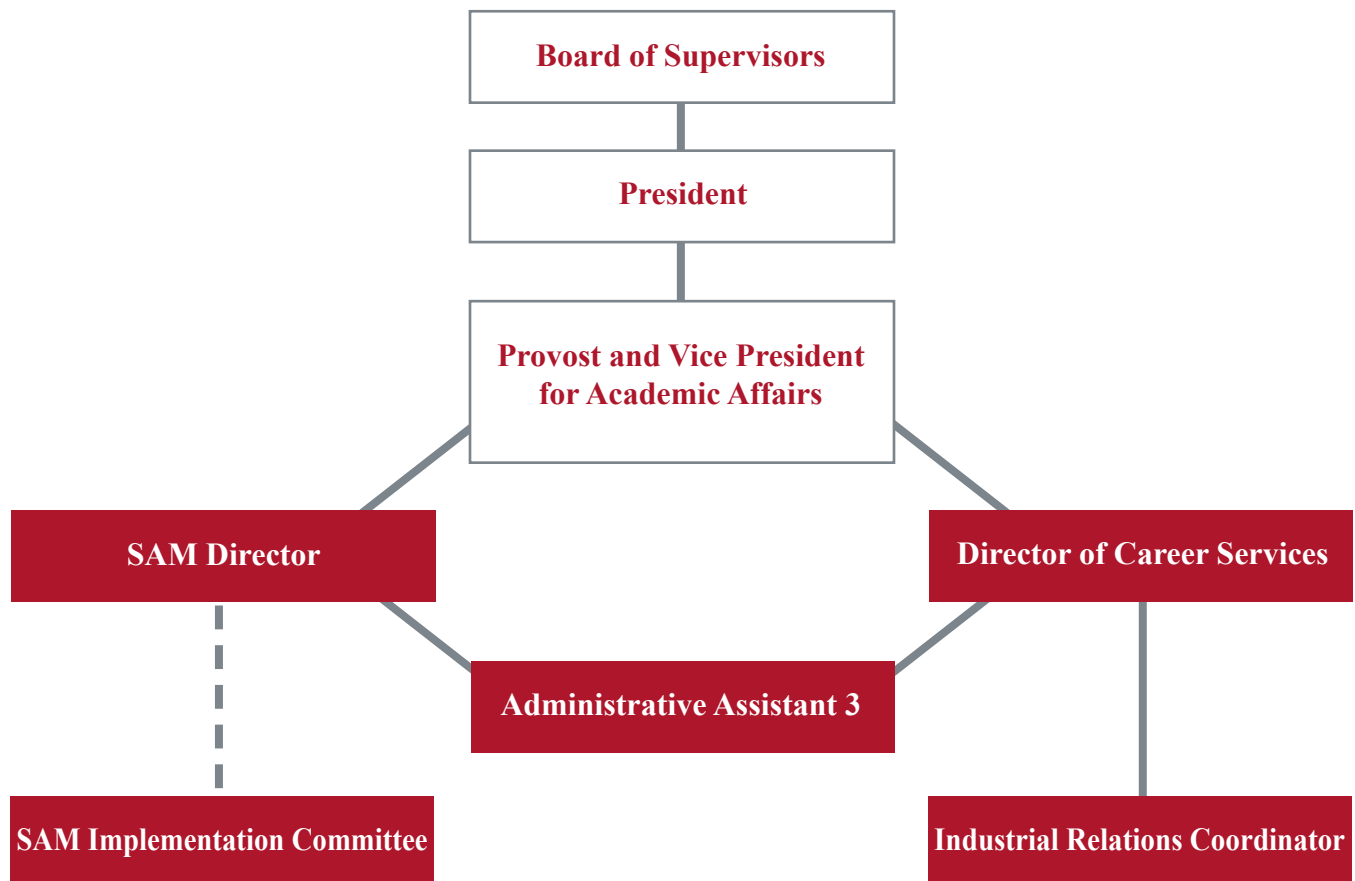
## VIII. Organizational Structure

**Clear lines of responsibility for implementation and sustainability** (*providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 “institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP”*)

Nicholls State University demonstrates its capacity to support SAM through a committed staff, accountable reporting structure, and an appropriate budget. Additional resources, such as the Academic Advising Center, Office of Career Services, Office of Information Technology, Office of Assessment and Institutional Research, and University Printing, among others, will support the initiative through their services and use of existing assets.

The organizational chart below provides clear lines of responsibility for implementation and sustainability through the SAM director, the Office of Career Services, and an administrative assistant. In addition to the positions mentioned above, the Implementation Committee, along with the Professional Development and Assessment Subcommittees, will remain in place for the duration of SAM. These committees will support the function of the SAM director in an advisory capacity, performing assessment, monitoring and spearheading creation of professional development initiatives.

*Figure VIII.1. The Organizational Structure for SAM*





The Implementation Committee's primary role will be to support the SAM director in initiation, implementation, and completion of SAM. This committee will serve as the primary advisory board to the SAM and Office of Career Services directors, meeting regularly to review timelines and progress on SAM implementation initiatives. This committee will be charged with troubleshooting and problem solving as implementation is ongoing. With the SAM and the Office of Career Services directors, the Implementation Committee shall report to the University administration as needed. The SAM director, the Office of Career Services director, as well as a member of each college shall be represented on this committee. The SAM director shall serve as chairperson of this committee. The chairperson of the Professional Development and Assessment Subcommittees shall serve on the Implementation Committee.

The Professional Development Subcommittee will advise the SAM director for the implementation of the University-wide professional development program. The professional development program will consist of, but will not be limited to, advisor training events and best practices in advising. The Professional Development Subcommittee will participate in assessment and improvement of the professional development program. The SAM director and Office of Career Services director, as well as a member of each college shall be represented on this committee. The SAM and Office of Career Services directors shall be ex-officio members.

The Assessment Subcommittee will advise the SAM director for the assessment of the student learning and program outcomes of SAM. The SAM and Office of Career Services directors, as well as a member of each college shall be represented on this committee. The SAM and Office of Career Services directors shall be ex-officio members.





## IX. Resources

**A realistic allocation of sufficient human, financial, and physical resources** (*providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 “institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP”*)

### Human Resources

#### ***SAM Director***

The implementation of SAM will require the all-encompassing involvement of the administration, faculty, and students. To provide sufficient coordination and support of the SAM initiative, the University will dedicate a full-time position to support the effort. The SAM director position will be advertised on July 1, 2016, after the 2016-17 academic year budget commences, and the hiring process will be completed by fall 2016. The SAM director will bear primary responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the SAM initiative.

#### ***Administrative Assistant 3***

An administrative assistant will be hired to support the SAM Director and the Director of Career Services. The position will be advertised after the SAM Director is hired. The primary supervisor of the administrative assistant will be the SAM Director, working in cooperation with the Director of Career Services.

#### ***SAM Implementation Team***

General oversight of the QEP will reside with the SAM director who reports directly to the provost. The Implementation Committee also includes the director of the Office of Career Services whose position will increase from a part-time position of 80% to a full-time position in fall 2016. Additional support will be provided through the hiring of an administrative assistant who will report to both directors and a professional staff member who will report directly to the director of the Office of Career Services. A summary of the job description and responsibilities of each team member may be found in Appendix 9.1., 9.2, and 9.3. Both the SAM director and the Office of Career Services director have the expertise to successfully lead the QEP. Both directors will report directly to the provost and be members of the Academic Council, which consists of academic college deans and other academic unit directors.

### Financial Resources

The projected budget supporting the SAM initiative reflects Nicholls State University’s strong commitment to the success of this effort. The QEP budget reflects a six-year plan which anticipates investing more than \$1.17 million over six years to improve student success through advising, mentoring, student engagement in high-impact learning practices, and assessments of these actions. Projected salaries are based on average SREB costs for each position and related fringe benefits with a scaled-up benefit percent for each year. Nicholls has already committed human and financial support for:

- eighty percent of the Office of Career Services director’s salary and associated fringe benefits; and
- assessments (i.e. AAI Inventory, LiveText, GradesFirst, Qualtrics).

Table IX.1 outlines budget expenditures by year, from 2016 to 2021, and by the type of expenditure.

Table IX.1: Budget Table

<b>Personnel</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Total</b>
QEP Director	\$27,500	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$302,500
Fringe <sup>1</sup>	\$11,825	\$24,475	\$25,438	\$26,538	\$27,778	\$29,150	\$145,204
Career Director 20% convert to FT	\$9,348	\$9,348	\$9,348	\$9,348	\$9,348	\$9,348	\$56,088
Fringe <sup>1</sup>	\$4,020	\$4,160	\$4,323	\$4,510	\$4,721	\$4,954	\$26,688
Administrative Assistant 3	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$22,000	\$132,000
Fringe <sup>1</sup>	\$9,460	\$9,790	\$10,175	\$10,615	\$11,110	\$11,660	\$62,810
Industrial Relations Coordinator	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$240,000
Fringe <sup>1</sup>	\$17,200	\$17,800	\$18,500	\$19,300	\$20,200	\$21,200	\$114,200
<b>Assessment</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Total</b>
New Assessment Instruments	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Technology</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Total</b>
New Software & Hardware	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Marketing and Promotion</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Total</b>
Collateral/Promotional Materials	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$22,500
QEP Documents	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500
<b>Professional/Services Development</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Total</b>
QEP Evaluator	\$2,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,500
Supplies	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$6,000
<b>Travel</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Total</b>
QEP Director Travel	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$13,500
Professional Readiness Travel	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$152,603</b>	<b>\$200,823</b>	<b>\$203,034</b>	<b>\$203,061</b>	<b>\$205,907</b>	<b>\$209,062</b>	<b>\$1,174,490</b>

## Physical Resources

The SAM director, the Office of Career Services' staff, and its administrative assistant will be housed in a suite of offices in a centrally located space that is yet to be identified. This space will include Internet connections and phone lines for each director and the administrative assistant.

