



QEP Proposal: Connect! Empowering Students through Advising to Navigate Pathways to Success

Thomas More University

Onsite review: February 17-20, 2020

President: Dr. Joseph L. Chillo

Accreditation Liaison: Ms. Kelly M. French

SACSCOC VP: Dr. Mary P. Kirk

On-Site Reaffirmation Committee Chair: Dr. Lawrence D. Czarda



THOMAS MORE
UNIVERSITY

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary	1
II. Topic Identification	3
III. Broad-based Support.....	10
IV. Literature Review and Best Practices	21
V. Focus of the Plan	29
VI. Institutional Capability for the Initiation, Implementation, and Completion of the Plan.....	55
VII. Assessment of the Plan.....	59
VIII. References	67
IX. Appendices.....	71



Thomas More University Main Campus

I. Executive Summary

Thomas More University selected academic advising as the topic for its 2020-2025 QEP through a comprehensive review and analysis of institutional research and stakeholder input from across campus. This analysis identified the need to improve student success measures such as persistence and timely progress towards graduation.

The mission of the Thomas More University QEP, *Connect! Empowering Students through Advising to Navigate Pathways to Success*, is to promote student success by increasing their ability to connect with, plan for, and achieve their educational goals. The QEP is designed with the following outcomes in mind:

Program Outcomes:

1. The *Connect!* Advising QEP will provide services in the area of faculty and professional advisor training leading to increased knowledge of policies and procedures related to engaging students in productive advising and pathways to graduation.
2. The *Connect!* Advising QEP will promote student behaviors leading to increased retention and academic success.

Student Outcomes:

1. Students will develop an educational growth plan based on assessment of abilities, interests, and values.
2. Students will apply at least two high impact practices to their educational growth plan.
3. Students will have knowledge and make relevant use of Thomas More University success resources.
4. Students will persist and make timely progress towards graduation.

These outcomes are intended to support the goals of helping students meet the mission of the university and prepare for postgraduate opportunities. This QEP is focused on student success for first- and second-year traditional undergraduates at Thomas More including at-risk and exploring students. Student success is defined as student persistence and timely progress towards graduation. The QEP is designed to impact 2,000 traditional, undergraduate students at Thomas More during the five-year span of the QEP (five cohorts of traditional, undergraduate students). Eventually, once the QEP becomes institutionalized, other Thomas More student populations such as those in the Thomas More Accelerated Program for adult students will be impacted.

Through stakeholder feedback and a review of research and best practices, a new, shared advising model was selected consisting of faculty and newly hired professional advisors utilizing improved technology tools. In order to ensure institutional capability, the human, physical, and budgetary resources that were involved in Thomas More's last successful QEP were reviewed. Based on that model and an analysis of the potential for the *Connect!* Advising QEP to increase retention, a budget was developed that is financially viable in the current environment. As part of the plan, Thomas More will employ new staffing resources including a QEP administrative team along with the new professional advisors to ensure adequate human resources for successfully executing the *Connect!* Advising QEP.

The assessment plan includes direct and indirect measures of program and student outcomes. It also includes clear procedures for “closing the loop” to make changes to advising procedures as indicated by an analysis of the data and to ensure the program becomes institutionalized. The *Connect!* Advising QEP is grounded in the idea that Thomas More wants the “. . . opportunity for all students to develop a personal, consistent relationship with someone in the institution who cares about them” (Drake, 2011, p. 10 as cited in Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2015)).

II. Topic Identification

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) topic identification process was related to institutional strategic planning, involved a wide range of constituents, and considered institutional needs. Initially, the selection process focused on student learning, which eventually transitioned to a focus on student success and accomplishing Thomas More University's mission,

Thomas More University is the Catholic Liberal Arts University of the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky. Inspired by the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, we challenge students of all faiths to examine the ultimate meaning of life, their place in the world, and their responsibility to others.

PHASE I: Analysis of Institutional Data by QEP Working Group Composed of Representative Constituents Resulting in Themes for QEP Consideration

The selection process officially began in June 2017 with a working group selected by the President's Cabinet that included faculty and staff constituents: The Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IR Director), Director of Thomas More Accelerated Programs that serves non-traditional adults and graduate students, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, and Assistant Dean of Students. The group began with a two-month review of institutional data and information related to institutional needs. The group considered the following:

- Retention and Graduation Rates
- National Survey of Student Engagement, 2016 Results
- National Survey of Student Engagement Topical Module: First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions, 2016 Results
- National Survey of Student Engagement Topical Module: Academic Advising, 2015 Results
- Graduating Student Exit Survey, 2016-2017 Results
- First Year Seminar Survey, Fall 2016 Results
- Topics suggested at the January 17, 2017 faculty development day related to assessment. The IR Director coordinates fall and spring assessment days. During these days, students completed general education assessments and faculty participated in faculty development related to assessment. Since January 2017, a frequent component of these agendas was related to the QEP selection and development process. This was a primary venue for gathering feedback from faculty, a key constituent group. On January 17, 2017, the IR Director presented on the SACSCOC standards related to the QEP, discussed current data related to student learning, and led small group conversations related to the following questions:
 - "What deficiencies or issues do you see related to student learning and meeting our mission?"
 - "What data do we have? What data do we need?"
- Academic Department Assessment of Experiential Learning, 2015-2016 academic annual reports. Experiential learning became a degree requirement for all students entering in fall 2014 and later earning a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and Bachelor of Fine Arts. To evaluate implementation of the

requirement, department chairs were asked to respond to the following question in their annual reports:

- What classes or experiences are being used by students in the program?
- How many students within the program completed experiential learning this academic year?
- How many program faculty members are engaged with overseeing experiential learning within the program?
- How are faculty in the program assessing experiential learning as listed in the catalog ("All Experiential Learning options require documented student learning outcomes that connect the student's curriculum to the experiential learning activities. In addition, students must reflect on the meaning of the experience as it relates to their understanding of the college's mission statement and on how they will integrate their experience into future coursework or their career." 2015-2016 Catalog, p. 55).
- What successes have students, faculty, or the College achieved through the program?
- Where do you see a need for additional resources or support?
- Return on Investment in Community, Character, and Career map, finalized in March 2017. This was developed as part of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, which included a tactic to "Develop a taskforce, define the behavioral outcomes that will result in character, career (and community) ROI".
- Retention Taskforce report, March 2017. The Retention Taskforce was formed in April 2016 by the Vice President for Academic Affairs to "Conduct program evaluation of retention at Thomas More College (now University) with the goal of developing and implementing strategies and tactics to effectively and efficiently reach the 2020 TMC Strategic Plan retention goals."
- Board of Trustee and Faculty joint session, June 2, 2016. At the annual Board of Trustees retreat, Board of Trustee and faculty members discussed a variety of areas related to the strategic plan, some of which related to student learning and accomplishing the University's mission.

The QEP working group found particularly noteworthy the findings on retention and graduation rates. As can be seen in [Table 1](#), Thomas More retention and graduation rates have not consistently met peer benchmarks or Thomas More goals based on the 2015- 2020 Strategic Plan. These data, therefore, became the focus of the group members as data that should be addressed by the QEP.

Table 1. 2017 Thomas More Retention and Graduation Rates Data for Phase 1

Cohort Year	Retention Rate	4 yr Grad Rate	6 yr Grad Rate
2009		34%	47%
2010		38%	51%
2011		36%	46%
2012	61%	35%	
2013	71%	38%	
2014	65%		
2015	71%		
2016	67%		
Peer Institutions*	70%	40%	53%
Thomas More Strategic Plan Goal	73%	39%	52%

* Peer Benchmark institutions (n=19) were established in February 2016 as part of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

The group also reviewed best practices, including recently approved QEP proposals from the SACSCOC, high-impact educational practices from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (<https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips>), and VALUE rubrics from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (<https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics>).

From this institutional data and research, the working group identified several broad themes to consider for addressing retention and graduation rates:

1. Experiential learning
2. Linking liberal arts to careers
3. Undergraduate learning communities
4. Academic advising
5. Enhancing global perspectives/inclusion
6. First-Year Experience
7. Improving adult learning with andragogy

Phase II: Working Group Narrows Scope of Potential QEP Topics through Input from a Wide Range of Constituents

The working group prepared a digital presentation that explained the SACSCOC standards related to the QEP, provided an overview of the Thomas More University timeline, and briefly explained each potential topic, including a definition and explanation, background, key research, and potential goals of the QEP specifically related to student learning. In October 2017, an email was sent to all employees requesting their ranking and feedback. The presentation requested respondents to rank order each topic based on what they thought was “most relevant and focused on student learning outcomes and accomplishing the mission of the institution.” Forty-five full-time faculty (57% response rate) and 39 full-time staff (43% response rate)

responded to the survey. These results were discussed with the President's Cabinet, which included a variety of constituents: President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Vice President for Finance and Operations, Vice President for Enrollment, Associate Vice President for Adult and Graduate Education, Director of Athletics, Dean of Students, IR Director, University Legal Counsel, and Director of Human Resources. The topics were narrowed down to four and shared with all employees.

1. Experiential learning/linking liberal arts to careers
2. Academic advising
3. First-year experience
4. Improving adult learning with andragogy

Phase III: Working Group Researches and Presents Topic Finalists for Stakeholder Input Leading to Selection of Final Topic for QEP Proposal

The working group then evolved into four sub-groups that included individuals with expertise in each of these four areas, see [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Phase III Working Sub-Groups

First-Year Experience Sub-Group Membership

Kevin Reynolds, Dean of Students, Chair (Administration)
 Terry Connor (Athletics Administration)
 Dan Esterline (Chemistry Faculty)
 Michele Geiger, (Communication Faculty)
 Amy Osborne (Thomas More Success Center Staff)
 McKenna Clark (Student)
 Taylor Walz (Student)

Advising for Student Success Sub-Group Membership

Cari Garriga, Assistant Dean and Chair of Academic Advising Taskforce, Chair (Faculty)
 John Hennessey (Thomas More Success Center Staff)
 Becky Collins (Retention Staff)
 Amy Thistlethwaite (Criminal Justice Faculty)
 Angela Crawford (Business Administration Faculty)

Embedding Career Development into Curricula Sub-Group Membership

Robin Norton, Assistant Director, Institute for Career Development and Graduate School Planning, Chair (staff)
 Elizabeth Bone (Art Faculty)
 Julie Luebbers (Education Faculty)
 Maria McLean (Psychology Faculty)

Improving Adult Learning through Andragogy Sub-Group Membership

Anthony Schumacher, Director of Thomas More Accelerated Program, Chair (Staff)
Anne Busse (Business Administration Faculty)
John Ernst (Thomas More Success Center Staff)
Becky Tacy (Nursing Faculty)
Kim Haverkos (Education Faculty)
Nathan Hartman (Instructional Technology Staff)
Kasey Jackson (Instructional Technology Staff)

Sub-group membership was chosen based on interest obtained via the survey and nomination from the President's Cabinet and designed to ensure representation from faculty and staff who work directly with students. The IR Director met with the leaders of each working sub-group to develop a timeline and standard template for a final proposal. The final presentation included slides on each of the following in order to focus on institutional needs and viability of the plan:

1. Topic and working group
2. Key goals
3. Target group and projected impact on learning
4. Assessment data reviewed
5. Literature and best practice research
6. Alignment with mission
7. Student learning outcomes
8. Capabilities and resources
9. Risks
10. Logistics and budget
11. Assessment plan
12. Key milestones

The working sub-group related to improving adult learning with andragogy determined that the ideas were mostly related to faculty development, which would improve student learning, but did not meet the requirements of a QEP. Therefore, the final topics presented were:

1. First-Year Experience
2. Advising for Student Success
3. Embedding Career Development into Curricula

Each working sub-group determined that the initial target group would be traditional, undergraduate students. In addition, although they were not directed to do so, each group had identified a goal from the University's key student achievement measures. Thomas More University has identified retention rate, graduation rate, and career outcome rate as key student achievement measures. These rates are regularly shared with faculty and staff. The 2015-2020 Strategic Plan included key metrics and goals related to each of these measures, and the University had not yet met the retention or graduation rate goals. Thus, retention and graduation rates continued to be a key factor in determining the final QEP topic.

Students, faculty, and staff were invited to the final presentations held on April 19 and April 20, 2018, and 104 faculty and staff attended. A follow-up survey was sent exclusively and directly to attendees. They were first asked “Do you feel you have enough information to choose a topic for our QEP?” The QEP working group wanted to ensure faculty, staff, and student constituents had an understanding of the purpose of a QEP, university data, and proposals to make an informed decision. Eighty-three individuals responded and 95% answered yes. Respondents were then asked to “Rank order the topics (with 1 being your first choice) based on what you think is most relevant, focused on student learning outcomes and/or success, and accomplishes the mission of the college [university].” Fifty-one percent of respondents selected Advising for Student Success as their first choice, and 84% selected it as either their first or second choice. The comments related to this QEP demonstrate a focus on retention and graduation:

- It is a key component (although not so much at TMC) of retention.
- Necessary to strengthen retention.
- Advising is HUGE. Advising is linked to retention, graduation rates, and overall satisfaction.
- I rank this one first because of feedback at the meeting that there's a strong correlation to good advising structure and retention.
- This plan seems like it would be the most effective at improving retention and helping students to make the right decisions for their school and career goals.
- The numbers for students graduating in 4 years is very low and I think one important goal should be to help our students to graduate on time. Advising is crucial as it offers a one on one relationship with students.

The results, which demonstrate the Thomas More community’s awareness of the importance of advising and how it impacts student achievement and success measures that are discussed in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, were shared with the President’s Cabinet. Based on the comments related to all of the proposals, institutional needs specifically related to retention, and viability of the plan, the President approved moving forward with a QEP focused on a clearly-defined topic: academic advising for student success, incorporating elements of first-year experience and career development. This final topic and an update was shared internally on May 21, 2018 with employees via an announcement in The Insider: Thomas More Employee E-Newsletter:

QEP Update

Based on feedback from faculty and staff, we will move forward with a QEP focused on advising for student success. We will incorporate components from the first-year experience and career development related to advising. We are working now to gather a team for developing the proposal. If you are passionate about this area and would like to be involved, please let (the provost) know.

Conclusion: The QEP Topic Selected is Clearly Defined and Arose out of Institutional Planning Processes

As can be seen above, the Thomas More QEP Topic of Academic Advising for Student Success was selected after careful review of institutional data to be aligned with institutional mission and strategic planning, and with the input of a wide range of

stakeholder feedback at each phase of topic selection. It is focused on improving student success defined as persistence and timely progress towards graduation.



Students and Faculty at the Robinson Family Academic Mentoring Center

III. Broad-based Support

Once the QEP topic, academic advising focusing on student success, was identified through institutional research processes, broad-based support for the topic was developed using a hybrid program-oriented evaluation combined with decision-oriented evaluation. The CIPP Evaluation Model Framework (Stufflebeam, 2005 as cited in Fitzpatrick et al., 2001) classifies *input evaluation* as a process to identify strategies and implementation methods for programming. This input evaluation provided a method for ensuring the involvement of all relevant stakeholders during QEP development. Logic models, a program-oriented evaluation approach, provided a method to ensure that the plan stayed focused on clear objectives (Fitzpatrick et al., 2001)—in this case, program and student outcomes related to student success.

QEP Proposal Team

The QEP proposal team included membership from a wide-variety of stakeholders, including faculty from across the university's colleges, the Thomas More Success Center, the offices of the Controller, Academic Affairs, Retention, Thomas More Accelerated Program, and Institutional Research:

Carrie Jaeger, co-chair, Business Administration Faculty
 John Ernst, co-chair, Thomas More Success Center Staff
 Amy Thistlethwaite, Criminal Justice Faculty
 Michele Geiger, Communication Faculty
 Maria Mitchell, Accountancy Faculty
 Kelsey Wicher, Thomas More Accelerated Program Staff
 Becky Collins, Retention Staff
 Michelle Vezina, Registrar Staff
 Jacob Schweinefuss, Institutional Research Staff
 Kim Haverkos, Education Faculty
 Dee Allen, Education Faculty
 Joe Christensen, Physics Faculty
 Mark Goshorn, Controller Staff
 Anthony Schumacher, Ethical Leadership Faculty

Originally, the QEP Proposal Team included a student member. Unfortunately, after several missed meetings it was apparent the student was not going to participate. At that time, the group decided to broaden efforts to reach students. As described in [Table 3](#), in spring 2019, all students were surveyed on their advising experiences. In addition, representatives of the QEP committee met with the student government association in spring 2019 and the student government association executive board in fall 2019 to interactively exchange information about advising and the QEP plan as it developed.

Development of Broad-Based Support among Institutional Constituencies

Development of support through interactive institutional stakeholder meetings and surveys. Input evaluation guided the development of broad-based support among institutional constituencies through a series of stakeholder meetings and surveys. The agenda for each stakeholder meeting and survey, in turn, was guided by a logic model. Support development was an interactive process in two ways. First, each meeting was interactive. QEP planning team members began each meeting by presenting recently collected institutional data relevant to academic advising along with additional information about advising theory and best practices.

Attendees then completed activities in which they discussed advising amongst themselves and provided feedback to the QEP planning team. Second, the QEP planning team received additional feedback and perspectives from these meetings as well as from stand-alone surveys collected from stakeholders. This new information was used to revise the logic model, which then guided a new round of stakeholder and survey agendas. [Table 3](#) indicates the date of each stakeholder meeting or survey, which stakeholder group was canvassed for their feedback on the plan, which section of the logic model was addressed by the meeting or survey, and a brief summary of the feedback or support signals provided from that meeting.

Table 3. Stakeholder Feedback by Advising Logic Model Category

Meeting or Survey Date	Stakeholder Group Canvassed	Advising Logic Model Category Addressed by Meeting or Survey	Brief Summary of Feedback/Support Signals Provided by Stakeholders at Meeting or through Survey
9/14/2018	All faculty and staff	Goals and Activities	Faculty requested additional clarification regarding promotion and tenure requirements and advising work.
11/20/2018	Chair of Faculty General Assembly	Goals and Interventions	Faculty policy manual is being revised and may provide guidance on role of advising in faculty workload vis a vis service v. teaching v. a new fourth pillar. What is the philosophical underpinning and what does it mean to have a culture of advising?
12/4/2018	IT/IR/Retention leadership	Interventions	Thomas More University Enterprise Resource Planning solutions are being researched with 2020-2021 decision timeline
12/6/2018	First Year Seminar Program leadership	Interventions	Ideas for interventions
1/10/2019	All faculty and staff	Goals	Carrie Jaeger, QEP proposal co-chair, provided all faculty and staff with an update on the QEP.
1/14/2019	Accounting Advisory Committee including Alumni	Goals	Expressed desire for advising consistent with developmental approach including pathway to graduation and an emphasis on career development: experiential learning and community contacts
1/22/2019	All faculty and staff	Student Outcomes	Interactive workshop culminating in faculty and staff votes for QEP Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Top four SLOs subsequently incorporated into QEP logic model.
1/28/2019	Student government representatives	Student Outcomes	Interactive workshop culminating in student government votes for QEP

Meeting or Survey Date	Stakeholder Group Canvassed	Advising Logic Model Category Addressed by Meeting or Survey	Brief Summary of Feedback/Support Signals Provided by Stakeholders at Meeting or through Survey
			SLOs. Vote consistent with faculty/staff vote.
2/5/2019	Acting Provost	Goals, SLOs, Activities, Inputs (resources)	Approved SLOs, idea of professional advising, focus on first and second year advising, wanted more student input.
2/5/2019	QEP Design and Assessment Team-faculty and staff	Goals, SLOs, Outputs, Interventions, and People & Resources	Approved SLOs from faculty, staff, and student votes as short and long-term outcomes. Suggested goals, outputs, activities and inputs.
2/7/2019	Open faculty and staff meeting	SLOS, Outputs, Interventions	Gathered feedback on QEP developments.
2/12/2019	Acting President	Interventions, People, Resources	Plan for dealing with uneven faculty advising loads, plan for transfer students, use professional advisors for students transferring majors, work with controller's office to plan budget, consider applying for outside grants.
2/13/2019	College of Education and Health Sciences	Interventions, outputs, SLOs	Key interventions should include orientation/convocation day, team advising, course availability known for long-term planning, better advising tools, and group peer and faculty advising; key outcome should be a positive long-term relationship for student with advisor.
2/20/2019	Open faculty and staff meeting	Interventions, outputs, SLOs	Gathered feedback on QEP progress.
2/26/2019	College of Business	Interventions	In-meeting survey indicated strongest support for developmental/holistic advising and least support for faculty doing intervention/proactive/intrusive advising.
3/6/2019	Open faculty and staff meeting	Interventions	Better communication with students, increased number of advising sessions recommended, holistic advising, implement first year advising taskforce syllabus and recommendations.
Spring 2019	End of term electronic surveys sent to students	SLOs, interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative results: students generally satisfied with academic advising. Report deficiencies in academic plans and accurate information related to advising. First year students less satisfied than junior students.

