

Incorporating Experiential Planning in Academic Advising at UofSC

The Reinvention Collaborative, a national consortium of research universities, suggests that research institutions like UofSC should “adopt, scale, and render accessible high-impact learning experiences so that undergraduate students benefit from two or more of these enrichments as part of their integrated learning.” As an opportunity-rich environment, at UofSC student learning in the classroom is supplemented and enhanced through engagement in purposeful beyond-the-classroom experiences. With their academic advisor, students critically plan, reflect on, and make meaning of their integration in beyond-the-classroom activities. Beginning in students’ first semester at UofSC, using My UofSC Experience, academic advisors help students plan and engage in educationally purposeful experiential activities including internships, study abroad, student organization membership, undergraduate research, and campus leadership opportunities. As the only mandated interaction with a representative of the university, academic advisors will play a key role in the university’s reaccreditation as student integration and reflection on experiential and integrative education is being written into UofSC’s new Quality Enhancement Plan, a critical component of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation process. Additionally, internal research suggests that the discussion of experiential and integrative learning in advisement is positively linked to greater overall satisfaction with advising (see report below).

Sample Four-Year Integration Plan

Conversations about experiential and integrative learning should be woven through a student’s academic advisement over their four years at UofSC. See below for an sample four-year integration plan.

		Topics	Questions	Advisor Checklist
Year 1	Fall	Introduction to experiential and integrative learning opportunities at UofSC	<p>What kind of activities do you want to get involved in during your time at UofSC?</p> <p>At the end of your four years, what would you like on your resume/co-curricular transcript?</p>	Show students the Sample Co-Curricular Transcript
	Spring	<p>Look at My UofSC Experience Student Record together</p> <p>Planning future involvement</p>	<p>What kinds of beyond-the-classroom activities did you participate in during the fall semester?</p> <p>What did you learn from your experience in those activities?</p> <p>Looking at the recommended experiences by major, what interests you? What interests you beyond your major? How would these experiences supplement your learning in the classroom?</p>	My UofSC Experience Student Search

Year 2	Fall	<p>Internship Planning Study Abroad Undergraduate Research Peer Leadership Opportunities</p>	<p>Internships Are you planning on participating in an internship this summer? What kind of experience are you looking for in an internship?</p> <p>Do you have a resume prepared? What would you like to change or improve about your resume before you start applying for internships? What experiences do you need to engage in this fall and spring to bolster your resume?</p> <p>Study Abroad Have you considered studying abroad? If you have, where would you like to go? Why?</p> <p>Undergraduate Research Have you considered engaging in undergraduate research? Do you know of any faculty with similar research interests to your own? Are you familiar with the Magellan Grant?</p> <p>Peer Leadership What do you know about peer leadership opportunities at UofSC? Are you interested in this kind of experience? What do you want to get out of serving in a leadership capacity? How would engaging in in this experience relate to and enhance your learning?</p>	<p>Career Center Student Services Study Abroad Program Directory Faculty Research Database Undergraduate Research Funding</p>
	Spring	<p>Have a conversation regarding the knowledge and skills related to engagements (connecting to their selected major and/or career pursuits.)</p> <p>Discuss Graduation with Leadership Distinction</p>	<p>Question about knowledge and skills...</p> <p>Are you interested in graduating with Leadership Distinction?</p> <p>Which pathway interests you?</p>	<p>GLD Pathways My UofSC Experience Student Search</p>

			<p>What experiences within that pathway have you already completed?</p> <p>What experiences within that pathway do you wish to complete?</p>	
Year 3	Fall	<p>Creating Meaning</p> <p>Final Planning</p>	<p>What experiences are you actively engaged in this semester/year? What are you learning in these experiences? How have you integrated topics you've learned in the classroom in this/these experience(s)?</p> <p>Looking at your resume/co-curricular transcript, what is missing? Thinking back to your first-year, what did you hope to accomplish that you have not yet?</p>	<p>My UofSC Experience Student Search</p> <p>GLD Pathways</p>
	Spring	<p>GLD Check-In (For students pursuing and/or eligible)</p>	<p>Are you planning on pursuing GLD? Is there coursework you need to complete next year for your GLD Pathway? What experiences do you still need to complete? What's your plan for accomplishing these tasks/activities?</p>	
Year 4	Fall	<p>Career Planning</p> <p>GLD Completion</p>	<p>Based on the experiences you've had at UofSC, how have those experiences shaped your career goals?</p> <p>What do you hope to accomplish in your final semester at UofSC?</p>	<p>My UofSC Experience Student Search</p> <p>Career Center Student Services</p> <p>e-Portfolios and UNIV 401</p>
	Spring	<p>Integrating curricular and co-curricular learning</p>	<p>Looking back on your four years at UofSC, what have you accomplished?</p> <p>How have your experiences and learning in the classroom complemented each other?</p>	<p>My UofSC Experience Student Search</p>

Impact of Advisor Recommending Beyond-The-Classroom/Experiential Learning Opportunities on Overall Satisfaction with Advising at UofSC

Quick Findings

Research suggests that students report greater overall satisfaction with academic advising when they discuss beyond-the-classroom and experiential learning opportunities with their academic advisor.

Summary

In 2005, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) launched Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP), a national public advocacy and campus action initiative. The LEAP initiative identified "Essential Learning Outcomes" for a modern liberal education. These outcomes include knowledge of diverse cultures and geography, practical skill development, personal and social responsibility, and integrative and applied learning. LEAP further identified ten high-impact practices shown to enhance student learning, engagement, and retention. These ten practices are: first-year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, ePortfolios, service learning, internships, and capstone courses/projects.

Academic advisors play a key role in connecting students intentionally to high-impact practices both in and beyond the formal curriculum that align with a student's educational, career, and personal goals. High-quality advisors help students make meaning of their co-curricular activities. In fact, according to Lowenstein (2005) "an excellent advisor does the same for the student's entire curriculum that the excellent teacher does for one course." He further suggests, "learning transpires when a student makes sense of his or her curriculum just as it does when a person understands an individual course, and the former is every bit as important as the latter (p. 69)."

Data from the 2019 Academic Advising Student Survey were analyzed to determine the impact of advisors discussing and recommending beyond-the-classroom activities such as study abroad, internships, peer leader positions, Graduation with Leadership Distinction, etc. on overall student satisfaction with advising.

The Academic Advising Student Survey is administered to a stratified random sample of students at the University of South Carolina during the spring semester of odd years. In spring 2019, the instrument was sent to 12,000 students and yielded an 11% response rate (n=1,087). The dataset was coded to include a variable that indicated whether advisors had recommended beyond-the-classroom activities to student's during advisement. In spring 2019, 710 students indicated their advisor had recommended beyond-the-classroom activities while 377 students reported that their advisor had not recommended beyond-the-classroom activities. The data was analyzed to find difference in means on overall satisfaction with advising between students whose advisors had recommended beyond-the-classroom activities and those whose advisors had not. An independent samples T-test yielded significant differences in overall satisfaction with advising for students who been encouraged to engage in beyond-the-classroom activities ($M=3.39$, $SD=0.03$) and students who had not ($M=2.04$, $SD=0.46$); $t(1,085)=-27.55$, $p = .000$.

