

# Advisor Role in Reversing the Non-Returner Rate

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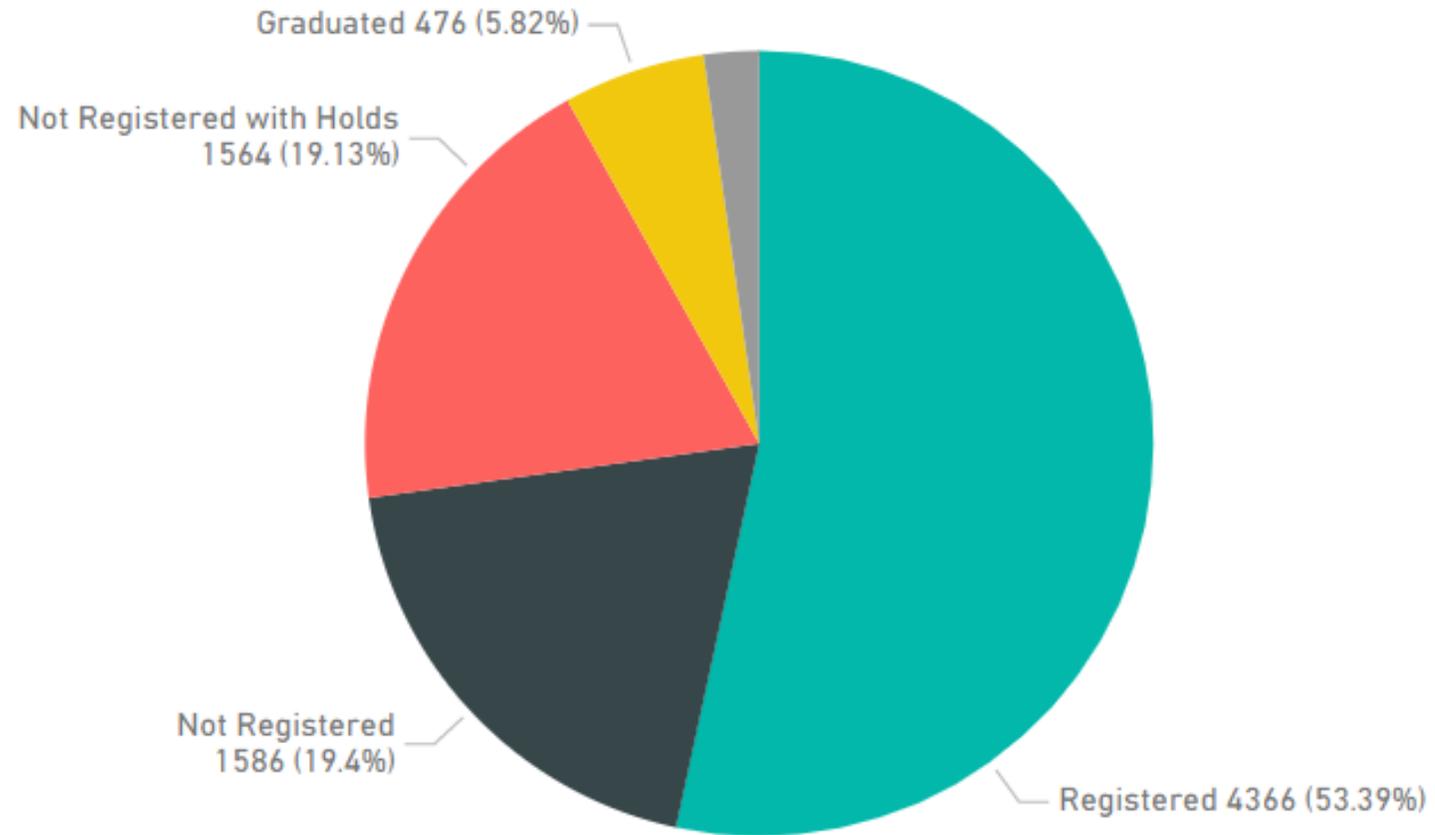
# Goals for the Session

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- Conceptualize goals of advisement and methods to prevent non-returners: outreach and prevention, maintenance, and managing concerns
- Identify key strategies and methods to develop strong advisor-advisee relationships
- Identify key partners and supports for students to assist advisors in their work with students

