Executive Summary

The Advising office provides academic advising for all new students until they reach the 25 credit hour mark. The objective of the advising process is to successfully transition new students into the College of Lake County by helping them establish goals and a plan for completion. When the student is integrated, at about the 30 credit hour mark, they should be prepared to transition to more specialized advising with a faculty advisor (career programs) or counselor (transfer programs).

Advising at the College of Lake County is a shared model, with departments across the College working together to advise the student during the different stages of their educational career. There is central intact process; where by all new students begin in advising. From Advising, students are transitioned according to their individual needs and development. The academic advisor is a generalist, focused on getting the student established at the college, helping him create academic and career goals, drafting a plan for completion of goals, and making appropriate referrals. All students are transitioned out of advising at the 30 credit hour mark, to receive more specialized advising with a counselor or faculty member during the latter part of their time at CLC.

The Advising department is affected by many other departments because Advising is the initial point of entry for all students and because the advisors are generalist making diagnostic referrals for each student based on their specific needs.

Departments affecting advising include:

New Student Orientation (NSO)
Admissions
The advising department was created only seven years ago and spent the first five years getting established and integrating with existing departments and services. The past two years, with the help of the Academic Standards and Holds AQIP, the department has made some significant strides forward. The growth of the staff has slow and cost-conscious, with the quality improvements to NSO advising and as the department has expanded to all three campuses. There is good momentum and positive staff investment in the changes that are being implemented. The only threat to this continued upward trajectory is not maintaining adequate staffing levels to sustain all the services and communication barriers between departments and the student. The focus for the next five year will be to fully implement and maintain all the recent changes that have happened in the past two years. An investment in additional advisors and academic planning software are needed to accomplish this goal.

Academic advising at CLC was identified as an AQIP project during the fall 2006 semester. The problems with the current system was evident through low advising ratings on student surveys (Noel-Levitz, CCSSE, ACT), concerns reflected on faculty and staff surveys, and feedback in the AQIP systems portfolio report which indicated that we needed to intervene with students earlier, be more proactive and not rely on students to take the initiative, address the needs of
part-time and continuing students (as well as full-time and new students), and recognize that although our performance gap mirrors that of other large community colleges, there are things that we can do to improve the situation.

The College of Lake County AQIP Advising Team was formed and carried out their charge to review the current system for advising students at CLC as well as review processes at other colleges. Recommendations for improvements to CLC’s advising processes and systems was made based on focus group reports, benchmark research, as well as a consultant’s recommendations. The Advising Team recommended the College create a New Student Advising Center.

The Advising office provides academic advising for all new students until they reach the 25 credit hour mark. The focus is to successfully transition new students into the College of Lake County and help them establish their goals and a plan for completion before the student transitions to more specialized advising with a faculty advisor or counselor.

An advising mission statement was created by the College Advising Committee in 2010. The mission statement was built on the CLC mission statement, with specific emphasis on College commitment to “advance student success and strengthen the diverse communities we serve.”

The advising staff then modified the statement and added values to represent the specific work of the department. The advising staff made careful consideration for the CLC strategic goal to “Advance student learning and success.” The department has fulfilled this goal by working to “improve the retention of first-year students” and other special at-risk populations and “increase student performance and momentum toward completion.”
**Mission Statement:**

The Academic Advising Office exists to facilitate the successful transition of new students into the College of Lake County. Advising is an intentional partnership between the student and the advisor, focused on the development and achievement of academic and career goals.

**Values:**

Professionalism: we will consistently provide student-centered advising and good customer service.

Respect: we will value the diversity of our students and treat each student as an individual.

Learning: We will move students toward autonomy by teaching them how to achieve their goals.

Over the course of the last seven years, the department has evolved and grown. Given that the department is relatively new and has been in perpetual growth since 2008, positions have been added but none have been eliminated. At this time, all staff positions are fulfilling key responsibilities with the department and no functions or roles are obsolete or should be reassigned.

In the next 5 years, the department expects an increase in student contacts because an increasing number of students return each semester to see an advisor. On recommendation of the Academic Standards and Holds AQIP committee, the College is leaning toward requiring all...
new students to see an advisor before or during their first term. The department is also piloting a designated advisor/case load model to see if this approach affects student success. Advisors are significantly more involved at the College since 2008, including regular services on AQIP and other College committees, liaisons relationships with academic divisions, student organizations, and key offices, and special outreach for special needs and at-risk populations including athletes, Veterans, international students, and home school students. This expansion is good for the students, but the department will need more advisors in the near future to sustain the current work load.