Meeting or Survey Date	Stakeholder Group Canvassed	Advising Logic Model Category Addressed by Meeting or Survey	Brief Summary of Feedback/Support Signals Provided by Stakeholders at Meeting or through Survey
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative results: students report both examples of high and low quality advising. Themes include concerns about quality of communication, desire for more information about minors, difficulties when switching advisors, especially among first year students, feeling alone when it comes to advising, desire for more career advising.
4/29/2019	College of Arts and Sciences	Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative responses: currently doing prescriptive, prefer to do either developmental or strength and assess; least prefer to do prescriptive, SLO, and proactive. Quantitative responses: desire for more holistic advising, help getting students who need most help to come to advising, early semester meet and greets, more group/peer advising, student accountability.
5/14/2019	Retention and Student Life Staff	SLOs and interventions	Students often seem confused as to who their advisor is; students seek academic advising from student life staff; juniors and seniors seem happy with advising; support early alert; strong recommendation for professional advisor; need more support for Thomas More University students than they are receiving; have early semester ice-breakers.
5/31/2019	Academic Affairs Staff Retreat	Interventions	Include other types of advising such as honors and Faculty Liaison to the Athletic Teams; registrar's office asked lots of advising questions by students; how can QEP help the exploring student; students seek a lot of non-academic support from academic advisor; Enterprise Resource Planning is a key issue; advising should be elevated on campus; learn from the Thomas More Accelerated Program experiences; support for professional advisor and improved communication

Meeting or Survey Date	Stakeholder Group Canvassed	Advising Logic Model Category Addressed by Meeting or Survey	Brief Summary of Feedback/Support Signals Provided by Stakeholders at Meeting or through Survey
			and reporting using comprehensive advising app.
Spring 2019	Faculty electronic surveys sent end of spring 2019 term	Interventions	Report mostly doing prescriptive, but do others as well; want to do prescriptive the least; want most to do developmental; response rate of about 50% .
6/4/2019	New University President	Interventions	Prefers hybrid faculty/professional advisor model; more engagement with students; comprehensive advising app; pilot for professional advisors; wants to see financial model/budget.
Summer 2019	Retention data supplied by IR	Interventions	Identified at-risk groups by college and selected demographics. College of Arts and Sciences and Exploring combined have largest absolute fail to retain groups; students with ACT < 22 and HS GPA >=2.5 and <= 2.99 have lower retention rates.
6/12/2019	President, Acting Provost	Budgeting, Interventions	Student facing tech should be phone user-friendly, include professional advisors in the plan and budget, benchmark against other schools, revise the budget, professional advisor to be housed--during pilot--in success center.
6/17/2019	Controller	Budgeting	Include fringe in the budget; set it up so that it outlasts the QEP .
7/10/2019	Institutional Advancement Art Director	Marketing	Art director will provide sample logos based on our QEP overview; need to develop roll-out plan.
8/7/2019	President's Cabinet	Plan	Revise budget for improved ROI; wait until fall 2020 to start with professional advisor.
8/15/2019	Dept Chairs Meeting	Plan	Presentation to department chairs on QEP proposal .
8/15/2019	Faculty and Staff/General Assembly Day	Plan	Presentation to faculty and staff on QEP proposal.
8/23/2019	First Year Seminar Program co-director, Director of Advising	Interventions	QEP self-assessment intervention can take place in next iteration of First Year Seminar .

Meeting or Survey Date	Stakeholder Group Canvassed	Advising Logic Model Category Addressed by Meeting or Survey	Brief Summary of Feedback/Support Signals Provided by Stakeholders at Meeting or through Survey
8/30/2019	Orientation Planning Team	Interventions	QEP should address communication and procedures for advising that occur during orientation.
9/3/2019	Faculty at Faculty Development Day	Interventions	Positive feedback on professional advisor; course registration clearance should stay with faculty advisor; be sure to put in place procedures for good communication among professional and faculty advisors. How does athletics fit into advising?
9/4/2019	President, IR Director, Provost	Budget	The reduced outcomes to seven makes sense, update the plan and complete revisions. Budget given provisional approval by president.
9/6/2019	QEP Committee	Plan	Initial review of plan against the QEP Framework Rubric for Site-Visit Team Evaluators.pdf looks positive.
9/10/2019	Institutional Advancement Art Director	Marketing	New logo looks good.
9/12/2019	IT, IR	Interventions	Need to develop rubrics for assessing student artifacts in Canvas; IR will roll out advising metrics; faculty advising training will be scheduled for faculty development days; need to plan for tech for professional advisors.
9/16/2019	QEP Assessment Committee	Assessment	Plan needs updating for personnel responsible for collecting and analyzing data; additional narrative needed.
9/17/2019	IR Director	Assessment	Need to distinguish between faculty and professional advisor metrics. IR will develop and release advising metrics to faculty.
9/20/2019	QEP Budget Committee	Budget	Initial review of budget plan against the QEP Framework Rubric for Site-Visit Team Evaluators.pdf looks positive.
9/20/2019	QEP Design Team	Interventions	Initial review of budget plan against the QEP Framework Rubric for Site-Visit Team Evaluators.pdf looks positive. Student educational growth plan looks good.
9/25/2019	QEP Marketing Team	Marketing	Initial marketing for fall will include posters, monitors, and giveaways. As QEP gets closer, marketing should include interactive elements.

Meeting or Survey Date	Stakeholder Group Canvassed	Advising Logic Model Category Addressed by Meeting or Survey	Brief Summary of Feedback/Support Signals Provided by Stakeholders at Meeting or through Survey
10/1/2019	Athletic Director, Athletic Assistant Director, Faculty Liaison to the Athletic Teams Leader	Interventions	Train advisors on issues around academic eligibility for athletes and include section on improving communication between advisors and coaches. Desire for multi-year published course offerings.
10/4/2019	JGB Honors Students and Faculty	Interventions	Suggested changes for clarifying the student self-assessments and educational growth plans.
10/23/2019	Student Government Association Executive Board	Interventions	Positive response to proposal especially having two advisors and goal of faculty advisor as mentor. Wondered how to get at-risk students to participate.
10/28/2019	President, Provost, Director, IR	Interventions	Set a goal for faculty advising load; QEP roll-out should include Spring 2020 QEP director in place, Summer 2020 first professional advisor hired, Fall 2020 first faculty advising learning community and first all-faculty QEP advising professional development
11/7/2019	Provost	People and Resources	Faculty compensation. Faculty learning communities on advising for QEP will count toward FRC (Faculty Relations Committee) endorsed professional development in faculty annual self-assessment. Faculty will have the option of including this under the teaching or the service section of the self-assessment.
12/3/2019	President, Provost, IR Director	All facets	Plan looks good. Clean and finalize the proposal. Prepare for spring 2020 roll-out and site visit; find an outside reader to review for clarity.
12/16/2019	President's Cabinet	Interventions	Six-year budget (Table 9) approved.

In addition to engaging the stakeholders listed in [Table 3](#), the Board of Trustees was regularly kept apprised of developments in the QEP plan through regular updates at Academic Affairs Committee of the Thomas More University Board of Trustees given by the university Provost (8-30-2018, 8-29-2019, and 10-31-2019).

In order to ensure that all faculty and all students had a chance to weigh in during QEP development, the QEP proposal committee co-chairs conducted a series of interviews and surveys. Faculty were surveyed in spring of 2019 regarding the types of advising interventions

they currently employ and which advising methods they prefer to employ. The results can be seen in [Table 4](#).

Table 4. Faculty advising practices and preferences. Numbers indicate average agreement on 5-point scale with parentheses indicating standard deviation

Current practice is information-based (n=42)	3.88 (1.09)
Desired practice is information-based (n=35)	3.0 (1.24)
Current practice is holistic-based (n=43)	3.76 (1.04)
Desired practice is holistic-based (n=38)	4.02 (1.00)
Current practice is appreciative-based (n=39)	3.15 (1.23)
Desired practice is appreciative-based (n=34)	3.4 (1.65)

Next, faculty were surveyed in fall 2019 regarding their evaluation of the QEP proposal. The results can be seen in [Table 5](#).

Table 5. Faculty evaluation of QEP proposal. Numbers indicate average agreement on a 5-point scale. N = 13

QEP outlines adequate resources for faculty to implement plan	4.00
QEP is a good plan for Thomas More University	4.38
I intend to follow the QEP in my advising practices	4.38
I believe the QEP will make advising more effective at TMU	4.31
The QEP proposal is clear	3.92
The QEP proposal is relevant to student learning and success	4.31
The QEP proposal has good ideas for advising	4.15
I still have a lot of questions about the QEP	2.54
After reading the QEP, I have a good idea for how it will affect my advising practices.	3.69
Faculty needs are addressed by the QEP proposal	3.73

In addition, in spring 2019 students were surveyed on aims of the QEP that relate to advising, retention, and graduation. The results can be seen in [Table 6](#).

Table 6. Student evaluations of advising practices at Thomas More University. Numbers indicate average agreement on a 5-point scale. Parentheses indicate number of respondents

<u>Question</u>	<u>First-Year Students</u>	<u>Second-Year Students</u>	<u>Third-Year Students</u>
1. Advising has been available when I needed it.	4.21 (155)	4.30 (137)	4.26 (139)
2. I am able to do the things I need to do to stay in college until I graduate.	4.22 (155)	4.30 (137)	4.30 (139)
3. I am confident that I will graduate on time.	3.88 (155)	3.95 (137)	4.04 (139)
4. I am satisfied in general with the academic advising I have received.	4.07 (155)	4.07 (137)	4.22 (139)
5. I have a written plan for my goals based on an assessment of my abilities, aspirations, and interests.	3.74 (155)	3.80 (137)	3.92 (139)
6. I have a written plan that includes extracurricular activities (i.e., clubs, sports, etc.)	3.50 (155)	3.55 (137)	3.66 (139)
7. I have a written plan that includes what courses I plan to take between now and graduation.	4.05 (155)	3.94 (137)	4.30 (139)
8. I have received accurate information about courses, programs, and requirements through academic advising	4.03 (155)	4.12 (137)	4.19 (139)
9. Sufficient prior notice has been provided about deadlines related to institutional policies and procedures.	4.01 (155)	4.06 (137)	4.01 (139)
10. Sufficient time has been available during advising sessions.	4.26 (155)	4.31 (137)	4.30 (139)
11. To make decisions about goals, I consult a variety of sources including other people, readings, etc.	4.03 (155)	4.07 (137)	4.10 (139)

As can be seen in the tables above, when providing feedback on later drafts of the QEP, faculty indicated approval of the shared advising model team approach that included professional advisors. Additionally, inspection of the student results revealed that although students are generally satisfied with advising, they do not have detailed plans for graduation. The need for such detailed plans is discussed later in Chapter V, Focus of the Plan, when discussing implementation of the *Connect!* Advising QEP. In sum, the surveys and stakeholder meeting results are consistent with support for the plan.

Development of support through QEP planning teams that represented a variety of stakeholders. In order to further ensure that the QEP plan had broad-based support from institutional constituencies, teams were formed from representatives of key stakeholder groups. Because the topic of the QEP is academic advising, key stakeholder groups included the Director of Advising, Faculty, Student Life, Office of Retention, Thomas More Success Center, Controller's Office, Financial Aid, and Registrar. Development of the *Connect!* Advising QEP plan was shared among three sub-groups: Design and Research, Assessment, and Budget. The *Connect!* Advising QEP co-chairs served as chair of each sub-group as a way to ensure the three teams stayed aligned.

Development of final logic based on stakeholder input. As stakeholder meetings listed above were conducted, an interactive process guided by a logic model served to develop the plan. New information from each meeting or survey was used to update the logic model. The logic model, in turn, served as a resource for planning agendas for future stakeholder meetings and surveys as a way to fill in, revise, or substantiate the logic model. In addition, the model was used as an interactive tool to guide and incorporate the literature review of research and best practices. [Table 7](#) indicates the final logic model.

Table 7. Connect! Advising QEP Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Goals	Vision
People and resources	Interventions	Evidence that activities occurred as planned	Short-term change in skills, knowledge, attitudes, etc.	Long-term change in skills, knowledge, attitudes, etc.	Overall program goal: Increasing student learning and success
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trained advisors: faculty and professional 2. Students 3. Sufficient course offerings 4. Thomas More University committed budget 5. Technology including: Canvas, Cognos, SurveyMonkey, Handshake, WOnline 6. QEP personnel: director, assessment coordinator, administrative coordinator 7. Collaboration with other units including institutional research, provost office, Thomas More Success Center and registrar's office 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Orientation 2. Student self-assessments on abilities, aspirations, interests, and values 3. Educational Growth Plan 4. Second-year Reflections 5. Early semester advising 6. Course-planning advising meetings 7. Course registration 8. Proactive advising with at-risk students 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Signed advising syllabus 2. Student self-assessments completed and on-file with Canvas 3. Fall schedule signed off by student and advisors 4. Advisor notes in student dashboard 5. KPIs including term-to-term retention, # proactive advising sessions, % at risk students using success supports, % students registered for 15-18 academic credits/term 6. Completed educational growth plans and sophomore reflections on file with Canvas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will develop an educational growth plan based on assessment of abilities, interests, and values 2. Students will understand high impact practices and apply them to their educational growth plans. 3. Students will have knowledge and make relevant use of Thomas More University Success resources 4. Students will persist and make timely progress towards graduation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare students for postgraduate opportunities 2. Help students meet the mission of the university 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultivate the intellectual habits that lead to a lifetime of learning 2. Behave as citizens who engage in the wider world around them

Conclusion. As evidenced above, a wide variety of stakeholders including students, faculty, administrators, and staff were involved in the development of the plan for *Connect!* Advising QEP. By using interactive processes, the QEP planning team kept the Thomas More community

involved and informed in the QEP plan development process. In addition, the Thomas More community will be involved in decision-making during the implementation of the QEP. As stated in Chapter V, Focus of the Plan, and in the plan's timeline ([Table 8](#)) the QEP director will complete an annual report at the end of each spring and develop recommendations for change based on the assessment of that year's activities. These recommendations will be shared with the cabinet during the following summer and with the faculty at the start of each following academic year.

IV. Literature Review and Best Practices

Once outcomes were identified through institutional research and the interactive process with broad-based stakeholders as described in Chapter III, methods for achieving those outcomes through advising practices were investigated through the following review of advising literature and best practices.

Introduction

According to The National Center for Education Statistics (2018), the six-year graduation rate for “first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began seeking a bachelor’s degree at a 4-year degree-granting institution in fall 2010 was 60 percent” (Fast Facts, graduation rates). Due to statistics such as these, it is important for higher education institutions in the United States to not only help students transition to college, but to also focus on ways to improve student learning and success, which can then lead to students’ increased persistence towards graduation (Tinto, 2012 as cited in Nicholls State University, 2016).

Spady (1970) stated that

first year transition and academic persistence is directly influenced by the level of social and academic integration of the student into the institutional environment. An atmosphere conducive [sic] to a successful integration is formed when the institutions have constructed programs, policies, and activities that provide a balance between the social and academic experience. (as cited in Turner & Thompson, 2014, p. 103)

Further, He and Hutson (2016) identified academic advising programs as one of the important methods for directly impacting student development (p. 214), and King (1993) as cited in Kot (2014), added that advisors can aid in student persistence because often:

Academic advising is the only structured service on our campuses that guarantees students some kind of interaction with concerned representatives of the institutions. [...]. Advisers play a key role in helping students become integrated within the academic and social systems on campus, which in turn contributes to student growth, satisfaction, and persistence. (p. 529)

Arendale (2016) further added to this perspective by noting that “advising is one of the few resources students find consistent from semester to semester; thus, it is at the center of student education and engagement” (p. 142).

Advising Organizational Structures

There are different models of advising, discussed below, as well as different organizational structures for academic advising programs from which institutions can choose. The organizational structures include centralized, decentralized and shared advising structures. Pardee (2004) described each of these models as:

Centralized model: Professional advisors are typically housed in an advising center and have the primary responsibility for advising students.

Decentralized model: Faculty are responsible for student advising.

Shared model: Responsibility is shared between faculty and professional advisors. Under this model, there are two common structures:

- 1) *Supplementary model:* Students are advised by a faculty member who is supported by the professional advisors with resources and training.
- 2) *Split model:* Advising is split between faculty and professional advisors, with the professional advisors typically focusing on a subset of the student population. Typically, with this model, students move on to be advised by a faculty advisor after certain conditions are met.

Kot (2014) discussed the expansion of advising services, including services provided by non-faculty staff members, as one method for enhancing advising. One of the benefits of having both faculty and professional advisors is that students see the strengths of each in regard to advising. In their study of how to transition students from a professional advisor to their major faculty advisor, Barker and Mamiseishvili (2014) found that students trusted their major faculty advisor because they saw them as experts in their field. However, when it came to general information such as degree requirements for graduation and core curriculum requirements, they trusted professional advisors because students know they spent most of their time focusing on advising.

Additionally, according to Schneider, Sasso, and Puchner (2017) adding professional advisors (which they refer to as academic advisors) can help strengthen proactive advising efforts by helping to decrease the caseload of the faculty, as well as other professional advisors on campus. As Robbins (2013) noted, there is not a standard advising load recommendation for professional advisors due to the variety of factors that impact advising at individual institutions. Such factors include advisor responsibilities, advising delivery, advising approaches, student needs, advising timelines, and mission statements (Robbins, 2013). Additionally, when discussing the 2011 NACADA (the Global Community for Academic Advising) National Survey in which the reported average advising caseload per faculty members was 25, Wallace (2013) agreed that a variety of factors such as teaching load and responsibilities, tenure status, and type of student the faculty member is advising should be considered when determining faculty advising loads. Research, therefore, supports that leadership at each university should determine optimal advising loads based on a variety of factors, including those mentioned above, as well as student needs and programmatic goals (Robbins, 2013; Wallace, 2013).

Models of Advising

Ye and Hustson (2016) discussed the various academic advising models, including appreciative advising, and described them as:

Information-based/Prescriptive advising: This is the most basic model of advising that entails the advisor sharing information with the student and involves more one-way communication. In this model, the advisor is seen as the expert.

Intervention-based/Proactive advising: In this document, this will be referred to as Proactive Advising. When using this model, advisors try to identify issues early, communicate consistently with the student forming close relationships, and provide extra support for the student.

Holistic Development/Developmental Advising: This shared model of advising allows the advisor to go beyond course selection and instead focus discussions on long-term

goals such as internships, and post-graduate opportunities such as graduate school and career goals. Advisors using this model focus on students' holistic growth.

Student Learning Outcome/Advising as Teaching Model: In this model, advising is viewed as teaching and focuses on the student's development of cognitive processes.

Strength and Asset Building/Appreciative Advising: Students identify their abilities and strengths and make decisions based on these and their past experiences. This model helps students identify multiple pathways that allow them to use their strengths.

Additional research shows that using a strengths-based approach (appreciative advising) “enables advisors to identify and build on the inherent talents students bring with them into the college and university setting, teaching students to develop and apply their strengths to new and challenging learning tasks” (Schreiner & Anderson, 2005, p.20). An important distinction from developmental advising is that appreciative advising addresses student motivation based on strengths, rather than student needs or gaps (Schreiner & Anderson, 2005). These authors also note that the use of appreciative advising motivates students to set goals and achieve them.

Intrusive advising (intervention-based/proactive) occurs when an advisor contacts a student prior to the student reaching out for support, requires the student to meet with an advisor, and aims to form a connection with the student and demonstrate that they care about them (Kraft-Terry & Kau, 2019). This type of advising is especially effective with at-risk students. As explained by Heisserer and Parette (2002) advising program plans should be comprehensive and include proactive advising as a component.

Developmental advising was first defined by Winston, Ender, and Miller (1982) as a type of advising based on close relationships between the advisor and the student that can aid students in “achieving educational and personal goals through the utilization of the full range of institutional and community resources” (as cited in Grites, 2013, p. 8). Grites (2013) noted that regardless of the above advising method used by advisors, “the advisor of today integrates the common thread of the developmental approach to assist students in achieving their goals and maximizing their opportunities for success” (para. 53).

First Year Advising

As students transition to college, it is important that they form relationships early in order to increase their commitment and attachment to an institution. As Kurland and Siegel (2013) noted, “Individuals unable to form or maintain secure attachment bonds face a more difficult transition, putting them at risk for attrition” (para. 10). However, they also stated that when students form close, trusting relationships with advisors, they are more willing to discuss issues as they occur, which results in both increased attachment and increased academic success.

Because aiding students in a successful transition to college is so important, institutions give first-year students a lot of support, including first year experience courses and orientation activities, where advising often occurs (Sanchez-Leguelinel, 2014). When researching how to revamp academic advising at Spelman College, Pedescleaux, Baxter, and Sidbury (2008) found it is also important to increase the number of interactions between the advisor and advisee, even if some of the interactions are informal gatherings.

Further, Kot (2014) discussed a study conducted by Seidman (1991) in which a group of students received additional pre and post-admissions advising where programs were discussed

in terms of the student's "academic background, interests, career goals, and academic and personal goals. Their post-admission advising consisted in career and program planning based on the student's academic history and potential, as well as his/her career goals and aspirations" (p. 530). As a result of this additional advising, students' persistence levels entering their third semester was 20 percent higher than those who did not receive this additional advising. This lends support to the importance of advising occurring early in a student's college experience. Additionally, early advising also increases a student's ability to make decisions, feel competent, and exhibit autonomous behavior by the end of the first year (Leach & Patall, 2016).

Second-Year Advising

While first-year students tend to receive high levels of support, sophomore students lose some of the structured support they received during their first year, which can leave them feeling confused (Noel-Levitz Inc., 2011). Sanchez-Leguelinel (2014) noted that sophomores often enter a "slump" at a time when first-year students receive much attention and resources in order to "engage and retain" them, and "to the junior and senior classes for career advisement, planning, and future person goals" (para. 7). The study conducted by Noel-Levitz, Inc. (2011) further noted that sophomore students have a high desire for advising help, but low satisfaction with the levels of communication offered by their academic advisors. These data support the need for increased interaction between sophomores and their advisors in order to help them surpass the sophomore slump and persist on a timely path of graduation.

