DRIVING
TOWARD A DEGREE

THE EVOLUTION OF ACADEMIC ADVISING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

PART 1: STATE OF THE ACADEMIC ADVISING FIELD

2017



Tyton PARTNERS

BABSON Survey Research Group

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Driving Toward a Degree: The Evolution of Academic Advising in Higher Education offers insights to help institutions make informed decisions toward reforming their academic advising to improve overall student success and retention.

Following our 2015 two-part series *Driving Toward a Degree: The Evolution of Planning and Advising in Higher Education* and 2016 publication *Driving Toward a Degree: Establishing a Baseline on Integrated Approaches to Planning and Advising*[1], this year's publication is also a two-part series that tracks the progress of academic advising and student success initiatives from the institutional and supplier perspectives.

PART 1: STATE OF THE ACADEMIC ADVISING FIELD

Drawing largely from Tyton Partners' 2017 primary research survey that reached over 2,200 administrators and advisors across nearly 1,400 institutions, Part 1 measures the extent and impact of various student success practices, products, and services related to academic advising. It introduces readers to contextually relevant benchmarks that enable institutions to gauge their progress and to identify what barriers are preventing improved student outcomes and institutional performance.

- Institutions believe they are improving advising on campus. The percentage of institutions who believe they are achieving an ideal advising situation from 2015 to 2017 has grown from 20% to 34%.
- Institutions cite improvements in the clarity of ownership of advising and cross-departmental collaboration. Moreover, significantly more institutions say technology effectively enhances their advising function.
- Five elements—leadership, advising capacity, advising coordination, technology, and student engagement—emerged in 2017 for institutions from our analysis of the survey results, depending on where institutions are on the road toward an ideal advising situation.
- Four institutional segments emerged based on respondents' perspectives and attitudes toward advising and technology use: Limited Technology Users, Check Engines, Refuelers, and Equipped Navigators. There has been considerable movement since our first survey in 2015 among these segments. Limited Technology Users have grown as a share of the total respondents and Equipped Navigators have shrunk. Of note, every segment reports more success than two years ago. Gains varied between segments, (e.g., Check Engines barely budged, and Refuelers – previously called Low Fuels – leaped forward).
- Choosing the right organizational or advising model is complex. No model is the clear winner. There are several layers in determining which model is the right one for your institution. There are tradeoffs to be considered and the right model depends on institutional context and core mission.

1. Also available at ***tytonpartners.com***.

- The emergence and growing prominence of guided pathways as a framework for student support has had an impact on the field. 60% of institutions in our survey are aware of guided pathways and 48% have adopted pathways in at least some departments or colleges. Awareness and adoption are highest at two-year institutions and larger institutions. The level of pathways adoption across campuses is correlated with the degree to which they believe advising is succeeding.

PART 2: SUPPLIER LANDSCAPE

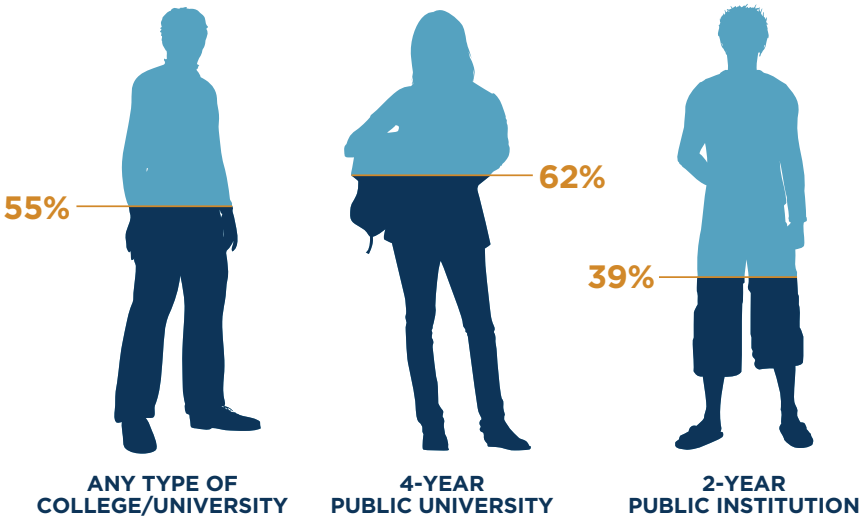
Part 2 allows readers to gain insight into the present and future states of technologies for integrated academic advising according to the metrics of product sophistication, market reach, and product breadth. You can access Part 2 at ***tytonpartners.com***.

THE PROBLEM

STUDENTS ARE NOT COMPLETING THEIR DEGREES...

- Among students who started in any type of college or university in Fall 2010, only 55% completed a degree or certificate within six years of entering a postsecondary institution.
- Students who entered a four-year public university earned a degree or certificate at a rate of 62% within six years.
- Students who started at a two-year public institution had an overall completion rate of 39%.[2]

POSTSECONDARY DEGREE, CERTIFICATE OR COMPLETION RATES

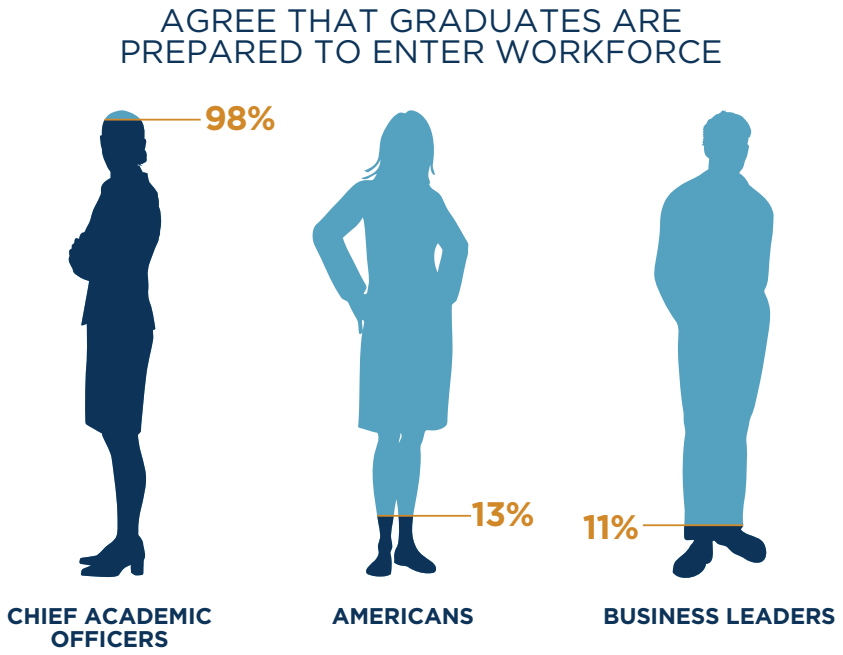


...AND THOSE WHO DO ARE NOT PREPARED

- Americans owe over $1.4 trillion in student loan debt, spread out among about 44 million borrowers.
- The average Class of 2016 graduate has $37,172 in student loan debt, up 6% from 2015.[3]
- Students who take out college loans but do not graduate are almost 3 times more likely to default than borrowers who complete.[4]

2. National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, *Signature 12 Supplement: Completing College: A National View of Student Attainment Rates by Race and Ethnicity – Fall 2010 Cohort*, April 2017.
3. Federal Reserve Bank of New York, *Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit*, Q4 2016.
4. Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, *Report on the Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households in 2016*, May 2017.

- The skills and perceptions gap between employers, educators and students is evident
  - 98% of Chief Academic Officers rate their institution as very/somewhat effective at preparing students for the world of work.
  - 13% of Americans strongly agree that college graduates in this country are well prepared for success in the workplace.
  - 11% of business leaders strongly agree that graduating students have the skills and competencies their businesses need.[5]



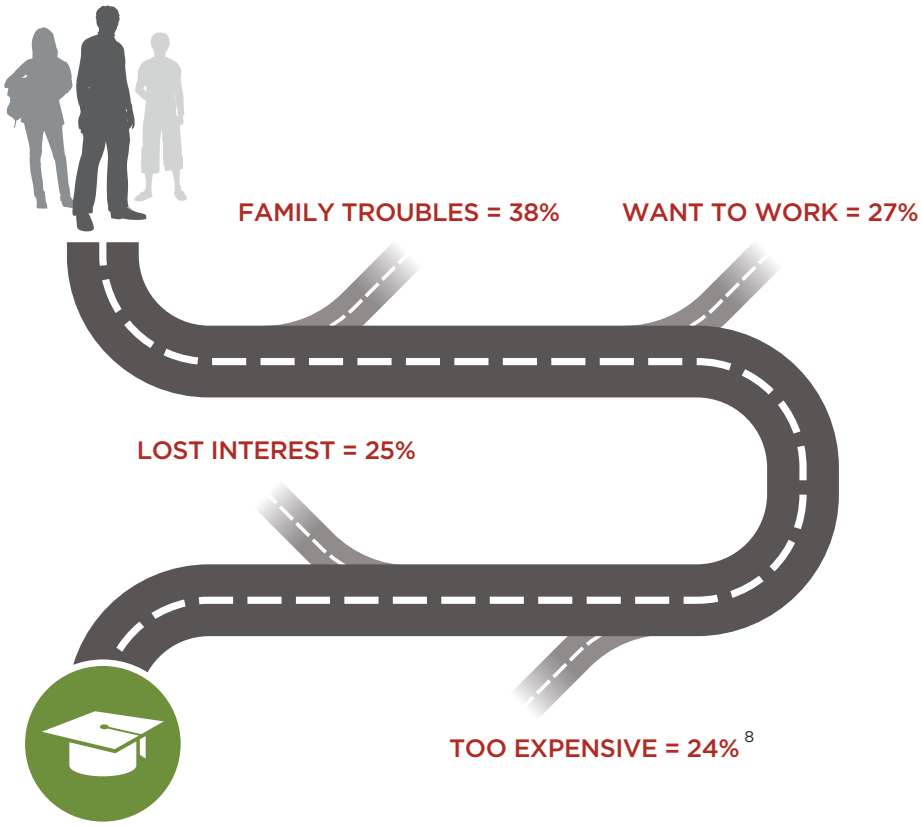
TOO MANY STUDENTS FLOUNDER THROUGH COLLEGE, TAKING MORE TIME THAN THEY PLANNED TO GRADUATE, AND GRADUATE WITH A DEGREE FOR A JOB FOR WHICH THEY ARE UNDERPREPARED.