## Registration Status

Registered Status Text   ● Registered   ● Not Registered   ● Not Registered with Holds   ● Graduated   ● Not Able To Register



# Goals of Advisement

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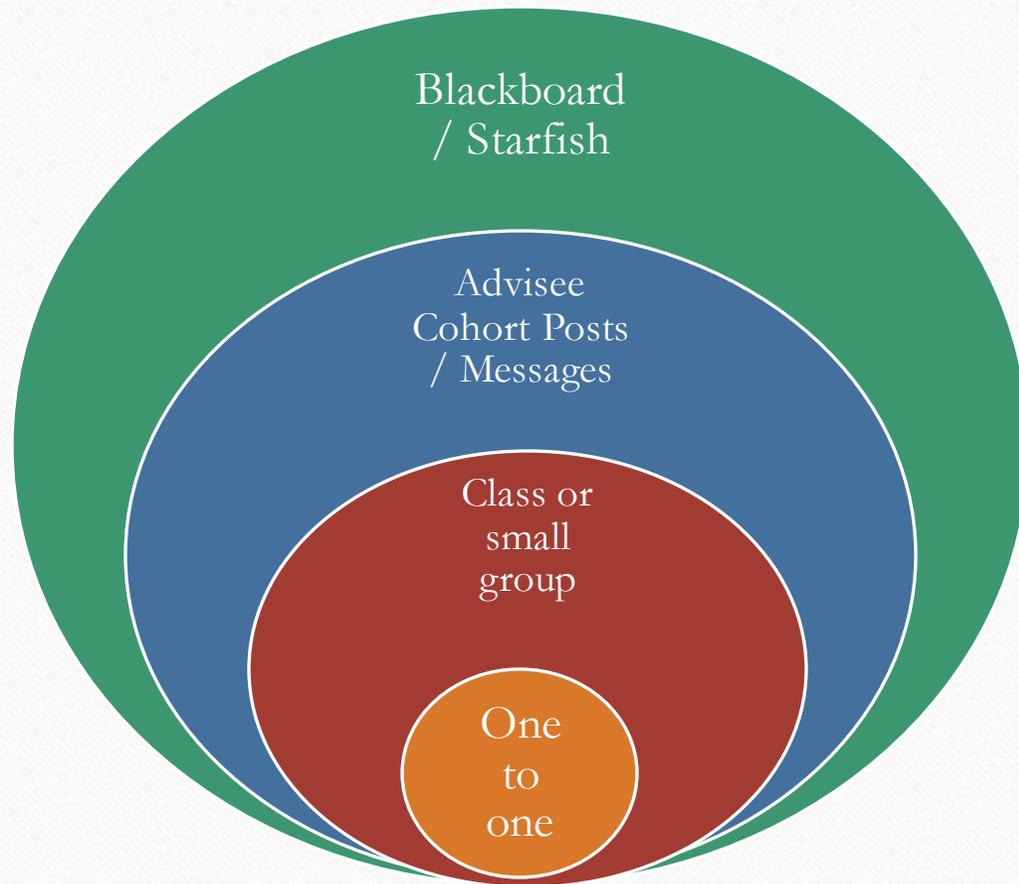
- These core goals of advisement also help prevent non-returning students:
  - Raise student aspirations and set goals
  - Develop academic plans and register for courses
  - Help students help themselves

# Relationship Building

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- Having a strong relationship with your advisees is a key *prevention* strategy
- **Building a relationship is building:**
  - Trust and understanding
  - Consistent communication throughout the relationship
  - Motivation for students to communicate or respond early
  - Knowledge about a student's particular needs, talents, and concerns
  - High and positive expectations for students' success
  - Unconditional Positive Regard

# How can we use these to develop positive relationships with advisees?



- Verbal / Nonverbal
  - Email / Announcements
  - Blackboard Posts / Flags
  - Documents/Handouts
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- **Take a few minutes to brainstorm options for outreach or communicate in ways to support a new relationship**

