MAP Advising Workgroup
2013 Workgroup Participant Survey

Highlights:

- ✓ The 25 members of the MAP Advising Workgroup (external to ISAC) were asked to provide feedback on ideas covered in the September and October meetings, and more specifically on an advising/support requirement for MAP students, by completing an online survey. To date, 14 members, or 56 percent, have completed the survey.

- ✓ Ninety-three percent of respondents indicated there should be an advising/support requirement of some kind for a school to be MAP-eligible, and seven percent indicated there should not be a requirement.

- ✓ Fifty-seven percent indicated there should be minimum requirements for students to take advantage of advising/support, and 43 percent reported there should not be minimum requirements.

Comments from those who said there *should* be minimum requirements:

Student MAP recipient should have some "skin in the game".

Certainly all institutions should provide advising/support and all students should take advantage of those services. I would lean more toward "should" vs., "required" as it might take more time to appropriately develop and implement the measures and expected outcomes. Perhaps a phased-in approached over several years might be appropriate.

For MAP eligible students there should be some type of entry / exit counseling similar to taking student loans through FAFSA.

Schools and students receiving MAP should be meeting minimal requirements to insure that funding is being used productively and appropriately.

The evidence is clear: more advising leads to better retention and graduation rates.

This would assure the students are getting some support to help guide them on their path to graduate.

Comments from those who said there *should not* be minimum requirements:

Because there is no place to explain my answer to question #1, I will do so here: The focus should be on improving outcomes with advising and support, however an institution decides to do so. To that end, the school can require advising or support, but

that should not come from the state. The state should hold a school accountable for meeting measures of student success.

Just participating in advising or support does not mean it helped. Too hard to track and measure.

Administrative burden to verify participation.

How would you enforce and/or monitor this? What would the penalties be for a MAP student who doesn't complete advising? No MAP? What about non-MAP students? How would schools report this to ISAC? The monitoring and enforcing of the requirement seems incredibly complex. Significant system changes would need to occur at both ISAC as well as schools in order to enforce this, not to mention staff time to devote to it. I don't believe the benefit would outweigh the significant cost of implementing such a requirement.

All students should have mandatory advising and have the opportunity to take advantage of all support that is offered by the institution.

✓ Respondents were asked what set of standards should be used for the advising/support requirement to apply to the institution. Forty-six percent, or 6 respondents, said average graduation rate, 23 percent said none, 15 percent said 3-year cohort default rate, and/or 8 percent, or 1 respondent said average ACT and/or GPA of incoming students. Another 46 percent, or 6 respondents, suggested some "other" set of standards included below.

Some way of assessing the population served by the institution should also be applied, e.g., the number of Pell-eligible or MAP-eligible students that attend, to ensure that institutions that serve the most at-risk students and that do not selectively enroll students are valued. In addition, retention and progression toward a credential or degree might serve as a better measure than graduation alone.

Cumulative GPA, persistence and graduation rate.

Not so much GPA, but somehow measure the success rate that students who receive MAP. Possibly track the rate of pass / fail grades for those MAP eligible students.

I'm not sure I understand the question. Whatever requirement is set should be universal.

Allow the institution to identify their population of at-risk students and apply the requirement to that group. Looking at average graduation rate, 3-year cohort default rate or average GPA of incoming students will unduly place community colleges at an extreme disadvantage. The application of the requirement should apply equally to all schools.

Students with low combinations of ACT and HS GPA may be in a program that requires additional advisement and support.

- ✓ Sixty-four percent of respondents reported all students should receive the advising/support requirement, 29 percent MAP recipients, 14 percent MAP-eligible students, and/or no respondents reported first generation students should receive the advising/support requirement. Fourteen percent, or 2 respondents, provided some "other" group or comment with regard to who should receive the advising/support requirement:

  Recommend an institutional level requirement to have an advising support rather than student requirement.

  While advising would benefit all students, our focus is MAP recipients.

- ✓ Seventy-nine percent of respondents indicated the advising/support requirement should be involuntary (at the institutional level), and 21 percent reported the requirement should be voluntary.

- ✓ Eighty-six percent of respondents reported the advising/support requirement should apply to first year students, 43 percent to returning students, and/or 36 percent to pre-college students. Thirty-six percent, or 5 respondents, provided some "other" group or comment, most often mentioning that the requirement should apply to all students who need the advising/support (see below).