**Infrastructure and resources (10 pages)**

Under the direct supervision of the Dean of Counseling, Advising, and Transfer, The Director of Academic Advising has the authority to communicate on behalf of the department, within department and across departments. With consultation from the Dean and appropriate constituencies, the Director makes decisions on behalf of the Advising department. The Director supervises 15 specialists (6 full-time advisors, 8 part-time advisors, and the Manager of New Student Programs) and 3 classified staff members. The advising department provides a critical service to new students, which directly impacts student success and satisfaction. Though this work is vital for these reasons, the department does not fulfill any larger, external or legal obligations on behalf of the College.

Job summaries for each position are listed below:
Director, Academic Advising

The Director of Advising reports to the Dean of Counseling, Advising and Transfer and is responsible for the day to day operation of the advising and new student orientation offices. This position is responsible for the implementation and on-going administration of the advising office including hiring, training and supervising advising staff; supervising the Manager, New Student Programs and providing leadership for the New Student Orientation (NSO) and Succeed at CLC programs; working closely with academic divisions and the counseling office in transitioning students from advisors to counseling and teaching faculty; developing systems, programs and activities which provide timely and accurate advising information to students and the college community; and coordinating the delivery and promotion of college-wide advising services as the Chair person for the Advising Committee.

Manager, New Student Programs

Under the supervision of the Director of Advising, the Manger of New Student Programs coordinates New Student Orientation (NSO) and Succeed at CLC programming, designed to support students in achieving their academic goals. This person is responsible for the daily oversight of both the NSO and Succeed programs including supervision of a full-time clerk, the Ambassador Program Coordinator (specialist) and 25 student ambassadors, planning details for more than 300 events per year (room reservations, catering, staffing, promotion, registration management, and event implementation). The New Student Orientation department coordinates 150 on campus NSOs for approximately 3000 recent high school graduates per year
and maintains an online orientation to meet the needs of all other students. The Manager of New Student Programs works with the Succeed Programming Committee to coordinates a calendar of campus wide academic support programming, marketing for these programs, and student staff support for all Succeed events. The Succeed at CLC program includes the annual Freshman Seminar (1000a attendees), the Succeed at CLC conference (200), The Study Zone program (4 per week with tutors and staff), and the academic support and leadership workshop series.

Professional Academic Advisor (14)

This position is responsible for providing academic advising, information, and support to students who are new to CLC as well as to continuing students with specified academic advising needs. The position also assists with the development and implementation of workshops for New Student Orientation, Succeed at CLC, and the Succeed Leadership program. Advisors are expected to conduct workshops on a regular basis and must be comfortable doing presentations. In addition to generalist academic advising responsibilities, advising assignments may include a special emphasis on specific populations of students, such as international students, veterans, athletes, and students in specific occupational/career programs and transfer disciplines.

Office Associate (1)

The academic advising office associate provides secretarial support to the Director of Academic Advising and the Manager, New Student Programs. She or he also assists with the day to day
operations of the advising office and provides support to the advisors and office assistants. This position requires an in-depth knowledge of departmental procedures, excellent customer service and problem solving skills and exercises judgment while adhering to College procedure.

Office Assistant (2)

Under the administrative supervision of the Director, the Clerks perform clerical and receptionist duties including, but not limited to, assisting students (in-person and over the phone) by providing basic information on counseling services, procedures, policies, etc., and referring students to advisors or division office personnel as appropriate. Clerks assist students in class registration, printing transcripts, applying to the college, and creating their login for MyStudentCenter. Clerks must have solid customer service skills, as position requires a high level of student interaction.

The department has made good use of the advising staff throughout a sustained 7 year period of growth. The department now offers advising at all three campuses and for all NSO events (200/year). For cost savings, part-time seasonal advisors have been utilized to maximize staffing during registration periods, when the department has the highest level of student contact. With changes to NSO (30 minute advising appointments and academic plans for completion) the current structure is no longer affective. During the spring and summer 2015, the office closed regularly to staff NSOs. This meant continuing students seeking advising were turned away, as much as 17 hours/month. In addition, the advisors are now extensively involved in the Succeed at CLC academic support program. The College is moving toward
mandatory advising for all new students and, should this be implemented, additional staff members and staff hours will be needed. The part-time advisors are needed year-round and additional staff should be added in the next five years.