Advisor training will primarily take place in the existing CAFE facility, in rooms 209 and 211 of Elkins Hall. This facility is already equipped for such training sessions and will need no additional modifications to function adequately. Additional training may also take place in other existing campus locations at the requests of deans and department heads.

## Technological Resources

### *Using Software to Predict Enrollment Needs*

One goal of the QEP is to decrease the number of students who cannot enroll in needed courses. The lack of course availability has been discussed at Nicholls State University for years and continues to be one of the biggest issues students and faculty cite in polling data from QEP surveys and other studies

(Noel-Levitz, 2004). Though it may appear that additional faculty members are needed to help solve these concerns, previous studies of this campus have suggested that improved needs-analysis based on data about the current and historical student cohort could mitigate the problem.

Currently, most departments use ad hoc scheduling methods based on curriculum knowledge and past enrollment patterns. The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (AIR) provides detailed information regarding departmental enrollment, etc. The AIR reports (described in more detail below) include information regarding courses taken by program majors, as well as other students. These reports could be particularly useful in coordinating departments to offer courses at more convenient days and times.

Each semester, AIR will coordinate the following actions:

- identify and collect data that can be used to predict the number of sections and seats needed for selected courses;
- distribute the predictive data to department heads on a timely basis so it can be incorporated into their schedules of course offerings;
- assess the accuracy of the predictive scheduling data; and
- assess to what degree department heads have incorporated the predictive data into course schedules.

### ***Utilize Existing Software***

Some of the features mentioned above can be approximated using software which the University has already purchased, such as Banner (CAPP), GradesFirst, and COGNOS. The following are examples of data that can be collected:

- class overloads (where registration exceeds the preferred class size) with attention to the times of the sections, the terms, and the instructors;
- electronically-maintained course waitlists; (This will reduce the work for administrative staff, as well as provide students with updated information on the likelihood of their getting into preferred classes.)
- the number of students who have completed the prerequisites for popular “bottleneck” courses, such as general education requirements;
- the number of students in each major; and
- historical course enrollment data collected over several years, which can be used to identify trends.

### ***Examples of Predictive Data using COGNOS and CAPP***

In response to a recommendation made by the University Recruitment and Retention Committee, AIR developed interactive COGNOS reports to assist with improvement of scheduling efficiency by departments to maximize course seat availability. AIR developed two types of reports to assist with this matter: the Strategic Scheduling Report and the Course Enrollment by Program Report.

The Strategic Scheduling Report provides up to five years of historical data on course offerings and enrollment. Fall and spring reports are developed separately to account for the fact that some courses are offered only in certain terms, once a year, or once every other year. Both the fall and spring scheduling reports allow departments to drill down through the college, department, course subject, course number, and/or section level. Data elements of the report include numbers of course offerings, census enrollment (Official Statistics Day enrollment), actual enrollment (reflecting end-of-term enrollment after course drops), and maximum enrollment. The Strategic Scheduling Report is updated once a semester. Following is a sample of two semesters of data on a general education “bottleneck” course, Mathematics 101 (College Algebra):

Table IX.2: Strategic Scheduling Report for MATH 101 of Fall 2013 and 2014

		Fall 2014				Fall 2013			
		Offering	Census	Actual	Maximum	Offering	Census	Actual	Maximum
		Number	Enrollment	Enrollment	Enrollment	Number	Enrollment	Enrollment	Enrollment
101	1T								
	1T1								
	1TP								
	1TW	1	37	28	35	1	35	29	30
	2R								
	2RP								
	2T								
	2T1								
	2TM	1	35	1	35	1	32	28	30
	2TW	1	34	31	35	1	33	29	30
	3RP								
	3T								
	3T1								
	3TM	1	37	32	35	1	33	30	30
	3TP								
	3TW	1	35	27	35	1	35	31	30
	4RP								
	4T								
	4T1								
	4TM	1	37	32	35	1	33	30	30
	4TP								
	4TW	1	34	23	35	1	30	26	30
	5T								
	5TW	1	33	31	35	1	35	31	30
	BER	1	27	26	30	1	45	40	30
	CEN	1	2	2	30				
	CNC	1	7	6	30	1	6	4	30
	CNP								
	IBP								
	MOR					1	9	9	30
	PAT								
	WN2					1	10	9	10
	WSM								
	WWN	1	29	22	30	1	28	16	27
	WWW								
	XA								
	XA1	1	14	13	30				3
	XB1	1	10	9	30	1	9	6	30
	101	14	371	313	460	14	373	318	397



The Course Enrollment by Program Report reflects data for one term at a time. The most recent academic year is available for review by semester. Departments can drill through this data to slice the information both by program (with student classification) and by course (down to the section level or aggregated at the course subject/course number level). This report provides information to the departments regarding courses that their majors are taking, along with the sections in which they are enrolling. This report, in combination with the department's knowledge of the curriculum, can be particularly useful in assisting the department with determining which courses their students are taking for electives and coordinating with other departments to offer them at more convenient times for the student. The sample data below shows the number of majors within the Department of Accounting and Finance who are taking Management 301 (Management of Organizations and Behavioral Processes) in the fall 2014 semester, and at what times they are enrolled.

Table IX.3: Course Enrollment by Program Report for MNGT 301 Enrollment by Major for the Department of Accounting

Fall 2014									
			MNGT 301						
	PERSON-UID		2T	3T	4MW	5MW	WWA	WWB	XB1 301
ACCT	BA-BS-ACCT	FR							
		SO							
		JR	3		6	11			20
		SR	4		4	3			11
		BA-BS-ACCT	7		10	14			31
	ACCT		7		10	14			31
BABS	BA-BS-BAPL	FR							
		SO							
		JR	1						1
		SR							
		BA-BS-BAPL	1						1
	BABS		1						1
CISY	BA-BS-CISY	FR							
		SO							
		JR			3	1			4
		SR	1		2	2			5
		BA-BS-CISY	1		5	3			9
	CISY		1		5	3			9
FINC	BA-BS-FINC	FR							
		SO							
		BA-BS-FIFS							
	BA-BS-FINC	FR							
		SO							
		JR				1			1
		SR			2				2
		BA-BS-FINC			2	1			3
	FINC				2	1			3
Accounting and Finance			9		17	18			44

At any point, the user can download the data from all reports into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for further analysis. A document of suggestions of how to use these reports is also posted to our website with the reports at <http://www.nicholls.edu/institutional-research/faculty-staff-interactive-reports/>.

Scheduling data will be updated at the end of each semester. Access to all reports will be made available to the campus through links on the AIR website under a Faculty-Staff Interactive Reports section (<http://www.nicholls.edu/institutional-research/faculty-staff-interactive-reports/>). Upon development of the reports, AIR will present them during Faculty Institute each fall. The reports will be presented to all department heads, as well as to the Academic Council.

1. Timeline for fall semester
    - a. February 4th: An email with important scheduling dates is customarily sent to department heads.
      - i. A link to the predictive data will be added to this email.
    - b. February 18th: Secretaries begin entering department schedules.
    - c. March 2nd: A draft of the departmental schedule is due to the Office of Academic Affairs.
  2. Timeline for spring semester
    - a. Aug. 18th: An email with important scheduling dates is customarily sent to department heads.
      - i. A link to the predictive data will be added to this email.
    - b. Sept. 8th: Secretaries begin entering department schedules.
    - c. Sept. 28th: A draft of the departmental schedule is due to the Office of Academic Affairs.
- All of the goals listed in this section are to be met by the end of the first five years of the QEP.

## Overview of Technology Resources and Applications for Advising

### *Advising Management Software*

Advising should encompass not only course scheduling, but also academic, extracurricular, and career planning. Use of advising management software can enhance the advising experience by allowing advisors to keep a record of each student's University-related activities such as:

1. the number of advising appointments;
2. past academic suspensions;
3. low grades in ongoing classes;
4. the use of early registration;
5. involvement in extracurricular activities; and
6. utilization of student services.

Advising management software can enhance the campus-wide advising experience by making it uniform and comprehensive. This software will allow administrators to do the following:

1. audit advising records to monitor utilization;
2. track advisors' history throughout students' careers;
3. identify at-risk students whose semester GPA falls below 2.0; and
4. monitor the number of students:
  - a. who earn early registration as a result of meeting with their advisor;
  - b. who are under academic/financial aid suspension who returned in a subsequent semester;
  - c. who are involved in clubs, undergraduate research, internships, and other extracurricular activities; and
  - d. who take advantage of student services like tutoring, career services etc.

Two types of widely-used advising software are GradesFirst and DegreeWorks:

GradesFirst has the functionality required to implement an advising monitoring and tracking system. It allows advisors to document all communications with advisees, including text messages and phone calls.

Instructors can electronically mark at-risk students, which automatically notifies advisors. It also aids in making advising appointments and records the time spent in advising sessions. GradesFirst is already used in many departments, and applying it campus-wide would not increase the cost of the QEP.