5. Lumina Foundation / Gallup Poll, *The 2013 Inside Higher Ed Survey of College & University Chief Academic Officers Report*, 2013.

CRITICAL ROLE OF ACADEMIC ADVISING

Academic advising can help get students on the right track to graduate and prevent students from slipping off track. Advising exerts a significant impact on student persistence through its positive association with student satisfaction with the college experience, effective educational and career planning and decision-making.[6]

Moreover, advising plays a central coordinating role in a holistic system of student support that involves many different functions and student-facing touch points on campus. Students are more likely to thrive, persist, and complete degrees in environments that provide clear and consistent information about institutional expectations and requirements.[7]



[8]

Hence, Tyton Partners' goal is to identify the gaps between the supply and demand sides of the academic advising market, and then to provide institutions with a guide for selecting and implementing student success and persistence strategies and technologies.

6. Adena D. *Young-Jones*, Tracie D. *Burt*, Stephanie Dixon, Melissa J. Hawthorne, Missouri State University, *Academic Advising: Does It Really Impact Student Success?*, 2013.
7. Jayne K. Drake, NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, *The Role of Academic Advising in Student Retention and Persistence*, July 2011.
8. Federal Reserve Bank of New York, *Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit*, Q2 2015.

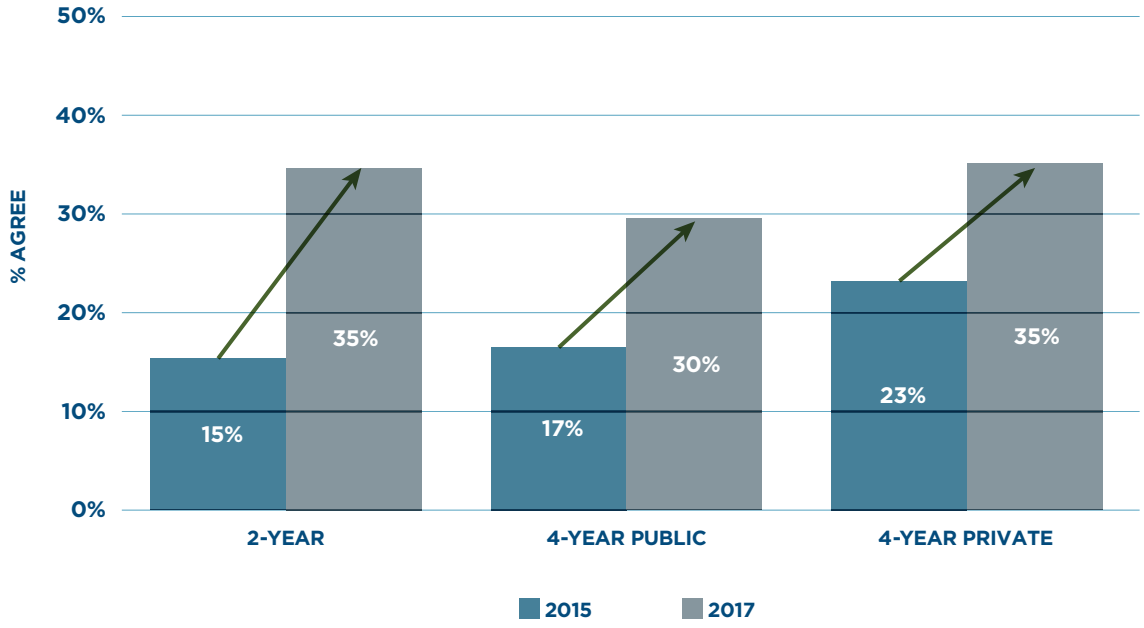
PART 1: STATE OF THE ACADEMIC ADVISING FIELD

WHERE ARE WE ON THE MAP?

Institutions believe they are improving advising. The percentage of institutions who believe they are achieving an ideal advising situation from 2015 to 2017 has grown from 20% to 34%.

ALL TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS REPORT INCREASES IN ADVISING SUCCESS

Overall, my institution successfully achieves an ideal advising situation
n (2017) = 1,170*



* In several instances, we received multiple responses form the same institution so we used a key respondent methodology, whereby we only used the most senior respondent at an institution by role/title. This is consistent with the previous survey in 2015.

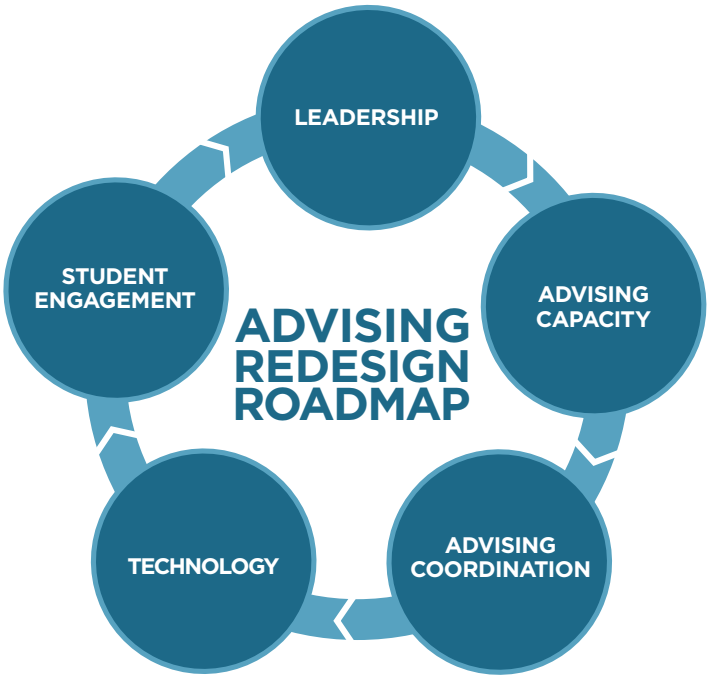
Across the board, institutions cite improvements in the clarity of ownership of advising and cross-departmental collaboration. This represents significant progress on the early but critical steps of the advising redesign roadmap.

The top performers in these two areas are institutions who pursue a "Self-contained" advising model, the most centralized of all advising models. Centralization does not guarantee advising success, but the data does provide lessons for institutions who seek a clear accountability structure around advising.

More institutions say technology effectively enhances their advising function. However, adoption of core solutions to support advising does not seem to be the key driver of improvements, as adoption rates for Degree Planning, Case Management, Alerts & Signals, and Transfer Evaluation products have remained constant. However, new products have emerged, including return on investment (ROI)/resource allocation tools that can help institutions best direct efforts to both forecast course demand and improve advising (read more in Part 2: The Supplier Landscape).

REDESIGN ROADMAP

As in 2015, five elements—leadership, advising capacity, advising coordination, technology, and student engagement—emerged in 2017 for institutions from our analysis of the survey results.



- **Leadership** – Commitment to and vision for advising, and structures to support effective leadership including clear ownership and accountability
- **Advising Capacity** – Resources to support advising including technology funding and staffing
- **Advising Coordination** – Structures to enable communication and collaboration on advising
- **Technology** – Technology solutions to support advising
- **Student Engagement** – Mechanisms and practices to increase utilization of advising programs and resources

The segmentation analysis that follows provides guidance to institutions on the important contextual elements that frame the advising redesign roadmap. The individual segments reflect the different points at which institutions may find themselves on the path toward ideal academic advising, and therefore define which of the five elements should be prioritized.

ATTITUDINAL SEGMENTATION

Typically, institutions look to identify best practices and benchmarks based on peer institutions segmented by institutional type or size. An attitudinal segmentation, however, allows us to glean best practices from among institutions that struggle with similar challenges or have similar views on the importance of academic advising. The segmentation analysis that follows provides a deeper look at institutional attitudes and preferences toward advising. Multiple variables were considered for the segmentation analysis, including organizational structure, advising model, coordination and collaboration, leadership and ownership, barriers, outcomes, and technology adoption. Ultimately, five key variables defined the institutional segments:

1. **Coordination:** Level of cross-departmental collaboration in support of student success
2. **Ownership:** Clarity of ownership over student success and retention
3. **Technology vs. People:** Degree to which technology or people have the greatest potential to improve advising
4. **Technology Effectiveness:** Extent to which technology used today enhances the advising function
5. **Perception of Progress:** Degree to which the institution achieves an ideal advising situation

INSTITUTIONAL SEGMENTATION

Four institutional segments emerged based on respondents' perspectives and attitudes toward advising and technology use.



Institutions that fall in the **Limited Technology Users** segment do not report widespread use of any advising technology.



The **Check Engines** segment contains institutions that do not yet view themselves as having achieved success. This segment is more favorable toward technology adoption to improve advising but struggles with technology integration (eliciting a metaphorical "check engine" light) and lacks strong ownership and coordination.



Those institutions in the **Refuelers** segment favor people over technology as a solution for advising. Increasingly they see themselves as successful in advising, and report rising levels of collaboration and clarity of ownership.

We had previously labeled this segment Low Fuel; however, we have renamed it given the improvement among institutions in reporting overall success, clear ownership, and cross-departmental collaboration in this segment.



Finally, the **Equipped Navigators** segment is for institutions that have both the people factors and the technology factors in place to form an integrated advising function.

While Limited Technology Users are at one end of the spectrum and Equipped Navigators are at the other, the two categories in the middle represent divergent paths rather than a linear progression toward Equipped Navigators. These segments form the basic contextual categories for consideration of the advising redesign roadmap. There has been considerable movement since our first survey in 2015 among these segments. Limited Technology Users have grown as a share of the total respondents and Equipped Navigators have shrunk. The number of unique institutions and total number of respondents to the survey have grown by 40% and 57%, respectively. As the sample has grown, so too has our understanding of institutional attitudes about advising.

