



**ADVISING &
REGISTRATION
BEST PRACTICES**

*A collection of best practices from
North Carolina Community Colleges.*

Compiled by Student Development Services
North Carolina Community College System Office
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Introduction

“It is the people who come face-to-face with students on a regular basis who provide the positive growth experiences for students that enable them to identify their goals and talents and learn how to put them to use. The caring attitude of college personnel is viewed as the most potent retention force on a campus.” (Noel, L. 1985, p. 17).

Evidence shows that effective academic advising and uncomplicated registration procedures can be major factors in student retention. Through positive interaction with students, college bonds and connections can be formed, making both advising and registration core processes in retention.

Presented in the following pages are the best practices used by several North Carolina Community Colleges in their efforts to address and improve academic advising and registration with innovative ideas in processes and techniques, publications, training, centralization, software, and other strategies. Best practices are listed by college and topic with campus contact included.

We would like to thank the colleges who responded to the request for best practices and their willingness to share their procedures and materials.


NCCCS Student Development Services will be revising this document with additional information as needed. If you have best practices or other information you would like to be included, please forward it to Karen Yerby at yerbyk@nccommunitycolleges.edu.

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Alamance Community College

Mary-Charles Barrett – Coordinator, Academic Advising Center

 **Advising Center** - Alamance Community College's approach to academic advising, registration and retention has improved with the addition of its new Academic Advising Center. ACC's Academic Advising Center opened in August 2008. Open year-round, 5 days a week, this academic and career resource provides a wealth of information for ACC's enrolled students.

Within the Academic Advising Center, students can receive academic and career support as they make decisions regarding their educational plans at ACC. With the help of full time Advising Center staff and volunteer faculty advisors, students in all curriculum programs can be advised and register within the center. These efforts have enhanced ACC's continuous registration process, enabling the majority of current and returning students to register for classes in a central, accessible location before official registration events.

Retention efforts at ACC have increased with the Advising Center's services. Students receive appropriate academic counseling during the drop/add period and meet with career counselors when changing their academic program or major. Individual assistance is available for students at computer kiosks as they have the opportunity to complete online applications, utilize WebAdvisor for online registration, and work with Blackboard sites. A Financial Aid counselor schedules appointments in the Advising Center for one-on-one consultation with students as they complete their FAFSA online.

University Transfer resources are also easily accessible to provide students information about 4-year college and university opportunities. To complement ACC's 2+2 Elementary Education transfer program with North Carolina A&T University, the university's Elementary Education program advisor schedules weekly visits to the Advising Center to help inform students of program requirements. Other college and university representatives also frequent the Advising Center to recruit and promote their many degrees and opportunities available to transfer students. Students are made aware of these events through ACC's website and student email accounts.

Throughout the year, the Advising Center offers seminars in the areas of resume writing, interviewing skills, and choosing a major or career. Information sessions on hybrid and online classes are also available. As online registration, transcript requests, and final grade access become a reality, WebAdvisor training held in the Advising Center helps students gain access to and use these new resources.

The Advising Center's central location is essential to student access. Located near the snack bar in ACC's main building, students find it very accessible and can receive assistance on a walk-in basis. Staff, faculty and administration support make the Advising Center a new success at Alamance Community College.

Beaufort County Community College

Sue Brookshire – Director of Retention Services

- **New Student Orientation** – Orientation is held for new students in June during fall registration. Those participating attend a general session, meet with their faculty advisors, and register for fall classes a day earlier than other students. Participation in this activity has increased.

Cape Fear Community College

Phil Farinholt - Registrar

- **Advising for Currently Enrolled Students** - Faculty advisors are assigned by admissions, based on majors, when a student application is received. New advisors are assigned immediately when a student changes their major.

Prior to registration for currently enrolled students, students are sent a personal email containing their advisor name, advisor office location, registration priority and time, and a registration timeline. While not required, all students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor prior to registering for classes. During the advising period, advisors post appointment times on their doors for student sign up. Email advising is also available to College Transfer students. Our College Transfer area has a well developed advising website at <http://cfcc.edu/transfer/Advising4.htm>.

The advising period lasts for two weeks. All advisors have access to student information both through WebAdvisor and Colleague. Much effort has been put into training faculty to access and understand Degree Audit. Some students choose to self-advise, usually those in their second year of studies. All students have access to Program Evaluation in WebAdvisor.