  If GPA, graduation rate and persistence are used as metrics, the requirement might well apply to all students.

  Advising should be available to any student who needs it.

  At a minimum, first year students. But it would be desirable to extend to others.

  Upper classmen as needed.

  It is important that first year and returning students receive mandatory advising and support. However, advising would be helpful for all students.

- ✓ Respondents were asked what type of advising/support should be required at the institutional level. Eighty-six percent of respondents indicated academic advising/support should be required, 64 percent indicated financial support should be required, and/or 43 percent reported social support should be required. Twenty-nine percent, or four respondents, provided some "other" comment; three of the four respondents indicated all of the types of advising/support are desirable.

Any advising or support that helps a student progress and graduate with a credential or degree.

Institutions should be required to have all of these types of support available to all students.

The other types of support would be desirable, but academic is number one.

Depends on the advising requirement and who it applies to. Although theoretically all of the above would be desirable, based on institutional resources, it is not feasible to require all of these for an extremely large population of students without additional resources.

✓ All of the respondents indicated the advising/support requirement should include academic support (including advising), 86 percent tracking/early warning, 71 percent transition and early orientation, 50 percent counseling and mentoring, 36 percent student-faculty interactions, 29 percent learning communities, and/or 21 percent scholarships. Another 21 percent, or 3 respondents, provided some "other" comment with regard to what should be included in the requirement.

"Require" may be the wrong word to use, but the categories I suggested (counseling and mentoring, transition and orientation, academic support (including advising), and tracking/early warning) are the bare minimum standards that an institution should have if it is not meeting its outcomes and achieving greater college success.

Financial/financial literacy.

Once again it is difficult to answer this question unless you know the target group it applies to. Again, while all in theory are desirable, they cannot all be practically applied based on the size the group they are required for.

✓ Fifty percent of respondents indicated a delivery mechanism should not be prescribed for an advising/support requirement, 36 percent suggested through group presentation, 29 percent via individual face-to-face, 21 percent each through either e-mail or social media, and/or 7 percent, or 1 respondent, by phone. Three respondents provided some "other" comment with regard to a delivery mechanism:

Information in student services office.

If the school already has appropriate programming in place to meet minimum requirements there is no need to change it. There should be some type of basic delivery mechanism requirement to all schools that are receiving MAP funding.

When a face-to-face or group presentation is not possible, an on-line information system, web sites and information through email should be available, depending on the information and support that is offered.

✓ Fifty percent of respondents indicated the minimum number of times each year the student receives advising/support should be once a quarter or semester, 43 percent reported there should be no minimum, and 7 percent, or 1 respondent, suggested the minimum should be once a month, but as many times as the student requires, with possibly a maximum of 4 times per month.

✓ Forty-six percent of respondents indicated ISAC should track compliance through compliance audits, and 39 percent through a school report. Of the remaining 15 percent, one respondent indicated they are not sure how ISAC should track compliance, and one respondent suggested that ISAC should gather the data based on the pre-defined metrics.

✓ Respondents were asked to think about how we will measure success, establish a baseline, and establish goals for an advising/support requirement, by identifying the components they feel are important to measure or achieve. Ninety-three percent of respondents reported that year-to-year retention is important to measure, 79 percent program completion, 36 percent participant pace, 21 percent participant GPA, and/or 7 percent, or 1 respondent, suggested it is important to measure or achieve debt reduction, and 1 respondent suggested measuring credit hour completion.

✓ Respondents provided a variety of comments with regard to measuring success, establishing a baseline, and/or establishing goals for an advising/support requirement:

Graduation rates alone are too limited, so we should add progress and retention, as well.

Separate baseline and goal for each institution based on current retention and graduation rates for each institution.

Typically outcomes, i.e. performance, would not be measured until after the requirements have been implemented.

There should be a minimum of one advising session made available for financial, social as well as academic support for all students.

If a school has students who are moving along at an appropriate pace, staying in school and graduating I think that provides evidence of successful support programs.

Schools that achieve high graduation and retention rates should be excluded from the MAP Advising Support rules since they are already successful. Minimum requirements should be established and then the State and ISAC should focus efforts and resources on helping schools failing to meet them to reach an acceptable level so student outcomes improve. Compliance would be assessed in the MAP audit for those schools who are not meeting the standards for completion and retention.

