Dear Faculty,

What follows is the progress to date on the Quality Enhancement Plan. There are many areas that are still to be filled in, and the steering committee is meeting weekly to continue to flesh out the Plan. A blank area does not necessarily mean no thought has been given to the item, only that is not yet entered into the draft. Nor is the draft edited for overall consistency—it is truly a working draft.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

We look forward to receiving your feedback.

Regards,

The QEP Steering Committee

What Shall We Name This Thing?

1. Centenary GPS

(Goals + Plans = Success)

(Guidance, Persistence, Success)

2. Forward!

or

? (contest to choose name?)

Executive Summary

Advising is an essential component of the education process at Centenary College. It represents the most significant way that students connect their career and life goals to their educational experience. As such, it is increasingly important that advisors have as much information as possible when working with their advisees. It is also important that students are fully aware of the variety of campus resources available to them to help them achieve their goals. Our current model of advising is based on an academic faculty advising model that does not always capture the variety of other sources from which students need and receive advice. Indeed, depending on the student, the work of an academic faculty advisor is only one input—students hear from their coaches, their admission counselors, their residence hall staff, and any number of other sources. As well, students who arrive at Centenary as student-athletes, as first-generation college students, those with documented learning disabilities, or those with academically at-risk profiles may benefit from having a customized "team" of advisors who provide networked support and help inform the work of academic advisor.

This QEP proposes to create an integrated advising model that leverages relationship building to provide personalized, proactive, and holistic support to meet the individual needs of each student while providing as much information as possible to faculty academic advisors. Existing resources will continue to support students with fewer identified risk factors—the teams will concentrate on those students with a higher risk profile, especially in the first year and in the transition to the second year. Using a case management approach, the relationship manager will build bridges between the institution and the student and coordinate resources that are provided by faculty, staff, and peers to assure student success. The goal of this QEP is to improve students' academic self-efficacy and persistence at Centenary College.

About Centenary College

[nb: add description]

Timeline for Topic Development

The following chronology provides an overview of the QEP process from first conversations to final approval. Noteworthy campus events that impacted the QEP topic selection process are included for context.

Spring 2015

- The College began to discuss its next QEP planning process by hosting an informative faculty and staff event. Economics professor Dr. David Hoaas talked about his experience as a SACSCOC reviewer for QEPs. He walked the group through Core Requirement 2.12 and Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2, which guided the QEP process at that time.

Spring 2016

- In January, the College organized a QEP Topic Selection Committee.
- The QEP Topic Selection Committee sent a "Call for Ideas" to faculty, staff, and students.

· The QEP Topic Selection Committee began its work identifying data sources and QEP proposals for review.

- President David Rowe announced his resignation from the College effective July 2016.

Summer 2016

· In July, SACSCOC placed the College on probation for one year, which delayed submission of the College's SACSCOC reaffirmation materials including the Quality Enhancement Plan.

· In July, the College welcomed Dr. Christopher Holoman as its thirty-first president.

- In July, Edward Ragan attended the SACSCOC Summer Institute on Quality Enhancement and Reaffirmation.

Fall 2016

· The College began development of a new Strategic Plan.

- The QEP Topic Selection Committee began its review of institutional data.

Spring 2017

· The QEP Topic Selection Committee vetted proposals in light of institutional data.

· A new Strategic Plan called for the further integration of Academic and Student Affairs through the creation of a "Centenary-specific integrated advising program."

- The College also began an external review of the its retention program.

Summer 2017

· In July, the College successfully emerged from SACSCOC probation and returned to good standing, which started the clock on the reaffirmation timeline.

- In July, Edward Ragan and Vice Provost Karen Soul attended the SACSCOC Summer Institute on Quality Enhancement and Reaffirmation.

Fall 2017

· The College brought in Dr. Charles Schroeder, a retention consultant, to identify ways that the College could improve its persistence, retention, and four-year graduation rates. The data collected for this consultation proved significant for the QEP Topic Selection Committee.

· Beth Duet was named as the Director of Career Exploration and Integrated Advising.

- SACSCOC revised its QEP-related Core Requirement 2.12 and Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2 into a single Standard 7.2. The significant change shifted the language and emphasis of Core Requirement 2.12 from a focus “on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning” to Standard 7.2, which requires a focus “on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success.”