LIMITED TECHNOLOGY USERS		CHECK ENGINES		REFUELERS		EQUIPPED NAVIGATORS	
							
Very little use of technology. Do not believe their institutions have achieved advising success, and report a relative lack of coordination and ownership over advising.		Do not view themselves as having achieved advising success. While they are open to using technology to support advising, they struggle with integration, a lack of coordination, and unclear ownership over the advising process.		Favor people over technology as a solution for advising. Increasingly see themselves as successful in advising, and report rising levels of collaboration and clarity of ownership.		View their advising program as successful. Ownership over advising is clear, and stakeholders collaborate to support the advising process. This group is favorably disposed toward the use of technology in advising.	
2015 29% of respondents	**2017** 35% of respondents	**2015** 19% of respondents	**2017** 24% of respondents	**2015** 23% of respondents	**2017** 20% of respondents	**2015** 29% of respondents	**2017** 21% of respondents
2015 41% 2-year 16% 4-year public 43% 4-year private	**2017** 27% 2-year 23% 4-year public 51% 4-year private	**2015** 43% 2-year 25% 4-year public 32% 4-year private	**2017** 33% 2-year 36% 4-year public 31% 4-year private	**2015** 39% 2-year 27% 4-year public 34% 4-year private	**2017** 28% 2-year 29% 4-year public 43% 4-year private	**2015** 33% 2-year 22% 4-year public 45% 4-year private	**2017** 29% 2-year 34% 4-year public 36% 4-year private
2015 Average success rating* 41/100	**2017** Average success rating 42/100	**2015** Average success rating 33/100	**2017** Average success rating 34/100	**2015** Average success rating 38/100	**2017** Average success rating 70/100	**2015** Average success rating 69/100	**2017** Average success rating 76/100
36% complete or partial guided pathways adoption		45% complete or partial guided pathways adoption		50% complete or partial guided pathways adoption		62% complete or partial guided pathways adoption	

* *Respondents were asked to evaluate the success of their programs on a 1-100 scale, with a rating of 100 indicating that they had achieved overall advising success.*

IMPORTANCE OF MAKE & MODEL

To offer more insight into ideal advising situations, Tyton Partners also considered the five key elements of the advising redesign roadmap in relation to the organizational and advising models adopted by institutions. See exhibits C and D for descriptions of these models.



LEADERSHIP

How does organizational structure impact accountability for academic advising?

Overall, respondents are more likely to report clear ownership than in last year's survey.

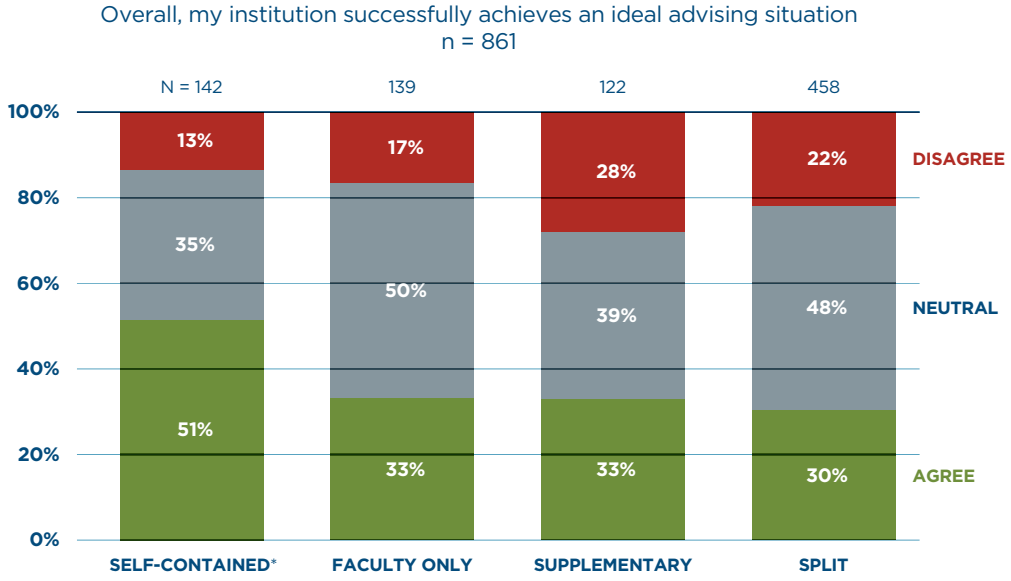
58% in 2017 vs. 46% in 2015

This is a critical first step for institutions to improve their advising function. But note that there is still work to be done: 42% of institutions saying ownership of advising is not clear is still quite high. How do institutions improve their accountability structure? It all begins with the organizational model.

Most institutions are pursuing a "Split" advising model (46%), though at larger institutions (25% of > 20,000 students enrolled) and two-years (19%) there is increased prevalence of the "Self-contained" model, while smaller institutions (31% of < 1,000 students) and four-year privates (26%) are more likely to pursue the "Faculty Only" model.

While the Split model is the most common advising model, institutions pursuing this model report below-average levels of ownership compared to the overall sample (49% vs. 58% overall).

THE MOST WIDELY USED ADVISING STRUCTURES ARE NOT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL



* *Percentages may not add to 100% in all charts due to rounding.*

On the contrary, 84% of institutions pursuing the Self-contained model report clear ownership, which is significantly higher than the overall sample. In fact, over 50% of institutions pursuing the Self-contained model achieve an ideal advising situation. Well above the overall sample average of 34%.

ADVISING CAPACITY

ADVISING CAPACITY

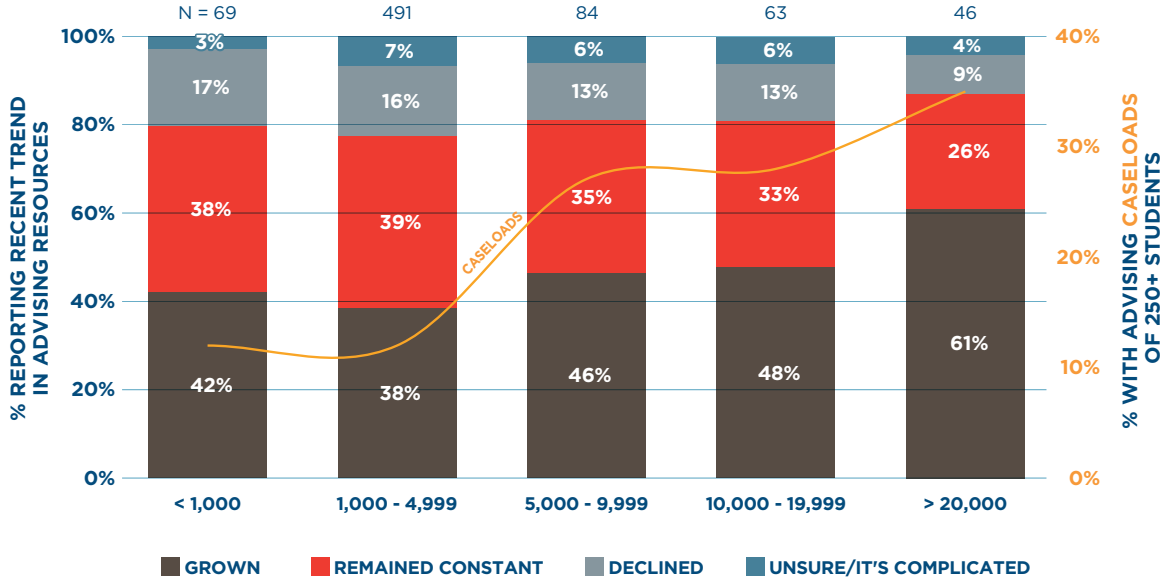
Are the institutions who need to improve advising capacity receiving reinforcements?

The level of personnel dedicated to advising seems to have grown moderately. 42% reported growth in personnel in 2017 vs. 37% in 2015. Growth in advising personnel seems to be most prominent at the largest institutions.

Is this growth sufficient for institutions? It seems intuitive that the largest institutions grow their personnel resources the fastest. However, do these institutions have the greatest need? In actuality, institutions with > 20,000 students institutions report only slightly larger caseloads than their 5,000 to 20,000 counterparts. But personnel growth at > 20,000 is much larger, suggesting that mid-sized institutions may not be receiving the resources they need to improve advising.

CASELOADS & ADVISING PERSONNEL BY INSTITUTION SIZE

Over the past three years how has the level of personnel dedicated to academic advising in your institution changed?
n= 753



More optimistically, there is greater growth this year vs. last year in technology spending. (54% in 2017 vs. 45% in 2015). Technology spending follows a similar theme as personnel by size of institution. A greater number of large institutions report growth in technology spending (40% significant growth vs. 20% under all other size brackets), further suggesting that mid-sized institutions may not have the technology capacity needed to improve advising.

ADVISING COORDINATION

ADVISING COORDINATION

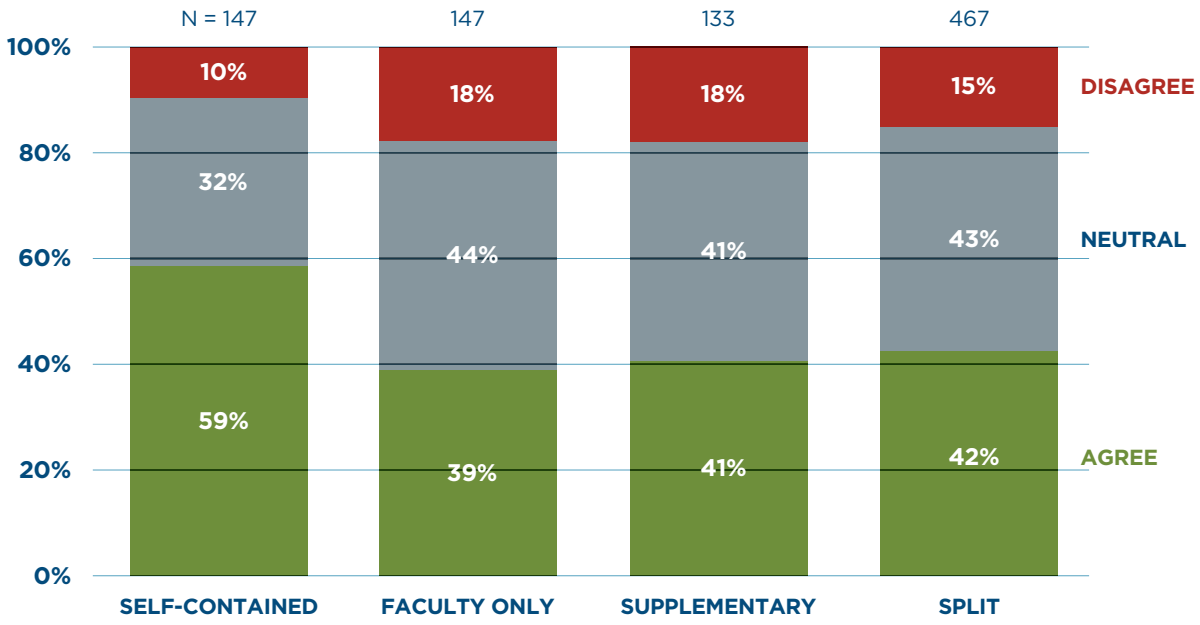
Is there coordination across departments to make for a seamless student experience?