The advising process is primarily a 1on-1 format at CLC. Almost all advising interactions happen in person, in an advisor’s office. In the near future, the mode of advising will need to be expanded to offer more options for continued student satisfaction and to meet the needs of online learners. The student intake and matriculation processes have changed with the addition of academic success coaches and the one new one-stop enrollment center. The methods of accesses student academic information and academic planning are disjointed and not conducive to interdepartmental collaboration for student success. Student notes and records are kept in three different, disconnected systems which creates communication barriers between recruitment, advising, academic coaching, counseling, financial aid, and faculty advisors. For this reason, students are bounced around and information gets lost between departments, creating a barrier to student success. In the next five years, the College needs to invest in a technology solution for student academic planning to better coordinate the academic support services for each student.

The Advising office is a new and nicely furnished. The problem is that we need more space and the space we have should be configured in a more practical, useful way. The individual offices are quite spacious, but we need more offices total and a better reception area. Currently, the advisors are sharing office space between shifts to keep the office staffed from 8:00am –
8:00pm, but even with sharing the department is facing limitations and will need more office space in the next few years.

The reception area is very cramped and the work space for the front office staff is limited. There is often congestion in the reception area, which is unpleasant for students and is not a conducive environment for the classified staff to work on projects. There is a really need for a shared check-in/reception area and waiting area for Advising and Counseling. Several times per year our offices use the hallways to accommodate this need, but it is disruptive to the surrounding offices, looks unprofessional, and creates an unpleasant experience for students and staff. The renovation of the student services offices and the creation of a centralized Welcome Center will address many of the space issues for the Advising office.

**Quality**

The College’s advising practices were closely study last year during The Academic Standards and Holds AQIP project. The objective was to evaluate the current practice and effectiveness of mandatory advisement holds; recommend changes to mandatory advisement processes; and prioritize implementation of proposed changes to support student success. To accomplish these objectives, the committee did peer institution benchmarking, researched best practices, survived students and staff, and examined student success data pertaining to advising. This project aligns with the college’s strategic goal 1 to “advance student learning and success” and strategic objective 5.1 to “update and improve internal processes and procedures on a routine basis.”

**The Project Description:**
Mandatory advisement exists for recent high school graduates, veterans, financial aid students who do not make satisfactory academic progress, students not meeting academic standards and students who repeat math courses.

The Academic Standards Policy was last updated in 2007. In addition to the 19th and 41st hour advisement holds, mandatory advisement is required for a growing number of students.

Best Practices/Research:

- Research does not indicate that quantity of advising or mandatory advising for continuing students is significant.
- Quality (intrusive, developmental) had been shown to be more effective.
- Having an assigned advisor (relationship) is also tied to increase retention and other student success indicators.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) published a recent report detailing the Monetary Award Program (MAP) Advising Workgroup. This report provided the most current and relevant research about the impact of advising on student success outcomes for CLC students. ISAC report states, “The purpose of the MAP Advising Workgroup is to promote retention and degree completion among MAP recipients. The Resolution directs the working group to catalog existing student academic advising and support programs and available information on those programs’ outcomes, and to survey existing literature on the
effectiveness of similar programs within the state. One of the conclusions of the Task Force was that students would likely benefit from additional advising on academic and financial matters, but the group felt they lacked the expertise to define a mandatory, minimum standard that should apply to all students. Instead, they recommended consultation with people with greater expertise on best practices in advising for low-income and first-generation students, and that the Commission considers requiring MAP-eligible institutions to provide additional support to MAP recipients."

**ISAC: Map Advising Workgroup**

**Final Report Recommendations: February 3, 2014**

1. Mandatory Advising for all new students
2. Blueprint for timely degree completion, created with an advisor upon entry
3. Designated single advisor for each student; significant connection
4. Early alert – all referrals to advising
5. Mandatory new student orientation
6. Financial literacy education
7. No late class registration for at-risk students

[www.isac.org/about-isac/map-advising-workgroup/index.html](http://www.isac.org/about-isac/map-advising-workgroup/index.html)

**Student Opinion:**

An opinion survey for 19th and 41st hour hold advisees was conducted from October 2013 – January 2014. Responses were tallied every 2 weeks to monitor changes in opinion based on
timing of advisement. Responses were tallied in total to get a summary of student opinion regarding mandatory advising for continuing students.