Spring 2018

- In January, the QEP Topic Selection Committee voted to propose “Integrated Advising” as its next QEP.
- Faculty approved when? (2/19/18 meeting?)
- Board approved when? (2/22/18 meeting?)
- QEP Steering Committee formed to design the Integrated Advising initiative and to draft the proposal.

Summer 2018

- Beth Duet, the Career Exploration and Integrated Advising resigned from Centenary. The College began a job search to fill her position and eliminated “Career Exploration” from the portfolio of this role.
- Edward Ragan attended the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) Summer Institute to gain a better understanding of institutional needs for academic advising.

Fall 2018

- Hired new Director of Integrated Advising.

Process Used to Develop the QEP

As other institutions have described the process, preparing for a new QEP is both "a marathon and a sprint." QEP topic identification involved a systematic process of data collection, institutional self-assessment, issues identification, solutions identification, and final topic selection. The process was designed to engage a broad audience with the goal of identifying a key issue related to learning outcomes and/or student success. During an academic support consultation process, a single key issue emerged: persistence. To address the College's lagging persistence and retention rates, the Integrated Advising topic was selected, and implementation solutions were solicited from across the college community, focusing on how this solution would enhance student success and the fulfilment of the College's mission. The following section explains the core components that define Centenary's QEP. The components emerged from an analysis of the College's mission statement, its strategic plan, its alignment with other College initiatives, institutional assessment, institutional history and culture, assessment data and planning documents, and state and national reports.

Early Planning and Announcements

Starting in 2015, campus constituents began to discuss the QEP planning process by discussing two important questions: "What problem does the College want to solve? How does the College know it is problem?" An important first step was to determine what data the College had and what correlative problem the data revealed.

In January 2016, the QEP Director, Dr. Edward Ragan, convened the QEP Topic Selection Committee to begin its work. The Committee included representatives from faculty, staff, student body, and alumni constituencies. They developed a "Call for Ideas" that was subsequently sent to faculty, staff, and students. They also discussed the best means for identifying the various pools of data that existed across campus. Some wanted the QEP to be transformative, though all agreed that the topic needed to be narrow and focused. The Committee planned to allow time for proposal submissions and continue the conversation at the March 2016 faculty meeting.

Following the March faculty meeting, the Committee reconvened to discuss the ideas that had percolated to the top. At the time, seven proposals had emerged from the faculty, staff, and the Committee's preliminary review of institutional data.

1. Expand the speaking and writing (S&W) courses that are part of every students' graduation requirements as a way to create a more developmental approach to speaking and writing across the curriculum.
2. Create an integrated advising program to better track student progress and provide enhanced support for the environment surrounding student learning.
3. Restructure the First-Year Experience (FYE) course.
4. Streamline the General Education core.
5. Pioneer a model for assessment at a small college that is essentially an effort to collect big data for each student.
6. Create an information literacy initiative.
7. Create a campus-wide wellness initiative.

As the Committee made plans to identify data and research these topics, key institutional changes altered the timeline. Early in the Spring 2016 semester, Centenary President Dr. David Rowe announced his resignation effective July 2016, which coincided with the College being placed on a one-year probation by SACSCOC. That probation postponed the QEP submission date by one year, which provided time as the College's incoming president, Dr. Christopher Holoman, took the first steps toward developing a new strategic plan for the institution.

In its Fall 2016 meetings, the QEP Topic Selection Committee began the process of identifying the data sources and working with the Institutional Effectiveness Committee to compile said data. As the College's Strategic Planning Committee met to chart an institutional course, the QEP Topic Selection Committee continued to envision a high impact project that would align with the strategic planning process. For example, the Committee was intrigued by the idea of a wellness project, so it requested fitness center usage data, counseling services data, Department of Public Safety data, and data related to spiritual health. The Committee also reviewed state and national data that related to wellness. Although the Committee had no formal wellness proposal, and holistic wellness is unaddressed in a programmatic sort of way on campus, it is part of the College's mission. So the Committee posed a question of the data: Is there good evidence that improving the well-being of staff, faculty, and students would improve the quality of campus life? Or as one committee member asked, "If wellness were a real concern of the College, what would it look like?" The answer was "a little bit everywhere all the time."