Similar to clarity of ownership, respondents also report significantly greater advising coordination this year. The smallest and largest institutions report the greatest levels of coordination, while mid-size institutions, particularly those between 5,000 to 10,000 in enrollment struggle with coordination (45% for below 5,000 or 20,000 in enrollment, 33% for 5,000 to 10,000).

Here too, Self-contained model institutions report significantly greater cross-departmental collaboration than institutions employing all other models (59% agree vs. 45% for overall sample), suggesting that institutions employing this model have lessons to share regarding advising redesign.

THE SELF-CONTAINED ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL IS ASSOCIATED WITH STRONG COLLABORATION

Cross-departmental collaboration exists to support academic advising
n = 894



TECHNOLOGY

TECHNOLOGY

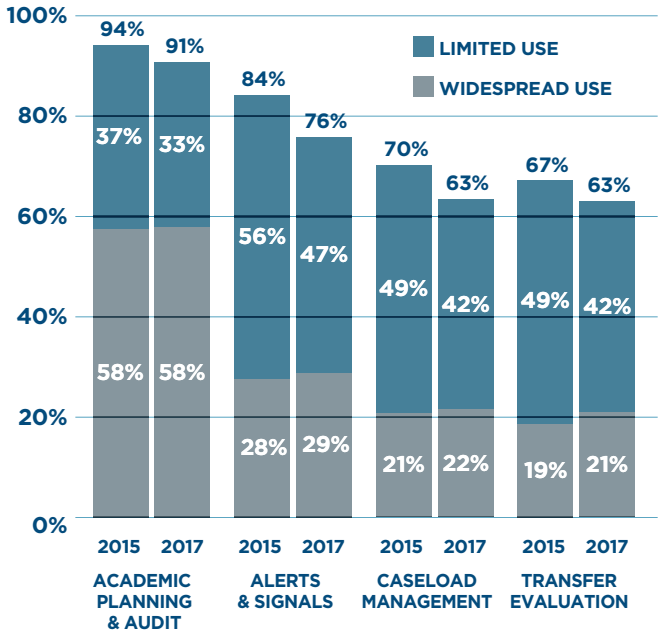
As adoption of core advising technology solutions reaches steady-state, how are institutions becoming more sophisticated in their use of advising technology?

A growing number of institutions report that technology is effectively enhancing their academic advising function (53% in 2017 vs. 32% in 2015). However, technology adoption rates for core advising functions have largely remained constant, including the following solutions:

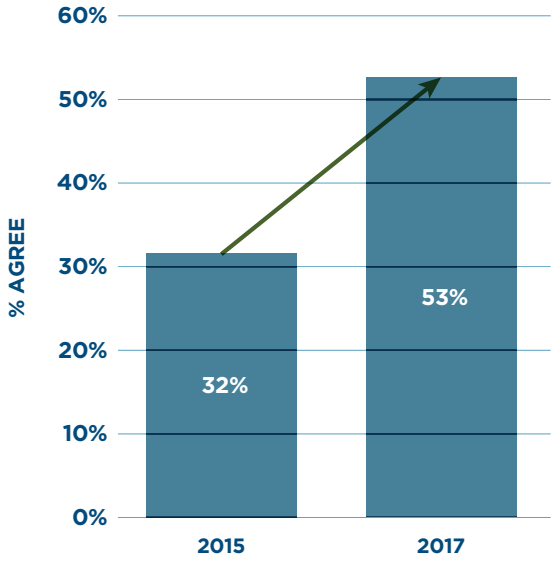
- **Academic Planning & Audit:** Roughly ~58% in both years report widespread adoption; limited adoption rates are roughly consistent though may have dropped a bit
- **Caseload Management:** 22% widespread adoption in 2017 vs. 21% in 2015; limited adoption rates seem to have dropped to 42% in 2017 from 49% in 2015
- **Alerts & Signals:** 29% widespread adoption in 2017 vs. 28% in 2015
- **Transfer Evaluation:** 21% widespread adoption in 2017 vs. 19% in 2015

POSITIVE VIEW OF TECHNOLOGY AND WIDESPREAD USE FOR CORE ADVISING FUNCTIONS

Which of the following academic advising functions does your institution use technology to support?
n (2017) = 1,274



Technology effectively enhances our academic advising function
n (2017) = 1,180



Despite the growing number of institutions reporting that technology is effectively enhancing their advising function, users' overall satisfaction with technology products decreased by 7%. We measured satisfaction using the Net Promoter Score, an index ranging from -100 to 100 that measures the willingness of users to recommend products others based on the one basic question of: "How likely are you to recommend the product you are most familiar with to a colleague in your institution?"

So how have institutions made more effective use of technology? Several emerging solutions have allowed institutions to make better use of limited resources. Impact assessment and resource allocation solutions allow institutions to see where resources are best invested, as opposed to simply adopting new solutions blindly. Whereas only 7% of institutions use these tools on a widespread basis across the institution, an additional 35% are experimenting with the tools on a limited basis.

While Academic Planning & Audit solution adoption has plateaued, 56% of institutions are at least piloting Career Planning tools that can help students better direct their course/degree planning efforts based on their desired career path. We share much more about these emerging technologies in Part 2 of this series.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

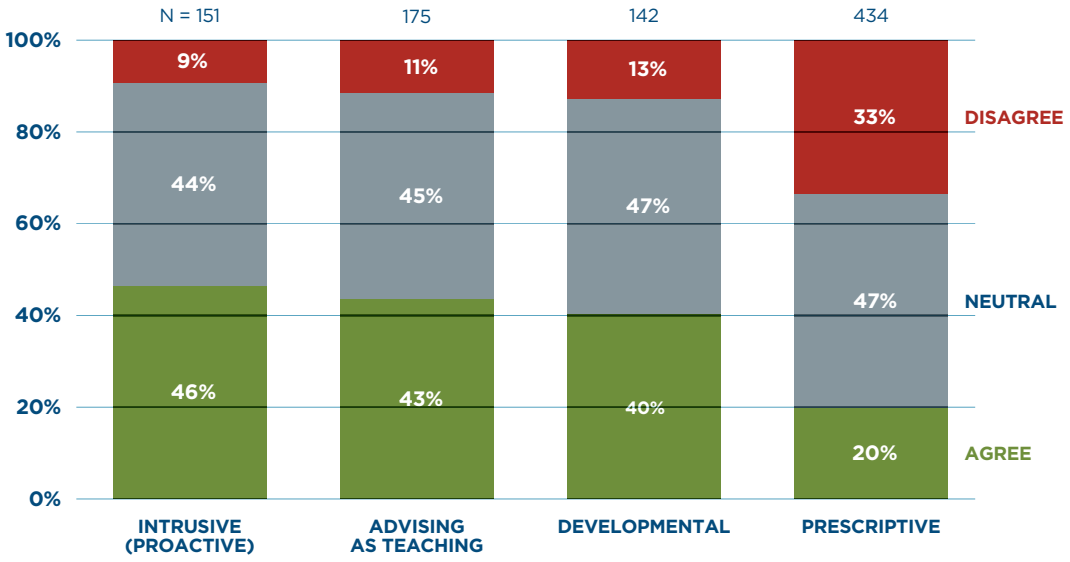
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

What are some approaches for institutions to encourage students to take advantage of advising resources?

The prescriptive advising model is considered to be the least successful in achieving an ideal advising situation.

THE MOST POPULAR ADVISING MODELS ARE NOT NECESSARILY SUCCESSFUL

Overall, my institution successfully achieves an ideal advising situation
n = 902



Prescriptive advising is linear communication from the advisor to the advisee and places most of the responsibility not on the student, but on the advisor.[9] It is most commonly associated with helping a student complete their degree plan. Despite many advisors' desire to be less of a transactional service and more a transformational part of students' educational experiences, students are more engaged when advisors dispense information about courses and schedules and prescribe solutions for problems the student encounters.[10]

This plays a part in the emergence of guided pathways. Guided pathways is described as courses in the context of highly structured, educationally coherent program maps that align with students' goals for careers and further education.[11]

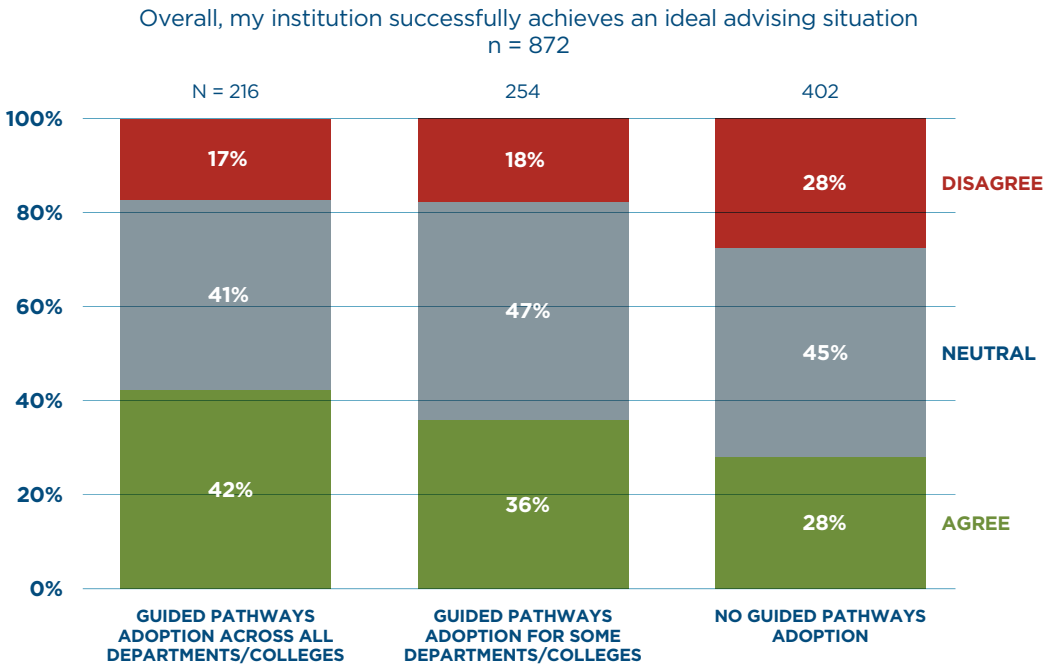
9. Missouri State, *Theories of Advising*, August 2017.
10. Robert F. Pettay, Vice-Chair, Kansas Academic Advising Network (KAAN), *Making the Transition from Prescriptive Advising to Advising as Teaching*, June 2007.
11. Community College Resource Center (CCRC), Teacher College, Columbia University, *What We Know About Guided Pathways*, March 2015.