However, if funds are available, the purchase of DegreeWorks should be considered. In addition to the functionality of GradesFirst, DegreeWorks incorporates sophisticated degree-planning mechanisms. It guides students through degree requirements, helping them plan the most effective path to graduation (including general education, core, distribution, major, minor, and concentration requirements). “What if?” scenarios and “look ahead” capabilities allow students and advisors to test the impact of degree plan modifications.

DegreeWorks can access other electronic information, such as catalogs, class schedules, and transcripts. For instance, incoming students can see for themselves which of their courses will transfer. Because it communicates with the course registration system in Banner, students can register for classes directly through DegreeWorks. Most importantly, DegreeWorks can aggregate data from multiple student educational plans to identify emerging enrollment patterns. This information allows the creation of a master schedule predicting the number of course sections needed each semester.

The QEP will develop advisor-training events about the role of and the use of advising software.

The QEP will assess the advising software by tracking:

1. advisor/advisee interactions;
2. retention of transfer students, sophomores, juniors, and seniors;
3. advisors’ history throughout students’ careers; and
4. academic department reports on transfer, dual enrollment, athletes, and online students.

### ***LiveText and Online Student Portfolios***

The QEP Student Learning Outcomes will be assessed in part by recording and reviewing reflection pieces in online student portfolios. These portfolios can form a continuous record of each student’s tenure at Nicholls and can include information relevant to the QEP regarding academic accomplishments, extracurricular activities, and interactions with advisors, as well as reflections upon these experiences. These portfolios will be both stored and assessed using LiveText. Students currently pay a fee to cover the cost of LiveText, so there is no additional cost to the QEP.

The SAM director will coordinate the use of LiveText for:

1. creating LiveText rubrics based on QEP Student Learning Outcomes;
2. storing student portfolios created over multiple years; and
3. assessing student portfolios using the LiveText rubrics.

LiveText allows for both the creation and storage of student portfolios in an online repository. Students can upload information to their portfolios at any point during their academic careers to capture information and achievements as they occur. Students will also be able to write and store journals in which they record their thoughts about their learning experiences. Portfolios may include text documents as well as various types of media.

QEP administrators will have continuous access to the information stored in LiveText. By applying LiveText rubrics to individual student portfolios, administrators can directly evaluate each student’s progress toward the QEP student learning outcomes.





## X. Assessment

**A comprehensive evaluation plan** (*providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 “a plan to assess their achievement”*)

The evaluation of SAM initiatives includes two goal types: student learning and program assessment. Ongoing indirect and direct assessments will be used to document the impact of the initiatives and to inform and guide the process. The indirect and direct assessments include qualitative and quantitative methods. Student, faculty, and University participation will be critical components in the ongoing assessment procedures.

### Student Learning Assessment

Multiple tools will be used to assess student learning. Direct and indirect measures will provide the QEP director, Implementation Committee, and Assessment Subcommittee with sufficient data to analyze progress in meeting SAM goals. Faculty and staff will guide students through completion, but, ultimately, students will be responsible for involvement in activities that lead to successful completion.

#### 1. Establish a positive student/teacher relationship with an academic advisor. (SLO5)

In order to experience the impact of advising, students must establish a positive relationship with academic advisors and program faculty. To determine the degree to which students establish this positive relationship, the SAM director and Assessment Subcommittee will monitor student and faculty survey responses.

#### *Advising Report in GradesFirst*

After students attend their advising sessions with a SAM-certified advisor, advisors will use GradesFirst to complete the Advising Report. This report will provide relevant information concerning students' participation in the advising process and high-impact learning practices. The following list provides a sample (which can be customized) of information that can be compiled for analysis:

1. assignments discussed;
2. session objectives;
3. study skills used;
4. goals for the following session;
5. students' punctuality;
6. students' preparedness;
7. students' requests for assistance;
8. students' responses to instruction;
9. students' awareness of future assignments;
10. students' comprehension of new material; and
11. appointment summary and reminders.

#### *Academic Advising Inventory (AAI)*

The AAI will be administered by the SAM director and Assessment Subcommittee beginning in fall 2016. While all students will be surveyed, SAM will use data generated by only sophomore students for the SAM assessment. In addition, students completing the AAI will be asked to identify their advisor so that survey data can be tracked for specific advisors and academic departments. Data collected on advising sessions conducted by SAM-certified advisors can then be separated from data on advising sessions conducted by non-certified advisors.

The questions on the AAI will be matched to the questions on the advisor's report in GradesFirst in order to determine whether the student's perception is similar to the advisor's perception of the session.

### ***Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)***

The SSI is a 45-item student survey designed to measure both the importance of and satisfaction with different aspects of the college experience. To determine whether or not students have met student learning objectives 2, 3, and 5, the SSI performance gap will be monitored. The aim is to reach a zero gap between the students' rating of importance and the students' rating of satisfaction on advising effectiveness, counseling, and career services. The following scales and items will be used to assess the objectives:

- academic advising effectiveness (Institutional Effectiveness);
- academic advisor helps set goals (Question 10);
- academic advisor is available (Question 16);
- advisor is knowledgeable about degree requirements of the major (Question 21);
- counseling services are available (Question 26);
- adequate services available for deciding on a career (Question 34);
- ongoing feedback is provided about progress toward academic goals (Question 38); and
- mentors are available to guide life and career goals (Question 43).

### ***Career Services Report***

The Office of Career Services will track and report the number of events held and record student participation data.

## **2. Create the e-portfolio in LiveText. (SLO1) (SLO2) (SLO3) (SLO4)**

### ***Freshman Reflection Piece Rubric***

Students will create an e-portfolio that will be assessed at both the freshman and sophomore levels. Freshman, with guidance of the UNIV 101 faculty, will be responsible for creating an e-portfolio in LiveText that will include the Freshman Reflection Piece. The Freshman Reflection Piece will be evaluated using a standard rubric created by UNIV 101 faculty and approved by the SAM Assessment Subcommittee.

The rubric will enable the SAM director and Assessment Subcommittee to evaluate whether or not students have developed personal and career goals based on personal strengths and challenges.

## **3. Create the Sophomore Reflection Piece in the e-portfolio. (SLO1) (SLO3) (SLO4)**

### ***Sophomore Reflection Piece Rubric***

In the second semester of the sophomore year (once the student has earned 45-60 credit hours), students will complete the Sophomore Reflection Piece. This document will consist of the student's analysis of the Freshman Reflection Piece to identify changes based on career goals and high-impact learning practices.

On the rubric, evaluators will assess the following components described in both the freshman and sophomore reflection pieces:

- Personal assessment: Students complete a personal career assessment (personality characteristics measured by KUDER Journey). Students will then assess their abilities, skills, and values relative to their potential careers.
- Career research: Students research a career choice using the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) and/or KUDER Journey program. Students are asked to research career information such as minimum level of education/training required for the career, job outlook (national and/or state), starting salary, workplace characteristics, and potential to find a job in a desired living location.

- Interview: Students relate the information obtained about their potential career from an interview performed earlier in the semester. Students compare and contrast this information to that retrieved from OOH or other sources.
- Degree information: Students evaluate their degree path and plan for future semesters taking into account prerequisites, course sequencing, etc.
- Reflection: Students write a “wrap-up” section reflecting on choice of major/career, academic performance, adjustment, and many other topics.
- In Sophomore Reflection Piece only: Students document participation in career services activities.

Academic departments will provide the SAM director and Assessment Subcommittee with assessment plans that detail how and when the Sophomore Reflection Piece will be assigned and when department faculty will randomly assess a sample of the documents using the SAM Reflection Piece Rubric.

### ***The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)***

The NSSE measures levels of student engagement. NSSE was last administered at Nicholls State University in 2014. Baseline data from the 2014 NSSE is being used to gauge students’ increased participation in high-impact learning practices. The “Reflective and Integrative Learning” engagement indicator measures the extent to which instructors motivate students to engage in activities that will be reported in the Sophomore Reflection Piece, such as reexamining belief systems. In addition, the NSSE “High Impact Practices” questions will provide indirect data indicating if more students participated in high-impact practices such as internships, undergraduate research, and service learning as a result of their participation in SAM.

## **Program Assessment**

### **1. Train full-time faculty to be SAM-certified advisors. (PO1) (PO3)**

#### ***SAM Advisor Training and Professional Development***

The advisor training and development components of the QEP will be organized through a three-tiered system of training: a foundational level of training and development followed by the option for advisors to achieve two more levels of certification as “add ons” to their foundation training. These “add on” options will be facilitated as part of the SAM advisor training and development activities or as part of offerings through the CAFE or other medium. If advisors pursue and achieve these additional certifications, they would be able to increase their score for advising and teaching on the faculty evaluation rubric. The content and offerings of the foundation training, as well as the higher certification levels, would be determined based on institutional needs at the time of the program implementation. The SAM director and Professional Development Subcommittee will monitor the number of those trained and the levels of training completed.

### **2. Create uniform, campus-wide advising standards. (PO2) (PO3)**

#### ***Advising Handbook (Web-based)***

The SAM director and the Professional Development Committee will be responsible for creating and updating the campus-wide .

#### ***Departmental Advising Syllabus Assessment Rubric***

Using a rubric of the components included on the syllabus template, the SAM director and Implementation Committee will assess the completion and implementation of the University and departmental advising syllabi to ensure that all departments include the components listed on the syllabus template.