Undeclared/Exploring and At-Risk Students

As Bullock-Yowell, McConnell, and Schedin (2014) noted, undeclared students represent a large volume of enrolled students; therefore, it is important to understand and assist undeclared students and help them overcome common barriers that exist in choosing a major. Their research suggested that if advisors can help students set achievable goals, such as researching five careers and the requirements for each, this can help them increase their self-efficacy. Also, it is important that advisors working with undeclared students make connections between students' interests and goals and programs available on campus and encourage course work related to them (Leach & Patall, 2016). Once students have declared a major, it is also important that universities encourage students to continue to reflect on their decisions, and also let them know that they can switch majors if needed (Ashraf, Godbey, Shrikhande, & Widman, 2018).

At-risk students can be defined in a variety of ways. In their study of at-risk students and the effects of early interventions through advising, Zhang, Fei, Quddus, and Davis (2014) defined at-risk students as those that had midterm grades below a C. Other studies used criteria such as a cumulative GPA of less than 2.0; high school GPA less than 3.0; SAT score less than 540; and those that did not do well on their first assessment in a first year seminar course (Kraft-Terry & Cheri Kau, 2019; Lizzio, & Wilson, 2013; Rogers, Blunt & Triple, 2014)

At-risk students are less likely to ask for help and can be more difficult to reach (Zhang, Fei, Quddus, & Davis, 2014; Vivian, 2005). Zhang, Fei, Quddus, and Davis (2014) demonstrated that early developmental advising intervention has a positive effect with at-risk students. In their study of business students, those who received advising as part of an early intervention program were more successful and had a higher pass rate than those who did not participate. At Georgia Regents, where all first-year students and sophomores are advised by professional advisors within the first three weeks of the semester, instructors were asked to let the advising

office know of students who were struggling in class. This notice allowed the advising office to use proactive advising and request that students meet with an advisor who helps guide them to various on campus resources. The article discusses that feedback on the effectiveness from a student point of view has been positive (Patel, 2014). The research noted here also demonstrates the importance of interventions occurring early in the semester to increase the chances of student success.

Advising Training and Resources

Providing advisor training and resources is a key success factor in an advising program. As Wiseman and Messitt (2010) noted, when faculty received advising training, they felt that they could better help students “set goals, make decisions, become accountable, and build strategies for academic success. They also felt that they had built relationships with students and encouraged their self-determination” (p. 46). Having quick and easy access to advising materials is also important and providing discipline-specific advising guides can also be used to increase the effectiveness of advising (Wiseman & Messitt, 2010). Further, Heisserer and Parette (2002) stated that in order to effectively advise at-risk students, advisors need to have training and extensive knowledge of the services and resources available on campus. Similarly, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2015) noted that effective advising programs should monitor student progress and make sure that they can direct students to appropriate resources. EAB (2017) further suggested that campuses create a “coordinated care network” where the advisor can connect a student to resources, and the department they interact with can close the loop with the advisor on the outcome of the office’s interactions with the student.

EAB (2017), presented a model for a seven-day, robust training plan for advisors shown here:



Figure 1. EAB Advisor Training Framework

This model was developed by Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, NY, which expanded their training with the above five competencies (relational, technology, personal reflection, conceptual, and informational). As EAB (2017) noted, relational, informational, and conceptual are based on NACADA's core competencies, and the college added technology and personal reflection. In addition to their initial training when hired, the professional advisors receive on-going training.

Advising syllabus. An advising syllabus is an important part of creating an effective advising program. As Sullivan-Vance (2008) noted, new college students are often unsure of the advising process and the role of an academic advisor. An advising syllabus can help increase their understandings and the expectations and responsibilities of the relationship. She also noted that such a syllabus can be used in orientations for new students. From a faculty and

professional advisor viewpoint, Schneider, Sasso, and Puchner (2017) found that both groups “refer frequently to the use of clear, descriptive syllabi in promoting student success” (para. 31).

Arendale (2016) discussed advising syllabus best practices and recommended including the following details for creating one. The syllabus should include:

- consistent formatting aligned with syllabi requirement on campus to increase student familiarity with it
- clear expectations of both faculty and students during the advising process so that they can take more responsibility
- the outcomes of advising, so students understand how it can impact their success
- a list of additional resources and tools available for both faculty and students

High Impact Practices. High impact practices, which increase student success, “are teaching and learning tools which have been demonstrated to increase student engagement and persistence” (White, 2018, p. 118). Kuh (2008) identified ten high impact practices which include: first year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignment and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning/community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects. These practices increase the interaction students have with both faculty and their peers; and are important because they “put students in the company of mentors and advisers as well as peers who share intellectual interests and are committed to seeing that students succeed” (Kuh, 2008, p. 15).

In addition to their “positive associations with student learning and retention” (NSSE, n.d., para. 1), Sandeen (2012) noted that implementing high impact practices can help students develop broad liberal arts skills, which employers have indicated they want. One way to implement high impact practices is to “use technology (e.g., blogs, such as at NYU) to encourage synthesis and reflection (critical thinking, self-knowledge, writing)” (Sandeen, 2012, p. 88). Finally, continuous and substantive feedback is a key component of high impact practices in higher education (NSSE, n.d. b; White, 2018).

Technology

Appropriate use of technology has many benefits for both the institution and for students. It aids institutions in capturing student information. It also allows advisors and students to take a systematic approach in examining the students’ various paths towards degree completion that align with the students’ goals (Phillips, 2013). When professional advisors are used, it can also help them stay current on the requirements for the various degrees and programs (Phillips, 2013). Technology also makes it easier for institutions to track students’ use of academic services as well as to merge data to examine the impact of advising on student learning outcomes and success (Kot, 2014, p. 528). Additionally, it can provide increased student access to advising and makes course scheduling and planning easier (Turner & Thompson, 2014; Kalamkarian & Karp, 2017). Pedescleaux, Baxter, and Sidbury (2008) similarly noted that when technology is effectively used, it can allow more time for mentoring activities to occur.

Rowh (2018) identified robust technology as one of the key factors needed for a successful advising program. Using such technology allows institutions to increase the use of data analytics, which can help identify students who may be in need of proactive advising earlier.

While the use of technology is important to the effectiveness of academic advising, it is important to note that students still prefer meeting with their advisor in person to discuss academic and career goals, as well as their multi-year academic plans. This demonstrates that technology can act as an additional tool in advising but should not to replace in-person advising (Kalamkarian & Karp, 2017).

Educational plans and Decision Making

When an advising process of shared responsibility between students and advisors occurs, students become more self-directed learners and decision makers (Pedescleaux, Baxter, Sidbury, 2008). Fike and Fike (2008), as cited in Wiseman and Messitt (2010), also found that meeting regularly with students and helping them think critically about their academic decisions, helped them not only complete a long-term academic plan (which helped with student persistence), but it also helped them effectively plan for their professional careers (p. 35). An important piece of this planning and creation of education plans is reflections. Evidence of this is demonstrated by Lombard and Eichinger's (2000) research (as cited in Mackay & Tymon, 2013) that stated that "an individual with reflective skills has enhanced learning agility often linked to high potential" (p. 645).

Another positive aspect of educational plans is that they can help plan and track the number of credit hours students take per semester. This will increase the likelihood that students will take at least 15 credit hours a semester. This number of credit hours per semester is a key component of students graduating on time. At Georgia Regents, they ask students to sign a pledge that they will take at least 15 hours a semester and students hear the importance of this number beginning at orientation and consistently during their time on campus. Since this campaign began, "71 percent of freshmen attempted 15 or more credits, compared with 8 percent the previous year. This fall, 90 percent of freshmen attempted 15 credits or more" (Patel, 2014, para. 22).

Setting goals is an important part of both decision making and advising, as it can aid in student persistence towards graduation. A clear purpose and clear goals are essential to students creating a clear sense of personal meaning (DeWitz, Woolsey, & Walsh, 2016). Further, Leach and Patell (2016) in their research on self-determination as it relates to undeclared students and their decision making, noted that advisors should help students see connections between their interests, goals, and available programs (para. 41).

Finally, in their study, Noel-Levitz, Inc. (2011) found that sophomore students indicated a need to develop an academic plan, the want to define their goals, and the desire to discuss both their career plans and internship opportunities (p. 11). In fact, 52.8 percent of students at four-year private institutions indicated the desire to prepare a written, academic plan for graduation (p. 7).

Conclusion. The information gained from the literature and best practices review helped guide the development of the QEP proposal. Research demonstrated the importance of supporting first- and second-year students through advising. Additionally, it demonstrated the effectiveness of developmental/holistic advising and appreciative advising for all students, as well as the importance of proactive advising with at-risk students. The importance of linking student interests, abilities and values to their academic program and future career goals is also clear. Finally, the review aided Thomas More in identifying tools to increase the effectiveness of advising, which include effective advisor training, providing resources for both students and

advisors, implementing enhanced technology, and using educational growth that plans to guide students towards a timely path to graduation and their future goals.

V. Focus of the Plan

The *Connect!* Advising QEP is focused on student success. One implication is that the QEP will impact 2,000 traditional, undergraduate students during the five-year span of the QEP (five cohorts of traditional, undergraduate students). Eventually, once the QEP becomes institutionalized, other Thomas More student populations such as those in the Thomas More Accelerated Program for adult students will be impacted. In this section, the vision, goals and outcomes (program and student), the actions to be implemented, and the timeline for the QEP at Thomas More are discussed.

As discussed in Chapter II, QEP topic selection was guided by the University's mission statement. This mission statement focuses on helping students examine the ultimate meaning of life, their place in the world, and their responsibility to others. These goals match well with NACADA's sample of suggested advising outcomes (NACADA, 2006). Through consideration of the NACADA outcomes and through the interactive process described in the broad-based support chapter, the following vision, goals, and outcomes (program and student) were identified.

Vision

For students to be part of a program that will help them learn to

1. "Cultivate the intellectual habits that lead to a lifetime of learning" (NACADA, 2006).
2. "Behave as citizens who engage in the wider world around them" (NACADA, 2006).

Goals

The program will

1. Help students meet the mission of the university.
2. Prepare students for postgraduate opportunities.

Outcomes

Program Outcomes:

1. The *Connect!* Advising QEP will provide services in the area of faculty and professional advisor training leading to increased knowledge of policies and procedures related to engaging students in productive advising and pathways to graduation.
2. The *Connect!* Advising QEP will promote student behaviors leading to increased retention and academic success.

Student Outcomes:

1. Students will develop an educational growth plan based on assessment of abilities, interests, and values.
2. Students will apply at least two high impact practices to their educational growth plan.
3. Students will have knowledge and make relevant use of Thomas More University success resources.
4. Students will persist and make timely progress towards graduation.



Student-Faculty Research Presentations

Based on (a) the institutional research conducted, (b) the proposal team’s interaction with stakeholders, (c) the literature review of best practices, (d) the logic model used to guide the proposal processes ([Table 7](#)), and (e) crosswalk ([Appendix A](#)) with the academic advising standards published by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS] (2015) to ensure that the plan is robust, Thomas More University has decided to implement the following actions, captured in the conceptual workflow shown below:

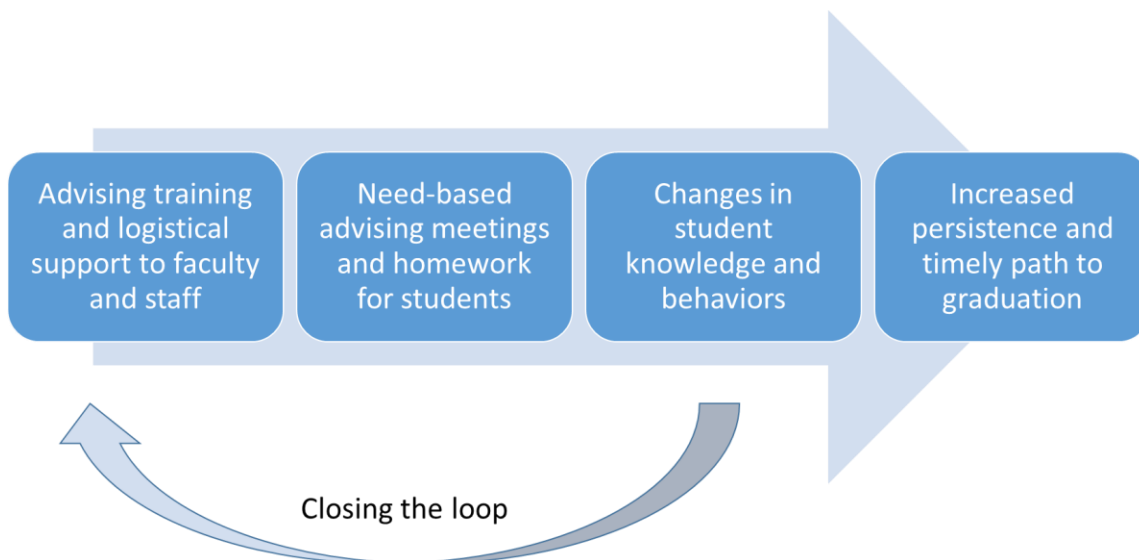


Figure 2. Connect! Advising QEP Conceptual Workflow

Connect! Advising QEP Staffing

To support the *Connect!* Advising QEP, Thomas More University intends to hire the following positions: a QEP Director (half-time), an Assessment Coordinator (quarter time), and an Office Coordinator to support the QEP (half-time). A professional advisor will also be hired at the beginning of year one (2020-2021) of the QEP.

A brief description of each position is provided here, and the full job description of each also is included in [Appendix B](#).

The QEP Director will lead the implementation and reporting for the 2020-2025 *Connect!* Advising QEP with reporting duties extending through 2026. The QEP will be overseen by a member of the faculty given a two course/term (or half-teaching time) reassignment. The QEP Director reports directly to the Provost. Primary responsibilities include leading the QEP team, managing the budget, and engaging the wider Thomas More University community in the QEP on academic advising. The director will continue to involve a variety of constituents in the implementation and execution of the QEP to ensure continuing broad-based support of the QEP and to help institutionalize it.

The QEP Assessment Coordinator will also be a faculty member who receives a one course (quarter time) reassignment per semester. This Assessment Coordinator is responsible for assessment logistics and analysis and will support the director in faculty and staff development initiatives. The assessment coordinator will collect and analyze data, as well as meet with stakeholders to review the data.

The QEP Office Coordinator is a new position and this person will be responsible for providing administrative and clerical support for the QEP in areas such as event planning, marketing, and logistics for programming and assessment. Sample responsibilities include coordinating the systemization of day-to-day operations of the QEP implementation, including implementation checklists. This position assists in keeping constituencies informed about QEP progress.

The Professional Advisor positions will be new positions at Thomas More University. Professional advisors will be members of the support advising team for all traditional undergraduate students, primary advisors for exploring students, and proactive advisors for at-risk students (e.g., conditionally admitted students, students on academic probation, students identified at day 10 of each semester as having missed homework, low attendance, or poor grades on early assignments). During year one of the *Connect!* Advising QEP, the plan calls for Thomas More to hire the University's first professional advisor. As the ROI for this advisor is documented, additional professional advisors will be hired.

Implement a Shared Advising Model

Faculty members at Thomas More University have indicated a desire for academic advising to remain with the faculty, but also indicated a need for additional help and resources to make them more effective and to help with high advising loads. Additionally, students indicated a desire to have more, and longer, meetings with their advisors. To address these viewpoints, and after a consideration of the literature review, Thomas More University has decided to implement the shared model of advising, as described by Pardee (2004).

Under the shared advising model (seen in the diagram below in [Figure 3](#)), there will be advising teams at Thomas More University structured as follows:

- Students who have declared a major will be assigned a faculty member as their primary advisor, with a professional advisor providing support.
- Exploring students will have a professional advisor as their primary advisor.
- At-risk students (defined as students who are conditionally admitted, students on academic probation, students identified at day 10 of each semester as having missed homework, low attendance, or poor grades on early assignments) and who have declared a major will have a faculty member as their primary advisor to engage in developmental and appreciative advising as well as a professional advisor assigned to the advising team to provide proactive advising as needed.
- First-year Exploration (FYE) course faculty will act as mentors to all first-year students and help lead their self-assessment initiatives.

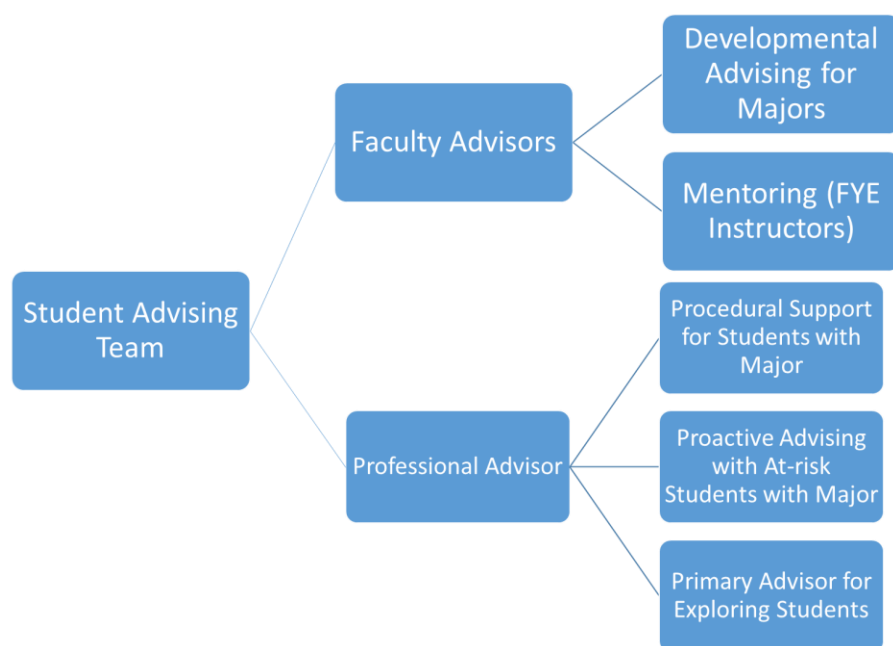


Figure 3. Student Advising Team and Advisor Roles

Hiring professional advisors for the shared advising program will evolve in the following way:

- While in year one of the *Connect!* Advising QEP (2020-2021) all students at Thomas More will be impacted through enhanced advising from a faculty member, Thomas More University also will hire one full-time professional advisor (PA). Based on the needs identified in the institutional retention data, this position will support exploring students as well as at-risk students and first- year students in the College of Arts and Sciences. The professional advisor will help these students with course scheduling and also help them complete an educational growth plan. The professional advisor will initially be housed in the Success Center, which supports student persistence, graduation, and meaningful success (<https://university.thomasmore.edu/academics/tmu-success-center/>).
- In year two of the *Connect!* Advising QEP (2021-2022) all students will continue to be impacted through enhanced advising from a faculty member. Additionally, the new first-year students will receive the support described above and second-year students in the

College of Arts and Sciences will continue to work with their professional advisor to complete their second-year reflections that include a discussion of high impact practices.

- Barring unforeseen circumstances, the director will hire a second full-time PA in year two of the *Connect!* Advising QEP (2021-2022) to work with an additional college.
- At the end of the second year of the *Connect!* Advising QEP, the QEP Director will assess the effectiveness of the initial hires to assess sustainability of the professional advisor position.
- In year three of the *Connect!* Advising QEP (2022-2023) a third full-time professional advisor will be hired if justified by increases in student persistence and timely progress towards graduation. Long-term, the goal is for each student in the three colleges at the University to have access to a professional advisor during their first two years of college.

Based on a consideration of institutional factors, Thomas More University has determined the following initial advising loads at the university. Professional advisors will have a caseload between 150 and 500 depending on the number of professional advisors (PAs) hired. The advising load will be divided equally between the PAs. The goal for faculty advisors is that they will have no more than 25 advisees. As the number of professional advisors is increased, more PA support will be assigned to faculty with more than 25 advisees.

Creating these advising teams will give students access to professional advisors who can help with policies, procedures and course scheduling and allow students more time for mentoring activities with faculty members. These activities can include items such as discussions of how to get the most out of their time while at college, becoming involved in high impact practices, and discussing various interests and career paths.

Thomas More University will provide incentives for students to meet with their faculty advisors and PAs. Students must meet with their faculty advisors to receive registration clearance. When students meet with their PA, reinforcement occurs because the emails, etc. will cease once the student meets with them and receives the needed help and guidance. Students who meet with their required advisors, whether they are professional or faculty advisors, and who complete the reflections and educational growth plan prior to meeting with their advisors, will receive priority registration (Nicholls State University, 2016) which will be a day earlier than their assigned registration time.

Student Focused

While all students will be impacted through enhanced advising, Thomas More has decided to focus its *Connect!* Advising QEP on all traditional undergraduate students in their first year and second year including subgroups consisting of at-risk students and exploring students. The use of proactive advising with at-risk students, as well as additional support provided by professional advisors for exploring students, will help address some of the challenges these students face, and increase their success.