60% of institutions are aware of guided pathways and 48% have adopted pathways in at least some departments or colleges. Awareness and adoption are highest at two-year institutions (61% have adopted vs. 46% at four-year publics and 31% at four-year privates) and larger institutions (56% with > 20,000 students enrolled vs. 40% with under 1,000, and 47% with between 1,000 to 5,000 students).

Most institutions think about academic program structure (i.e., programs are fully mapped out and aligned with further education and career advancement) when they think about pathways (74% said this is included in their definition vs. 46% for the next highest answer).

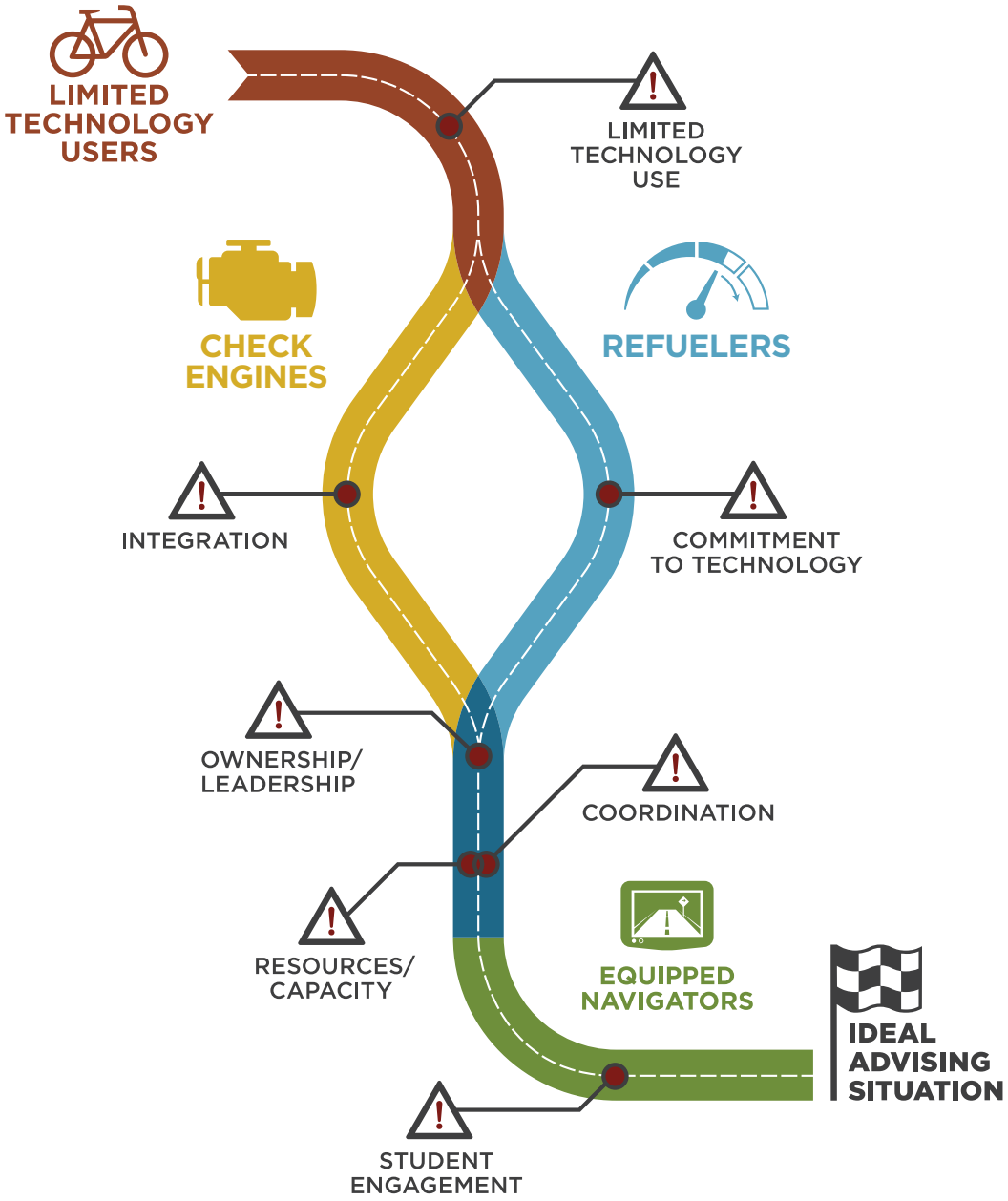
Pathways institutions exhibit greater advising success. The level of adoption across campus is correlated with the degree to which they believe advising is succeeding:

GUIDED PATHWAYS ADOPTION IS POSITIVELY CORRELATED WITH ADVISING SUCCESS



ROAD TO IDEAL ADVISING

Each institutional segment represents a point on the road toward an ideal advising situation. In some cases, an institution may have encountered a detour, such as lack of clear ownership, and needs to get back on a path to success. Other institutions have barely begun the journey and are not yet prioritizing advising as a path toward improving student success and persistence. Even Equipped Navigators, who may feel that they are out ahead of the roadblocks, may encounter hazards going forward.



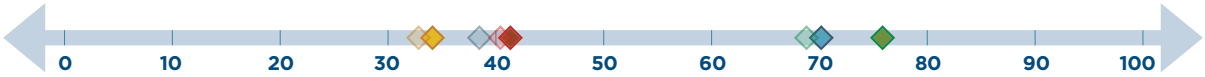
The relevance of each intervention in the redesign roadmap, as well as broad actions in each area, are described below. While the specific priorities will be different for each segment's institutions, these focus areas have emerged as critical for transforming the advising function.

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

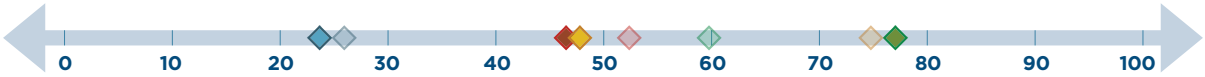
ATTITUDINAL SEGMENTATION

In order to help us understand your institution, please use the sliders below to indicate where your institution's values and priorities fall on these dimensions
n = 1,065

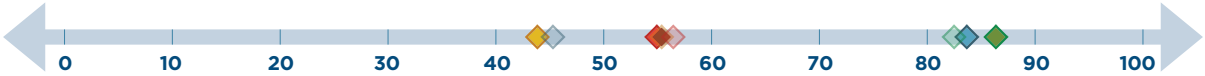
OVERALL, MY INSTITUTION SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVES AN IDEAL ADVISING SITUATION



INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY (OVER PEOPLE) HAS THE GREATEST POTENTIAL TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC ADVISING



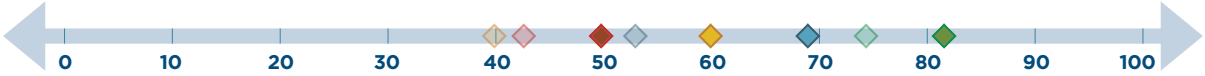
CLEAR OWNERSHIP OF ACADEMIC ADVISING EXISTS AT MY INSTITUTION



CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION EXISTS TO SUPPORT ACADEMIC ADVISING



TECHNOLOGY EFFECTIVELY ENHANCES OUR ACADEMIC ADVISING FUNCTION



0-30: Disagree **31-70:** Neutral **71-100:** Agree

LIMITED TECHNOLOGY USERS 2015 2017

CHECK ENGINES 2015 2017

REFUELERS 2015 2017

EQUIPPED NAVIGATORS 2015 2017

Similar to 2015, the four institutional segments cut across different sizes and types of institutions in 2017. Of note, every segment reports more success than two years ago. Gains varied between segments, (e.g., Check Engines barely budged, and Refuelers leaped forward).



Institutions that fall in the **Limited Technology Users** segment report less belief in the potential of technology and less clear ownership of advising in 2017 than in 2015. Conversely, they report more cross-departmental collaboration and technological effectiveness.



Check Engines report the least success and report less ownership over the advising process and less collaboration to support advising. In fact, Check Engines report less success, ownership, and collaboration than Limited Technology Users. Despite these lower numbers, they reported an increase in overall success in 2017 vs. 2015. This is likely due to a 50% increase in technological effectiveness.



Two years ago, **Refuelers** were similar to Check Engines on most dimensions – hence, the Low Fuel title. Now, Refuelers are closest to Equipped Navigators on nearly all dimensions. Refuelers report that technology is enhancing their advising function. This is particularly interesting for Refuelers, given their belief in investing in people over technology.



The **Equipped Navigators** segment reports improvements across the board. Similar to Refuelers, Equipped Navigators both report a high level of success and share solid ownership and coordination around advising. They differ starkly from Refuelers only in their preferred investment target (people vs. technology). This illustrates that there are multiple paths to establishing a successful advising program (i.e., not a one-size-fits-all solution).