- **Advisor Training** - Cape Fear offers new and seasoned advisors many opportunities for professional development. The Registrar's Office offers a two hour basic advisor training to all new advisors. In addition, we offer an advanced class that covers program evaluations and test score interpreting. The Instructional Division has divisional meetings each fall to discuss changes in courses and programs of study for

the coming year. Lastly, advisors hired to work in the advising center attend an orientation meeting before the center opens each summer.

- **Advising New and Returning Students** - All new and returning students meet with an advisor at the time of registration. Either advising transcripts or degree audits are printed and given to the student prior to meeting with an advisor.

Cape Fear utilizes an advising center to accommodate the large number of students entering the college each semester. It is open for two weeks in December for spring students and several weeks during the summer for fall students. Faculty are paid on a separate contract for working in the center. Advisors work with students in all majors. The advising center has proven to be a great tool in getting students off to a good start by receiving a warm welcome, an explanation of program evaluations, excellent advising, correct course placement, and an explanation of the next steps.

In addition to the advising center, we offer advising and registration to students as a part of new student orientation. During the fall orientation students attend a departmental orientation, affording them a chance to meet with their assigned advisor and meet their fellow students. Orientation is usually held 3-4 days prior to the start of the semester.


- **Registration for Currently Enrolled Students** - begins about two months prior to the spring and summer semesters and six months before the fall semester begins. Campus Cruiser emails, announcements, and signs are posted announcing the beginning of advising and registration. Cape Fear also created a guide to on-line registration that students have found quite helpful.
(<http://cfcc.edu/studentserv/documents/RegistrationGuide.pdf>)

Currently enrolled students are expected to use WebAdvisor to register. Web registration begins the same day the advising period begins. Advising packets are also prepared for faculty including advisee listings, priority dates and times, registration flags, registration calendar, and web registration advising forms. Registration priorities are assigned and emailed to students about two weeks before registration. Technical and Vocational students register first, followed by College Transfer, and then Special Credit. Colleague registration is also made available to faculty in their offices. Many Technical and Vocational advisors advise and register their students as a group since they teach most or all of their advisees.

Registration priorities are assigned in groups of 500 students. This keeps the web server from becoming overloaded. Students on academic probation can register themselves for up to 10 credit hours. Students on academic suspension that wish to remain enrolled must meet with a counselor. Prerequisite checking is strictly enforced during web registration. Employees and students requesting a course

overload must see the Registrar, Director of Enrollment Management or the Vice President of Student Development to register.

Immediately upon completion of web registration, the system generates a registration confirmation email. This confirms the successful registration and reminds the student of payment options. Fall registrants are mailed bills in early July. Web payments have been a popular tool for students and their parents to use. It has significantly cut down on the lines at the cashier. Again, a payment confirmation email is sent to the student upon completion of each payment. We have extended the availability of web registration nearly every semester. Currently, web registration ends on the tuition due date and reopens 2 days later with no enforced priorities and remains open through registration day. Our goal is to have nearly all currently enrolled students register via the web in order to free up resources for new and returning students.


 **Registration for New and Returning Students** - New and returning students are offered a number of opportunities to register before the semester begins. Many returning students and some savvy new students will register via the web as soon as registration priorities have been ended. The majority of students visit our Advising Center to register (see Advising for New and Returning Students above). The Advising Center typically has 8-10 part-time faculty employed with each person working about 20 hours per week also one or more counselors are always there. Advising Center hours are usually from 11 am to 5 pm Monday through Thursday. Lastly, we have a support staff person assigned to assisting Distance Learning students. This staff member works with the DL students beginning with the application through registration, payment, and even graduation.