The research supports the need for students to connect and feel supported early in their college experiences. Ensuring that first-year students can interact early with their advisors is essential. Because of this, the QEP Director will form a subcommittee that will explore how advising should be addressed beginning in orientation. Additionally, students should meet their advisor during the first 10 days of the semester, even if it is a group meeting between the advisors and their advisees. Having these meetings will also allow students to meet their peers and begin

forming connections, which can help increase their persistence. Further, professional advisors will schedule supplemental meetings with at-risk students throughout the term, carefully track their progress, and communicate with these students about using Thomas More University success resources such as peer tutoring, on-line tutoring (Smarthinking), writing center, math and physics tutoring center, academic coaching, accommodations, advising with the Director of the Thomas More Success Center, the study skills and student success course, Institute for Learning Differences, study tables, summer leadership camp (Camp Summit) and career development services.

Additionally, second-year students often feel less supported relative to their first year even though they may still feel uncertain about how to achieve college success. It is important, therefore, to address their needs for success. At-risk students also need additional support as well as a higher level of proactive advising. Finally, exploring students need to understand the connection between their interests and goals and the programs that are available at the University and to help them choose a major during their second-year.

One of the goals of the *Connect!* Advising QEP is to help students set goals and make decisions based on their abilities and interests. To help students identify their goals and interests, appreciative and developmental advising will be used. First-year students will assess and reflect on their interests, and their advisors will help students create educational growth plan goals based on this assessment. The advisors also will assess student progress towards achieving their goals. As second-years, students will reflect on their experiences and progress made in their first year, work with advisors to identify high impact practices they can engage in while at the University (Nicholls State University, 2016) and update their plan. Creating these educational plans and reflecting on them will help students stay on a timely progress towards graduation. In addition, setting goals can help them with persistence and lead to increases in the students' autonomy in their later college years.

In year one, the QEP will focus on first-year, traditional students. In year two, the QEP will expand to include both first- and second-year students. As the *Connect!* Advising QEP progresses, the focus of advising initiatives will expand to also include traditional undergraduate juniors and seniors, graduate students, and adult students in the Thomas More Accelerated Programs.

Marketing

In order to ensure that the entire Thomas More University community is aware of the *Connect!* Advising QEP the proposal co-chairs engaged in two processes. First, as detailed in the Chapter III, Broad-based Support, the proposal co-chairs frequently met with advising stakeholders. In addition, a logo and marketing plan was developed to ensure broad awareness of the *Connect!* Advising QEP. This marketing plan was developed in collaboration with the communications art director in Institutional Advancement and with support from the staff of the Institute for Career Development and Graduate School Planning. Moreover, the QEP co-chairs drafted a short statement explaining the QEP, and the Provost requested that professors include this statement on their syllabi. The goal of the marketing plan is that everyone on campus know that the QEP focuses on advising and increasing student success. Student success is defined as student persistence and timely progress towards graduation. Once the QEP director and office coordinator are in place, they will develop and implement additional marketing throughout the life of the QEP.

Training and Resources Provided

The QEP director will develop, through an interactive process, a training program for both faculty and the professional advisors. The training will focus on the use of the various models of advising, best practices, ways advisors can be advocates for students, and the use of tools and resources that will be provided and available for both students and faculty.

Faculty and Staff Training. The *Connect!* Advising QEP will provide services in the area of faculty training, which will lead to an increased knowledge of policies and procedures related to graduation and engaging students in productive advising. Faculty training will include both mandatory (at bi-yearly professional development days) and optional (participation in a yearly faculty and staff learning community cohort) components. During the 2019-20 baseline year a group of faculty and staff participated in a pilot of the learning community cohort.

- **Faculty and staff pilot group.** During the baseline year, the QEP proposal co-chairs led a faculty and staff pilot group made up of volunteer faculty. The pilot group received training on the various advising models, as well as on self-assessments, reflections, and using educational growth plans. Training also included topics such as how to use the current technology (e.g., the student dashboard and the early alert system) to enhance advising. During the pilot, students were asked to complete the following four items:
 - A pre and post-survey relative to their advising sessions
 - The Occupational Information Network (O*NET) survey, to identify interests (<https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip>)
 - A reflection of the survey results from O*NET
 - Educational Growth Plans (as time allowed)

This pilot group allowed the QEP team to continue an interactive process with faculty members, as well as provide faculty with the training and development they desire. Feedback from the faculty pilot group will help the QEP director assess and revise, if necessary, tools and procedures that will be used in year one of the *Connect!* Advising QEP.

Faculty participating in the pilot group during the baseline year are:

Debra Allen, Education Faculty
 Caitlyn Dwyer, Theology Faculty
 Michele Geiger, Thomas More Accelerated Program Staff
 Caitlin Powell, Psychology Faculty
 Amanda Siegrist, Law Faculty
 Amy Thistlethwaite, Criminal Justice Faculty
 Kelsey Wicher, Thomas More Accelerated Program Advisor

- **Mandatory Faculty Training:** Thomas More University already has twice-yearly faculty professional development days early in the fall and spring terms. Advising training will be incorporated during each of these days. Topics will include advising theory, use of educational growth plans, making the most of an advising session,

advising technology and communication tools, and other topics related to the QEP. Faculty will also review data from the previous year as part of a closing the loop process.

- **Faculty and Staff Learning Community Cohorts:** Faculty and staff will also have the opportunity to volunteer to participate in learning community cohorts where they can learn about best practices in advising, as well as the various advising models and the most effective use of each. Those who participate in these learning communities and complete training will earn a Master Advisor Certificate. The goal is to have two-thirds of the faculty participate in these learning communities by year five of the *Connect!* Advising QEP. The QEP Director will work with the Chair of the Faculty Relations Committee (FRC) to discuss the details of this certificate. The learning community will include organized training sessions and regularly scheduled active-learning seminar style meetings.
- **Professional Advisor Training:** The *Connect!* Advising QEP will provide services in the area of a one-to-two week professional advisor training, which will lead to an increased knowledge of policies and procedures related to graduation and engaging students in productive advising. This training will focus on the Key Performance Indicators noted in the assessment section of the plan, as well as best practices in advising. Professional advisors will receive training on an on-going basis.

Additional Resources and Support for Faculty and Professional Advisors

Canvas course. An additional resource that will be provided for all advisors is a Canvas course that allows quick and easy access of materials for students and faculty. The course will contain the following:

- An advising syllabus which will be signed by the end of the fall semester by first-year students and advisors (See [Appendix C](#))
- A template for the educational growth plans
- Important university contacts for both students and advisors
- Policy information such as course registration dates, graduation application due dates, athletic eligibility, adding and withdrawing from courses
- Discipline guides for the majors and minors available
- Core curriculum information
- A place for students to submit their various reflections and educational growth plans throughout their first and second years at the University.

Implement Software

Initially, the *Connect!* Advising QEP will focus on helping both professional advisors and faculty advisors understand and increase their usage of existing advising software, such as the student dashboard and the early alert system. This technology is key to effective communication between advisors, as well as the athletic department and faculty liaisons to the athletic teams. To achieve this, advisor training on this technology will occur.

The Student Dashboard was developed in-house to provide advisors access to key information in one location. The dashboard combines information from the early alert system, Canvas

learning management system, and the Student Information System to give advisors a holistic view of their advisees. During the pilot year, advisee metrics were added to the Student Dashboard that will allow faculty to see a snapshot of statistics on their advisees. These metrics serve two purposes: to identify advisees who need attention, and to share key university metrics, most of which are listed in the assessment section of the *Connect!* Advising QEP. The information should enable advisors to help students be more successful. All full-time faculty were trained on these metrics at a faculty meeting. The following metrics are included:

- Open early alerts and alerts in the past three weeks – advisors should follow-up with these students.
- Students on probation – advisors should ensure these students have submitted academic success plans and follow up throughout the semester but especially during mid-terms.
- Advisees registered for next semester and cohort students registered for next semester – the university has set targets related to these measures: 87% of all traditional, full-time fall students return in the spring and 90% of first-time, full-time cohort students from the fall return in the spring. The percentages are shown for each advisor to identify students who are not registered.
- Advisees registered for 15 hours in the previous, current, and next semester – in order to graduate in four years (120 credit hours), students must take an average of 15 hours per term. If students are not making adequate progress, they are less likely to retain and graduate. Helping advisors and students understand and stay on track should improve timely progress towards graduation.
- Progress towards graduation – these metrics identify key checkpoints to help students stay on track for graduation: completion of 30 hours after the first year, 60 hours after the second year, and 90 hours after the third year; satisfactory academic progress (SAP) – earned 67% of courses with a C or better.

During the second half of the pilot year, reports will be developed for each academic program related to these metrics to help faculty identify programmatic issues or opportunities to help students be more successful. Throughout *Connect!* Advising QEP, these metrics will also be included on the Student Dashboard for the professional advisors as they are hired.

In years one and two of the *Connect!* Advising QEP, the QEP Director will investigate both internal and external software options that may be implemented to enhance advising. A decision will be made at the end of year two about what software will be integrated for professional advisors and faculty advisors to use. Options include continuing to enhance internal, existing software or purchasing external software. In year three of the *Connect!* Advising QEP (2022-2023), new software will be implemented. In years four and five, the QEP Director will review the implementation of the software, review its usefulness and make changes as needed.

Components of the New Advising Model

Throughout the interactive process with various stakeholders, Thomas More University decided to develop a model of advising that focuses on moving a student from the dependent, prescriptive advising model to the developmental, holistic advising model and the appreciative advising model. The goal is to increase the students' decision-making and goal setting abilities and move forward with an educational plan based on the assessment of their abilities and interests. This section describes specific actions both faculty advisors, professional advisors, and students will implement under the *Connect!* Advising QEP.

Educational Plans Based on Interests, Abilities, and High Impact Practices. Initially, the professional advisor will work with exploring students as well as at-risk and first- and second-year students in the College of Arts and Sciences, to develop educational growth plans ([Appendix D](#) and [E](#), educational growth plan and second-year reflection, respectively) that consider their interests and abilities and that also include high impact practices in which the students plan to engage. These plans will help students persist on a timely path to graduation. Additionally, the plans will include items that the student should complete based on their goals while choosing a major, the courses they will take while attending Thomas More University, and their goals and interests after graduation.

Students will assess their interests and abilities to help them determine (or confirm) their intended major, as well as opportunities they want to pursue after graduation. To help students identify their interest and abilities, they will complete the O*NET self-assessment and a reflection (see [Appendix F](#)) of the results in their one-credit hour First-Year Exploration course. Exploring students, as well as first- and second-year students and at-risk students in the College of Arts and Sciences, will each interact with a team of advisors. Once the reflection is completed in the FYE course, the students will then meet with their professional advisor to begin working on their educational growth plans. Following the completion of the educational growth plans, the student will meet with their faculty advisor to discuss the educational growth plans, the student's academic performance, as well as any other decision made since the last advising meeting. The discussions between faculty advisors and students that are centered on the educational growth plans will allow faculty to mentor students in a variety of ways, including but not limited to co-curriculars, high impact practices, and postgraduate opportunities and goals.

In summary, the following checkpoints for student and advisor tasks will serve as guides to student progress. Please note that the educational growth plan and second-year reflection will be assessed using rubrics ([Appendix G](#) and [H](#), respectively).

1. Checkpoint 1: end of fall advising period for first year students. Tasks include
 - a. Student tasks
 - i. Design a schedule for next term that helps meet graduation requirements
 - ii. To receive advising registration clearance and register for first year spring courses
 - iii. Submit the reflection of interests, values, aspiration, and abilities to Canvas as a first-year exploration course assignment.
 - b. Advisor tasks
 - i. Meet advisees before day 10 (individually or in groups)
 - ii. Review advising syllabus with advisee (both faculty member/PA will sign the syllabus)

- iii. Capture Advising notes
 - iv. Review reflections with advisee
 - v. Introduce the educational growth plan
 - vi. Clear students for registration for next term
- 2. Checkpoint 2: end of spring advising period for first year students. Tasks include
 - a. Student task
 - i. Create a four-year educational growth plan that meets the graduation requirements in order to receive priority registration
 - b. Advisor tasks
 - i. Day 10 interventions as needed based on student at-risk status
 - ii. Advising meetings
 - iii. Review plan
 - iv. Capture advising notes
 - v. Review educational growth plans with advisees
 - vi. Clear students for registration for next term
- 3. Checkpoint 3: end of fall semester for second year students. Tasks include
 - a. Student tasks
 - i. Reflect on the plan considering first year experiences
 - 1. What went well
 - 2. What needs work
 - b. Advisor tasks
 - i. Day 10 interventions as needed based on student at-risk status
 - ii. Meet with students to introduce the high impact practice second-year revision of the educational growth plan
 - iii. Capture Advising notes
 - iv. Discuss student reflections from first year
 - v. Clear students for registration for next term
- 4. Checkpoint 4: end of spring semester for second year students. Tasks include
 - a. Student task
 - i. Identify high impact practices (e.g., internships, research, service) and completion of second-year reflection in order to receive priority registration
 - b. Advisor tasks
 - i. Meet with students to review second-year HIP update of educational growth plans
 - ii. Meet with at-risk students by 10 day and as needed
 - iii. Capture Advising notes
 - iv. Review reflections
 - v. Clear students for registration for next term

At the end of the first year of the *Connect!* Advising QEP, the QEP Director will review the use of O*NET to ensure that the survey is providing sufficient value to Thomas More students. If it is not doing so, then the QEP Director will research other tools that may be more effective.

Timely path to graduation. Part of the educational plan described above is to map out and ensure that each student complete 15 hours at the end of their first semester, 30 hours at the end of their first year, and so on. Monitoring the amount of credit hours will help students not

only see the path to graduation, but also help them stay on track for timely progress towards graduation. Finally, in order to help students achieve these goals, the QEP office will help advocate for a multi-year course schedule to be developed which students can then use to develop a four year educational growth plan.

Implementing the plan's actions should lead to an increase in student persistence. It is important to note that persistence is a collaborative effort among Academic Affairs, the enrollment/retention offices, and each member of the Thomas More community. As mentioned previously, research demonstrates that advising directly affects retention and at Thomas More University and it also indirectly fits in with the retention taskforce report/plan that has been created.

Working collaboratively with the various functional areas that impact retention and persistence, at the end of each academic year the QEP director will use the information published annually by the IR director, to evaluate student persistence and the success of the QEP. If, at the end of year three, retention does not increase at least two percent, then Thomas More University will evaluate the *Connect!* Advising QEP methodologies to determine if advising is the appropriate method to address the plan's desired outcomes for persistence and student success. The goal is to create a culture of academic success throughout the University and an enhanced advising program can help achieve this.

When viewed comprehensively, all of these items result in the logistical workflow shown here:

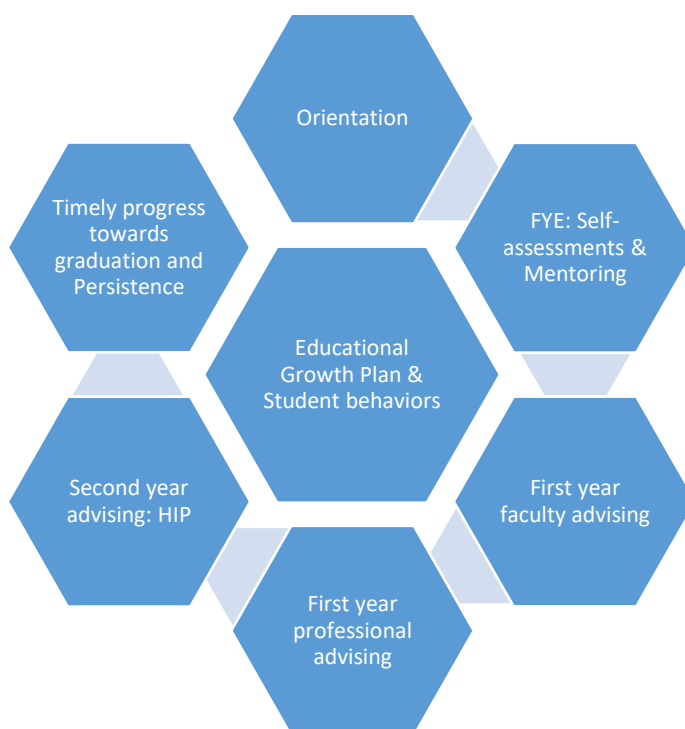


Figure 4. Connect! Advising QEP Workflow

This workflow demonstrates the collaboration that will occur between various stakeholder at Thomas More University in order to increase student success at the University.

Initial Assessment of Actions to Be Implemented from Fall 2019 Faculty Pilot

During the fall 2019 academic term the faculty pilot described above was implemented. Following fall 2019 advising week, the pilot group provided initial qualitative feedback on the actions to be implemented. Later in the term, based on pilot work with students, the pilot faculty found that students were mainly positive on the O*NET/Mynextmove Survey self-assessment tool with a minority of students reporting it was not helpful. Many students found the reflection worksheet relating the university mission statement to the self-assessment to be confusing. Generally, students found the educational growth plan to be useful. Faculty reported that the conversations generated by the student self-reflections and educational growth plans were useful. For the pilot faculty-student advising meetings, a set of conversation prompts based on developmental advising theory was developed; the faculty reported the prompts to be useful. The faculty members were concerned that advising sessions might require more than 30 minutes to cover the developmental advising materials. They also were concerned that it would take the entire academic year--rather than just the fall term--for students to complete the educational growth plan.

In response to this feedback, the QEP proposal team adapted the self-assessment reflection prompts related to the university mission statement to make them clearer (see [Appendix F](#) for updated reflection prompts). The student workflow timeline was also modified so that first year students at Thomas More have fall and spring terms for developing the educational growth plan rather than just the fall. As the QEP director leads the university in further developing the *Connect! Advising QEP*, the director should look for additional self-reflection tools and for ways to make faculty advising meetings more effective and efficient.



Student Research at the Thomas More University Biology Field Station

Timeline

The *Connect!* Advising QEP is intended to unfold in three major phases.

- *Implementation.* Phase one consists of implementing changes to advising training and procedures, as well as bringing on-line new advising tools such as the educational growth plan, second-year reflections, and advising related software in addition to hiring new professional advising staff.
- *Closing the loop.* Phase two consists of two processes—one for making operational adaptations to the QEP and one for determining strategic success of the QEP.
 - *Operational adaptations.* An annual report led by the QEP director will given to the president's cabinet and faculty. This report may result in recommendations for change in QEP interventions, resources, and assessment procedures based on the assessment data and findings.
 - *Strategic direction.* The IR Director working with the Institutional Assessment Committee is charged with evaluating the QEP director's annual assessment report and determining whether comprehensive changes in the QEP and its approach are needed. Should such changes be indicated, recommendations will be made to the QEP director, president's cabinet, and faculty. The Institutional Assessment Committee is a standing committee at the University, with representation from cabinet, staff, and faculty, and is charged with reviewing institutional assessment and strategic planning.
- *Institutionalization.* Phase three consists of consolidating progress and making recommendations to faculty and the president's cabinet for institutionalizing new advising procedures beyond the life of the *Connect!* Advising QEP. Based on an assessment of the QEP, The QEP director will work with the president's cabinet to develop a budget for continuing successful actions of the QEP beyond the five-year QEP.