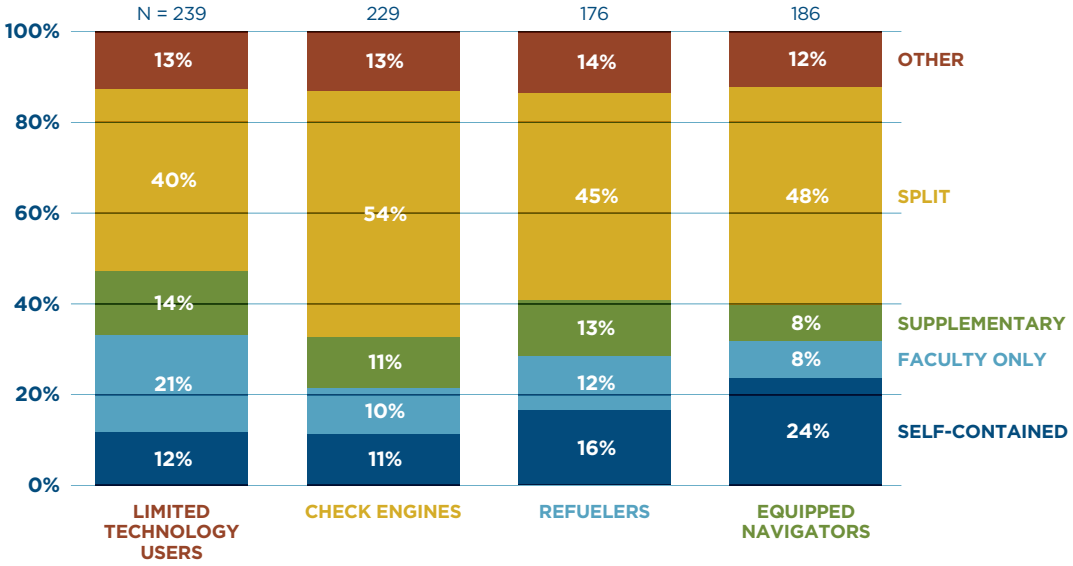
What sets successful segments apart?

In 2015, only Equipped Navigators considered themselves successful in advising their students. The landscape has changed this year, in that Equipped Navigator and Refueler institutions both consider themselves successful, despite some fundamental differences – namely, the degree to which they prioritize people over technology.

In regards to organizational model, the successful segments of Equipped Navigators and Refuelers are less likely to use Split models, and more likely to use Self-contained advising centers.

SUCCESSFUL SEGMENTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO USE SPLIT MODELS, MORE LIKELY TO USE SELF-CONTAINED ADVISING CENTERS

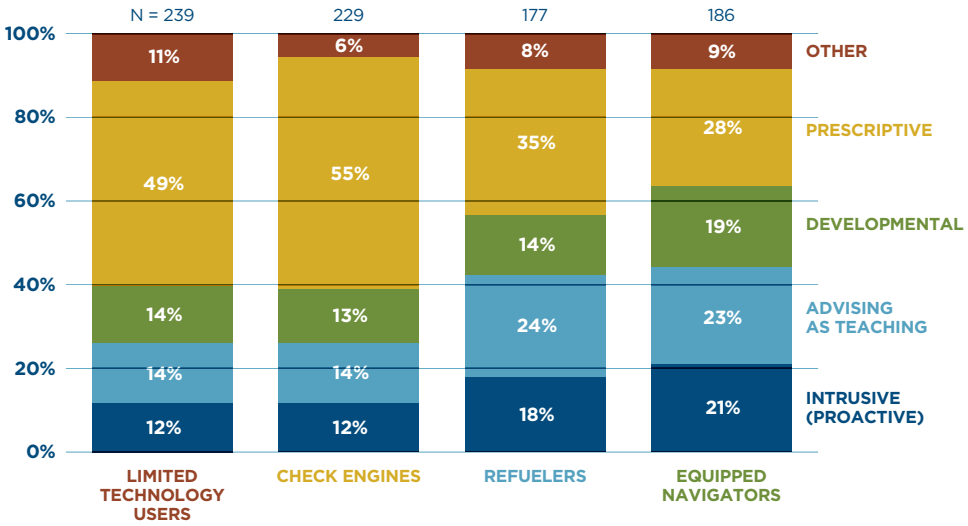
Which of the following models best describes how academic advising is organized at your institution?
n = 830



Regarding advising model, Check Engines are pursuing prescriptive advising by a wide margin. Yet, they report the least amount of perceived overall success, clear ownership, and cross-departmental collaboration. It should also be noted that the pursuit of prescriptive advising is negatively correlated with overall success, clear ownership, and cross-departmental collaboration across all four segments (i.e., as the pursuit of prescriptive advising increases, the reports of overall success, clear ownership, and cross-departmental collaboration decrease).

SUCCESSFUL SEGMENTS FAVOR LESS PRESCRIPTIVE ADVISING MODELS

In your opinion, which of the following best describes the type of academic advising that occurs at your institution?
n = 831



A WORD ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

These segments can also be compared based on student outcomes (i.e., graduation and retention rates as reported in the National Center for Educational Center's Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System). However, comparisons between segments based on these outcomes are premature. This is only the second study of our initiative and these outcomes are lagging indicators – the most recent data in IPEDS is from 2015 or earlier. It is too early to draw conclusions about outcomes between the segments as representative samples of institutions nationwide. In future studies, we will be able to compare the lagging student outcome indicators against the leading indicators of overall student success, clear ownership, technology effectiveness, etc.

Nevertheless, Tyton Partners can compare individual institutions against a select group of other institutions in similar or dissimilar segments based on student outcomes. By painting with a finer brush, we can more easily and accurately ascertain the differences between the leading and lagging indicators for an institution, and how those indicators compare across subsets of like or unlike institutions.

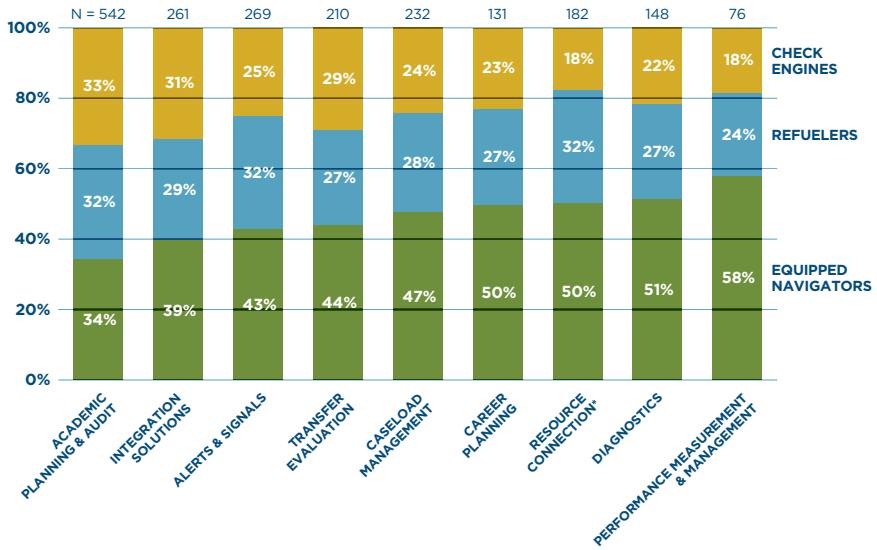
FILL 'ER UP

What have Refuelers done to achieve success while still maintaining their emphasis on personnel?

1. **Adopted technology to support advising.** 2015 data showed Refuelers adopting technology at a greater rate than Check Engines, even though they reported being less favorably disposed toward technology. That trend holds in our most recent survey: Refuelers again report more widespread use of technology to support core advising functions than do Check Engines. This is true despite Refuelers not having increased technology spending at a rate greater than Check Engines since 2015.

EQUIPPED NAVIGATORS TEND TO BE OVERREPRESENTED AMONG TECHNOLOGY ADOPTERS

Which of the following academic advising functions does your institution use technology to support?
n = 981

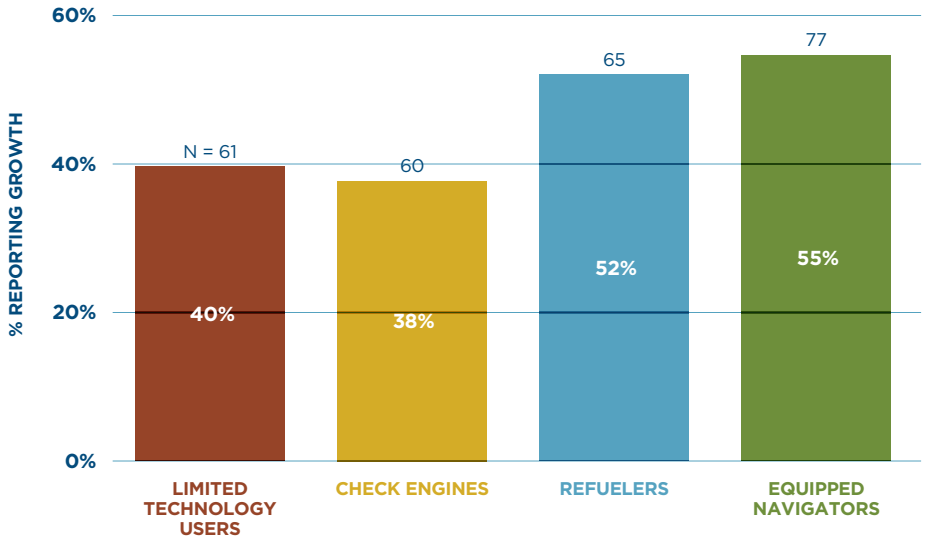


* *We combined the student services categories of Academic, Life Skills, and Aid, Benefits & Wellness as well as the Co-curricular Recognition category under Resource Connection. See Part 2: The Supplier Landscape for more details.*

2. **Hired more advising personnel.** Like Equipped Navigators, Refuelers were more likely than Check Engines or Limited Technology Users to report that the size of their advising staff had grown over the last three years.