# Positive and Pro-active Outreach

- **Introduce yourself and your role in their success**
  - Initiate the relationship and that communication is welcomed and key
- **Come from a place of care; no one wants to be chastised (even if they need it).**
  - I'm worried about how you're doing....
  - You haven't gone to tutoring – why don't I introduce you
  - Invite behaviors you want, correct behaviors you don't with an alternative
- **Be explicit and directive – don't rely on inference**
  - Procrastination and non-compliance can be a symptom of a student not knowing how to do what you're asking
  - Identify why the behavior is needed and what the outcome can be
  - If you're not clear – ask the student for clarification, get more information

# Responding to poor communication

- Student emails are famous – the Chronicle forum of “favorite” student emails has almost 31K posts and over 6.8 million views
  - Poorly constructed emails are a teachable moment
  - Behavior is only changed if we correct it, and give an alternative
  - Be clear and kind, and suggest an alternative way of wording things
- Poor behavior is often not personal or directed at us
  - It may feel that way – but it also may be the result of frustration, poor prior experiences, context
  - We are stuck making a decision of how to respond – escalation or de-escalation
  - Focus on what the actual issue or concern is and how to resolve it

# Maintaining the Advisement Relationship

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## Advisor

- Maintain communication with students – solidify that you are a key partner in their success
- Identify key tasks / actions / supports and expectations that are key for your students
- Keep them up to date on department symposia, opportunities, mentorship and academic programs
- Be on the lookout for early warning indicators
- Respond to questions and concerns – or help students bridge a gap

## Student/Advisee

- Maintain communication with advisor – utilize them as a support mechanism in times of challenge
- Follow up on recommendations and ask for help when needed
- Utilize supports and connect with partners as needed

# Methods to Maintain Positive Student Connection

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- Much of our work with students as advisors is to activate a student to engage in *new behaviors in a new environment*
  - Advisors serve as guides to resources and information and may be the first person to explain this information to a student
  - To do that effectively we often need to add the **how** and the **why** to **what** we're asking them to do
  - Remember – each year of college brings something new, and all students – even ones with advanced credits may be new to William Paterson
- Behaviors and skills are only learned through explicit instruction, correction, feedback, and repetition

# Warning Signs



- Take a few moments to brainstorm some key warning signs and cues to reach out to a student
- How can we become aware of these?

# Things to look out for

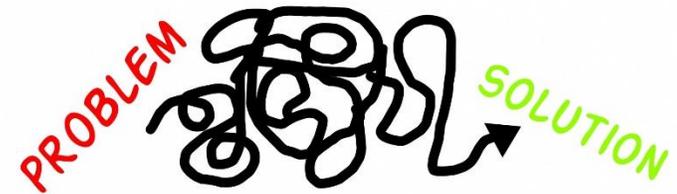
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- Change in behavior – normally responsive student goes radio silent
- Flags, alerts, absences in classes – Starfish shows key warning indicators even if the alert isn't emailed
- Student switches from full time to part time for a semester or WD from a class or two during the semester
- Student is in a challenging course load for the semester or is taking high risk courses for the department
- Student has mentioned concerns outside of school
- Holds – even those that don't prevent registration, may indicate challenges (TF hold)

# What to do when there's a problem?

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- Many of the concerns that cause a student to not return are beyond an advisor's direct ability to fix (financial, academic, personal)
- However, the advisor can be key in connecting students to resources, supports, or an alternative way of thinking about a challenging situation
- **Take a few moments to identify some of your go-to supports, people, offices are that you've found are helpful resources**



PROBLEM SOLUTION



# What to do when there's a problem

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- **Connect** with the student to gauge the concern or academic obstacle - gather information
- **Guide** the student through the process and confirm the student's understanding and commitment
- Use gathered information to work through a plan, make referrals, connect a student to resources.
- **Follow up** with the student on next steps, challenges, road blocks etc.
- Check **Starfish** for at-risk indicators such as non-attendance flags or missed exams – this will also help provide more details about concerns and tell a story about the semester
- Seek out **partners** who may be able to assist (Wellness Office, ARC, SES, Admissions, Registrar, and Financial Aid).
- **Consult** your department chairs, deans, faculty fellows, and college retention specialists

Any Questions?



Questions are the path to learning