- 211 students surveyed in the Advising/Counseling offices
- The results were generally positive, indicating the students found the practice of mandatory advising to be beneficial.
- The responses were consistent throughout; they did not change based on when or where the student received advising.
- Less than 10% had multiple advising holds; those who did had low basic skills or academic restriction holds; the holds were not redundant because these students need to meet with both a counselor and an advisor prior to registration.
- 52% say they would have met with an advisor without the hold
- Most common benefits identified by students include: help with course selection and making a plan to complete the degree
- 86% would recommend the College continue mandatory advising
- Based on data from prior terms, 20% - 30% of students with 19th and 41st hour holds do not have it removed the term it was placed

**New Student Advising During Orientation:**

The College currently requires all new students who are recent high school graduates (last two graduation years) to receive advising before they can register. The hold is released when the student meets with an advisor during orientation. This data compares students who were advised during Orientations with a control group of their peers who did not attend orientation
to see if there was a significant difference. It is important to note that any outcomes cannot be attributed to advising alone, the advising happened in the context of a new student orientation event. These students were also participants in academic advising workshops, small group activities, and interactions with peer leaders. The data shows that recent high school graduates who attend orientation and receive mandatory new student advising have significantly higher (more than 10% higher) persistence rates. Other measures of student success, such as GPA and number of classes taken, are higher but not significantly.

The College is currently using the information from the Academic Standards and Holds AQIP project to make substantial changes to advising processes and practices. Two such changes that are already underway are the online orientation initiative, which will provide orientation options for non-traditional students and incorporating degree road mapping as part of the NSO advising appointments. There are some additional improvements that should be more closely considered including: requiring all new students to see an advisor during their first term of enrollment and establishing better connections with new students by using designated advisors.

Students attending New Student Orientation from April 12, 2015 – August 21, 2015 will be part of a pilot study to assess the impact of a structured advising process, including a clearly identified assigned advisor, on the success of new students. Measures of success will include term-to-term persistence, term GPA, and number of credits registered for Spring 2016. Students attending NSO will be randomly assigned to an advisor, which will determine if they
are in the pilot or a comparison control group. All NSO attendees will be tracked during the fall 2015 term (and beyond) to evaluate their outcomes including persistence, number of credits taken, and term GPA. Students who had a designated advisor will be compared with those who did not to evaluate the impact of the structured advising plan.

The changes that have happened in past five years are aggressive and student-centered. The department is headed in a positive direction. The broad goal for the future is for all students to: receive advising, to feel connected to at least one individual at the college, and to receive coordinated support services that move them toward their goals.

Looking ahead for the next three years, the advising department has an urgent need for more advisors and more hours worked per part-time advisor. With the expansion of services and the addition of 30 minute advising appointments during NSO, the department has reached the point of having to prioritize which student to advise because there is not enough staff to meet the demand. There is also an urgent need for improved communications across the College and with the student. There has been an influx of (positive) change which will directly impact student success and satisfaction both within the advising department and in other departments, such as the addition of the academic coaching initiative. To maximize the benefits of these changes, a technology solution is needed to facilitate academic planning that can be accessed by the student, faculty, advisors and counselors, and any staff member providing an academic support service. Currently, there is very little communication between departments, faculty, and students which results in students being bounced around and slipping through the
cracks. A shared information source would allow all important academic information pertaining to each student to be kept in a single place so College staff and faculty can collaborate and support services can build on each other, not complete or conflict.

The advising department was created only seven years ago and spent the first five years getting established and integrating with existing departments and services. The past two years, with the help of the Academic Standards and Holds AQIP, the department has made some significant strides forward. The growth of the staff has slow and cost-conscious, with the quality improvements to NSO advising and as the department has expanded to all three campuses. There is good momentum and positive staff investment in the changes that are being implemented. The only threat to this continued upward trajectory is not maintaining adequate staffing levels to sustain all the services and barrier in communication between departments and the student. The focus for the next five year will be to fully implement and maintain all the recent changes that have happened in the past two years.