SUCCESSFUL SEGMENTS INVEST IN ADVISING PERSONNEL

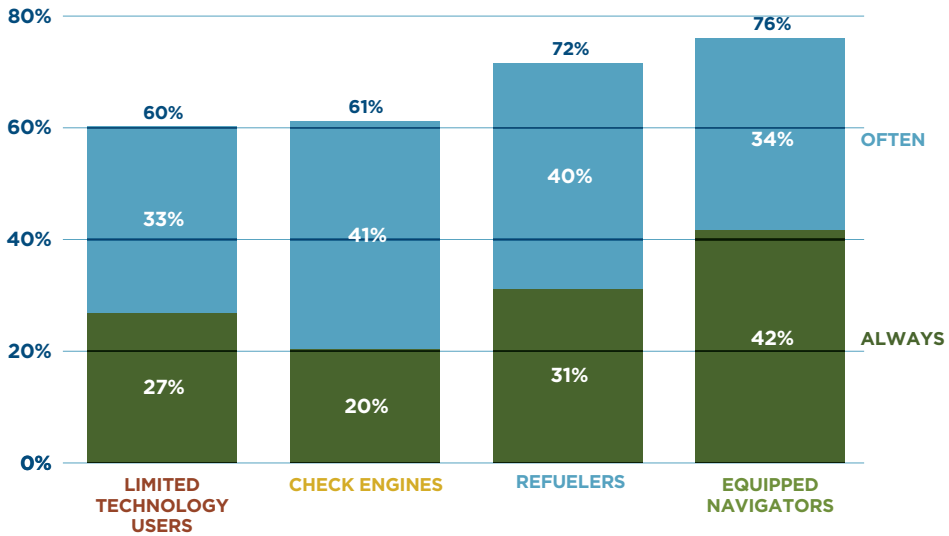
Over the past three years, how has the level of personnel dedicated to academic advising in your institution changed?
n = 579



Which, in turn, helped Refuelers more effectively manage their advising caseloads.

SUCCESSFUL SEGMENTS ARE BETTER ABLE TO MANAGE THEIR ADVISING CASELOADS

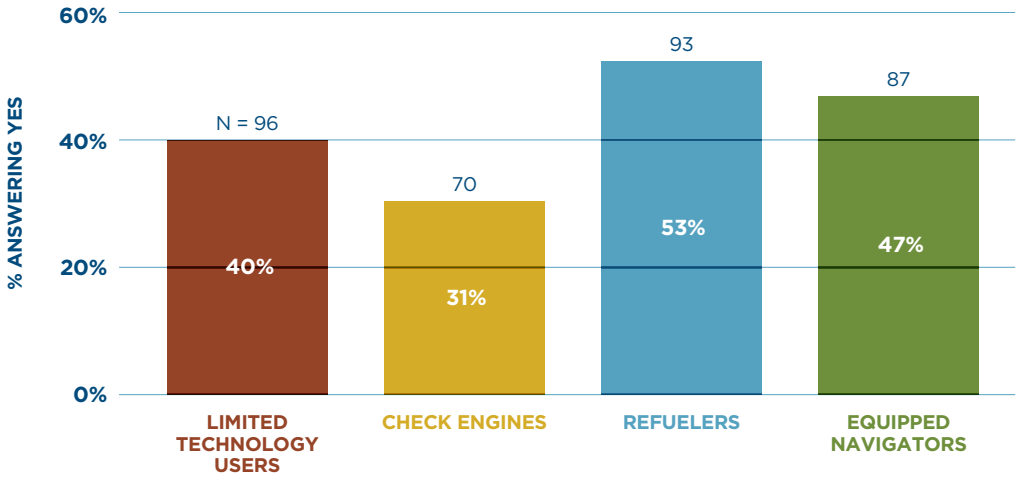
Is your caseload size manageable to effectively meet the needs of your students?
n = 362



3. **Assigned ownership over the advising process to a single individual.** Across the institutional segments, Refuelers were most likely to report that a single individual holds overall responsibility for the academic advising program at their institution. This underlies the strong clarity of ownership reported by this group as indicated earlier in the stakeholder perspectives. It also indicates advising improvements may be achieved through reorganization of existing resources, and not necessarily by spending on additional resources.

SUCCESSFUL SEGMENTS ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITY OVER ADVISING TO A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL

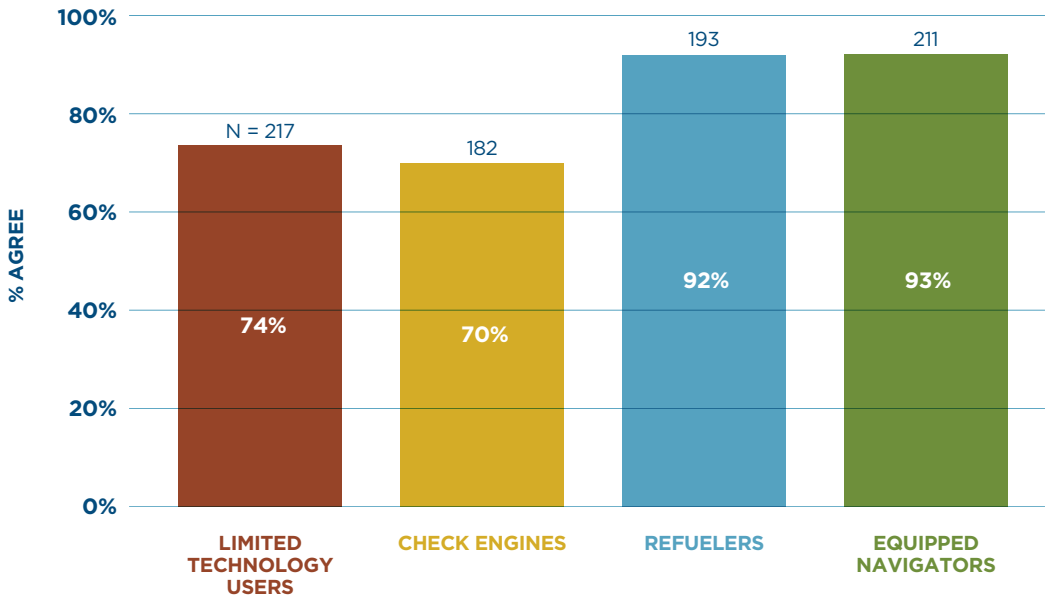
Is there one individual with overall responsibility for academic advising at your institution?
n = 827



4. **Committed to improving upon their advising programs.** Most importantly, Refuelers have demonstrated an institutional commitment to advising redesign under the axiom of, "You can't manage what you can't measure." Refuelers measure the success of advising at their institutions in line with Equipped Navigators and far more than Check Engines, and Refuelers are also more likely to report that advising redesign is a strategic priority at their institutions than Check Engines.

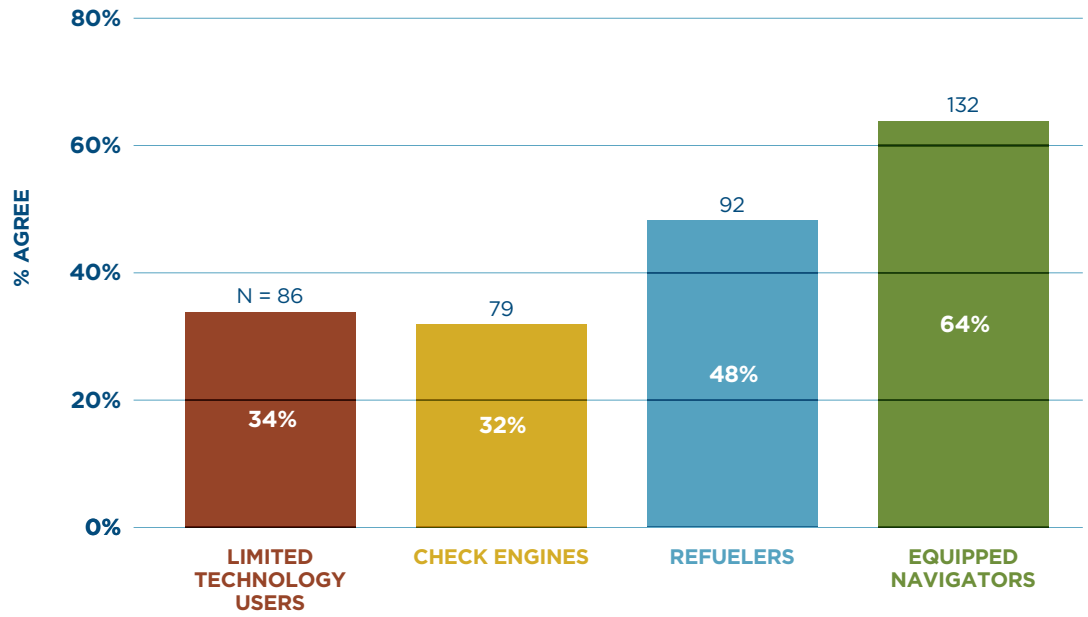
SUCCESSFUL SEGMENTS EVALUATE THE SUCCESS OF THEIR ADVISING PROGRAMS

The success of academic advising is assessed at my institution
n = 990



SUCCESSFUL SEGMENTS ARE COMMITTED TO ADVISING REDESIGN

Redesign of academic advising is included in my institution's strategic plan
n = 900



SEGMENT-BY-SEGMENT BARRIERS

The main barriers that institutions face in improving academic advising vary by institutional segment.

TOP 5 BARRIERS TO IMPROVING THE UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ADVISING FUNCTION

	LIMITED TECHNOLOGY USERS	CHECK ENGINES	REFUELERS	EQUIPPED NAVIGATORS
1	Lack of coordination across departments (38%)	Lack of coordination across departments (45%)	Limited budget (48%)	Students are not taking advantage of resources (55%)
2	Limited budget (35%)	Faculty resistance to change (40%)	Students are not taking advantage of resources (47%)	Limited budget (43%)
3	Lack of professional development/ training opportunities (35%)	Limited budget (35%)	Too few advisors (44%)	Too few advisors (42%)
4	Faculty resistance to change (34%)	Poor accountability for institutional outcomes (35%)	Faculty resistance to change (30%)	Technical integration challenges (31%)
5	Too few advisors (32%)	Lack of professional development/ training opportunities (33%)	Lack of coordination across departments (29%)	Lack of coordination across departments (29%)

Like in 2015, budget and resources are concerns across all segments, but some nuances also emerge between segments.