Staff and faculty typically do not like arena style registration, but it is likely something we will never get away from. Most classes are full, lines are long, and patience is short. However, many current, new, and returning students for various reasons insist on waiting until the day before classes to register. Some students seem to like the “controlled chaos” of the day! Arena registration is available at orientation and continues through drop/add on the second day of classes. Computer classrooms are used for College Transfer registration, the cafeteria for Technical and Vocational registration and the Advising Center for Special Credit registration. Once classes begin, all registrations are in the cafeteria. Typical registration schedule for fall semester:

Day 1:	New Student Orientation Registration Web registration is available	9 am until noon 1pm until 5 pm
Day 2:	Registration (all students) Web registration is available	8 am until 7 pm


Day 3:	In-Service Day (Professional Development) No web registration available Non-paying students from days 1 and 2 are purged Students are allowed to drop for 100% refund	
Day 4:	Late Registration (all students) Concurrent student registration No web registration available First day of classes 75% refund begins	9 am until 6 pm
Day 5:	Drop/Add only (all students) No web registration available Second day of classes	9 am until 6 pm


We are continually trying new things to improve web and in-person registration. The Registration Guide, soft application deadlines, purge notification emails and/or postcards, publicity about full classes, and extended on-line registration periods have all helped cut down the arena registration lines. We used to have students spend the night at the doors to be first in-line for registration. Students have learned that being first in line at arena registration is no longer assurance that you will get the classes you need.

 **Conclusion** - Colleges should never let their registration processes become static. As technology and enrollment trends change, adjustments need to be made to the advising and registration setups and processes. Flexibility and communication with students and advisors is the key to keeping registration fresh and efficient. Cape Fear discontinued telephone registration a year ago after WebAdvisor clearly became the registration tool of choice. With the features and controls available in WebAdvisor, it is like having a registrar on duty 24/7!

Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute

Mark Poarch, Vice President of Student Services

 **Transition Advisors** - Each public high school in our service area hosts a Transition Advisor employed by CCC&TI. Transition Advisors encourage students to finish high school and enroll in post-secondary institutions through the promotion of opportunities available through cooperative programs (Huskins/Dual Enrollment). Transition Advisors also assist with college applications, placement testing, career assessment and exploration, and general college advising.

 **Academic Advising Center** - The mission is to provide the best possible advisement for students to achieve their academic, career, and personal goals.

Academic Advising Services:

All Students

- Placement test score interpretation
- Determination, location, and availability of support services
- Assistance with selection of programs of study

College Transfer Students


- Assisting with selection of majors or pre-majors, development of individual educational plans, schedule planning, and registration including drop/add
- Providing up-to-date record keeping for individual students
- Scheduling appointments for college transfer students and faculty
- Advising students transitioning from CCC&TI to other colleges and universities

High School & GED Students

- Assistance with transition from high school programs to CCC&TI admission
- Assistance with college program selection and registration


Benefits

- Convenient advisor location
- Accurate student record keeping
- Complete semester schedule planning
- Quick and easy registration
- Advisement on transfer information
- Ease of adding and/or dropping classes

 **Advising/Registration Day** - This July, we are having an advising/registration day that targets new students who have completed admissions requirements. Curriculum classes are not being held that day allowing all faculty and staff to participate in advising, registration, and orientation activities. We are hopeful that this day will allow us to serve a large percentage of incoming new students in a manner that will be beneficial to all. Results to follow.

Coastal Carolina Community College


Dewey H. Lewis, Vice President for Instruction and Information Resources

 **Drop/Add Period** - Several years ago we began holding our drop/add period before classes began. Once a class has met, it is closed to enrollment. Coastal implemented this procedure after a study was completed that showed a low

percentage of students successfully completed a course if they entered after the first day of a semester.

College of The Albemarle

John M. Wells, Director, Counseling and Career Development

 **Online Advisor Training and Resources** - The College developed online training and resources for advisors. The initial advisor training is done on Blackboard and includes different modules and an exam. The modules deal with the advising basics, advisor/advisee relationship, and using the advising tools. The advisors have to take an online scavenger hunt, a comprehensive exam that includes different advising scenarios where they apply what they have learned. The online resources provide advisors access to advisor updates, necessary advising forms, advising policy and procedures, and links to the advising tools.

We hope to enhance the online training and the current advising web site for students with video instruction.

Durham Technical Community College


Peter Wooldridge, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences


Advising for Arts, Sciences, and University Transfer Department


- We have a Transfer Center that is staffed 20 hours per week, and we have a very rich Virtual Transfer Center <http://www.durhamtech.edu/transfer/index.htm>.
- We are migrating to Web Advisor and plan to turn on “pre-requisite check” in Fall 2009.
- We have an advising page on Blackboard for use by our faculty advisors. This page now substitutes for our advising notebook.
- We have personal advisors assigned to students so students are able to receive one-on-one advising with a knowledgeable advisor.
- We founded the College Transfer Program Association and have kept a leadership role in the organization since it began seven years ago.
- We have close working relationships with UNC-CH, NCSU, and NCCU.
- We coordinate all advising activities with the college’s Advising Center staff.


