

Workshop - Transforming Your Advising Program and Student Experience Through Collaboration, Communication, and Consistency!

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Abstract - The Department of Engineering Education at Virginia Tech is home to all General Engineering students, which primarily consists of first-year engineering students. Our department actively promotes a culture of positive advising and faculty excellence to support student development, advancement, and success. When given the opportunity to develop an advising program for the General Engineering population of students, we wanted to develop a holistic first-year advising program that aligned with our department's vision of preparing our students to be exceptional engineers and educators while serving as an international beacon for engineering and research.

Index Terms - body of knowledge, classification scheme, first-year taxonomy.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

There are approximately 2,300 undergraduate students in the Department of Engineering Education. With such a large advising case load we have to look at creative ways to help us manage this volume of students and provide them with the best academic advising experience possible.

We have actively sought out meetings with constituents across campus (advisors in the degree granting engineering majors, the honors program, the counseling center, the international center, career services, etc) to learn more about the services they provide and how we can better represent them when engaging with our students. This has helped us build great partnerships with a variety of offices on campus.

We have learned and implemented new technologies to help us improve our efficiency so we can stay ahead of student needs and be proactive rather than reactive. Examples include an on-line sign up tool for scheduling appointments; a card swipe system that allows the student to swipe their student ID card and we immediately see the student's information, the number of times we've met, and what our previous conversations were about; training in web development so we now have full control over our public website and can tailor it to what our students need and want; implementation of a document management system to replace paper folders so that all

documents related to a student are stored in one on-line system.

All of this combined as allowed us to provide students with the information they need in a multitude of ways which has led to better conversations in our one-on-one meetings with students. When students move on to a degree granting major, those advisors are seeing more knowledgeable students with well-established plans..

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this workshop, attendees will be able to:

- Identify strategies to build relationships in their department, college, and university
- Select appropriate approaches to managing the time necessary to advise large student populations
- Develop new initiatives to improve collaboration, communication, and consistency
- Describe new technologies to increase efficiency in advising programs