Student Success Timeline (per student). While the *Connect!* Advising QEP timeline ([Table 8](#)) below is organized by year of the QEP, please note that actions to be implemented at the student level uses a scaffolded structure for each student during their first and second years at Thomas More:

- First year students
 - Summer before entering first term: Complete course registration at orientation
 - Fall: Attend advising meetings, complete self-assessments
 - Spring: Attend advising meetings, complete educational growth plan, complete QEP surveys
- Second year students
 - Fall: Attend advising meetings, complete second-year reflection
 - Spring: Attend advising meetings, complete QEP surveys

Program Timeline Overview (for life of *Connect!* Advising QEP)*Table 8. Connect! Advising QEP Timeline*

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
2017-18: Topic Identification based on review of institutional data and broad-based stakeholder input.				
	Interactive stakeholder process	Lead by IR	May 21, 2018	QEP Topic, Academic Advising Announced
2018-19: Topic Development based on broad-based stakeholder input and review of research and best practices.				
	QEP Planning Team Recruited	University-wide	Fall, 2018	QEP
	Interactive stakeholder process	QEP team	2018-19 academic year	Feedback from meetings and surveys
	Preliminary proposal drafted	QEP team	Aug 8, 2019	Draft submitted to President and Provost
2019-20: Plan development based on stakeholder feedback, baseline data collection, and faculty-learning-community pilot; QEP Plan Submission, additional baseline data collection in spring 2020.				
Personnel	Hire QEP director	QEP proposal team	Jan, 2019	Letters of Agreement
Personnel	Recruit faculty for next year's learning community	QEP director	Spring, 2020	Letters of Agreement
Advising Interventions	Faculty pilot group work with advisees	QEP proposal team, pilot faculty	Fall, 2019	Self-assessments and Educational growth plans by students
Assessment	Collect baseline data with faculty, staff, and student feedback; assess KPIs	QEP proposal team, faculty, IR, students	Dec, 2019	Assessment report to SACSCOC Vice-President during visit
Assessment	Develop rubrics	QEP proposal team, IR	Fall, 2019	Rubrics
Assessment	Score plans using rubrics	QEP proposal team, pilot faculty, IR	Dec, 2019 May, 2020	Student scores
Assessment	Develop criteria for master advisor status and professional advisor knowledge	QEP director, IR	Spring, 2020	List of criteria or rubric
Budget	Submit budget based on review of resources and assessment of proposed plan	QEP proposal team	Oct, 2019	Budget spreadsheet
Physical resources	Physical location for new staff determined, computers, office furniture etc. purchased or located	Provost, QEP director, Thomas More Success Center Director, VP Finance, IT	Feb-Jun 2020	Space occupied by QEP staff
Technology	Update student dashboard	QEP proposal team, IT, student dashboard	Fall, 2019	Student dashboard includes use of success information

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
Technology	Existing software utilized for QEP, including sample Canvas course built for pilot advisor optional use	QEP proposal team, IR, IT, Thomas More Success Center, cognos, WOnline, Handshake, Student Dashboard, Canvas	Fall, 2019	Canvas course, reports from apps
Training	Faculty pilot group	QEP team	Fall, 2019	Assessment report
Awareness	Marketing campaign roll-out	QEP proposal team, institutional advancement,	Oct 1, 2019	Marketing materials
Reporting	Annual assessment meeting (including rubric evaluation), report writing, closing-the-loop with recommendations for change based on assessment made to cabinet and faculty	QEP team, IR	Jun 1, 2020	Report
2020-21: <i>Connect!</i> Advising QEP Year 1. Hire first professional advisor and research technology; first class of traditional undergraduate students to receive new advising model; director submits annual report and evaluation of plan progress leading to recommendations for improvement based on assessment.				
Personnel	Hire additional QEP staff: assessment coordinator and office coordinator	QEP proposal team	Jun 1, 2020	Letters of Agreement
Personnel	Hire first professional advisor	QEP director	Aug 1, 2020	Signed letter of agreement
Personnel	Recruit faculty for next year's learning community	QEP director	Spring, 2021	Letters of Agreement
Advising Interventions	All-faculty and -staff training	QEP director	Fall, 2020 development day; spring 2021 development day	Training materials and other handouts
Advising Interventions	Professional advisor training	QEP director and Thomas More Success Center director	August 2020	Training materials, handouts, quiz results
Advising Interventions	Professional advisor works with College of Arts and Sciences, including at-risk College of Arts and Sciences students, and	Professional advisor, QEP director, Thomas More Success Center, Dean and faculty	2020-2021	KPI report, Educational growth plans by students

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
	exploring students in first year	College of Arts and Sciences, retention		
Advising Interventions	Faculty advising meetings with all first-year, traditional undergraduate students	Faculty advisors working with traditional, undergraduate students, QEP director, QEP office coordinator	2020-21	Educational growth plans by first year students
Advising Interventions	Faculty year 1 learning community	QEP director and staff, faculty	2020-21	Faculty Master Advisor Certification
Advising Interventions	Revise procedures for advising and course selection during orientation for incoming students	QEP director, Registrar Office, Orientation Planning Team, Deans	2020-21	Revised plan approved by Provost
Assessment	Develop second-year reflection rubric	QEP director, IR, faculty learning community, professional advisors	Summer 2020	Rubric
Assessment	Score plans and reflections using rubrics	QEP team, faculty, IR	Dec, 2020 May, 2021	Student scores
Assessment	Process Evaluation to evaluate implementation and any barriers that threaten success. Identify revisions or modifications.	Director of IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	May 2021	Report to President's cabinet and QEP director
Budget	Submit budget based on review of resources and assessment results of prior academic year.	QEP director	Oct, 2020	Budget spreadsheet
Technology	QEP director researches comprehensive advising apps	QEP team, IR, IT, Retention, Thomas More Success Center	2020-21	Report
Technology	Update student dashboard	QEP proposal team, IT, student dashboard	Fall, 2020	Student dashboard includes use of student success resource usage information
Training	Faculty learning community training	QEP director, professional advisors	2020-21	Report
Training	Faculty advising training	QEP director, professional advisor, Provost office, IR	Fall 2020 and spring 2021 general	Meeting minutes and survey

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
			assembly and assessment days	
Training	Professional advisor training for new positions	QEP team	Fall, 2020	Assessment report
Awareness	Marketing campaign	QEP team, institutional advancement	2020-21	Marketing materials
Awareness	Report recommendations from prior year to fall general assembly	QEP team, Provost office	August 2020	Meeting minutes
Reporting	Annual assessment meeting (including rubric evaluation), report writing, closing-the-loop with recommendations for change based on assessment made to cabinet and faculty	QEP team, IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	Jun 1, 2021	Report
Reporting	Report progress of QEP to Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees	Provost, QEP director	August, 2021	Meeting minutes
2021-22: <i>Connect!</i> Advising QEP Year 2. Second class of traditional, undergraduate students and continue with second-year students; Director submits evaluation of whether advising changes are facilitating student success goals and whether significant program changes are needed; Implement second professional advisor pending evaluation of effectiveness of professional advising. The focus of this year is implementation and closing the loop.				
Personnel	Review personnel needs and adjust as indicated	QEP director	Aug 1, 2021	Report
Personnel	Recruit faculty for next year's learning community	QEP director	Spring, 2022	Letters of Agreement
Advising Interventions	All-faculty and -staff training	QEP director	Fall, 2021 development day; Spring, 2022 development day	Training materials and other handouts
Advising Interventions	Professional advisor training	QEP director and Thomas More Success Center director	Aug 2021	Training materials, handouts, quiz results
Advising Interventions	Professional advisors work with College of Arts and Sciences, including at-risk College of Arts and Sciences students, and	Professional advisors, QEP director, Thomas More Success Center, Dean	2021-22	KPI report, Educational growth plans by students

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
	exploring students in first year and students in second college to be identified through assessment	and faculty College of Arts and Sciences, Dean of second college, retention		
Advising Interventions	Faculty advising meetings with all first-year, traditional undergraduate students	Faculty advisors working with traditional, undergraduate students, QEP director, QEP office coordinator	2021-22	Educational growth plans by first year students, second-year reflection by second year students
Advising Interventions	Faculty year 2 learning community	QEP director and staff, faculty	2021-22	Faculty Master Advisor Certification
Assessment	Score plans and reflections using rubrics	QEP team, faculty, IR	Dec, 2021 May, 2022	Student scores
Budget	Submit budget based on review of resources and assessment results of prior academic year.	QEP director	Oct, 2021	Budget spreadsheet
Technology	QEP director recommends comprehensive software solution	QEP team, IR, IT, Retention, Thomas More Success Center	2021-22	Contract signed for app purchase
Training	Faculty learning community training	QEP director, professional advisors	2021-22	Report
Training	Faculty advising training	QEP director, professional advisor, Provost office, IR	Fall 2021 and spring 2022 general assembly and assessment days	Meeting minutes and survey
Training	Professional advisor professional development training	QEP team	Fall, 2021	Assessment report
Awareness	Marketing campaign	QEP team, institutional advancement	2021-22	Marketing materials
Awareness	Report recommendations from prior year to fall general assembly	QEP team, Provost office	August 2021	Meeting minutes
Reporting	Annual assessment meeting (including rubric evaluation), report writing, closing-the-loop with recommendations for	QEP team, IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	Jun 1, 2022	Report

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
	change based on assessment made to cabinet and faculty			
Reporting	Determination based on assessment of data whether QEP is effectively meeting goals of student success and whether significant changes in QEP direction are necessary	Director of IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	Jun 15, 2022	Report to President's cabinet, faculty, and QEP director
Reporting	Report progress of QEP to Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees	Provost, QEP director	August, 2022	Meeting minutes
2022-23: <i>Connect!</i> Advising QEP Year 3. Depending on success of the program, to include expanding scope to Thomas More Accelerated Program students and third and fourth year traditional undergraduate students; Implement third professional advisor pending evaluation of effectiveness of professional advising.				
Personnel	Review personnel needs and adjust as indicated	QEP director	Aug 1, 2022	Report
Personnel	Recruit faculty for next year's learning community	QEP director	Spring, 2023	Letters of Agreement
Advising Interventions	All-faculty and -staff training	QEP director	Fall 2022 development day; spring 2023 development day	Training materials and other handouts
Advising Interventions	Professional advisor training	QEP director and Thomas More Success Center director	Aug 2022	Training materials, handouts, quiz results
Advising Interventions	All first- and second-year traditional students in <i>Connect!</i> Advising QEP with advising teams consisting of faculty and professional advisors	QEP director, Thomas More Success Center, professional advisors, retention, faculty advisors	2022-23	Educational growth plans by first year students and reflection by second-years and KPIs
Advising Interventions	Faculty year 3 learning community	QEP director and staff, faculty	2022-23	Faculty Master Advisor Certification
Advising Interventions	Pilot interventions with Thomas More Accelerated Program students, staff, and faculty	QEP director, professional advisors, Thomas More Accelerated Program Director and staff	2022-23	Faculty Master Advisor Certification and PA KPIs
Assessment	Score plans and reflections using rubrics	QEP team, faculty, IR	Dec, 2022 May, 2023	Student scores

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
Budget	Submit budget based on review of resources and assessment results of prior academic year.	QEP director	Oct, 2022	Budget spreadsheet
Technology	QEP director leads implementation of comprehensive software solution	QEP team, IR, IT, Retention, Thomas More Success Center	2022-23	Contract signed for app purchase
Training	Faculty learning community training	QEP director, professional advisors	2022-23	Report
Training	Faculty advising training	QEP director, professional advisor, Provost office, IR	Fall 2022 and spring 2023 general assembly and assessment days	Meeting minutes and survey
Training	Professional advisor professional development training	QEP team	Fall, 2022	Assessment report
Awareness	Marketing campaign	QEP team, institutional advancement	2022-23	Marketing materials
Awareness	Report recommendations from prior year to fall general assembly	QEP team, Provost office	August 2022	Meeting minutes
Reporting	Annual assessment meeting (including rubric evaluation), report writing, closing-the-loop with recommendations for change based on assessment made to cabinet and faculty	QEP team, IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	Jun 1, 2023	Report
Reporting	Begin collaborating with IR to plan for QEP Impact Report and Fifth Year Interim Report	QEP team, IR	Oct 1, 2023	Meeting minutes
Reporting	Determination based on assessment of data whether QEP is effectively meeting goals of student success and whether significant changes in QEP direction are necessary	Director of IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	Jun 15, 2023	Report to President's cabinet, faculty, and QEP director
Reporting	Report progress of QEP to Academic Affairs	Provost, QEP director	August, 2023	Meeting minutes

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
	Committee of the Board of Trustees			
Institutionalizing QEP	Report QEP results to cabinet with purpose of discussing advising procedures and budget following end of QEP	QEP team, President's cabinet, IR	Jun 15, 2023	Meeting minutes
2023-24: <i>Connect!</i> Advising QEP Year 4. Depending on assessment results, to include significant changes if needed. The focus of this year is closing the loop and institutionalization.				
Personnel	Review personnel needs and adjust as indicated	QEP director	Aug 1, 2023	Report
Personnel	Recruit faculty for next year's learning community	QEP director	Spring, 2024	Letters of Agreement
Advising Interventions	All-faculty and -staff training	QEP director	Fall 2023 development day; spring 2024 development day	Training materials and other handouts
Advising Interventions	Professional advisor training	QEP director and Thomas More Success Center director	Aug 2023	Training materials, handouts, quiz results
Advising Interventions	All first- and second-year traditional students in program. Expand scope for Thomas More Accelerated Program students	QEP director, Thomas More Success Center, professional advisors, retention, faculty advisors	2023-24	Educational growth plans by first year students and reflection by second-years and KPIs
Advising Interventions	Faculty year 4 learning community	QEP director and staff, faculty	2023-24	Faculty Master Advisor Certification
Assessment	Score plans and reflections using rubrics	QEP team, faculty, IR	Dec, 2023 May, 2024	Student scores
Budget	Submit budget based on review of resources and assessment results of prior academic year.	QEP director	Oct, 2023	Budget spreadsheet
Technology	Review previous year's implementation of comprehensive advising app and make changes as needed	QEP team, IR, IT, Retention, Thomas More Success Center	2023-24	Count faculty, staff, students actively using app
Training	Faculty learning community training	QEP director, professional advisors	2023-24	Report
Training	Faculty advising training	QEP director, professional	Fall 2023 and spring 2024	Meeting minutes and survey

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
		advisor, Provost office, IR	general assembly and assessment days	
Training	Professional advisor professional development training	QEP team	Fall, 2023	Assessment report
Awareness	Marketing campaign	QEP team, institutional advancement	2023-24	Marketing materials
Awareness	Report recommendations from prior year to fall general assembly	QEP team, Provost office	August 2023	Meeting minutes
Reporting	Collaborate with IR for QEP Impact Report and Fifth Year Interim Report	QEP team, IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	Oct 1, 2023	Meeting minutes
Reporting	Annual assessment meeting (including rubric evaluation), report writing, closing-the-loop with recommendations for change based on assessment made to cabinet and faculty	QEP team, IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	Jun 1, 2024	Report
Reporting	Determination based on assessment of data whether QEP is effectively meeting goals of student success and whether significant changes in QEP direction are necessary	Director of IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	Jun 15, 2024	Report to President's cabinet, faculty, and QEP director
Reporting	Report progress of QEP to Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees	Provost, QEP director	August, 2024	Meeting minutes
Institutionalizing QEP	Report QEP results to cabinet with purpose of discussing advising procedures and budget following end of QEP	QEP team, President's cabinet, IR	Jun 15, 2024	Meeting minutes
2024-25: <i>Connect!</i> Advising QEP Year 5. Final year ensuring sustainability. The focus on this year is institutionalization beyond the QEP.				
Personnel	Review personnel needs and adjust as indicated	QEP director	Aug 1, 2024	Report
Advising Interventions	All-faculty and -staff training	QEP director	Fall 2024 development	Training materials and other handouts

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
			day; spring 2025 development day	
Advising Interventions	Professional advisor training	QEP director and Thomas More Success Center director	Aug, 2024	Training materials handouts, quiz results
Advising Interventions	All first- and second-year traditional students in program; Thomas More Accelerated Program students as indicated by assessment efforts of pilot programs with these students	QEP director, Thomas More Success Center, professional advisors, retention, faculty advisors	2024-25	Educational growth plans by first year students and reflection by second-years and KPIs
Advising Interventions	Faculty year 5 learning community	QEP director and staff, faculty	2024-25	Faculty Master Advisor Certification
Assessment	Score plans and reflections using rubrics	QEP team, faculty, IR	Dec, 2024 May, 2025	Student scores
Budget	Submit budget for institutionalizing the QEP based review of resources, assessment of meeting the goals, outcomes of the QEP, and feedback from cabinet	QEP director	Oct, 2024	Budget spreadsheet
Technology	Review previous year's usage of comprehensive advising app and make changes as needed	QEP team, IR, IT, Retention, Thomas More Success Center	2024-25	Count faculty, staff, students actively using app
Training	Faculty learning community training	QEP director, professional advisors	2024-25	Report
Training	Faculty advising training	QEP director, professional advisor, Provost office, IR	Fall 2024 and spring 2025 general assembly and assessment days	Meeting minutes and survey
Training	Professional advisor professional development training	QEP team	Fall, 2024	Assessment report
Awareness	Marketing campaign	QEP team, institutional advancement	2024-25	Marketing materials

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
Awareness	Report recommendations from prior year to fall general assembly	QEP team, Provost office	August 2024	Meeting minutes
Reporting	Collaborate with IR for QEP Impact Report and Fifth Year Interim Report	QEP team, IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	Oct 1, 2024	Meeting minutes
Reporting	Annual assessment meeting (including rubric evaluation), report writing, closing-the-loop with recommendations for change based on assessment made to cabinet and faculty	QEP team, IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	Jun 1, 2025	Report
Reporting	Receive and discuss Notification Letter from the SACSCOC President (track B)	Provost, QEP Team, IR Director, Institutional Assessment Committee	Apr 25, 2025	Meeting minutes
Reporting	Report progress of QEP to Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees	Provost, QEP director	August, 2025	Meeting minutes
Institutionalizing QEP	Present long-term advising plan along with advising budget to cabinet for 2025-26 academic year	QEP team, President's cabinet, IR, Controller	Jun 15, 2025	Meeting minutes; 2025-26 Advising budget proposal
2025-26: QEP Impact Report Preparation. Final impact report submitted. Focus is on analyzing assessment results and assembling the QEP impact report.				
Budget	Submit budget for institutionalizing the QEP based on review of resources, assessment of meeting the goals, outcomes of the QEP, and feedback from cabinet along with submitting budget needed over the next five years for preparing for the next QEP	QEP director	Oct, 2025	Budget spreadsheet
Reporting	Fifth-Year Interim Report Due, Including QEP Impact Report	QEP director, QEP Assessment Coordinator, IR, Institutional Assessment Committee	Mar 15, 2026	Submitted Report

Topic	Action	Office/Resources	Date	Outputs
Reporting	Review by the SACSCOC Committee on Fifth-Year Interim Reports	NA	June 2026	Letter received from SACSCOC
Reporting	Report progress of QEP to Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees	Provost, QEP director	August, 2026	Meeting minutes
Institutionalizing QEP	Present advising plan and budget to cabinet for 2026-27 academic year; continue advising trainings for faculty and staff	QEP team, President's cabinet, IR, Controller	Jun 15, 2026	Meeting minutes 2026-27; Advising budget proposal; Training materials

Conclusion. The *Connect!* Advising QEP focuses on student success. Through a multi-year QEP plan that includes closing-the-loop processes, Thomas More will increase the effectiveness of advising by hiring professional advisors, providing training for all advisors (faculty and staff), and implementing technology. First- and second-year students, as well as the sub-populations of at-risk and exploring students, will work with a shared advising team that includes a professional advisor and faculty advisor. Students will identify, through a self-assessment, their interests, values and abilities and then work with a professional advisor to develop an educational growth plan that includes a discussion of high impact practices. Faculty will conduct developmental advising sessions and mentor the students based on the plans. It is the goal of the program, and of Thomas More University, to help students persist and make timely progress towards graduation in order to succeed both at Thomas More and once they graduate—fulfilling the mission of the University.

VI. Institutional Capability for the Initiation, Implementation, and Completion of the Plan

The institution has allocated sufficient resources for implementing the *Connect!* Advising QEP that focuses on student success. As described above, the new advising strategies involve human resources including faculty and staff training, hiring of new professional advisors, and hiring of QEP staff to support implementation. Financial and physical resources needed include a budget for implementation, for training and hiring new staff, and for physical space for the additional hires. The budget also includes resources for new advising technology and costs associated with assessment. The sustainability of the *Connect!* Advising QEP rests on increased student retention and persistence leading to a financial return on investment in the QEP through additional tuition revenues. The specific costs and anticipated revenues from the QEP are detailed at the end of this chapter ([Table 9](#) and [Table 10](#)). The timeline above shows that the *Connect!* Advising QEP will become institutionalized through the assessment and budget allocation processes. On an annual basis, the QEP director and director of IR will work with the cabinet to institutionalize the new advising processes based on the assessment findings and long-term financial viability of the plan.

Human Resources

Because the plan seeks to expand the advising capabilities available to students, it calls for hiring new staff. Over each of the first three years, professional advisors will be added to the Thomas More Success Center staff so that each of the University's three colleges will have a professional advisor assigned to it. In addition, as discussed above and based on the institution's previous experience with a QEP and the needs of the current QEP, the following positions will be hired: a half-time QEP director, a quarter-time QEP assessment coordinator, and a half-time QEP office coordinator. See [Appendix B](#) for the job descriptions for professional advisors and QEP staff. The job descriptions include the credentials required for all positions in order to ensure that the individuals hired have the sufficient expertise to implement the QEP.

QEP Director. The *Connect!* Advising QEP will be implemented through the efforts a wide-ranging set of stakeholders. Leading this implementation will be the QEP director. This position will be a half-time faculty position with two course reassignments per term. The director will be responsible for ensuring all aspects of the QEP including action steps, communication, and assessment.

QEP Assessment Coordinator. Because the *Connect!* Advising QEP is a comprehensive program, a quarter time assessment coordinator with a reassignment of one course per term will support the QEP. The assessment coordinator will lead assessment efforts and support faculty and staff development.

QEP Office Coordinator. This will be a new, half-time position responsible for supporting all logistical aspects of the QEP including assessment, event-planning, and marketing.

Professional Advisors. *Connect!* Advising QEP professional advisors will be new hires. They will be members of the support advising team for all traditional undergraduate students, primary advisors for exploring students, and proactive advisors for at-risk students (e.g., conditionally admitted students, students on academic probation, students identified at day 10 of each semester as having missed homework, low attendance, or poor grades on early assignments,

etc.). During the *Connect!* Advising QEP year one, the plan calls for Thomas More to hire the University's first professional advisor. Additional professional advisors will be hired as the QEP progresses with a goal of three professional advisors by year three contingent on the ROI achieved by these advisors.

Faculty Development. Faculty development in the area of academic advising will be institutionalized in two ways (for additional details, see the Chapter V, Focus of the Plan).

- All faculty will attend advising workshops and information sessions on an annual basis at both the fall and spring faculty development days that occur on the Tuesdays following Labor Day and Martin Luther King Jr. day. Classes are not scheduled on these days so that faculty have adequate time to devote to development.
- Each year a cohort of 10-12 faculty and staff will take part in a learning community. Each learning community will be recruited and led by the QEP director. Faculty will attend workshops and peer-supervision sessions on a monthly basis and a day-long training session to be held the summer before the learning community begins. This group will also use the rubrics to evaluate the educational growth plans and second-year reflections. At the end of each learning community year, the faculty will be asked to present to all faculty during the next year's faculty development days. Faculty will also be encouraged to present on their experiences at local and national conferences. The budget includes money to pay faculty a stipend for participating in the learning communities and scoring the plan rubrics. It is anticipated that by the end of year five, 66-75% of all faculty will have taken part in one of the learning communities.