### ***Departmental Transition Plan Assessment Rubric***

The SAM director and Implementation Committee will assess the completion and implementation of the departmental transition plan for advisees using a rubric that contains the components on the transition plan template.

### **3. Incentivize advising. (PO1) (PO4)**

#### ***Assess Advising as Teaching***

SAM will pursue approval for a revised faculty evaluation rubric by spring 2017. The proposed changes to the faculty evaluation rubric will provide the means to evaluate participation in advising as teaching. Currently, advising is listed under the “Service” section of the faculty evaluation rubric. To provide incentive for faculty to participate in advising, advising will no longer be listed as a “Service,” but be moved to the “Teaching” section. The number of advisees served will also be included in the total weight as in current practice. In addition, faculty members who pursue SAM certification will receive more credit on the faculty evaluation rubric. The level of training that the advisor has completed will result in higher percentage of the score. Faculty will also have the opportunity to receive an administrative evaluation and a student evaluation of the quality of their advising. Faculty who have other duties in lieu of advising will be evaluated for those duties.

By changing the weight that advising currently holds on the faculty evaluation rubric, SAM will increase the priority of advising in the faculty evaluation process. The SAM director and Assessment Committee can use this data to evaluate which departments are utilizing SAM initiatives.

#### ***Assess Student Participation***

To assess incentivize advising for students who attend advising with a SAM-certified advisor, the SAM director and Assessment Subcommittee will track the number of students who are able to register early after meeting with a SAM-certified advisor.

### **4. Improve course availability. (PO4)**

#### ***Assessment of Course Availability***

In order to assess improved course availability, the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (AIR) will compare the numbers of sections/seats available at the beginning of early registration to the numbers of sections/seats filled on the published census date of each semester.

The following baseline data will be collected for assessment purposes:

- the number of course sections that were open at the start of early advising;
- the number of sections/seats that were actually filled by the census date; and
- student satisfaction as measured by the Student Advising Survey.

Accurate predictive data will:

- reduce the numbers of course sections that must be opened or closed during registration to meet unexpected needs; and
- increase student satisfaction by allowing them to register for the classes they have been advised to take.

The goal is to reduce the difference between the numbers of sections/seats open for early advising and registration and the numbers that were actually filled by the published University census date. The number of sections/seats open for early advising and registration should be less than 90% of the seats filled on the



14th class day, so that students who wish to register for a course are less likely to find all sections have been closed.

The following table shows each outcome followed by the actions to be taken to meet that outcome, the assessment used, baseline data, and five-year targets.

*Table X.1 Student Learning Outcomes and Programmatic Outcomes*

Goal	Student Learning Outcomes
Improve student ownership of their academic experiences with a focus on the sophomore level.	<p>Sophomores will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLO1: Identify high-impact learning experiences such as internships, service learning, undergraduate research, studies abroad opportunities and associate these practices with their academic and career goals.</li> <li>• SLO2: Analyze the requirements of their degree program as a path to their academic and career goals.</li> <li>• SLO3: Reflect on their personal interests, strengths, and challenges to develop a strategy to achieve academic, career and personal goals.</li> <li>• SLO4: Utilize extra-curricular opportunities and student services and associate these experiences with their academic and career goals.</li> <li>• SLO5: Establish a positive relationship with their academic advisor and program faculty.</li> </ul>
Improve the quality of advising and mentoring.	<p><b>Programmatic Outcomes</b></p> <p>This QEP will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PO1: Elevate the priority of advising at Nicholls State University</li> <li>• PO2: Create continuity in advising for sophomores transitioning from the AAC to their major</li> <li>• PO3: Improve quality of advising at Nicholls State University</li> <li>• PO4: Improve course availability</li> </ul>

Table X.2 Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Table

Assessment	Direct/ Indirect	SLO Addressed	Assessment Procedure	Baseline (2016)	Target (2021)
Advising Report in Grades First	Indirect	SLO5	Advisors will complete the Advising Report in Grades First after each advising session.	Pilot Spring 2016	Exploratory
Academic Advising Inventory (AAI)	Indirect	SLO5	The SAM Director will administer, collect and analyze Student Advising Survey data each semester.	New assessment	+ 5% improvement in overall score
Noel-Levits Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)	Indirect	SLO5	Advising effectiveness Importance	6.41	6.56
			Advising effectiveness performance gap	0.77	0.00
			Question #10 importance	6.32	6.32
			Question #10 performance gap	0.67	0.00
			Question #16 importance	6.41	6.56
			Question #16 performance gap	0.66	0.00
			Question #21 importance	6.62	6.77
			Question #21 performance gap	0.64	0.00
			Question #26 importance	5.87	6.02
			Question #26 performance gap	0.64	0.00
			Question #34 importance	6.23	6.38
			Question #34 performance gap	0.64	0.00
			Question #38 importance	6.28	6.43
			Question #38 performance gap	1.07	0.00
Career Services Report	Direct	SLO5	Question #43 importance	6.17	6.32
			Question #43 performance gap	1.07	0.00
			Career Services director report events and student participation data	New assessment	+30% increase in Career Services sponsored events +30% increase in student participation
Freshman Reflection Piece Rubric	Direct	SLO1, 2, 3 & 4	Assessment by UNIV101 faculty and assessment sub-committee using Freshmen Reflection Piece Rubric	Fall 2016	75% or more meeting bench mark on assessment rubric
Sophomore Reflection Piece	Direct	SLO1, 2, 3, & 4	Evaluate self-reported participation using Sophomore Reflection Piece Rubric	2 or more 60% 1 HIP 29%	2 or more 75% 1 HIP 45%
			Internships	42%	57%
			Faculty research	19%	35%
The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)	Indirect	SLO5	Service learning	22%	37%
			Reflective interactive learning indicator	49%	65%

Table X.3 Program Outcome Assessment Table

Assessment	Direct/ Indirect	PO Addressed	Assessment Procedure	Baseline (2016)	Target (2021)
SAM Advisory Training and Professional Development	Direct	PO1	Monitor number of faculty trained and level of achievement completed	0/0%	250/100%
Advising Handbook (web based)	Direct	PO1, 2 & 3	Monitor completion and updates of online content	Approved Spring 2016	Posted Fall 2016
Departmental Advising Syllabus Assessment Rubric	Direct	PO2 & 3	Rubric for Assessment of Departmental Advising Syllabus	Template Complete	100% complete Fall 2016
Departmental Transition Plan Assessment Rubric	Direct	PO2 & 3	Rubric for Assessment of Departmental Advising Plan	Template Complete	100% complete Fall 2016
Assess Advising as Teaching	Direct	PO1	Assess using data from faculty evaluation forms	Approved Spring 2016	Implemented Spring 2017, first scores Spring 2018
Assess Student Participation	Direct	PO1 & 4	Track number of students eligible for early registration	Spring 2017	50-75% of Sophomores
Assessment of Course Availability	Direct	PO4	Assess the number of sections/seats available at the beginning of early registration vs. the number of sections/seats filled on the published census date of each semester	Collect for Fall 2016 semester Identify specific problem classes	Capacity at early registration is less than 90% of filled seats at published census date at published university census date

## Bibliography

- Ambrose, G.A., Martin, H.E., & Page, H. R. (2014). Linking advising and e-portfolios for engagement: Design, evolution, assessment, and university-wide implementation. *Peer Review*, 16(1), 1-8. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/peerreview/2014/winter/linking-advising-and-eportfolios-for-engagement>
- Bass, R. (2012). Disrupting ourselves: The problem of learning in higher education. Retrieved from <http://er.educause.edu/~media/files/article-downloads/erm1221.pdf>
- Bean, J. (2005). Nine themes of college student retention. In A. Seidman (Ed.), *College student retention: Formula for success*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Campbell, S. M., & Nutt, C. L. (2008). Academic advising in the new global century: Supporting student engagement and learning outcomes achievement. *Peer Review*, 10(1), 4-7.
- Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., Melton, M., & Price, E. W. (2015). *Learning while earning: The new normal*. Retrieved from <https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Working-Learners-Report.pdf>.
- Coburn, K. L., & Treeger, M. L. (2003). *Letting go: A parents' guide to understanding the college years* (4th ed.). New York: HarperCollins.
- Christensen, E. & Heston, M. (2013, December). From *Silos to Bridges: Collaborative Tools to Select a QEP Topic*. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, Atlanta, GA.
- Crookston, B. B. (1994). A development view of academic advising as teaching. *NACADA Journal*, 14(2), 5-9. Retrieved July 15, 2013 from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/portals/0/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/documents/14-2-Crookston-pp5-9.pdf>.
- Drake, J. K., Jordan, P., & Miller, M. A. (Eds). (2013). *Academic advising approaches: Strategies that teach students to make the most of college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Eynon, B., Gambino, L.M., & Torok, J. (2014). Completion, quality, and change: The difference e-portfolios can make. *Peer Review*, 16(1). 1-11. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/completion-quality-and-change-difference-e-portfolios-make>
- Furr, S. R. & Gannaway, L. (1982). Easing the Sophomore Slump: A student development approach. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 23, 340-341.
- Givans, J. V., Miller, M. A., & Neste, S. L. (Eds). (2010). *Comprehensive advisor training and development: Practices that deliver* (2nd ed.). Manhattan, KS: Allen Press, Inc.
- Gordon, V. N. (2006). *Career advising: An academic advisor's guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gordon, V. N., Habley, W. R., Grites, T. J., & Associates. (2008). *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gore, P. A., & Hunter, M. S. (2009). Promoting career success in the second year of college. In M. S. Hunter, B. F. Tobolowsky, & J. N. Gardner (Eds.), *Helping sophomores succeed: Understanding and improving the second-year experience* (pp. 99-113). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gore, P. A., & Metz, A. J. (2008). Advising for career and life planning. In V. N. Gordon, W. R. Habley, T. J. Grites, & Associates, *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook* (pp. 103-117). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Graunke, S. S., & Woosley, S. A. (2005). An exploration of the factors that affect the academic success of college sophomores. *College Student Journal*, 39(2), 367-377.
- Grites, T. J., & Gordon, V. N. (2000). Development academic advising revisited. *NACADA Journal*, 20(1), 12-15.
- Hearin, R. (2013). Faculty partnerships: Critical enablers and key alliances. In E. Contomanolis, & T. Steinfeld (Eds), *Leadership in career services: Voices from the field* (pp. 67-73). CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.