Any of the above measures may be difficult for community colleges. What about the students who only come to the community college because they did not succeed at a 4-year school and only want to improve their GPA to return or are there for just one semester because of a lease requirement and then return to their local community college or are just moving from school to school? Has the cc not succeeded with these students? Many times we don't even know what their real plans are. They can tell us that they want to get a degree from our school, but really have no intention of doing so. I think it is more difficult to measure success for open enrollment institutions.

We need to discuss attainable goals. There are many programs that already successful. We should discuss what is common in all of them.

✓ Respondents were asked what should be done if goals are not met. Several respondents suggested that if the institution is not meeting their goals, they should be required to make a plan on how they will improve and then given time to improve.

Like with most audits, an institution should be given a certain amount of time to correct the issue and then considered MAP-ineligible if it cannot.

Not sure. Let's discuss at 11/14 meeting.

Institutions would continue to enhance/improve their programs until the required degree of success is attained.

An early warning advising session should be implemented to curtain the negative activity.

Schools should be required to narrow down exactly what the issue is and develop a plan for resolving it in order to continue receiving MAP funding. Perhaps they should be under some type of early warning system like the one suggested for students.

MAP eligibility probation, remediation plan.

Colleges and universities should create a plan of how they will meet the requirements and then ISAC should evaluate after a certain amount of time to ensure they are now meeting the goals under the new plan.

Provide an action plan in response to a MAP audit finding.

School could go on some sort of probation list and given time to improve.

I really dislike the idea of institutional penalties as opposed to student specific penalties.

The requirements cannot be established the same for all schools since the populations we serve are so very different. To do so, would unduly penalize open enrollment institutions and institution imposed sanctions without looking at the differences in institutions could harm those students who are most in need of MAP and are geographically bound.

Perhaps individual students should be warned, and then if progress is not made MAP aid could be held back.

✓ Seventy-seven percent of respondents reported they like the idea of an ISAC or MAP "Liaison" that could serve as a school contact for ISAC to aid in counseling students, and 23 percent, or 3 respondents, indicated they do not like the idea. Those that like the idea were asked how the position would work at their institution; they provided a variety of comments:

I do like the idea, however I would leave it up to the discretion of the institutional partners.

Similar to how the veteran's coordinator services student veterans.

I don't work at an institution but I think this person could be used to address and resolve system issues at the school that may be preventing students from being successful.

N/A

I like the idea of one contact for ISAC to use to contact the college or university but think that at the institution level that person then needs to share (Train the Trainer) information so that the liaison does not become the only person that all MAP students meet with. There is too much strain on Financial Aid and Advising areas during peak times that it would be beneficial for students to be able to meet with a variety of people rather than on specific person. ISAC Corps can also help with this role.

An adviser would be so designated.

It would be ok as long as the ISAC liaison encourages students to work directly with their institution. Also, ISAC would need to understand that not all information could be shared with the ISAC liaison.

Not Sure

✓ Respondents were asked how they would like ISAC involved in an advising/support requirement. Seventy-one percent would like ISAC to provide information, 43 percent compliance, 43 percent a high school-to-college bridge program, and/or 36 percent a first year college student program. Two respondents provided comments:

Intervention with the non-compliant institutions (meaning those that did not meet their goals), like sharing best practices and establishing minimum advising/support requirements.

Advising and support services are school specific making it difficult for ISAC involvement.

✓ Of those respondents who would like ISAC to provide information, 83 percent would like to see the agency deliver this information through the Corps members, 58 percent through printed materials, 50 percent through the call center, 42 percent through an online counseling service, and/or 25 percent through online chat. Another 25 percent, or 3 respondents, offered "other" suggestions:

Web site.

Possible quarterly presentations.

Any of these might be appropriate. Let's see what we end up requiring first.

✓ For those respondents who indicated they see first year college student programs as one of ISAC's roles, 80 percent would like to see financial aid programs, and/or 50 percent, or 3 respondents, would like to see ISAC offer near-peer programs. Another 3 respondents offered other suggestions:

General college orientation programs.

Academic support: tips, and possible pitfalls to avoid.