Physical Resources

The approved budget includes resources for office furniture, phones, computers, etc. In spring of 2020 the provost will work with the VP of finance, QEP director, and TSC director to locate physical office space for the new staff outlined above.

Financial Resources

As the accompanying budget demonstrates, Thomas More University has allocated significant resources to supporting the *Connect!* Advising QEP. This budget was approved by the president's cabinet in December 2019 (see also [Table 3](#)). These resources reflect Thomas More's commitment to student success and improving persistence. As can be seen in [Table 9](#), Thomas More University has allocated \$1,357,935 for the QEP over a six-year period. These financial resources cover human, physical, and technology budgets as well as costs associated with assessment, communication, and administration.

Table 9. Connect! Advising QEP Six-Year Budget

Thomas More University														
QEP Budget														
Fiscal 2019-2026														
	FY2019-20 Baseline data		FY2020-21 QEP Year 1		FY2021-22 QEP Year 2		FY2022-23 QEP Year 3		FY2023-24 QEP Year 4		FY2024-25 QEP Year 5		Total	
	Costs	#	Costs	#	Costs	#	Costs	#	Costs	#	Costs	#	Costs	#
Personnel Costs:														
QEP Director	\$ 17,500	1	\$ 35,000	1	\$ 35,000	1	\$ 35,000	1	\$ 35,000	1	\$ 35,000	1	\$ 192,500	6
QEP Admin Coordinator	\$ 10,000	1	\$ 20,000	1	\$ 20,000	1	\$ 20,000	1	\$ 20,000	1	\$ 20,000	1	\$ 110,000	6
Assessment Coordinator	\$ 5,000	1	\$ 10,000	1	\$ 10,000	1	\$ 10,000	1	\$ 10,000	1	\$ 10,000	1	\$ 55,000	6
Other faculty stipends	\$ 5,000		\$ 30,000		\$ 30,000		\$ 30,000		\$ 30,000		\$ 30,000		\$ 155,000	-
Professional Advisors			\$ 32,000	1	\$ 64,000	2	\$ 96,000	3	\$ 96,000	3	\$ 96,000	3	\$ 384,000	12
Fringe	\$ 5,325		\$ 20,050		\$ 28,050		\$ 36,050		\$ 36,050		\$ 36,050		\$ 161,575	
													\$ -	-
Total personnel costs	\$ 42,825	3	\$ 147,050	4	\$ 187,050	5	\$ 227,050	6	\$ 227,050	6	\$ 227,050	6	\$ 1,058,075	30
													\$ -	-
Non-Personnel Costs:														
													\$ -	-
Software & Support							\$ 61,000		\$ 49,630		\$ 49,630		\$ 160,260	-
Assessment Tests	\$ 2,500		\$ 4,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000		\$ 2,500		\$ 24,000	-
Training	\$ 1,000		\$ 16,000		\$ 1,000		\$ 1,000		\$ 1,000		\$ 1,000		\$ 21,000	-
Travel	\$ 7,600		\$ 7,600		\$ 7,600		\$ 7,600		\$ 6,200		\$ 6,200		\$ 42,800	-
Equipment			\$ 5,000		\$ 2,500		\$ 2,500						\$ 10,000	-
Printing	\$ 650		\$ 650		\$ 650		\$ 650		\$ 650		\$ 650		\$ 3,900	-
Membership dues	\$ 150		\$ 225		\$ 225		\$ 225		\$ 300		\$ 375		\$ 1,500	-
Food	\$ 2,000		\$ 2,500		\$ 2,500		\$ 2,500		\$ 2,500		\$ 2,500		\$ 14,500	-
Supplies	\$ 200		\$ 300		\$ 400		\$ 500		\$ 500		\$ 500		\$ 2,400	-
Marketing	\$ 4,000		\$ 2,500		\$ 500		\$ 500		\$ 500		\$ 500		\$ 8,500	-
Books and materials	\$ 1,000		\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000		\$ 11,000	-
														-
Total non-personnel costs	\$ 19,100	-	\$ 40,775	-	\$ 22,375	-	\$ 83,475	-	\$ 68,280	-	\$ 65,855	-	\$ 299,860	-
													\$ -	-
Total QEP Budget	\$ 61,925	3	\$ 187,825	4	\$ 209,425	5	\$ 310,525	6	\$ 295,330	6	\$ 292,905	6	\$ 1,357,935	30
Previously budgeted resources													\$ -	-
Replacement adjunct dollars required													\$ -	-
Net previously budgeted resc	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-
New funding for QEP	\$ 61,925	3	\$ 187,825	4	\$ 209,425	5	\$ 310,525	6	\$ 295,330	6	\$ 292,905	6	\$ 1,357,935	30

Because the *Connect!* Advising QEP is designed to increase student retention and persistence, the plan should lead to additional tuition revenue for the university. Note that in [Table 10](#), the plan is predicted to lead to an eventual net benefit of \$1,004,565 during the six-year period of the *Connect!* Advising QEP.

For example, cost estimates by Thomas More University's controller's office show that each additional student retained will generate \$15,000 per year. Note, however, that [Table 10](#) below does account for additional academic costs such as the need to offer additional course seats as retention and persistence improves. Taking \$15,000 per retained student as a baseline revenue gain, retaining an additional 6 students yields an annual revenue net gain of \$81,000 after subtracting additional academic costs. For year one of the *Connect!* Advising QEP, the professional advisor will be assigned to supporting students in the College of Arts and Sciences and as primary advisor to students in the Exploring major. Estimates based on five years of institutional data show that, on average, 57 first-year students in these categories fail to retain. Thus, if the plan can lead to an additional 7% of these 57 students retaining, there will be a sufficient financial ROI to continue investing in new professional advisor positions.

Table 10. Estimated Return on Investment

Thomas More University QEP Budget ROI Fiscal 2019-2026														
	FY2019-20 Baseline data		FY2020-21 QEP Year 1		FY2021-22 QEP Year 2		FY2022-23 QEP Year 3		FY2023-24 QEP Year 4		FY2024-25 QEP Year 5		Total	
	Costs	#	Costs	#	Costs	#	Costs	#	Costs	#	Costs	#	Costs	#
Revenue from increased retention:														
Freshmen			\$ 60,000	4	\$ 150,000	10	\$ 300,000	20	\$ 300,000	20	\$ 300,000	20	\$ 1,110,000	
Sophomore			\$ 30,000	2	\$ 90,000	6	\$ 180,000	12	\$ 300,000	20	\$ 300,000	20	\$ 900,000	
Junior			\$ -	-	\$ 45,000	3	\$ 90,000	6	\$ 180,000	12	\$ 300,000	20	\$ 615,000	
			\$ 90,000		\$ 285,000		\$ 570,000		\$ 780,000		\$ 900,000		\$ 2,625,000	
Additional academic costs			\$ (9,000)		\$ (28,500)		\$ (57,000)		\$ (78,000)		\$ (90,000)		\$ (262,500)	
Net Revenue generated			\$ 81,000		\$ 256,500		\$ 513,000		\$ 702,000		\$ 810,000		\$ 2,362,500	
Net benefit	\$ (61,925)		\$ (106,825)		\$ 47,075		\$ 202,475		\$ 406,670		\$ 517,095		\$ 1,004,565	

In addition, [Table 8](#) indicates that the plan includes an annual budget task. All academic departments and administrative units at Thomas More complete an annual report due each June. The annual report includes an assessment of the unit's resources, capabilities, and outcomes. Budgets are then submitted the following October based on analysis from the annual report. The *Connect!* Advising QEP will follow this same process, which ensures that the QEP is adequately resourced and that resourcing is reviewed on an annual basis. Furthermore, the budget process is critical to institutionalization of the QEP. Without a continued budget beyond the initial five-year span of the QEP, the plan will not be institutionalized. In order to guard against this, the timeline in [Table 8](#) above in the "Institutionalizing QEP" sections includes processes whereby the QEP Director and IR Director report to the cabinet on an annual basis and plan for the future of advising beyond the QEP. In sum, Thomas More University has committed the financial, human, and physical resources needed for success of the *Connect!* Advising QEP.

VII. Assessment of the Plan

Assessment of the *Connect!* Advising QEP involves two types of outcomes: program and student. Student outcomes include student knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to student success. Program outcomes include services and resources provided by the institution, including Key Performance Indicators for professional advisors. All outcomes are aimed at promoting student success such as persistence and timely progress towards graduation and are aligned with the QEP mission statement.

***Connect!* Advising QEP Mission Statement**

The mission of the Thomas More University QEP, *Connect! Empowering Students through Advising to Navigate Pathways to Success*, is to promote student success by increasing their ability to connect with, plan for, and achieve their educational goals.

The *Connect!* Advising QEP mission will be supported by providing (1) advising training and logistical support to faculty and staff, (2) need-based advising meetings and homework for students, leading to (3) changes in student knowledge and behaviors, and (4) increased persistence and timely progress towards graduation.

Assessment Plan Overview and Closing-the-Loop

Development of the assessment plan was an interactive process that included stakeholder feedback and research literature described above and the *Connect!* Advising QEP mission statement. The assessment plan follows the same logic as the action plan described in the Focus of the Plan chapter and depicted in [Figure 2](#). That is to say, it follows the flow of faculty and staff training, advising meetings and homework, change in student knowledge and behaviors, and increase in persistence and timely progress towards graduation. Each step in the action plan is assessed through a combination of student and program outcomes as described in [Table 11](#) below. Collection and analysis of the assessment plan is primarily the responsibility of the QEP director and QEP assessment coordinator. Institutional research staff also are involved in collecting and analyzing the assessment data as are other individuals from across the institution also shown in [Table 11](#).

The assessment process includes setting targets, measuring outcomes, and closing-the-loop. Targets were set based on relevant baseline data collected. Where baseline data has not been collected, targets were estimated. In general, the goal is to show 1-2% improvement per outcome, per year with a total improvement of 5-10% over the length of the QEP. In addition, the [Table 8](#) timeline includes three kinds of closing the loop behaviors.

- First, under “Assessment,” each year, the QEP director, assisted by the QEP assessment coordinator, will assess that year’s activities and report with recommendations.
- Second, under “Budget,” each October, the QEP director will review the budget with regards to the QEP’s annual report and assessment in order to develop and submit a new budget for the following year. The QEP will use Thomas More’s standard, annual budgeting process.
- Third, under “Institutionalizing QEP,” the QEP director and IR director will work with the cabinet to review the outcomes of the QEP and determine the budget and methods for institutionalizing advising gains made by the QEP.

Table 11. Connect! Advising QEP Assessment Plan for Student and Program Outcomes

Program Outcome 1 The <i>Connect!</i> Advising QEP will provide services in the area of faculty and professional advisor training leading to increased knowledge of policies and procedures related to engaging students in productive advising and pathways to graduation.				
<i>Measure</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>	<i>Who responsible</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>
NSSE Advising Module (all questions- Appendix I)	Spring each year including baseline; led by IR Office	<i>Collect:</i> IR <i>Analyze:</i> IR, QEP assessment coordinator, QEP director	80% of possible score per item; Range varies per item	Spring 2020 collection
Percent of faculty achieving master advisor status	Successful completion of master advisor learning community as tallied in spreadsheet - to be developed	<i>Collect:</i> QEP director <i>Analyze:</i> QEP assessment coordinator & QEP director	66% of all full-time faculty	Not applicable
Professional advisor knowledge of Thomas More University policies and procedures related to advising	End of Training Quiz – to be developed	<i>Collect:</i> QEP director <i>Analyze:</i> QEP assessment coordinator & QEP director	80% correct	Not applicable
Professional advisor knowledge of advising meeting best practices	End of Training Quiz – to be developed	<i>Collect:</i> QEP director <i>Analyze:</i> QEP assessment coordinator & QEP director	80% correct	Not applicable
Program Outcome 2 The <i>Connect!</i> Advising QEP will promote student behaviors leading to increased retention and academic success.				
<i>Measure</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>	<i>Who responsible</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>
Educational growth plan completed by students (Appendix D)	Submitted in Canvas by registration	<i>Collect:</i> Faculty advisor, professional advisors, QEP office coordinator, IR	66%	Not applicable

Program Outcome 2 The <i>Connect!</i> Advising QEP will promote student behaviors leading to increased retention and academic success.				
<i>Measure</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>	<i>Who responsible</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>
		<i>Analyze:</i> QEP director, QEP assessment coordinator		
Academic Success Plan completed by students on academic probation or warning (Appendix J)	Academic success plans submitted in Canvas by 10 th day of the term	<i>Collect:</i> Professional advisor, Retention coordinator, IR <i>Analyze:</i> QEP director, QEP assessment coordinator	66% first year and second-year students on academic probation with completed plans by 10 th day of term	Not applicable
Advising syllabus signed by student (Appendix C)	Completed in Canvas by end of fall, first year	<i>Collect:</i> Faculty advisor, QEP office coordinator, professional advisor, IR <i>Analyze:</i> QEP director, QEP assessment coordinator	66% first year students signed syllabus	Not applicable
Student registered for upcoming term by end of current term	End of Term Cognos report from IR Office	<i>Collect:</i> IR, Registrar <i>Analyze:</i> QEP director, QEP assessment coordinator, IR	Fall: 88% registered Spring: 76% registered	Fall 2019: 86.5% Fall 2018: 81.8% Spring 2019: 70.8% Spring 2018: 73.6%
At-risk students utilizing success resources (tutoring, career development, academic coaching)	Student dashboard during term	<i>Collect:</i> IR, professional advisor, Thomas More Success Center, QEP assessment coordinator <i>Analyze:</i> IR, QEP director, QEP assessment coordinator	50% of at-risk students utilizing	2018-2019: 67% (includes academic support usage, but not career services)
Students with declared major by end of 3 rd term	End of Year Cognos Report from IR Office	<i>Collect:</i> IR, Registrar <i>Analyze:</i> QEP director, QEP assessment coordinator, IR	99% students have declared major	2017 cohort: 96.35% 2016 cohort: 96.99% 2015 cohort: 96.76%

Student Outcome 1 Students will develop an educational growth plan based on assessment of abilities, interests, and values.				
<i>Measure</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>	<i>Who is responsible</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline Data</i>
Rubric score row 1 of educational growth plan (Appendix G)	Advising meetings; faculty submit scores into Canvas	<i>Collect:</i> QEP assessment coordinator, QEP office coordinator, IR <i>Analyze:</i> QEP assessment coordinator, QEP director	7 – scale 3-9	Not applicable
Student survey - I have a written plan for my goals based on an assessment of my abilities, aspirations, and interests (Table 6).	End of Year survey in April of each year by IR Office	<i>Collect:</i> IR director, QEP assessment coordinator <i>Analyze:</i> IR director, QEP director, QEP assessment coordinator	4 – scale 1-5	Spring 2019: First-years: 3.74 Sophomores: 3.80 Juniors: 3.92

Student Outcome 2 Students will apply at least two high impact practices to their educational growth plan.				
<i>Measure</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>	<i>Who is responsible</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline Data</i>
Rubric score row 4 of second-year reflection (Appendix H)	Advising week, fall second year; faculty will submit scores into Canvas	<i>Collect:</i> QEP assessment coordinator, QEP office coordinator, IR <i>Analyze:</i> QEP assessment coordinator, QEP director	7 – scale 3-9	Not applicable
NSSE – Overall participation in high-impact practices (Appendix I)	Spring each year including baseline; led by IR Office	<i>Collect:</i> IR <i>Analyze:</i> IR, QEP assessment coordinator, QEP director	85% of seniors participating in at least two	2017 NSSE report: 71%

Student Outcome 3 Students will have knowledge and make relevant use of Thomas More University success resources.				
<i>Measure</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>	<i>Who is responsible</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>
Rubric score row 3 of educational growth plan (Appendix G)	Advising week, fall first year; faculty will enter scores in Canvas	<i>Collect:</i> QEP assessment coordinator, QEP office coordinator, IR	2 – scale 1-3	Not applicable

Student Outcome 3 Students will have knowledge and make relevant use of Thomas More University success resources.				
<i>Measure</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>	<i>Who is responsible</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>
		<i>Analyze:</i> QEP assessment coordinator, QEP director		
Rubric score row 3 of second-year reflection (Appendix H)	Advising week, fall second year; faculty will enter scores in Canvas	<i>Collect:</i> QEP assessment coordinator, QEP office coordinator, IR <i>Analyze:</i> QEP assessment coordinator, QEP director	2 – scale 1-3	Not applicable
At-risk students utilizing success resources (tutoring, career development, academic coaching)	End of Year Cognos report through IR Office	<i>Collect:</i> IR, professional advisor, Thomas More Success Center, QEP assessment coordinator <i>Analyze:</i> IR, QEP director, QEP assessment coordinator	80% of at-risk students utilizing	2018-2019: 67%

Student Outcome 4 Students will persist and make timely progress towards graduation.				
<i>Measure</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>	<i>Who is responsible</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>
Rubric score row 2 of educational growth plan (Appendix G)	Advising week, fall first year; faculty will enter scores in Canvas	<i>Collect:</i> QEP assessment coordinator, QEP office coordinator, IR <i>Analyze:</i> QEP assessment coordinator, QEP director	12 – scale 3-15	Not applicable
Student survey – I have a written plan that includes what courses I plan to take between now and graduation (Table 6).	End of Year survey in April of each year by IR Office	<i>Collect:</i> IR <i>Analyze:</i> IR, QEP assessment coordinator, QEP director	4 – scale 1-5	Spring 2019: First-years: 4.05 Sophomores: 3.94 Juniors: 4.30
% students taking at least 15 credits per term unless contraindicated	Census Data Cognos report through IR Office	<i>Collect:</i> IR <i>Analyze:</i> IR & QEP assessment coordinator	85%	Fall 2019: 72.6% Fall 2018: 71.7% Fall 2017: 75.0%
% first-time, full-time cohort	End of Term Cognos	<i>Collect:</i> IR	85%	Fall 2018: 69.6% Fall 2017: 76.1%

Student Outcome 4 Students will persist and make timely progress towards graduation.				
<i>Measure</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>	<i>Who is responsible</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Baseline</i>
students at end of first term with 15 completed credits unless contraindicated	report through IR Office	Analyze: IR & QEP assessment coordinator		Fall 2016: 76.5%
% first-time, full-time cohort students at end of first year with 30 completed credits	End of Year Cognos report through IR Office	Collect: IR Analyze: IR & QEP assessment coordinator	65%	Fall 2018: 53.6% Fall 2017: 53.0% Fall 2016: 55.7%
% first-time, full-time cohort students at end of second year with 60 completed credits	End of Year Cognos report through IR Office	Collect: IR Analyze: IR & QEP assessment coordinator	75%	Spring 219 (2017 cohort): 69.5% Spring 2018 (2016 cohort): 64.5%
Persistence Rate	Enrollment Data Book from IR Office	Collect: IR Analyze: IR & QEP assessment coordinator	Fall: 90% Spring: 83%	Fall 2018-Spring 2019: 87% Spring 2019-Fall 2019: 80%
Cohort Retention Rate	Enrollment Data Book from IR Office	Collect: IR Analyze: IR & QEP assessment coordinator	73% in 2% increments	Fall 2019 (2018 cohort): 59%

The assessment plan includes both direct and indirect measures of assessment as well as formative and summative assessment.

Direct assessment. The key, new features, of the *Connect!* Advising QEP at Thomas More are the addition of professional advisors and educational growth plans and second-year reflections. These features all include direct assessment of knowledge behaviors. The quality of students' educational growth plans and second-year reflections will be directly assessed via faculty grading of the artifacts using rubrics. In addition, student success behaviors will be tracked via the Thomas More Success Center and will be assessed for their relationship to educational growth plans and advising interventions. Professional advisors will be assessed on their knowledge of advising practices through quizzes and in their effectiveness through Key Performance Indicators related to student registration, retention, persistence, course completion rates, and number of student meetings.

Indirect assessment. Student perceptions of the quality of advising, having a plan for graduation, and likelihood to graduate in a timely fashion will be collected each year at the end of the spring term using both internal surveys based on the student outcomes and the NSSE based items related to advising and high impact practices, along with the NSSE advising sub-module. Baseline data using the internal measure were collected in spring of 2019 and both the

internal measure and NSSE measures will be collected in spring 2020 before the debut of the *Connect!* Advising QEP in fall of 2020. Internal measures along with NSSE will be collected each spring thereafter.

Formative assessment. Students will receive formative feedback on their educational growth plans and second-year reflections during meetings with professional advisors and faculty advisors once these plans have been evaluated against the rubrics (see [Appendices G](#) and [H](#) for educational growth plan and second-year reflection rubrics, respectively). Students will be encouraged to use this feedback in revising their plans as part of the second-year reflection. Advisors will also receive information about student progress through the measurement of Key Performance Indicators such as registration, retention, persistence, grades, and student utilization of success resources, as well as rubric scores of student educational growth plans. Advisor training will incorporate group level analyses of these metrics with activities designed to help advisors support student success. At the end of each academic year, the QEP staff, along with institutional research staff, will analyze and report on the assessments collected during the previous year. The purpose of the report is to use the assessment analysis as a basis for recommending improvements to the advising policies and procedures to campus leadership and to advisors during fall advisor training. For details on this reporting see [Table 8](#) above.