- Hughey, K. F., Nelson, D. B., Damming, J. K., McCalla-Wriggins, B., & Associates. (2009). *The handbook of career advising* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hunter, M. S., Tobolowsky, B. F., Gardner, J. N., & Associates. (2010). *Helping sophomores succeed: Understanding and Improving the Second-Year Experience*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kahn, S. (2014). E-portfolios: A look at where we've been, where we are now, and where we're (possibly) going. *Peer Review*, 16(1), 1-6. Retrieved from <http://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/e-portfolios-look-where-weve-been-where-we-are-now-and-where-were>
- Kelly, R. (2010). Living learning communities help sophomores find their way. *Recruitment and Retention in Higher Education*, 24(4), 5-6.
- Kuh, G. D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: what they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Landis, C.M., Scott, S.B., & Kahn, S. (2015). Examining the role of reflection in ePortfolios: *A case study*. *International Journal of ePortfolio*, 5(2), 107-121.
- Ledwith, K. E. (2014). Academic advising and career services: A collaborative approach. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2014(148), 49-63. doi:10.1002/ss.20108
- Lowenstein, M. (2005). If advising is teaching, what do advisors teach? *NACADA Journal*, 25(2), 65-73.
- Mayowski, C., & Golden, C. (2012). Identifying e-portfolio practices at AAU universities. Retrieved from <https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/erb1206.pdf>
- NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. (2006). NACADA concept of academic advising. Retrieved from *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* Web Site: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Concept-of-Academic-Advising-a598.aspx>
- National Association of Colleges and Employers (2014). *Job outlook 2015*. Retrieved from <https://www.umuc.edu/upload/NACE-Job-Outlook-2015.pdf>
- Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students* (Vol. 2). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Reardon, R. C., & Lumsden, J. A. (2003). Career interventions: Facilitating strategic academic and career planning. In G. L. Kraemer (Ed.), *Student academic services: An integrated approach* (pp.167-185). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Roberts, J., & Styron, R. (2010). Student satisfaction and persistence: Factors vital to student retention. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 6, 1-18.
- Schreiner, L. A., Louis, M. C., & Nelson, D. D. (Eds.). (2012). *Thriving in transitions: A research-based approach to college student success*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago.
- Tinto, V. (2012). *Completing college: Rethinking institutional action*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Trabant, T. D. (2006). Advising Syllabus 101. Retrieved from NACADA Clearing House of Academic Advising Resources Website: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Creating-an-Advising-Syllabus.aspx>.
- Winston, R., & Sandor, J. (2002). *Academic Advising Inventory*. Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Academic-Advising-Inventory-.aspx>



## Appendices

## Appendix 2.1 QEP Faculty Survey Evaluation Report

Faculty provided open-ended written responses to five questions. The responses were collected by the Office of Institutional Research and analyzed by the full Steering Committee membership. Like-concepts were grouped and answers that addressed two or more concepts were scored for each. Responses that appeared >3 times have been grouped into “other” responses. The original written responses to each question are available upon request.

### 1. What are your most critical academic concerns?

Response (n=151)	Frequency	Percent
Curriculum rigor/ relevance is low	16	11%
Student's writing skills are poor	16	11%
Improve support in transition / advising past freshman year / transfer students	13	9%
Students are ill prepared for college	10	7%
Faculty recruitment and retention is poor	10	7%
Faculty has too many responsibilities outside of teaching	9	6%
Student's lack critical thinking skills	9	6%
Student's lack enthusiasm/ motivation	8	5%
Overcrowded classrooms (esp. lower level courses)	8	5%
Student's math skills are poor	8	5%
Need more use of technology in delivery of instruction	7	5%
Online courses diminish the personal touch	4	3%
Facilities/ resource allocation needs improvement	4	3%
The Gen. Ed. Curriculum is weak	3	2%
Plagiarism enforcement is weak	3	2%
Administrative Leadership is ineffective	3	2%
Student's science skills are weak	3	2%
Communication skills	3	2%
The financial burden on our students is high	3	2%
Other	11	7%

### 2. What would improve your success in the classroom?

Response (n=129)	Frequency	Percent
Improve technology/ internet in every room (projectors, computers, etc.)	27	21%
Need more training for faculty /inside (café) / outside (conferences)	16	12%
Need a lighter course load	11	9%
Need smaller classes	9	7%
Students are not prepared (increase admissions req.)	7	5%
Update/remodel classrooms (furnishings, lab infrastructure etc.)	6	5%
More guest speakers on applied learning	6	5%



More research time	5	4%
Better writing skills (students)	3	4%
More funding overall	3	4%
Other	33	26%

### 3. How can we improve student learning?

Response (n=156)	Frequency	Percent
Improve faculty/ student engagement	15	10%
Increase Rigor of curriculum	14	9%
Student motivation is poor	11	7%
Better training in delivery of instruction /Quality Measures/ faculty services	11	7%
Improve physical classroom spaces / classroom technology	10	6%
Need better prepared students	9	6%
Enhance Student support / awareness of student services	8	5%
Create integrated learning environment (synthesized learning)	8	5%
More applied learning	7	4%
Decrease course load / class size	7	4%
Increase service learning/ UG research	6	4%
Improve faculty performance	5	3%
Improve writing skills (students)	4	3%
Improve math skills (students)	4	3%
Improve advising (students)	4	3%
Improve faculty recruitment/ retention / morale	4	3%
Increase financial aid/ discounted software (like LSU)	4	3%
Increase administrative standards	3	2%
Improve transitions year to year	3	2%
Improve speaking skills (students)	3	2%
Need more program assessment	3	2%
Other	13	8%

### 4. What one thing can we do to improve the environment in which students learn?

Response (n=105)	Frequency	Percent
Improve the classrooms	20	19%
Improve classroom technology	13	12%
Decrease class sizes	9	9%
Improve faculty pay/retention	6	6%
Improve poorly motivated students	6	6%
Improve faculty moral	6	6%
Improve student mentoring by the faculty	5	5%
Clean the facilities	5	5%
Don't ridicule or embarrass students / improve faculty development	4	4%
Improve student's critical thinking skills	3	3%

Increase student engagement on and off campus	3	3%
Other	25	24%

### 5. Are our students prepared for professional work or graduate school?

Some respondents who said “maybe” provided good and bad evidence or reasons in their written responses. Not everyone who answered yes, maybe or no provided evidence or a reason.

Response (n=103)	Frequency	Percent
<b>Yes they are</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>55%</b>
Evidence or reason for a “yes” to question 5 (n=57)		
Job placement	8	14%
Grad school acceptance	6	11%
Motivated students	4	7%
NSU provides learning for future success	3	5%
Good grad school preparation	3	5%
Other	7	12%
<b>Maybe they are</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>No they are not</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32%</b>
Evidence or reason for a “no” or “maybe” to question 5 (n=46)		
Success varies by degree program	10	22%
Poorly motivated students	7	15%
Students are motivated by grades only	7	15%
Poor technology/computer literacy	5	11%
Poor critical thinking skills	5	11%
University lacks internship/externship opportunities	5	11%
University lack external mentoring opportunities	4	9%
Poor communication and writing skills	4	9%
Unrealistic expectations	3	7%
Poor faculty motivation	3	7%
Other	11	24%

## Appendix 2.2 QEP Student Survey Evaluation Report

Students provided responses to three multiple choice questions. Students were permitted to select one or more responses to the first two questions. The responses were collected by the Office of Institutional Research.

