

Piloting a New Advising Model

Southeast Community College is moving to a new model for student advising. Director of Advising, Vicki Domina, planned a pilot of the new model for the 2019-2020 school year and approached Institutional Research to develop an evaluation plan. With Vicki's input, the IR team implemented a multi-faced evaluation of the advising pilot that included: (a) tracking of institutional outcomes, (b) student survey, (c) advisor survey, (d) evaluation of contact logs compiled by the pilot advisors, and (e) a series of short focused conversations with a longer focus group held after the completion of the fall 2019 term. The coronavirus pandemic scuttled plans to repeat all components of the pilot study during spring 2020.

This document provides an overview of the primary (very encouraging) findings from all components of the pilot study.

Student performance outcomes

At the end of fall 2019, we evaluated the two groups on several outcome measures. As shown in the charts below, the results were highly consistent and showed that pilot students demonstrated more positive outcomes than their peers in the comparison group. All results were statistically significant.

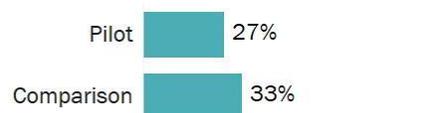
The pilot group had a *higher success rate* in their courses; *lower failure and withdrawal rates*; were *less likely to receive a failing grade*; had a *higher GPA* in the fall 2019 term; and were *more likely to be retained* in spring 2020.

A full description of these and other comparisons of outcome measures can be found in the institutional outcomes reports on <https://bit.ly/3qqvzEw>.

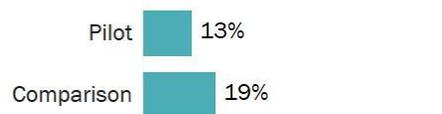
Course success rate



Failed at least one class



Course failure rate



GPA in fall semester



Course withdrawal rate



Retained in spring semester



Who were the students?

The fall 2019 pilot group consisted of 427 students (who were *not* randomly selected). The comparison group was all 1822 students in their first term at SCC with a declared program of study (i.e., all *except* dual-credit, undeclared, or visiting students).

Demographics

Because most of the pilot students were selected from cohort-based programs, the pilot group has disproportionately more *males*, more *students age 19 or younger*, more *career-technical students*, more students on the *Beatrice and Milford* campuses, and *fewer students from within the 15-county service area*.

Preparedness

We compared the groups on three measures of academic preparedness. The groups had nearly identical average ACT *Math* scores, but the differences for ACT *English* and *percent who took a developmental course in their first term* were statistically significant. The pilot group had lower ACT *English* scores, yet fewer of them took a *developmental course in their first term*. (See the fall 2019 outcomes report for details.)

Student survey

The pattern of results from the survey administered in November 2019 were highly consistent. Pilot students had *more contact* with their advisors and – for every question – reported being *more satisfied*, having *more understanding*, and feeling *more confident* as a result of their advising experience than comparison group students. Comparison students either skipped or responded with a neutral response more frequently than pilot students on most questions. A selection of these results are shown in the figure to the right; values do not add to 100% because the neutral/null responses are not shown.

As the result of advising services that I have received:

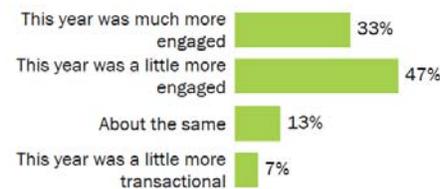
Agree Disagree Neutral/Null responses are not shown

I feel more confident in my future at SCC.	Pilot	1%	81%
	Comparison	6%	69%
I feel more confident in my ability to find help and solve problems	Pilot	1%	86%
	Comparison	6%	65%
I have a better understanding of my career goals and how to achieve them	Pilot	5%	73%
	Comparison	7%	66%
I feel more confident in my ability to make my own academic decisions.	Pilot		80%
	Comparison	7%	62%

Advisor survey

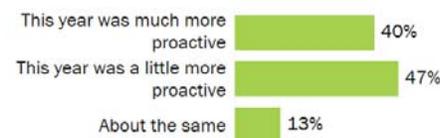
Before the term, Vicki Domina invited eight staff members and seven faculty members to join the pilot. All advisors completed surveys at the beginning and end of the semester. Both surveys asked whether they knew how to accomplish specific tasks and whether they felt comfortable and prepared for the role. At the end of the semester, additional questions asked them to characterize their experience and report on their level of satisfaction.

In level of engagement, how did this year differ from previous years?



As shown, when asked to compare the level of engagement this year to previous years, the vast majority of advisors indicated that this year was much or a little *more engaged*. Two advisors said it was the same and one felt that it was more transactional.

In level of proactiveness, how did this year differ from previous years?



When asked to compare the level of proactiveness, the vast majority indicated that this year was much or a little *more proactive*. Two advisors indicated that it was the same; none said it was more reactive.

Advising contact logs

All advisors were asked to log time and details of their contacts with students. At the end of the semester, IR compiled the logs. Since the advisors used

slightly different practices in record-keeping, the results must be interpreted with caution.

The compiled information showed that most advising sessions, which took an

average of 28 minutes, were for academic advising/planning purposes and were held either in-person (most often) or by email (a clear second).

Focused conversations with advisors

During each focused conversation, the advisors were asked to reflect on which aspects of the pilot model they felt were going well and which were challenging (or, in the case of the final meeting, to reflect back across the entire semester). The following themes emerged strongly and repeatedly:

- The advising model facilitated relationship building with students.
- Advisors found the systematic communication strategy to be beneficial.
- The pilot encouraged stronger relationships between programs and college advisors.
- Advisors found the systematic documentation of advising interactions valuable.
- Professional development for advisors will be needed on an on-going basis.

The final report sections for this study can be found on the IR web site at <https://bit.ly/3qqqvEw>

www.southeast.edu/institutional-research/home

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