Summative assessment. At the end of each year, the QEP director and QEP assessment coordinator will prepare an annual report. This report will be used in both a formative and summative fashion. As a formative tool, it will be used to “close the loop” with both analysis and recommendations for change advanced both to campus leadership and all campus faculty and staff. In consultation with administration, faculty, and staff, the QEP director will be responsible for implementing changes to the *Connect!* Advising QEP for the following year. In addition, as stated above, beginning in the second year, the IR Director, working with the Institutional Assessment Committee, is charged with reviewing the *Connect!* Advising QEP. This review is intended as a check on whether the QEP is making adequate process towards meeting the intended outcomes of the QEP. If the *Connect!* Advising QEP is not making progress, the IR director is empowered to recommend both minor and important, major changes to the QEP. If by the end of year three, the *Connect!* Advising QEP is not making adequate progress towards the intended outcomes, the IR director, in consultation with the Institutional Assessment Committee, is empowered to report to the QEP director, president’s cabinet, and faculty recommendations for whether the QEP should undergo major revisions and changes in both strategies and tactics for reaching those outcomes. Finally, as the *Connect!* Advising QEP enters its final years, the QEP director will work with campus leadership to plan and budget for institutionalizing successful advising tactics beyond the life of the *Connect!* Advising QEP. It is the hope that through this QEP the Thomas More campus will undergo a transformative experience in academic advising and student success.



Proud Thomas More Graduates, Class of 2019



Thomas More University Faculty

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IX. Appendices

Appendix A. Crosswalk between CAS Standards (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2015) and Thomas More University *Connect!* Advising QEP Plan Elements

CAS Standard Number	CAS Standard Description	Thomas More University QEP Chapter Number	Relevant Thomas More University QEP plan elements
2.1	Program Contribution to Student Learning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Outcomes Student self-assessment, educational growth plans, high impact practices
2.2	Assessment of Learning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter VII 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of both student outcomes and program outcomes are present.
2.3	Program Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter III Chapter V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates the interactive process used with stakeholders to develop the QEP New advising model will be a split model with both professional and faculty advisor support for students
2.4	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter II Chapter III Chapter V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each of these sections exhibit the collaborative process that occurred to choose the QEP topic, to design the QEP, and finalize actions that will be implemented. Collaboration among the retention office and QEP staff Collaboration among the retention office and advisors Collaboration among faculty and staff Collaboration among professional advisors and faculty advisors
2.5	Access to Advising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each student will have an advising team that consists of a professional advisor and a faculty advisor.
2.6	Facilitating Students' Opportunity and Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will assess and reflect on their abilities, values and interest and then set goals when developing an educational growth plan. An advising syllabus will outline student responsibilities in the advising process
2.7	Staff Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter V Chapter VII 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All stakeholders will receive updates each semester All faculty will receive mandatory advising training Faculty will have the opportunity to join advising learning communities All Professional Advisors will receive training
2.8	Connecting Students to Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will have access to an advising team As part of Program Outcome Two, advisors will promote success resources to students
2.9	Allocation of Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter VI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A budget is included that reflects adequate allocation of resources
2.10	Advocating on Behalf of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The QEP will advocate on behalf of the students. For example, the QEP staff will advocate for a multi-year course schedule.

Appendix B. Thomas More University *Connect!* Advising QEP Staff Job Descriptions

Thomas More University Exempt Job Description	
Title: QEP Director	Department: Office of Academic Affairs
Reports to: Provost	Created: 2/2010
	Revised: 10/29/2019

Brief Description:

This position is for the Director of the Thomas More QEP on Academic Advising. The QEP Director leads implementation and reporting for the 2020-2025 QEP with reporting duties extending through 2026. The QEP will be overseen by a member of the faculty given a 2 course/term (or half teaching time) release. The QEP Director reports directly to the Provost.

It is expected that all of the duties and responsibilities of this position will be performed ethically and professionally in a manner that reflects the core values of Thomas More University, which include a sense of responsibility toward fellow human beings and respect for diversity.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

Change management: Support or facilitate as appropriate institutional level adaptation to environmental changes in the landscape of higher education

- Oversees implementation and revisions of the QEP using evidence-based practices for academic advising.
- Implements structure for disseminating QEP successes and scholarship.
- Is informed on developments in higher education and their impact on advising programs.
- Shares in the responsibility to the University's compliance with accreditation requirements for the QEP.
- Actively supports the Mission-inspired values of inclusion, diversity, and equity in all University programs and activities.
- Contributes appropriately balanced input to the Provost in a collaborative and respectful manner.
- May conduct research in a particular field of knowledge and may publish findings in professional journals.
- Attends, as QEP budget allows, state, regional, or national meetings and conferences to present research findings and/or to keep abreast of advising developments.

Administration: Supports the Department/Program Chair in providing vision and leadership to the university and interface with departments/programs across the University. Includes: all academic units at Thomas More University, non-academic units at Thomas More University, and external constituencies such as accreditation agencies.

- Prepares annual reports, including the Impact Report in 2026.
- Recruits faculty and staff to participate in QEP.
- Interacts well with student, staff, faculty, and outside constituencies.
- Designs professional development structure.
- Markets QEP to Thomas More University community.
- Designs structure for disseminating QEP successes and scholarship.
- Directs assessment processes for all aspects of the QEP in collaboration with office of institutional research.

- Supervises faculty and staff development, data entry, and analysis in collaboration with FRC and HR.
- Hires and supervises staff associated with the QEP.
- Develops and builds advising resource center library.
- Chairs the QEP advisory group.
- Assists Provost on all QEP matters as requested.
- Supports leadership across the University.
- Represents the QEP at internal and external events.
- Supports the vision for the mission, management, and growth of the QEP.
- Furnishes appropriate administrative officers with the necessary information for publication of materials bearing on the academic areas of the University.
- Serves on faculty and/or university committees as appropriate.

Enrollment management: Support recruitment, advising, and retention initiatives.

- Promotes student awareness of the QEP.
- Supports all retention efforts of the University as relevant to the QEP.
- Supports academic advising and other student retention strategies in Academic Affairs.
- Works in collaboration with Enrollment Management and the Office of the Registrar to facilitate enrollment and retention initiatives.

Academic Leadership: Maintain strong presence and contribute to curricular adaptation and change.

- Facilitates professional development
- Reports assessment findings on an annual basis to appropriate stakeholders
- Supports the pursuit of advising and learning excellence.
- Conforms to the expectations of best practices within the field.
- Supports the implementation of academic and advising strategic planning.
- Assists the planning, organization and ongoing evaluation of advising within the institution through participation on specific committees.

Faculty: Support a strong faculty

- Promotes and supports faculty participation.
- Evaluates performance and participation of individuals receiving compensation.
- Inspires fellow faculty and staff to fulfill the strategic plan, achieve institutional goals, and support Thomas More University's mission within the context of the QEP.
- Appropriately uses resources available to achieve excellence in advising.
- Models and promotes a culture of inclusive excellence in advising.
- Participates, as appropriate, in faculty enrichment programs.
- Models cooperation across Academic units.

Budget: serve as a good steward of institutional resources by supporting the Department/Program Chair in developing and managing sustainable budgets.

- Manages the QEP Budget.
- Cooperates with the Provost as to long-range fiscal planning and efficient and effective planning and scheduling of institutional resources.

Philanthropy and community engagement: Assist and support the development efforts of institutional advancement.

- Represents the University internally in academic matters, as assigned by the Provost.
- Represents the QEP to internal and external constituencies.
- Assists in promoting effective strategic partnerships that enhance the educational experience of students and that enhance the professional opportunities for faculty.
- Supports the Office of Institutional Advancement to identify, procure, and manage grants for the QEP and academic advising.
- Assists the Provost as needed in representing the QEP to external communities, such as advisory boards or articulation agreements.

Essential Qualities:

The University seeks a faculty member who has:

- *Required:* Doctorate or terminal degree.
- At least 3 years of higher education teaching and advising experience.
- Experience with academic advising, collaborating with faculty, and supervising staff.
- Faculty appointment at Thomas More University.
- Experience leading teams.
- Knowledge of relevant technology including Microsoft Office applications, Canvas, and willingness to learn new software helpful to serving students with learning differences.
- Ability to work independently and efficiently.
- Excellent interpersonal, planning, problem-solving, organizational and communication skills.
- Some evening availability.
- Self-Starter, entrepreneurial, resourceful, and action oriented.
- Life-long learner.
- Ability to meet deadlines.
- Willingness to work with both traditional and non-traditional programs in a liberal-arts setting.
- Academic planning experience.
- Demonstrated ability to set high expectations and hold people accountable for excellent performance.
- Integrity, honesty, humility, and excellent social and interpersonal skills.

Physical Job Requirements:

Tools and Equipment Used

Personal computer, copier, fax/scanner, phone, and other typical office equipment.

Travel

- Minimal – less than 15% of time.

Physical & Mental Demands

- Frequently required to sit at a desk/workstation for long period of time.
- Ability to work at a computer terminal for extended periods of time.
- Digital dexterity and hand/eye coordination in operation of office equipment.
- Light lifting and carrying of supplies, files, etc.
- Ability to speak to and hear employees/clients via phone or in person.
- Body motor skills sufficient to enable incumbent to move around the office environment.
- Ability to analyze data and other reports and make recommendations.
- Mental requirements include: compare, decide, direct, problem solve, analyze, instruct, and interpret.

Thomas More University Exempt Job Description	
Title: QEP Assessment Coordinator	Department: QEP
Reports to: QEP Director	Created: 2/2010
	Revised: 11/05/2019

Brief Description:

This position is for the Assessment Coordinator of the Thomas More QEP on Academic Advising. The QEP Assessments Coordinator is responsible for the collection, management and dissemination of all QEP-related data, including student and institutional assessments. The QEP Assessment Coordinator will be a member of the faculty given a 1 course/term release. The QEP Assessment Coordinator reports directly to the QEP Director and collaborates on the success of the QEP.

It is expected that all of the duties and responsibilities of this position will be performed ethically and professionally in a manner that reflects the core values of Thomas More University, which include a sense of responsibility toward fellow human beings and respect for diversity.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

Change management: Support or facilitate as appropriate institutional level adaptation to environmental changes in the landscape of higher education

- Supports the QEP director in implementation and revisions of the QEP using evidence-based practices for academic advising.
- Supports the QEP director in implementation of structure for disseminating QEP successes and scholarship.
- Shares in the responsibility to the University's compliance with accreditation requirements for the QEP.
- Actively supports the Mission-inspired values of inclusion, diversity, and equity in all University programs and activities.
- May conduct research in a particular field of knowledge and may publish findings in professional journals.
- Attends, as QEP budget allows, state, regional, or national meetings and conferences to present research findings and/or to keep abreast of advising developments.

Administration: Supports the Department/Program Chair in providing vision and leadership to the university and interface with other departments/programs in the College and across the University.

Includes: all academic units at Thomas More University, non-academic units at Thomas More University, and external constituencies such as accreditation agencies.

- Ensures integrity of the data collection process.
- Administers assessments related to QEP outcomes.
- Coordinates with Institutional Research to integrate data from institutional instruments such as NSSE and institutional data such as retention and course completion data. The purpose of such coordination is to prepare a meaningful annual report of QEP progress in achieving the goals of improving the desired student outcomes and other QEP reports including the 5 year impact report.

- Interprets assessment data and distributes the information to the Thomas More community so that the University can use the data to adjust the strategies used to achieve the goals of the QEP.
- Communicates and collaborates with QEP Director, faculty learning community members, Institutional Research, and Information Technology to ensure effective and timely assessment of the QEP.
- Works with the QEP director to develop and revising rubrics and their implementation with users for that are consistent with the outcomes of the QEP.
- Ensures the logistics of the rubric process for assessing outcomes of the QEP.
- Assists director in preparation of annual reports, including the Impact Report in 2026.
- Interact well with student, staff, faculty, and outside constituencies.
- Support assessment processes for all aspects of the QEP in collaboration with office of institutional research.
- Represents the QEP at internal and external events.
- Supports the vision for the mission, management, and growth of the QEP.
- Furnishes appropriate administrative officers with the necessary information for publication of materials bearing on the academic areas of the University.

Enrollment management: Support recruitment, advising, and retention initiatives.

- Support all retention efforts of the University as relevant to the QEP.
- Through data collection and analysis, supports academic advising and other student retention strategies in Academic Affairs.

Academic Leadership: Maintain strong presence and contribute to curricular adaptation and change.

- Facilitate professional development
- Report assessment findings on an annual basis to appropriate stakeholders
- Supports the pursuit of advising and learning excellence.
- Conforms to the expectations of best practices within field.
- Supports the implementation of academic and advising strategic planning.
- Assists the planning, organization and ongoing evaluation of advising within the institution wide through the participation on specific committees.

Faculty: Support a strong faculty

- Promote faculty participation.
- Share advising assessment results with faculty and staff advisors.
- Models and promotes a culture of inclusive excellence in advising.
- Participates, as appropriate, in faculty enrichment programs.
- Cooperates across Academic units.

Budget: serve as a good steward of institutional resources by supporting the Department/Program Chair in developing and managing sustainable budgets.

- Provide budget information relative to assessment to the QEP director.

Philanthropy and community engagement: Assist and support the development efforts of institutional advancement.

- Provides assessment data as relevant to the Office of Institutional Advancement efforts to identify, procure, and manage grants for the QEP and academic advising.

Essential Qualities:

The University seeks a faculty member who has:

- *Required:* master's degree.
- Experience with data management and analysis as well as program assessment.
- Proficiency with statistics tool such as SPSS, SAS, or R.
- Knowledge of SQL desirable.
- Full or part-time faculty appointment at Thomas More University.
- Knowledge of relevant technology including Microsoft Office applications, Canvas, and willingness to learn new software helpful to serving students with learning differences.
- Ability to work independently and efficiently.
- Excellent interpersonal, planning, problem-solving, organizational and communication skills.
- Some evening availability.
- Self-Starter, entrepreneurial, resourceful, and action oriented.
- Life-long learner.
- Ability to meet deadlines.
- Demonstrated ability to set high expectations and hold people accountable for excellent performance.
- Integrity, honesty, humility, and excellent social and interpersonal skills.

Physical Job Requirements:

Tools and Equipment Used

- Personal computer, copier, fax/scanner, phone, and other typical office equipment.

Travel

- Minimal – less than 15% of time.

Physical & Mental Demands

- Frequently required to sit at a desk/workstation for long period of time.
- Ability to work at a computer terminal for extended periods of time.
- Digital dexterity and hand/eye coordination in operation of office equipment.
- Light lifting and carrying of supplies, files, etc.
- Ability to speak to and hear employees/clients via phone or in person.
- Body motor skills sufficient to enable incumbent to move around the office environment.
- Ability to analyze data and other reports and make recommendations.
- Mental requirements include: compare, decide, direct, problem solve, analyze, instruct, and interpret.

Thomas More University Non Exempt Job Description	
Title: QEP Office Coordinator	Department: QEP
Reports to: Director, Thomas More QEP	Created: 2/2010
	Revised: 11/2019

Core Values

It is expected that all of the duties and responsibilities of this position will be performed in a manner that reflects the core values of Thomas More University which include: sense of responsibility toward your fellow human beings, respect for life, adherence to social work ethics, respect for diversity, professionalism, and compassion.

Basic Purpose

This position is for the Coordinator of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) on Academic Advising at Thomas More University. Primarily responsible for administrative and clerical support for the QEP, which is, the program that supports the enhancement of academic advising at Thomas More. The Office Coordinator works under minimal supervision and reports to the QEP director.

Core Competencies

- Excellent interpersonal, planning, problem-solving, organizational and communication skills
- Ability to work independently and efficiently despite frequent interruptions
- Must be able to multitask
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written
- Excellent customer service skills
- Some evening and weekend availability
- Ability to work effectively in a complex environment
- Creative thinking, the analytical ability to exercise good judgment and basic research skills are needed
- Self-Starter, entrepreneurial, resourceful, and action oriented
- Life-long learner
- Interact well with student, staff, faculty, and outside constituencies
- Demonstrate knowledge of or willingness to learn about advising services, primarily at the post-secondary level

Principal Duties & Responsibilities

QEP Specific Duties. Responsible for

- Coordinating the systemization of day-to-day operations of the QEP implementation, including implementation checklists.
- Developing and implementing marketing and communication plans to keep constituencies informed about QEP progress.
- Meeting logistics.
- External and internal speaker logistics.
- Assessment logistics support.

- Communication and calendar coordination for QEP staff.
- Researching best practices and preparing relevant reports.
- Technical support for report writing such as editing, formatting, references etc.
- Assisting director in budget preparation and maintenance of budget record book, recording all transactions, and filing all required paperwork as needed
- Managing supplies and other QEP materials.
- Meeting minutes.
- Supporting data entry.
- Maintaining resource library.
- Attending and supporting QEP events.
- Supporting the pursuit of advising and learning excellence.
- Overseeing the administrative aspects of faculty learning communities.
- Collaborating with QEP staff on additional needs.

General Office Duties. Responsible for

- Providing general office reception including:
 - Greeting and problem solving for students, staff, faculty, and visitors
 - Directing inquiries to the appropriate campus resource
 - Maintaining all correspondence, including e-mail and phone calls
 - Providing general assistance as needed
- General office duties including but not limited to filing, copying and creating folders, record maintenance, orders/maintains office supplies, and develops/distributes information to student
- Providing administrative/clerical support to the Director and QEP staff as needed

Education, Specialized and/or Technical Knowledge Requirements

- *Preferred:* Associate Degree or higher in a relevant field
- Experience working with students, faculty, and staff
- Demonstrated ability to maintain confidentiality
- Knowledge of relevant technology including Microsoft Office applications, Adobe, Canvas, and willingness to learn new software helpful to serving students, faculty, and staff

Physical Job Requirements

Tools and Equipment Used

- Personal computer, copier, fax/scanner, phone, and other typical office equipment

Travel

- Minimal – less than 5% of time

Physical & Mental Demands

- Frequently required to sit at a desk/workstation for long period of time
- Ability to work at a computer terminal for extended periods of time
- Digital dexterity and hand/eye coordination in operation of office equipment
- Light lifting and carrying of supplies, files, etc.
- Ability to speak to and hear employees/clients via phone or in person
- Body motor skills sufficient to enable incumbent to move around the office environment
- Ability to analyze data and other reports and make recommendations
- Mental requirements include: compare, decide, direct, problem solve, analyze, instruct, interpret

SUPERVISOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT:		DATE:	
EMPLOYEE'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:		DATE:	

This job description does not constitute a written or implied contract of employment. This job description is not intended and should not be construed, to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, skills, efforts, or work conditions associated with the job. Furthermore, the employer reserves the right to revise or change job duties and responsibilities as the need arises.

Thomas More University Exempt Job Description	
Title: Professional Advisor	Department: Thomas More Success Center
Reports to: Director, Thomas More Success Center	Created: 6/2019
	Revised:

Core Values

It is expected that all of the duties and responsibilities of this position will be performed in a manner that reflects the core values of Thomas More University which include: sense of responsibility toward your fellow human beings, respect for life, adherence to social work ethics, respect for diversity, professionalism, and compassion.

Basic Purpose

This position is for a Professional Academic Advisor. The Professional Academic Advisor supports academic and intrusive advising with the goal of meeting the Thomas More University mission, aiding students in a timely path to graduation, and helping students be prepared for postgraduate opportunities. The professional advisor's caseload consists primary advising to exploring students, as well as supporting students who are primarily advised by faculty. The Student Success Advisor reports directly to the Director of the Thomas More Success Center.

Core Competencies

- Knowledge of evidence-based practice of academic advising
- Excellent interpersonal, planning, problem-solving, organizational and communication skills
- Ability to work independently and efficiently
- Self-starter, entrepreneurial, resourceful, and action-oriented
- Life-long learner
- Ability to interact well with student, staff, faculty, and outside constituencies
- Meet deadlines

Principal Duties & Responsibilities

- Advising students on academic policies and procedures, course registration preparation, and resolving academic scheduling problems in concert with their primary faculty advisor
- Primary advising for exploring students and students transitioning majors
- Participate in orientation, welcome week, and advising activities
- Assist students in developing a personalized educational plan
- Assist students in developing skills to set and achieve intentional goals
- Monitor and support students to make choices leading toward degree completion in a timely fashion
- Aid in student retention
- Promote student awareness of campus resources
- Track metrics for student success related to advising
- Report assessment findings on an annual basis to appropriate stakeholders
- Support QEP on advising reporting
- Develop student and faculty workshops on advising

- Maintain understanding and implementation of current advising best practices
- Design and implement a structure for disseminating advising successes
- Follow FERPA guidelines
- While working primarily during regular office hours, be regularly available for evening and weekend activities
- Engage in professional development

Education, Specialized and/or Technical Knowledge Requirements

- Required:
 - 5 years of experience working in higher education along with some higher education coursework completed; or a minimum of an Associates Degree
 - Experience working with teams
 - Knowledge of relevant technology including Microsoft Office applications, Canvas, and willingness to learn new software helpful to serving students with learning differences
- Preferred:
 - At least 2 years of higher education advising and/or teaching experience
 - Experience working with students from a variety of backgrounds and academic abilities

Physical Job Requirements

Tools and Equipment Used

- Personal computer, copier, fax/scanner, phone, and other typical office equipment

Travel

- Minimal – less than 15% of time

Physical & Mental Demands

- Frequently required to sit at a desk/workstation for long period of time
- Ability to work at a computer terminal for extended periods of time
- Digital dexterity and hand/eye coordination in operation of office equipment
- Light lifting and carrying of supplies, files, etc.
- Ability to speak to and hear employees/clients via phone or in person
- Body motor skills sufficient to enable incumbent to move around the office environment
- Ability to analyze data and other reports and make recommendations
- Mental requirements include: compare, decide, direct, problem solve, analyze, instruct, interpret

SUPERVISOR'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT:		DATE:	
EMPLOYEE'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:		DATE:	

This job description does not constitute a written or implied contract of employment. This job description is not intended and should not be construed to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, skills, efforts, or work conditions associated with the job. Furthermore, the employer reserves the right to revise or change job duties and responsibilities as the need arises.