### 1. What is the most significant challenge you face in completing your education at Nicholls?

Response	Frequency	Percent
My academic performance (my grades, meeting curriculum requirements)	397	29.8%
The courses I need are not offered regularly, course times conflict with other courses	533	40.1%
I'm not satisfied with the choice of majors available to me	111	8.3%
Inadequate advising, advisor availability, or instructor availability	139	10.5%
Costs of tuition, fees, & books are too high	597	44.9%
Balancing work, family, and school is difficult	527	39.6%
Personal issues outside of school are hard to manage with school	151	11.4%
I do not face any significant challenges	134	10.1%
Other	106	8.0%

### 2. When you compare your most and least favorite classes, what best facilitated your learning?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Small class size was beneficial to learning	786	60.9%
Larger class size was beneficial to learning	35	2.7%
Instructor was knowledgeable and created an optimal learning environment	889	68.9%
Instructor was available to me outside of class	564	43.7%
Classroom and/or laboratory was equipped with adequate technology	347	26.9%
Course was challenging and introduced new material to me	480	37.2%
Course was easy, allowing me to success without much effort	173	13.4%
Textbook and other assigned materials were beneficial to learning	347	26.9%
Homework and/or outside assignments were beneficial to learning	424	32.8%
I do not feel my learning was facilitated by any course at Nicholls	22	1.7%
Other	51	4.0%

### What is your classification?

Response (n=1227)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulation
Freshmen	174	14.2%	14.2%
Sophomore	227	18.5%	32.7%
Junior	265	21.6%	54.3%
Senior	439	35.8%	90.1%
Graduate Student	122	9.9%	100.0%

Student survey answers by classification

**1. What is the most significant challenge you face in completing your education at Nicholls?**

Response	Fresh.	Soph.	Junior	Senior	Grad. St.
My academic performance (my grades, meeting curriculum requirements)	37.9%	38.8%	35.2%	29.3%	12.3%
The courses I need are not offered regularly, course times conflict with other courses I need, or fill up to quickly	43.1%	46.7%	51.9%	38.9%	27.0%
I'm not satisfied with the choice of majors available to me	10.9%	7.9%	11.7%	6.9%	9.0%
Inadequate advising, advisor availability, or instructor availability	4.6%	10.6%	11.7%	12.7%	13.9%
Costs of tuition, fees, and books are too high	41.4%	55.9%	52.3%	49.1%	28.7%
Balancing work, family, and school is difficult	42.0%	39.2%	42.0%	43.8%	44.3%
Personal issues outside of Nicholls are hard to manage with school	13.8%	13.7%	13.6%	11.3%	5.7%
I do not face any significant challenges	11.5%	7.0%	8.7%	12.0%	12.7%

**2. When you compare your most and least favorable classes, what best facilitated your learning?**

Response	Fresh.	Soph.	Junior	Senior	Grad. St.
Small class size was beneficial to learning	67.2%	67.4%	64.0%	62.9%	46.7%
Larger class size was beneficial to learning	5.7%	1.8%	3.4%	2.3%	0.0%
Instructor was knowledgeable and created an optimal learning environment	68.4%	67.4%	75.0%	74.4%	63.1%
Instructor was available to me outside of class	47.1%	43.2%	44.3%	46.3%	42.6%
Classroom and/or laboratory was equipped with adequate technology, material and supplies for learning	29.3%	27.8%	28.8%	29.5%	14.8%
Course was challenging and introduced new material to me that I was interested in learning	36.8%	36.6%	40.2%	39.2%	41.8%
Course was easy, allowing me to succeed without much effort	16.7%	19.4%	13.6%	12.4%	4.1%
Textbook and other assigned materials were beneficial to learning	24.1%	25.1%	29.9%	31.8%	19.7%
Homework and/or outside assignments were beneficial to learning	36.2%	37.9%	35.2%	32.7%	23.0%
I do not feel my learning was facilitated by any course at Nicholls	2.9%	2.2%	0.8%	1.6%	2.5%



## Appendix 2.3 QEP Staff Survey Evaluation Report

Staff provided open-ended written responses to three questions. The responses were collected by the Office of Institutional Research and analyzed by the full Steering Committee membership. Like-concepts were grouped and answers that addressed two or more concepts were scored for each. The original written responses to each question are available upon request.

### 1. Based on your interaction with students and/or faculty, how can we improve student learning?

Response (n=32)	Frequency	Percent
Improve the quality of the faculty / teaching	8	22%
Increase applied learning / service learning / UG research	4	11%
Improve student motivation	4	11%
Improve classroom technology	4	11%
Improve advising	3	8%
Increase the rigor of the curriculum (relevance)	3	8%
Increase faculty training	2	5%
Improve awareness /quality / scope of student support services	2	5%
Improve mathematic skills	1	3%
Improve writing skills	1	3%

### 2. What one thing can we do to improve the environment in which students learn?

Response (n=29)	Frequency	Percent
Clean the classrooms	6	21%
Improve classroom technology	5	17%
Improve the classrooms (remodeling / updating)	4	14%
Improve the quality of the faculty / teaching	4	14%
Improve faculty communication skills (e-mail, office hours, etc.)	3	10%
Improve advising / registration	2	7%
Improve faculty moral	2	7%
Improve awareness /quality / scope of student support services	2	7%
Decrease class size	1	3%

### 3. Based on your interaction with students and/or faculty, what are your most critical academic concerns?

Response (n=27)	Frequency	Percent
Improve course availability	8	30%
Improve advising	8	30%
Increase the rigor of the curriculum	3	11%

Improve awareness /quality / scope of student support services	2	7%
Improve mathematic skills	2	7%
Improve classroom technology	1	4%
Address the cost of attending school	1	4%
Improve student motivation	1	4%
Improve writing skills	1	4%

## Appendix 2.4 QEP Alumni Survey Evaluation Report

### 1. Did you graduate from Nicholls State University?

Response (n = 510)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulation
Yes	490	96.1%	96.1%
No	20	3.9%	100.0%

### 2. Did you ever attend Nicholls State University?

Response (n = 20)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulation
Yes	15	75.0%	75.0%
No	5	25.0%	100.0%

### 3. What were the most significant challenge(s) you faced in your education at Nicholls? (you may select multiple items)

Response (n = 512)	Frequency	Percent
My own academic performance (grades, study habits, maturity)	148	28.9%
Trouble scheduling required courses	59	11.5%
Inadequate advising, advisor availability, or instructor availability	61	11.9%
High costs of tuition, fees, and books	55	10.7%
Balancing work, family, and school	138	27.0%
Personal issues outside of Nicholls	45	8.8%
I did not face any significant challenges	181	35.4%
Other	18	3.5%

## Appendix 3.1 QEP Departmental Advising Data

# of department faculty advisers by students in department and faculty FTE  
(sorted by college and department)

College	Department	# faculty advisers	# faculty FTE	# Spring 2015 students	# advisers per faculty FTE	Students per adviser
Arts & Sciences	Art	11	11	114	1.00	10.4
Arts & Sciences	Applied Sciences	3	3	64	1.00	21.3
Arts & Sciences	Biological Sciences	18	18	354	1.00	19.7
Arts & Sciences	Government & Soc. Sci.	5	5	103	1.00	20.6
Arts & Sciences	History & Geography	6	8	59	0.75	9.8
University College	Interdisciplinary Studies	5	8.25	594	0.61	118.8
Arts & Sciences	Languages & Literature	3	30	80	0.10	26.7
Arts & Sciences	Mass Communication	5	11.5	106	0.43	21.2
Arts & Sciences	Mathematics	20	18.75	66	1.07	3.3
Arts & Sciences	Petroleum E. T. & S. M.	6	6	417	1.00	69.5
Arts & Sciences	Physical Sciences	7	11	39	0.64	5.6
Business Admin.	Accounting & Finance	7	10	290	0.70	41.4
Business Admin.	Management & Marketing	9	10.5	306	0.86	34.0
Business Admin.	Business Admin. & C.I.S	17	9	476	1.89	28.0
Education	Psych., Counseling, & Family Studies	5	14	351	0.36	70.2
Nursing & Allied Health	Culinary Institute	6	8.25	247	0.73	41.2
Nursing & Allied Health	Nursing	29	29	715	1.00	24.7
Nursing & Allied Health	Allied Health Sciences	11	12	293	0.92	26.6



**Department responses to the frequency that they recommend or require students to be advised about curriculum and career options**

Question	Response	Frequency	Percent
1. Advising students about curriculum planning and course registration	Recommended during student tenure	1	6.3%
	Recommended each year	1	6.3%
	Recommended each semester	9	56.3%
	Required during student tenure	2	12.5%
	Required each semester	3	18.8%
2. Advising students about career options (e.g., employment, graduate school, etc.)	Recommended during student tenure	1	6.3%
	Recommended each year	4	25%
	Recommended each semester	4	25%
	Required during student tenure	1	6.3%
	Required each semester	3	18.8%

**3. Please indicate whether the following advising-related policies or procedures are currently in place in your department. Choose all that apply.**

	Response	Frequency
Faculty have previously completed Master Adviser Training	9	56%
There is continuing education/training provided for new advisers	8	50%
There is continuing education/training provided for current advisers	6	38%
A specific adviser is assigned to sophomore students in the department	8	50%
A specific adviser is assigned to junior students in the department	7	44%
Students are given the opportunity to evaluate their advisers	3	19%

**4. Please indicate whether the following advising-related processes or technology are currently in place in your department. Choose all that apply.**

	Response	Frequency
A system to engage or reinforce student participation in advising	7	50%
A department advising folder with a tracking sheet for curriculum advising	12	86%
A department advising folder with projected semester schedules until graduation for different students	3	21%
A department advising folder with degree analysis for transcripts (e.g., the "What If?" program)	10	71%
A department advising folder with information about internships, graduate school applications, service learning opportunities, study abroad opportunities, etc.	3	21%
Grades First software for adviser communication/tracking	5	36%
Any other adviser access system	2	14%