Forsyth Technical Community College

Eliza Sieswerda, Academic Advisor

-  **Success Center/Advisor Training** - In 2004 we were awarded a Title III grant to establish a new Student Success Center. The purpose of the center is to target the needs of our new students and provide training and support for our faculty advisors. The Center employs two full-time and four part-time professional advisors, and assists new students through a series of new student SOAR (Success through Orientation Advising and Registration) sessions. There is also an online orientation available for students who are unable to attend an “in person” orientation session. Our staff works in collaboration with our academic divisions to offer advisor training for all of our faculty advisors. Members of our staff sit on different college committees and play a role in shaping policy as it pertains to advising, registration, and retention efforts.


-  **WebAdvisor** - This past spring our WebAdvisor service went live, and our office provided training to faculty, staff, and students to teach them how to log in and effectively utilize that service, including registering themselves for their classes. We also continue to promote face-to-face advising for all of our students.

-  **Peer Advising** - We coordinate a small but active Peer Advising Program, and our peer advisors assist with hosting orientations, WebAdvisor training sessions, and provide peer-based guidance and support within the Student Success Center.

-  **AdvisorTrac software** - This past year, the Student Success Center purchased AdvisorTrac software. This software enables us to better track the students who come into the center, and provides us with more consistent data so that we can shape our services to best serve our students’ needs.


Mayland Community College

Monica Boyd, Director of Enrollment Management


-  **Online Registration** - Our returning students are encouraged to use LEO (our online portal) to register for classes. Returning students meet with their advisors during the two weeks prior to priority registration. Then they are eligible to register online; therefore, reducing lines and wait time for in-person registration.

Nash Community College

Timmy Tucker, Dean of Students and Enrollment Services


 **Publications** - Instead of listing a best practice, I am enclosing examples of student check sheets that can be used to ensure a smooth application and registration process. (The check sheet is our best practice of minimizing student confusion. Students who follow these check sheets usually experience no confusion in the process.)

The first attachment is a tri-fold “Passport to Success.” The second is a Dual Enrollment process guide and recruitment tool. The last attachment is a “Steps to First Year Success,” i.e. the basics of what to do first and when to do it. Advisement and registration are steps in each process. (See attachments I, II, III)

 **Registration Process** - The actual registration process best practice for Nash CC is that on the first days of Registration and Extended Registration, each department is centrally located – all college transfer advisors are in one room, all health science advisors are in one room, etc. Students do not have to wait long to register with his/her advisor (or any knowledgeable departmental advisor).

Sandhills Community College

Madie Ash, Director of Student Success and Disability Services

 **Pre-Advising** - Effective Spring Semester of 2008 a new “Pre-Advising” method was implemented to replace the traditional “New Student Group Orientation” that occurred monthly throughout the academic year. These group orientations began with an information overview for all students in the auditorium. After hearing many speakers, program advisors picked up advisors from the auditorium to register them for classes.

In our new “Pre-Advising Model, twelve specifically trained student services staff members provide one-on-one attention to each student immediately following his/her placement testing. Pre-Advisors give students a pre-advising packet, information, and engage them by reviewing ACUPLACER scores and placement, confirming majors, determining the need for career counseling, explaining the required ACA 115 course, providing advisor information and other pertinent academic support services.

The Pre-Advising process averages approximately 15 minutes and students are better informed of support services available and know how and when to meet with their program advisors. Additionally, this interaction allows new students to seek

answers for the many questions they have related to college processes. The ultimate goal is that when students pre-advise, they know the location of their advisor and are prepared to focus on their program and register for classes.

Although we discontinued the traditional group orientation and registration required, we replaced it with New Student Registration Day (NSRD). This allows an open time frame that new students can either make an appointment to see their assigned advisor or do walk-in registration for classes during a designated time. During the advising session, students course plan, register for classes, and discuss program requirements. They also have the option of paying tuition and/or purchasing text books during this time.