- Limited budget is no longer the primary concern of Limited Technology Users, and is less of a barrier than as indicated by the Refuelers and Equipped Navigators.
- Lack of coordination across departments is at the top of the list for Limited Technology Users and Check Engines, but at the bottom for Refuelers and Equipped Navigators.

- Students not taking advantage of resources is by far the top barrier for Equipped Navigators. It is the second barrier for Refuelers immediately following limited budget. These data points demonstrate that despite the best efforts of institutions to promote student success through advising redesign and technology adoption, not all students are engaged with advising on their campuses.
- Too few advisors appeared on the list for the first time for three of the four segments - Limited Technology Users, Refuelers, and Equipped Navigators.
- Only Equipped Navigators ranked technical integration challenges on their list in 2017. This echoes our findings in Part 2 of this year's series which demonstrates that institutions using fully integrated technology solutions – which Equipped Navigators are more prone to do – are less likely to report overall success with their academic advising functions.

CONCLUSION

Interventions to improve advising vary in importance and impact based on where an institution is currently on the road to ideal advising. Institutions can locate where they are on that road to success by benchmarking themselves against their peer institutions according to institutional segment. These benchmarks act as standards or points of reference, allowing an institution to discover the best advising performance being achieved and what barriers are preventing that institution from equaling or exceeding best in class.

Contact Tyton Partners (***drivetodegree@tytonpartners.com***) to learn more about how we can assist in the process of advising redesign and discover how to benchmark your institution's performance. In an era when too few students are graduating with career-ready degrees, academic advising has an enormous opportunity to meet or exceed the rising expectations for degree completion.

WHO IS TYTON PARTNERS?



Tyton Partners is the leading provider of investment banking and strategy consulting services to the education sector and leverages its deep transactional and advisory experience to support a range of clients including companies, foundations, institutions, and investors.

In higher education, Tyton Partners' consulting practice offers a unique spectrum of services that supports institutions and companies to develop and implement strategies for revenue diversification and growth, student persistence and success, and innovations in teaching & learning technology.

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Tyton Partners supports the work of both institutions and vendors in the education market. Any mention of particular vendors or institutions in this report serves to illustrate our observations on the evolution of this market. They do not represent an endorsement in any way. Finally, any errors, omissions, or inconsistencies in this publication are the responsibility of Tyton Partners alone.

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APPENDIX

EXHIBIT A: RESPONDENT ATTRIBUTES

RESPONDENT ATTRIBUTES

Functional area, role, and years in position
n = 1,313

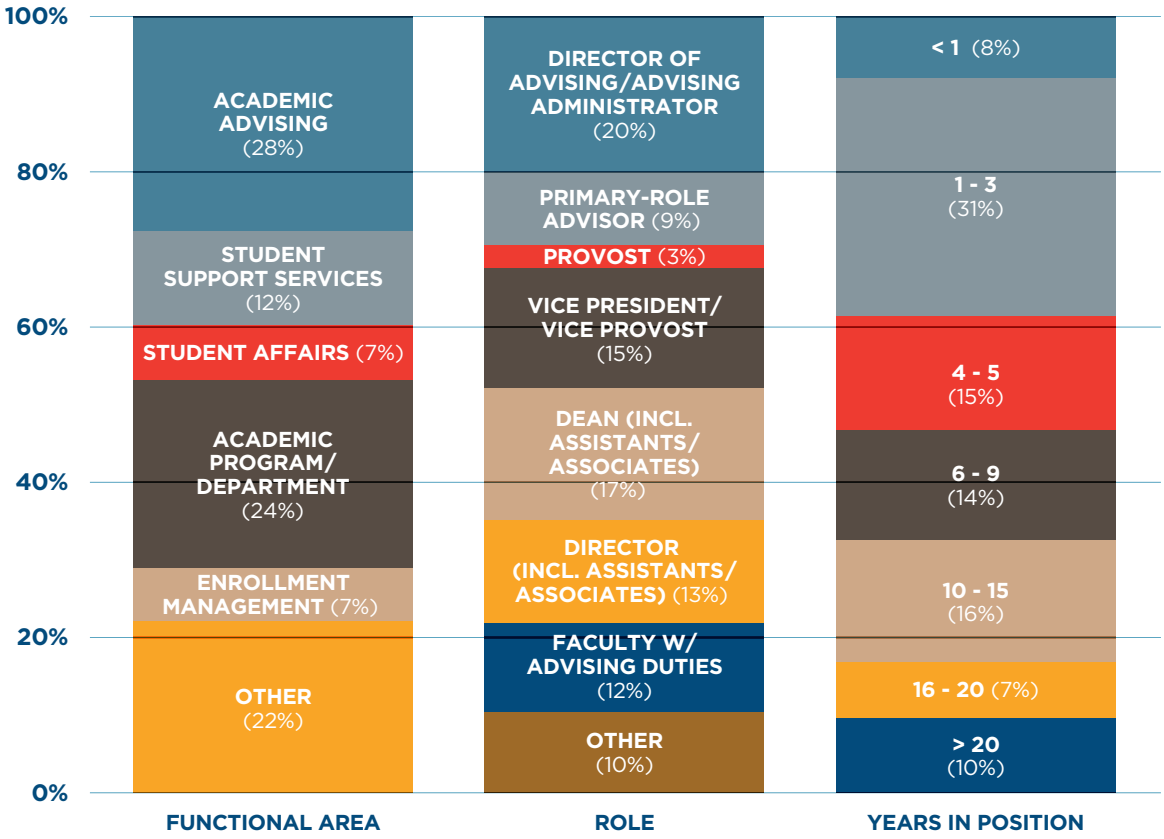

EXHIBIT B: INSTITUTION ATTRIBUTES

INSTITUTION ATTRIBUTES

Institutional size and type
n = 1,313

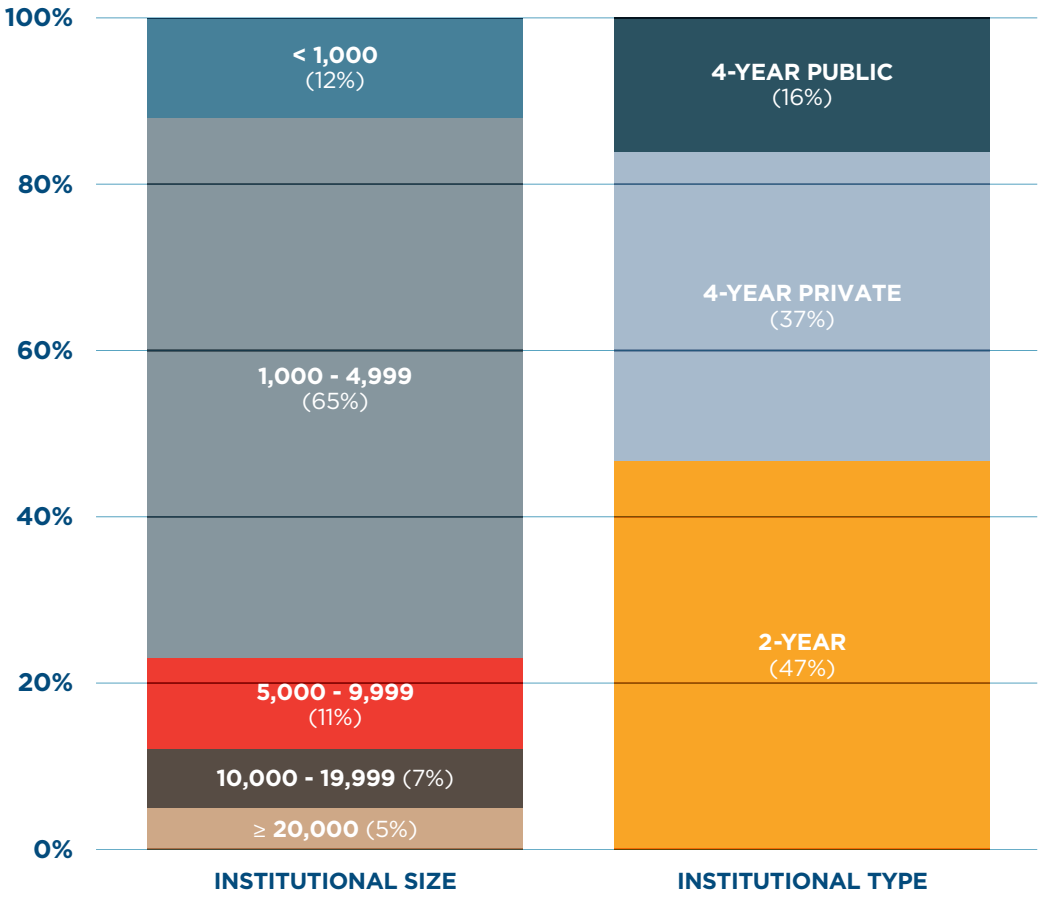

EXHIBIT C: ADVISING MODEL DEFINITIONS

ADVISING MODEL DEFINITIONS

ADVISING MODEL	DEFINITION
Prescriptive	Offer course and degree information and prescribe solutions for academic problems
Developmental	Focus on the whole student, facilitating students' non-cognitive skills
Teaching as Advising	Connect students with who they are, what they are learning, and who they want to become
Intrusive (Proactive)	Incorporate intervention strategies for students who otherwise might not seek advising

EXHIBIT D: ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL DEFINITIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL DEFINITIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL	DEFINITION
Self-contained	All advising occurs in a center that is staffed primarily by primary-role advisors
Faculty Only	All students are assigned to a department advisor, usually a professor from the student's academic discipline
Supplementary	Students are assigned to a department advisor (usually faculty), but there is a central administrative unit with primary-role advisors to support the department advisors by providing resources and training
Split	Advising is carried out by faculty in their departments, as well as primary-role advisors of an advising center responsible for a particular subset of students (e.g., those who are undecided on a major, freshmen, those on academic probation)

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