Again, let's discuss this after we set up the requirements.

✓ Ten respondents offered a variety of suggestions for how to put all this together to develop a coordinated effort to help these students:

Hopefully it is clear from my answers, but I would like to see us establish minimum student success outcomes and a way to evaluate and intervene if institutions do not meet the goals.

ISAC monitors retention and graduation rates for each institution. ISAC provides low cost information services to students regarding financial aid.

The workgroup should be able to make the recommendation and then establish another workgroup to include subject matter experts from MAP eligible institutions, to develop and implement the program requirements (policy/procedure). The workgroup would also help develop best practices calling upon the expertise of those institutions already providing excellent advising/support programs.

Create a presentation, but make it accessible via internet. Make it mandatory that students go through training / advising prior to (receiving aid, selecting classes, etc.)

I would like to see existing on campus student support programs being used to their fullest extent to help students. Since most schools already have appropriate advising and support programs in place, it may be helpful to provide students with someone they feel comfortable asking for help when issues arise. Extending the ISACorps into the first year of college may be a simplified way to provide this support as Corps members already have access to the information students need and may be considered more approachable than others on campus.

Start with the goal(s) and work backwards to determine activities, policies, resources, etc.

I think a lot of cross training and Train the Trainers will be essential to share all the information across campuses and institutions.

Identify a best practices package. Highlight schools that achieve this level of designation. Perhaps competition would encourage others to go beyond a minimum.

I would encourage an approach that focuses on improving the retention rate for institutionally defined at-risk populations. Also, I would suggest that this be a phased in approach. The first three years may be just identifying the populations, identifying the current programs offered, measuring their success and then recommending changes to the programs to improve retention of this population. Then you could move to the phase where improvements are monitored. What this workgroup has suggested thus far from a policy/theory standpoint may be desirable, but implementation in the short-term (1-2 years) will be almost impossible for some institutions with large at-risk populations.

We need to discuss this further.

✓ Ten respondents commented on what they would like to see come out of this workgroup. Several of the comments suggested a flexible minimum advising requirement that would not be too difficult to administer and track.

Hopefully it is clear from my answers, but I would like to see us establish minimum student success outcomes and a way to evaluate and intervene if institutions do not meet the goals.

Specific, tangible and doable recommendation for ISAC to provide low cost information to students regarding financial aid to all students, but specifically targeting MAP eligible students.

A recommendation that sufficient academic/support advising is critical to the success of all students. Data that supports this conclusion and as evidenced by analysis of MAP recipients.

A consensus on what we can do in our educational capacity to increase retention and graduation rates; and also, minimize the amount of money / funding utilized on students who under achieve or under perform in class.

I would like to see simplified requirements for schools to show they are providing student support and for MAP receiving students to not necessarily be required to do any additional work but for them to receive increased access on where to seek out support when issues arise.

General understanding that advising/guidance/counseling is not an "extra," but rather something that all students need access to, and that should be tracked for results.

I would like to see a list of minimum requirements (not too prescriptive) for colleges and universities. We should also share some best practices and models (preferably things already happening in Illinois) that other colleges and universities can see and adapt to fit their particular institution. I don't think we can create a one size fits all solution but creating minimums and then providing a menu of "upgrades" or "add ons" for institutions would be helpful.

A minimum requirement that MAP eligible institutions provide academic advising for first year MAP students once each semester. I would have no problems if this was expanded/extended.

I would like to see a recommendation that challenges schools to do a better job in terms of working with at-risk students, but has an element of student responsibility also. Having schools be required to offer academic advising to all students is fine, but requiring that all students take advantage of it is not. If the group as a whole requires it, then the sanctions for not completing the advising can only be applied to MAP recipients and should be student specific. i.e., taking away or reducing the MAP award for a future semester if academic advising is not completed. The complexity of monitoring this requirement for both schools and ISAC would be monumental.   Timing would be an issue also, so that the award is cancelled/reduced before a student gets past the no refund period or schools will be left with large uncollectible tuition bills and students with unpaid tuition bills are unlikely to return as this becomes an insurmountable obstacle.   Can we not come up with something that challenges schools, but doesn't become a beast for both the school and ISAC to implement.

Flexible programs depending on the institution that help all students to succeed.

RPPA, 11/11/13