Appendix C. Academic Advising Syllabus

Thomas More University
Academic Advising Core Curriculum Institutional Syllabus

Advisor:

Phone:

Office:

E-mail:

Texts: University Catalog 2018-2019

Student Handbook 2018-2019

Goals:

To advise in a way that (a) improves student outcomes by establishing a clear academic pathway to timely graduation through the development of an educational growth plan and second-year reflection based on a self-assessment of values, interests, and abilities, and (b) provides support in personal development.

Objectives:

To understand the Thomas More University mission statement and curricular graduation requirements; To experience a liberal arts education that continually practices critical thinking; To learn about resources to enhance on- and off-campus educational experiences; To articulate, analyze, and often evaluate career and life goals

Outcomes:

Students will understand the Thomas More University mission statement is reflected in their lives at Thomas More University; Students will articulate an understanding of the value of core curriculum requirements; Students will develop an educational (curricular and co-curricular) plan for timely graduation; Students will make use of campus resources

Advising approach:

The faculty and professional advisors engage in shared integrative and developmental advising marked by continuous improvement and geared towards independent decision making for each student. Students are encouraged to find comfort in ambiguity, imagine new possibilities, and continuously develop as engaged citizens.

Student responsibilities:

To schedule and attend advising appointments each semester with their advising team
 To prepare questions for discussion for each meeting
 To complete self-assessment, educational growth plan, and second-year reflections
 To keep a personal record of progress made towards set goals
 To satisfactorily complete educational requirements
 To seek advice to clarify career and life goals
 To provide feedback on the advising process

Advisor responsibilities:

To be available for appointments each semester (in person, by telephone, or through electronic communication) with each advisee
 To understand and direct all advisees to institutional resources that enhance learning and personal well-being
 To review self-assessments, educational growth plans, and second-year reflections with students
 To maintain confidential and timely documentation of meetings and student progress towards graduation
 To convey an understanding of the value of a Catholic, liberal arts education.

Advisor signature

Student signature

Appendix D. Educational Growth Plan (First-Year Students)



Educational Growth Plan

Section 1: Personal Information

Date:	Name:
Major(s):	TMU ID:
Minor(s):	

Course offerings, sequences, and graduation requirements are subject to change.

Please see your academic advisor to discuss your course selections.

Please review your degree audit in MyTMU.

Section 2: Results and Reflection from your Self-Assessment

MyNextMove-O*NET Results (please attach results)

Reflection (please attach completed form)

Section 3: Goals and means for achieving your goals

Goal 1:
Resources for achieving goal 1:
Relevant Core Courses:
Relevant Major Courses:
Relevant Co-Curriculars:
Relevant Experiential Learning:
Relevant Success Resources such as tutoring, career advising, academic coaching:

Goal 2:
Resources for achieving goal 2:
Relevant Core Courses:
Relevant Major Courses:
Relevant Co-Curriculars:
Relevant Experiential Learning:
Relevant Success Resources such as tutoring, career advising, academic coaching:

Goal 3:
Resources for achieving goal 3:
Relevant Core Courses:
Relevant Major Courses:
Relevant Co-Curriculars:
Relevant Experiential Learning:
Relevant Success Resources such as tutoring, career advising, academic coaching:

Section 4: 4- or 5-year course plan for graduation

AP/IB/Dual Enrollment/Transfer Credits		
Course	Number	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

AP/IB/Dual Enrollment/Transfer Credits		
Course	Number	Credits
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
Total		0

AP/IB/Dual Enrollment/Transfer Credits		
Course	Number	Credits
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
Total		0
Total AP etc. credits		0

First Year: Fall		
Course	Number	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

First Year: Spring		
Course	Number	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

First Year: Summer		
Course	Number	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0
Total Credits First Year		0

Second Year: Fall		
Course	Number	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Second Year: Spring		
Course	Number	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Second Year: Summer		
Course	Number	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0
Total Credits Second Year		0

Third Year: Fall		
Course	Number	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Third Year: Spring		
Course	Number	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Third Year: Summer		
Course	Number	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0
Total Credits Third Year		0

Fourth Year: Fall		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Fourth Year: Spring		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Fourth Year: Summer		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0
Total Credits Fourth Year		0

Fifth Year: Fall		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Fifth Year: Spring		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Fifth Year: Summer		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0
Total Credits Fifth Year		0
Planned Total Credits		0
Minimum of 120 Credits for Graduation		

This educational growth plan is a resource. It is not a contract. Please use it as an aid for preparing for your future here at TMU and beyond. It can be affected by changes in your interests, success in your courses, and changes in availability in courses and programs, etc.

Section 5: Signatures

Print Name _____

Faculty Advisor Name (Print) _____

Sign Name _____

Faculty Advisor Name (Sign) _____

Date Faculty Advisor Approves Educational Growth Plan _____

Appendix E. Second-Year Reflection



Educational Growth Plan: Second-Year Reflection

Section 1: Personal Information

Date:	Name:
Major(s):	TMU ID:
Minor(s):	

Course offerings, sequences, and graduation requirements are subject to change.

Please see your academic advisor to discuss your course selections.

Please review your degree audit in MyTMU.

Section 2: Possible Minor

Identification of Possible Minor: Academic Benefits

--

Identification of Possible Minor: Career Benefits

--

Section 3: Goals and co-curricular (HIP) means for achieving your goals

Goal 1:
Resources for achieving goal 1:
Progress achieved towards reaching goal 1:
Strengths: Challenges for next two years:
Relevant HIP 1 for achieving goal 1:
Next steps for participating in HIP 1
Relevant HIP 2 for achieving goal 1:
Next steps for participating in HIP 2:

Goal 2:
Resources for achieving goal 2:
Progress towards achieving goal 2:
Relevant HIP 1 for achieving goal 2:
Next steps for participating in HIP 1
Relevant HIP 2 for achieving goal 2:
Next steps for participating in HIP 2:

Goal 3:
Resources for achieving goal 3:
Progress towards achieving goal 3:
Relevant HIP 1 for achieving goal 3:
Next steps for participating in HIP 1
Relevant HIP 2 for achieving goal 3:
Next steps for participating in HIP 2:

Adapted in part from Nicholls State University Sophomore Reflection

Section 4: 4- or 5-year course updated plan for graduation

AP/IB/Dual Enrollment/Transfer Credits		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

AP/IB/Dual Enrollment/Transfer Credits		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
Total		0

AP/IB/Dual Enrollment/Transfer Credits		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
Total		0
Total Credits AP etc.		0

First Year: Fall		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

First Year: Spring		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

First Year: Summer		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0
Total Credits First Year		0

Second Year: Fall		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Second Year: Spring		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Second Year: Summer		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0
Total Credits Second Year		0

Third Year: Fall		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Third Year: Spring		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Third Year: Summer		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0
Total Credits Third Year		0

Fourth Year: Fall		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Fourth Year: Spring		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Fourth Year: Summer		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0
Total Credits Fourth Year		0

Fifth Year: Fall		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Fifth Year: Spring		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0

Fifth Year: Summer		
Course		
Number	Course Name	Credits
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
Total		0
Total Credits Fifth Year		0
Planned Total Credits		0
Minimum of 120 Credits for		
Graduation		

This educational growth plan is a resource. It is not a contract. Please use it as an aid for preparing for your future here at TMU and beyond. It can be affected by changes in your interests, success in your courses, and changes in availability in courses and programs, etc.

Section 5: Signatures

Print Name _____

Faculty Advisor Name (Print) _____

Sign Name _____

Faculty Advisor Name (Sign) _____

Date Faculty Advisor Approves Educational Growth Plan _____

Appendix F. First-Year Student Reflection on O*NET/Mynextmove Survey

Student reflection on mynextmove survey

Name _____

Date: _____

Advisor _____

After completing the survey found at www.mynextmove.org, please answer the following questions as it relates to the Thomas More University mission statement and what discovered about yourself by taking the survey. Reflection is a powerful tool that can help you get more out of your experiences. We will use this at an upcoming advising meeting to help you get more out of college and plan for your future.

The TMU mission statement reads,

Thomas More University is the Catholic Liberal Arts University of the Diocese of Covington, Kentucky. Inspired by the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, we challenge students of all faiths to examine the ultimate meaning of life, their place in the world, and their responsibility to others.

1. A. What is your definition of the ultimate meaning of life?

1. B. Which results from the survey are relevant to your understanding of the ultimate meaning of life for you?

2. A. What do you think is meant by the phrase "your place in the world?"

2. B. Which results from the survey are relevant to your understanding of your place in the world?

3. A. What is your definition of one's responsibility to others?

3. B. Which results from the survey are relevant to your understanding of your responsibilities to others?

4. What is one thing that taking the survey changed about your perspective on your college plans?

5. What are two things you would like to discuss with at your next advising meeting?

6. Other as given by advisor:

Appendix G. Educational Growth Plan Rubric

Rubric for Evaluating Educational Growth Plan

Task Description: The primary goal is to help students develop and follow an intentional educational growth plan grounded in the student's self-assessment of their values, interests, and abilities, and facilitated through holistic advising.

Dimensions	3-Exemplary	2-Competent	1-Developing
1. Students will craft a coherent educational plan based on assessment of abilities, aspirations, interests, and values	<input type="checkbox"/> Section 3 goals are clearly stated and consistent with section 2 self-reflection. <input type="checkbox"/> Core, major, and co-curricular activities for achieving goals are clearly specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Experiential learning activities for achieving goals are clearly specified.	<input type="checkbox"/> Section 3 goals are clearly stated and appear reasonable, yet appear unrelated to section 2 self-reflection. <input type="checkbox"/> Some but not all core, major, and co-curricular activities for achieving goals are specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Experiential learning activities for achieving goals are mentioned without including details.	<input type="checkbox"/> One or fewer goals are given. <input type="checkbox"/> Core, major, and co-curricular goals for achieving goals are not specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Experiential learning activities for achieving goals are not specified.
2. Students will make progress towards timely path to graduation	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan completes graduation requirements in <i>four years</i> (unless contraindicated). <input type="checkbox"/> Major requirements appear to be met. <input type="checkbox"/> Core Requirements appear to be met. <input type="checkbox"/> Elective Requirements appear to be met. <input type="checkbox"/> Other graduation requirements such as experiential learning and first year experience appear to be met.	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan completes graduation requirements in <i>four or five years</i> (unless contraindicated). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Major requirements for first two years specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Core Requirements for first two years specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Elective Requirements for first two years specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Other graduation requirements such as experiential learning and first year experience for first two years specified.	<input type="checkbox"/> Timeline for graduation not given or appears to be longer than five years. <input type="checkbox"/> Major requirements not given beyond current semester. <input type="checkbox"/> Core Requirements not given beyond current semester. <input type="checkbox"/> Elective Requirements not given beyond current semester. <input type="checkbox"/> Other graduation requirements such as experiential learning and first year experience not given beyond current semester.
3. Students will have knowledge and make relevant use of Thomas More University success resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant success resources (such as peer-to-peer tutoring) for achieving goals (especially in light of section 2 reflection on abilities) are clearly specified.	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant success resources (such as peer-to-peer tutoring) for achieving goals, yet appear unrelated to section 2 self-reflection on abilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant success resources (such as peer-to-peer tutoring) for achieving goals are not considered

Appendix H. Second-Year Reflection Rubric

Rubric for Second-Year Reflection

Task Description: The primary goal is to help students think through and include a variety of high impact practices such as undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, and service learning/community-based learning in their educational growth plan.

Dimensions	3-Exemplary	2-Competent	1-Developing
1. Students will craft a coherent educational plan based on assessment of abilities, aspirations, interests, and values	<input type="checkbox"/> Section 3 goals are clearly stated and consistent with section 2 self-reflection. <input type="checkbox"/> Core, major, and co-curricular activities for achieving goals are clearly specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Experiential learning activities for achieving goals are clearly specified.	<input type="checkbox"/> Section 3 goals are clearly stated and appear reasonable, yet appear unrelated to section 2 self-reflection. <input type="checkbox"/> Some but not all core, major, and co-curricular activities for achieving goals are specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Experiential learning activities for achieving goals are mentioned without including details.	<input type="checkbox"/> One or fewer goals are given. <input type="checkbox"/> Core, major, and co-curricular goals for achieving goals are not specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Experiential learning activities for achieving goals are not specified.
2. Students will make progress towards timely path to graduation	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan completes graduation requirements in <i>four years</i> (unless contraindicated). <input type="checkbox"/> Major requirements appear to be met. <input type="checkbox"/> Core Requirements appear to be met. <input type="checkbox"/> Elective Requirements appear to be met. <input type="checkbox"/> Other graduation requirements such as experiential learning and first year experience appear to be met.	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan completes graduation requirements in <i>four or five years</i> (unless contraindicated). <input type="checkbox"/> Major requirements for first two years specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Core Requirements for first two years specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Elective Requirements for first two years specified. <input type="checkbox"/> Other graduation requirements such as experiential learning and first year experience for first two years specified.	<input type="checkbox"/> Timeline for graduation not given or appears to be longer than five years. <input type="checkbox"/> Major requirements not given beyond current semester. <input type="checkbox"/> Core Requirements not given beyond current semester. <input type="checkbox"/> Elective Requirements not given beyond current semester. <input type="checkbox"/> Other graduation requirements such as experiential learning and first year experience not given beyond current semester.
3. Students will have knowledge and make relevant use of Thomas More University success resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant success resources (such as peer-to-peer tutoring) for achieving goals (especially in light of section 2 reflection on abilities) are clearly specified.	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant success resources (such as peer-to-peer tutoring) for achieving goals, yet appear unrelated to section 2 self-reflection on abilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant success resources (such as peer-to-peer tutoring) for achieving goals are not considered
4. Students will apply at least two high impact practices to their educational growth plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Two or more HIPs are clearly stated and next steps for HIPs included. <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Minor identified. <input type="checkbox"/> Next steps identified.	<input type="checkbox"/> Two or fewer HIP are clearly stated OR next steps for HIPs not included. <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Minor identified. <input type="checkbox"/> Some next steps identified.	<input type="checkbox"/> HIPs are not given. <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Minor not identified. <input type="checkbox"/> Next steps not identified.

Appendix I. NSSE Assessment Items

NSSE Academic Advising Module Items (National Survey of Student Engagement, n.d. a)

1. During the current school year, how many times have you discussed your academic interests, course selections, or academic performance with the following individuals?

Response options: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 or more, Not applicable

- a. Academic advisor, faculty, or staff assigned to advise you
- b. Academic advisor(s) available to any student
- c. Faculty or instructor(s) *not* assigned to advise you
- d. Student services staff (career services, academic support, Trio, etc.)
- e. Success or academic coach
- f. Peer advisor or mentor
- g. Other, please specify: [textbox]

2. Do you know how to contact (in person, email, phone, or online) an advisor at your institution?

Response options: Yes, No, Unsure

3. Thinking about academic advising, how much have people and resources at your institution done the following?

Response options: Very much, Quite a bit, Some, Very little, Not applicable

- a. Been available when needed
- b. Provided prompt and accurate information
- c. Provided information about learning support services (tutoring, writing center, success skills, etc.)
- d. Notified you of important policies and deadlines
- e. Reached out to you about your academic progress or performance
- f. Followed up with you regarding something they recommended
- g. Asked questions about your educational background and needs
- h. Actively listened to your concerns
- i. Respected your identity and culture
- j. Cared about your overall well-being

4. Thinking about your academic advising, about how often did someone at your institution discuss the following with you?

Response options: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very often, Not applicable

- a. Your academic goals and future plans
- b. How your major or expected major relates to your goals and future plans
- c. Special opportunities (study abroad, internship, service-learning, research, etc.)
- d. Participation in co-curricular activities (organizations or clubs, performing arts, sports, etc.)
- e. Resources for your well-being (health, counseling, financial guidance, etc.)

5. How much have each of each of the following helped you develop your academic goals and future plans?

Response options: Very much, Quite a bit, Some, Very little, Not applicable

- a. Academic advisor, faculty, or staff assigned to you
- b. Academic advisor(s) available to any student

- c. Faculty or instructor(s) *not* assigned to advise you
- d. Online advising system (degree progress report, etc.)
- e. Website, catalog, or other published sources
- f. Student services staff (career services, academic support, Trio, etc.)
- g. Success or academic coach
- h. Peer advisor or mentor
- i. Friends or other students
- j. Family members
- k. Other, please specify:

6. Regarding academic advising, who has been the most helpful and in what way? [text box]

NSSE HIP Items (National Survey of Student Engagement, n.d. b)

NSSE standard module collects participation rate in the following high impact practices:

Service-Learning

Learning Community

Research with Faculty

Internship or Field Exp.

Study Abroad

Culminating Senior Exp.

Appendix J. Academic Success Plan

Academic Success Plan

<i>Please fill out both pages of this form prior to meeting with your Advisor and/or Academic Coach to review your current academic status and your plan for academic success. Be as honest as possible; this is for you.</i>			
Name:		Student Id:	
Major:		Email:	
		Phone:	

Reflection:	<i>Why do you think you were placed on academic warning or academic probation? (If not on either of these, what challenges do you believe exist that have led to academic difficulty?)</i>

I seek help when I need it.		I feel overwhelmed.		I feel lonely or isolated.	
	<i>Very Often</i>		<i>Very Often</i>		<i>Very Often</i>
	<i>Often</i>		<i>Often</i>		<i>Often</i>
	<i>Occasionally</i>		<i>Occasionally</i>		<i>Occasionally</i>
	<i>Never</i>		<i>Never</i>		<i>Never</i>

Identify Challenges/Obstacles:		<i>What challenges do you face that may be obstacles to your academic success? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)</i>			
	Study/Test-Taking Skills		Stress/Anxiety Management		Heavy/Challenge Course Load
	Time Management		Reading/Writing Skills		New Student
	Low Motivation		Major/Career Concerns		Social Distractions
	Housing/Roommate		Family/Relationship Problems		Athletics
	Financial Challenges		Commuting or Transportation		Health/Personal Issues
	Disability Concerns		Too Many Work Hours		Identity Issues
	Other:				

Build On Your Strengths:	<i>What strengths do you have that may help you succeed? It may help to think about and describe a class or assignment in which you were successful and reflect on why it was a success.</i>

Seek Resources:	<i>What resources have you either used or would like to use that would help you increase your chances for success?</i> (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)				
	Academic Advisor		Professor's Office Hours		Student Financial Services
	Peer-to-Peer Tutoring		Disability Services		Career Services
	Writing Center		Academic Coaching		Health Center
	Math Tutoring Center		Counseling		Athletic Study Tables
	Other:				

Assess Your Study Skills	<i>Reflect on your current study habits. If you marked other, please explain below.</i>		
	Yes	No	Other
<i>I have a designated study area where I am not distracted and can focus on assignments.</i>			
<i>I have a plan for each study period.</i>			
<i>I am prepared to come to class with my homework assignments completed.</i>			
<i>I review my notes after class.</i>			
<i>I take notes or highlight text as I read my assignments.</i>			
<i>I start my writing assignments well before they are due.</i>			
<i>I know how to organize my notes into an outline.</i>			
<i>I allow enough time for drafts and rewrites of my papers.</i>			
<i>I study two to three hours for every one hour I am in class. (on average)</i>			
<i>I use a quarterly, weekly, and/or daily calendar to plan for classes/assignments.</i>			
<i>I attend all classes except in emergency situations or illness.</i>			
<i>I notify my instructors and develop a plan with them if I miss class.</i>			
<i>I utilize professor office hours on a regular basis.</i>			
<i>I begin studying for an exam when the material is first assigned or covered in class.</i>			
<i>I get help from instructors, tutors, or classmates when needed.</i>			
<i>I make outlines and summary sheets to prepare for exams.</i>			
<i>If you marked other, please explain:</i>			

Set and Achieve Goals:	<i>Reflect and identify three goals to achieving success. Consider study skills, challenges, strengths, resources, and deadlines to implement and achieve your goals. Be specific in your goal: consider using SMART goals.</i> http://www.hr.virginia.edu/uploads/documents/media/Writing_SMART_Goals.pdf
GOAL 1:	
GOAL 2:	
GOAL 3:	

Check Point Meeting. *Students and advisors are asked to set up a check point meeting before midterms to assess progress towards the student's goals and pave a path for successful midterms.*

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Additional Recommendations (To Be Completed by the TMC Staff/Faculty Completing the Success Plan)

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The Academic Success Plan developed by the student has been reviewed with an Advisor/Academic Coach and Retention Office has been deemed satisfactory.

Advisor/Academic Coach Signature & Date	
Student Signature & Date	
Retention Office Signature & Date	