## Academic Advising Student Survey - Evaluation Report

Question	#	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
1. My academic advisor was accessible during office hours or scheduled times.	817	60.7%	25.3%	7.1%	2.3%	1.4%	3.2%
2. My adviser helps me understand program requirements and university procedures.	817	59.4%	23.5%	9.6%	2.7%	2.1%	2.8%
3. My advisor was cordial and professional.	817	65.4%	23.1%	6.6%	1.2%	1.0%	2.7%
4. My advisor showed interest in me as an individual.	817	61.6%	21.5%	9.1%	2.8%	2.3%	2.7%
5. My advisor encourages me to assume responsibility for my decisions.	817	61.1%	24.1%	8.9%	1.6%	1.2%	3.1%
6. Overall, I believe my advisor was effective.	817	62.2%	20.4%	8.9%	3.1%	2.7%	2.7%

### What is your major? (sorted by college and number of responses)

# of responses

College of Arts & Sciences	
Biology (BIOA/BIOC/BIOD/BIOE/BIOJ/BIOI/BIOO/BIOV)	25
English (ENCW/ENFS/ENLS/ENLX/ENWR)	17
Mathematics (MATC/MATE/MATM)	14
Sociology (SOCI/SOCX/SOYA)	12
History (HIST/HISX)	10
Mass Communication (MCJO/MCPR)	10
Art (ARTE/ARTS)	9
Geomatics (GEOM)	8
Chemistry (CHDM/CHPM/CHPR)	5
Music (MUSA/MUSN/MUSV)	5

Pre - Dental Hygiene or Pre-Clinical Laboratory Science or Pre-Pharmacy (PDHY/PMTC/PPHA)	5
Government (GOVT)	3
<b>College of Business Administration</b>	
Accounting (ACCT)	48
Business Administration (BABS/BABX/BAMB/BAPL)	48
Management (MNGH/MNGM/MNGT)	34
Computer Information Systems (CISY)	9
Marketing (MKTG/MKTS)	9
Finance (FIFS/FINC)	8
<b>College of Education</b>	
Psychology (PSYC)	43
Birth to Five Early Interventionist Education (BAPL)	36
General Family & Consumer Sciences (GFCS/GFCX)	31
Secondary Education (SEEN/SEFC/SEGS/SESS)	15
Human Performance Education (HPED)	6
Early Childhood Education - PK-3 Certification (P3ED)	3
Middle School Education - 4-8 Certification (48ED)	3
Child Development & Preschool Management (CDAS)	1
<b>College of Nursing &amp; Allied Health</b>	
Nursing (NURS/NURX)	153
Health Sciences (AHPR/AHSM)	23
Dietetics (DIET)	17
Communicative Disorders (COMD)	14
Athletic Training (ATTR)	1
<b>University College</b>	
Interdisciplinary Studies (IDST/IDSX)	68
Culinary Arts (CAAS/CABA/CACO/CAPC/CAPR/CARD/CASV)	36
Petroleum Services (PSAS/PSEP/PSST)	32
Safety Technology (STAS/STAX)	25
Undecided (UNDE/UNDX)	3

## Appendix 6.1 Sophomore Reflection Piece Outline and Rubric

Content Outline

Degree Information

- Academic plan for junior and senior years
- Prerequisites
- Course sequencing

Evaluation of a possible minor

- Academic plan
- Career benefits

Evaluate co-curricular opportunities (HIP's)

- Identify beneficial HIP's
- Analyze relationship to academic and career goals

Reflection & analysis

SLO	4	3	2	1	0
Identify high impact practices such as internships, service learning, undergraduate research, studies abroad opportunities and associate these practices with their academic and career goals.	Identifies HIP and associates HIP with their academic and career goals.	Identifies HIP and associates HIP with <del>their</del> only academic goals or only career goals.	Identifies HIP and associates HIP with identifies academic and/or career goals but does not associate goals with HIP.	Identifies only HIP or only academic or career goals.	Does not identify HIP or academic or career goals.
Analyze the requirements of their degree program as a path to their academic and career goals.	Analyzes the requirements of their degree program as a path to their academic and career goals.	Analyzes the requirements of their degree program but discusses the path in relation to only academic or only career goals.	Lists the requirements of their degree program and academic and career goals but does not analyze the path.	Lists either only the requirements of the degree or only the academic or career goals.	Does not list the requirements of the degree or the academic and career goals.
Reflect on their personal interests, strengths, and challenges to develop a strategy to achieve academic, career and personal goals.	Reflects on their personal interests, strengths, and challenges to develop a strategy to achieve academic, career and personal goals.	Reflects on their personal interests, strengths, and challenges to develop a strategy on only 1 or 2 (academic, career and personal) goals.	Reflects on their personal interests, strengths, and challenges and lists academic, career and personal goals but does not develop strategy to achieve goals.	Either only reflects on interests, strengths, and challenges or only lists academic, career and personal goals.	Does not reflect on interests, strengths, and challenges or academic, career and personal goals.



<b>SLO</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Utilize extra-curricular opportunities and student services and associate these experiences with their academic and career goals.	Associates extra-curricular opportunities and student services student has participated in with their academic and career goals.	Associates extra-curricular opportunities and student services student has participated in with either only their academic or only their career goals.	Lists the extra-curricular opportunities and student services student has participated in and their academic and career goals but does not associate.	Lists either only extra-curricular opportunities and student services student has participated in or only their academic or their career goals.	Does not list extra-curricular opportunities and student services student has participated in or academic or career goals.
Establish a positive relationship with their academic advisor and program faculty.	Provides reflection of establishing a positive relationship with their academic advisor and program faculty.	Provides reflection of establishing a positive relationship with either only their academic advisor or only program faculty.	Provides reflection of establishing a relationship with their academic advisor and/or program faculty but does not mention type of relationship (positive/neutral/negative).	Provides discussion of academic advisor and/or program faculty but does not mention relationship.	Does not discuss academic advisor and/or program faculty.

## Appendix 6.2 Outline for Online Advisor Handbook

1. Advisor Training and Development Components
  - a. Theoretical framework for advisor training and development
  - b. Conceptual, Relational, Personal, Informational, and Technology components and definitions.
  - c. University advising mission, goals, and student learning outcomes.
2. Admissions
  - a. process and standards
    - i. Incoming Freshman
    - ii. Transfers
    - iii. Re-Admits
    - iv. Veterans
  - b. Banner Screens for Admissions (back Banner)
3. Testing
  - a. Admissions purposes
    - i. ACT
    - ii. COMPASS
    - iii. Other tests
  - b. Banner Screens for Testing (back Banner)
4. Financial Aid
  - a. FASFA
  - b. Loans, scholarships, grants
  - c. Banner Screens (back Banner)
5. Fee Payment Policies
  - a. Banner screens for Fee Payments (back Banner)
  - b. Refund policies
6. University Structure – lists of presidents, deans, department heads, etc.
7. The Advising Center and What we do
  - a. Registration for incoming Freshman and continuing students
    - i. Process
    - ii. Determining placement
    - iii. Placement Guide
    - iv. Banner screens associated with registration (back Banner)
    - v. Special courses – 7A7/7B7, WWW, night classes, Saturday classes, etc.
  - b. Transfer Students
    - i. Different between -30 and +30
    - ii. Process of advising/registering transfer students
    - iii. Transfer evaluation – official and unofficial
    - iv. Substitutions
    - v. Placement
  - c. Early Start
    - i. Admissions process
    - ii. Registration process
    - iii. Courses to be registered
  - d. Cross Enrolled
    - i. Relationship with FTCC, etc.
    - ii. Admissions Process
    - iii. Registration Process
  - e. Honors

- f. Tutoring
- 8. Overview of Campus Services
  - a. Colonel Card
  - b. Parking Decal
  - c. Student Life and Student Services
    - i. Counseling
    - ii. Disability Services and Dyslexia Center
    - iii. Career Services
    - iv. Health Services
    - v. Student Organizations
    - vi. Student Judicial
    - vii. Other services as appropriate
  - d. Housing and Meal Plans
  - e. Library
  - f. Computer Labs
  - g. Orientations
  - h. Advising Seminars
- 9. Breakdown of Special Populations
  - a. Veterans
  - b. Non-traditional
  - c. Probation and Suspension
    - i. Rules and procedures
    - ii. Calculating GPA for advisors and students
  - d. Transfers
  - e. Early Start/DUAL Enrollment
  - f. Cross Enrolled
- 10. Advising Handbook
  - a. Overview of entire book
  - b. Explanation of each department
  - c. Advising tips
  - d. Curriculum secrets and cheat sheets
  - e. Curriculum checklists
- 11. Overview of Nicholls website
- 12. Email/Moodle user instructions for faculty and students
- 13. GradesFirst instructions
- 14. Banner – List of screens we use with explanations and demonstrations
- 15. Self Serve Banner explanation – for faculty/staff and for students
- 16. Other things to include in manual
  - a. Class schedule
  - b. List of school codes for transfers and statewide transfer matrix
  - c. Directions for Banner, Moodle, and Email
  - d. Department and College phone numbers and phone lists
  - e. General Education Requirements and list of humanities courses
  - f. Placement Guide (ACT, SAT, and Compass)
  - g. List of liaisons

## Appendix 6.3 QEP Advising Syllabus Template

# NICHOLLS STATE UNIVERSITY Advising Syllabus



Department of \_\_\_\_\_

Department Office Location

Office Phone #

Office E-mail

List of Faculty Advisors with phone # and e-mail

### **Student Advising and Mentoring (SAM) Mission**

To integrate students, faculty, staff, and departments in order to empower students in achieving their personal, academic, and career goals. Faculty serves their students as mentors and students should be fully engaged in the University community. As a result, advising fulfills Nicholls' mission to deliver "comprehensive learning experiences to prepare students for regional and global professions." Advising is also critical to the University's vision, "To be the intellectual, economic and cultural Heart of the Bayou Region."