Strengths of the process:


- Students are better prepared to register.
- No long registration lines.
- Advisors are more satisfied with the process as it allows them more time to focus on program needs.


Weaknesses of the process:


- Without total support from faculty and staff, the process doesn't work.
- Inability to monitor the process on the designated NSRD days.
- Some students may not connect with advisor on the NSRD to register immediately.

Wake Technical Community College

Rosemary Kelly, Dean of Enrollment and Records

 **Entrinsik software** - Wake Tech uses Entrinsik Informer, a web-based software program that is directly linked to the Datatel database. This is a reporting tool similar to Query builder but more robust and easy to use. It allows the user to work with multiple files in one query and allows input and output from multiple files. This program makes it easier to produce reports in pdf, Excel, saved lists, or printable formats. It allows for multiple user access and does not have to be installed on each machine –it is through a secure website. Users can access the program and run reports from a menu of items or make a copy of a report and customize it to fit their need at the time.


 **Withdrawal Using WebAdvisor** - After the drop/add period ends, faculty key the “NA” (Never Attended) grades using the WebAdvisor grading process. The faculty also submits an online withdrawal form which is submitted to the student records department for keying and processing. A copy of the withdrawal form is also forwarded to our financial aid department during the submission process.

 **National Student Clearinghouse** - Wake Technical Community College utilizes the services of the National Student Clearinghouse for transcript requests and enrollment verifications.

Official transcript requests can be placed online and incur an additional \$2.50 convenience fee that is collected by the National Student Clearinghouse, along with the Wake Tech fee of \$5.00. Transcript requests are not processed, under any circumstance, for students who have any outstanding indebtedness to the College.

In addition, the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) is now our authorized agent for providing enrollment verification certificates. This is a free service offered by the NSC in cooperation with Wake Technical Community College. A student may obtain an enrollment certificate to print and mail to a health insurer or other company that requests proof of his/her enrollment. The NSC meets all FERPA requirements and can accommodate requests immediately.


Providing both of these services online is a benefit to our students and assists the staff as well.

 **FERPA & Student Dependent Status Certification** - Wake Tech recently implemented a new process in an effort to clarify FERPA to parents and students and to provide FERPA release information to faculty and staff across the campus. Students are informed of the process on how to release information to someone through the use of a FERPA Consent Form. This form allows a student to list up to 3 people who can access one or all of the following types of information: Academic Records, Accounts (billing) and/or Financial Aid Records. To verify a student's identity when submitting the form, we require students to show us a valid government issued photo ID. If the form is mailed, students must provide a copy of their ID. This information is entered in Datatel and is valid until the student submits a request to end the access.

Parent's also have the ability to complete a Parent Certification of Student's Dependent Status Form. To verify dependent status, parents must provide a copy of their most recent federal income tax return showing the student listed as a dependent. This information is entered into Datatel and is valid until April 15th of the following year when the next tax return should be filed. The Parent Certification of Student's Dependent Status Form has to be submitted each year with a copy of that year's federal income tax return.

Both forms also include an added security measure of an alphanumeric code and hint to be used to verify the identity of a caller claiming to be one of the individuals listed who can receive information. The alphanumeric code and hint work the same way a mother's maiden name does when calling to talk to a credit card company. If

a caller cannot provide the alphanumeric code, the hint is provided. If the caller cannot provide the alpha numeric code after hearing the hint, the request is denied and the caller is told to contact the student or to complete a Parent Certification of Student's Dependent Status Form.

 **Online Registration** - Wake Technical Community College uses a completely online registration process through the use of WebAdvisor.

- Students are given registration priority dates based upon their curriculum program. College Transfer students are given priority based upon the number of hours they have completed.
- Registration for summer and fall is conducted at the same time. Dates are established within Colleague for both semesters and students are able to register for both sessions-this helps the student and assists with academic advising as students are advised for fall classes while faculty advisors are still on campus. Advising for both semesters begins on or around April 1st.
- Students are taught how to use WebAdvisor during their advising session as well from a registration guide. The guide is located on the Wake Tech website main page.
- A registration help center is provided by the enrollment and records division the first week of classes to assist students with registration, dropping and adding, and payments. This walk-in registration help is set-up in the student lounge for highest visibility and access to the students.

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