### **Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)**

Advising is often viewed as a support for the learning environment at an academic institution. There is strong evidence however, that student learning is the direct result of academic advising and mentoring of students by their faculty advisors. The following five Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) result from academic advising:

Throughout the advising process students will be able to:

- identify high-impact practices such as internships, service learning, undergraduate research, studies abroad opportunities, and associate these practices with their academic and career goals;
- analyze the requirements of their degree program as a path to their academic and career goals;
- reflect on their personal interests, strengths, and challenges to develop a strategy to achieve academic, career, and personal goals;
- utilize extra-curricular opportunities and student services and associate these experiences with their academic and career goals; and
- establish a positive relationship with their academic advisor and program faculty.



### Advisor Responsibilities:

You can expect your Advisor to:

- Help you clarify your life and career goals, evaluate your progress toward established goals, and give you feedback about your academic progress.
- Select appropriate courses and interpret institutional requirements.
- Develop suitable educational plans based on your chosen academic program.
- Enhance your awareness of available educational resources, student services, and other educational experiences (such as internship opportunities, honors, and tutoring programs).
- Evaluate your progress toward established goals and give you feedback about your academic progress.
- Assist you in completing degree requirements in a timely manner.
- Collect and distribute data regarding student needs, preferences and performance for use in making institutional decisions and policy.
- Maintain contact with you each semester to notify you of academic information as it pertains to your academic progress

### Student Responsibilities:

You Advisor will expect you to:

- Be knowledgeable about university, school/division, and departmental program requirements; academic regulations; and calendar deadlines specified in the Bulletin, Schedule of Classes, and departmental publications.
- Consult with your advisor whenever appropriate and in a timely manner and be prepared for all scheduled advising sessions.
- Make academic decisions based upon the information obtained or recommendations offered and act upon academic decisions in a timely manner. Your advisor will not make decisions for you.
- Maintain personal records of academic progress, including documentation of approved exceptions to stated program requirements.
- Seek advice from other university personnel or services as needed or recommended.
- Be honest and openly discuss factors (such as employment, commuting distance, and other circumstances) that might influence selection of classes, registration processes, and other academic planning.

### How to prepare for an advising session:

- **Be proactive.** Think about the big picture, your current interests, your future career and which courses will get you from point A to point B. See the *Student Advising Questionnaire* at the back of this handout for things you should be prepared to discuss.
- **Be prepared.** Write out specific questions or concerns. For example, if you're meeting about course selection, start by researching potential courses in the schedule of classes and making out a tentative schedule with backups.
- **Be honest.** Be willing to identify and discuss your difficulties and come up with ideas for addressing them. Then follow up on the plan you and your advisor agree upon.
- **Be open.** You should be prepared to accept new ideas, even if they seem difficult.

- **Be assertive.** If you feel overwhelmed or you are having any trouble, ask for advice. Your advisor will help you get the support services you need, but he or she won't know to help if you don't ask.
- **Be respectful.** If you must cancel an advising appointment, please call ahead to reschedule. Remember, your advisor has a busy schedule, too.



### **Reflection Questions:**

#### **At the beginning of the semester/during the semester:**

What academic goal would you like to accomplish this semester?

What steps do you need to take to achieve this goal?

What obstacles might prevent you from achieving this goal?

What resources are available to you to help you achieve this goal?

How do the courses you are enrolled in fit into your intended major?

What questions do you have for your academic advisor?

#### **After the semester:**

How did you do last semester?

Did you achieve the academic goal you decided upon at the beginning of the semester?

If not, how can you improve upon last semester?

How confident are you in your choice of major?

### **Additional Student Services**

- Tutoring Center – 143 Peltier Hall (985) 448-4100
- Writing Center – 144 Peltier Hall (985) 448-4100
- [Office of Career Services - 110 Polk, \(985\) 448-4508](#)
- Office of Financial Aid – Candies Hall (985) 448-4048
- Counseling Center – 224 Elkins Hall, (985) 448-4080
- Health Services - Ayo Hall, (985) 493-2600
- Office of Housing and Residence Life - Brady Complex (985)-448-4479
- University Police – Calecas Hall (985) 448-4746 (4911 for emergencies)

### **Important Information for Your Degree Program**

- Required testing
- Certifications
- Capstone coursework
- Portfolio reviews/recitals
- Minors

### **Department & Program Specific Co-Curricular Opportunities**

- Research opportunities
- Service learning opportunities
- Clubs and organizations
- Scholarship opportunities
- Studies abroad opportunities

## Appendix 9.1 SAM Director

Job Title:	Director, Student Advising and Mentoring Program
Department:	Academic Advising Center / Office of the Provost
Position Title:	Director
Position Type:	Staff
Posting Date:	March, 2016
Closing Date:	August 15, 2016
Special Instructions:	<p>Please be sure that all "Required Applicant Documents" are submitted via the website and that you complete all steps in the website's application process. Incomplete applications cannot be viewed by the search committee.</p> <p>"Optional documents" (i.e., three letters of reference and a copy of transcript) may be required at a later date. Applicants are encouraged to submit these via the website as soon as possible.</p>
Official Title of Supervisor:	Provost & VPAA
Minimum Education Req:	MA/ABD in: Higher Education, Leadership and/or Counseling.
Minimum License Req:	No.
Other Minimum Req:	Commitment to effective advising and teaching; Background in academic advising, and data analysis.
Test(s) Required:	No.
Pref. Education:	Ph.D. in: Higher Education, Leadership and/or Counseling.
Pref. Licenses:	No.
Other Pref. Req:	
Employment Year:	12 month
Employment Basis:	Full time
Salary Range:	\$55,000
Duties and Responsibilities:	<p>Oversee all aspects of faculty advisor training and development programs.</p> <p>Train existing faculty to be SAM Advisors and administer the SAM Advisor Workshop Series. Train new faculty advisors campus wide, and provide ongoing training for all faculty advisors.</p> <p>Work with faculty liaisons to disseminate information and to collect data for assessment. Facilitate development of department advising plans.</p>

	<p>Work with AAC Director to facilitate introduction of advising in UNIV 101 classes.</p> <p>Work with AAC Director to implement Grades-First advising management software campus-wide.</p> <p>Work with department heads to establish acceptable advisor to student ratios responsive to department advising needs.</p> <p>Develop a virtual advising system to meet the needs of online or distance education students.</p> <p>Work with the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (AIR) to collect/assess data on advising and mentoring activities.</p> <p>Maintain the web based Advisor's Handbook and Advising Syllabi.</p> <p>Coordinate Advising Survey.</p> <p>Recordkeeping and documentation for SACSCOC.</p>
--	---



## Appendix 9.2 Industrial Relations Coordinator

Job Title:	Coordinator, Industrial Relations
Department:	Career Services
Position Title:	Coordinator
Position Type:	Staff
Posting Date:	March, 2016
Closing Date:	August 15, 2016
Special Instructions:	<p>Please be sure that all "Required Applicant Documents" are submitted via the website and that you complete all steps in the website's application process. Incomplete applications cannot be viewed by the search committee.</p> <p>"Optional documents" (i.e., three letters of reference and a copy of transcript) may be required at a later date. Applicants are encouraged to submit these via the website as soon as possible.</p>
Official Title of Supervisor:	Director of Career Services
Minimum Education Req:	Bachelor's Degree.
Minimum License Req:	No.
Other Minimum Req:	Background in industrial relations and/or career services.
Test(s) Required:	No.
Pref. Education:	Bachelor's Degree
Pref. Licenses:	No.
Other Pref. Req:	
Employment Year:	12 month
Employment Basis:	Full time
Salary Range:	\$40,000
Duties and Responsibilities:	<p>Coordinates all recruiting efforts of employers on campus (on-campus recruiting, job postings, recruitment tables, etc).</p> <p>Works with employers to assess workforce needs and identify experimental learning opportunities for students.</p> <p>Promotes the services of the office to industry representatives.</p> <p>Assists Director with Career Days/Job Fairs.</p> <p>Works with director to seek out sponsorship opportunities with employers.</p> <p>Fulfills other duties as assigned by the Director of Career Service.</p>

### Appendix 9.3 Administrative Assistant 3

Job Title:	Administrative Assistant 3
Department:	SAM Office/Career Service
Position Title:	Administrative Assistant
Position Type:	Staff
Posting Date:	March, 2016
Closing Date:	August 15, 2016
Special Instructions:	<p>Please be sure that all "Required Applicant Documents" are submitted via the website and that you complete all steps in the website's application process. Incomplete applications cannot be viewed by the search committee.</p> <p>"Optional documents" (i.e., three letters of reference and a copy of transcript) may be required at a later date. Applicants are encouraged to submit these via the website as soon as possible.</p>
Official Title of Supervisor:	Provost & VPAA
Minimum Education Req:	AA/AS in Office Information Systems
Minimum License Req:	No.
Other Minimum Req:	No.
Test(s) Required:	No.
Pref. Education:	BA/BS Office Information Systems
Pref. Licenses:	No.
Other Pref. Req:	
Employment Year:	12 month
Employment Basis:	Full time
Salary Range:	\$22,000
Duties and Responsibilities:	