To gain a sense of what wellness looks like on campus and how a wellness program might be developed and implemented, the Committee reviewed the data it had collected. The data included institutional data from the Office of Counseling and Disability Services' annual reports and the biennial Core Alcohol and Drug Survey. Since the many of our students are regional, the Committee reviewed of regional, state, and national health data (i.e., the *Louisiana Health Report Card 2015*) to get a better sense of lived wellness experiences of our students. The Committee then reviewed QEP executive summaries and reports for several colleges that had wellness-oriented QEPs. All of these programs sought to enhance students' understanding of health and wellness and develop behaviors and attitudes for a lifetime of well-being by including wellness in their curricular and co-curricular programming. The Committee's biggest hurdle to overcome with the development of a wellness project was how to implement such an initiative without creating a course-like structure, and thus, another graduation requirement. As the Committee considered a way to formulate a well-being (as it had come to be termed) program, it turned its attention to institutional data.

Institutional Assessment and Identification of Need

The Committee reviewed key, nationally-normed data points including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Before College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+). The NSSE survey has a biennial administration cycle, so the Committee reviewed the 2014 and 2016 survey results. One key indicator centers on six High Impact Practices (HIP):

- Learning Community
- Service-Learning
- Research with Faculty
- Internship or Field Experience
- Study Abroad
- Culminating Senior Experience

Overall, the College has a good record of students participating in two or more HIPs. The Committee also reviewed the NSSE Engagement Indicators, which include:

- Academic Challenge
- Learning with Peers
- Experiences with Faculty
- Campus Environment

In terms of “Academic Challenge,” first-year students struggled with this component on the 2016 survey, which suggests that there is opportunity for academic programming directed to first-year students. In terms of “Learning with Peers,” there seems to be an opportunity to do more to engage group/collaborative work first-year students. As for "Experiences with Faculty," there is good student-faculty interaction, though at the first-year level there is an opportunity to improve upon effective teaching practices. This may reflect first-year students' disjunction between high school and college, or it may suggest the need for a stronger first-year program. NSSE also revealed that there is a greater need for a more supportive campus environment. Such data support a QEP focused on some aspect of advising.

Engagement Indicators at Centenary demonstrate that among returning and upper-class students, our measures of persistence and engagement are comparable, or in some areas compare favorably, with peer and aspirational peer institutions. While first-year students at Centenary are less satisfied with their college experience than students at peer institutions, seniors are more satisfied. When compared to peer and aspirational peer institutions, first-year students' results at Centenary are lower across all indicators of Academic Challenge (Higher-Order Learning, Reflective & Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies, and Quantitative Reasoning). Centenary students spend less time preparing for classes and significantly less time reading. The NSSE data related to Academic Challenge shows that first-year students struggled with this component on the 2016 survey. This suggests that there is opportunity for academic programming directed to first-year students.

[nb: insert institutional data review with graphic support here: NSSE, BCSSE, FSSE, CLA+, etc.]

[nb: add graphic materials throughout this section to help reader interpret data]

The committee also reviewed data related to persistence, retention, and four-year graduation rates. This data set was compiled as part of Dr. Charles Schroeder's on-campus retention consultation that was conducted in the Fall 2017 semester.

The Committee spent considerable time reviewing an array of institutional data. The following describes historical patterns in retention and completion rates as well as data very relevant to understanding students` performance as well as other characteristics associated with persistence and attrition.

1. *Retention patterns*. In recent years the institution`s fall to fall to fall freshman to sophomore retention rates have ranged from a high of 80 percent (2013) to a low of 73 percent (2015) with the most current rate being 78 percent. Similar trends were noted for fall to spring rates but with much less variation, 92-94 percent with 92 percent recorded for the 2016 cohort.
2. *Graduation rates.* Four-year rates have ranged from 42-55 percent with the most recent being 50 percent.
3. *ACT scores and their relationship to retention*. For the 2015 entering class, the mean ACT score was 25. Customarily a score of this magnitude is highly correlated with a fall to fall retention rate in the low 80s, not the mid to high 70s, which has been the case with Centenary in the past few years.

   Of the 156 students in the 2016 cohort, 42 had an ACT score of < 22. Of this number, 53 percent were retained fall to fall. When scores in the range of < 24 were used, a total of 70 students were included, and of this number, 45 or 64 percent returned the following fall. Hence, of the *total, 42, non-returning students*, 25 of them, or 60 percent, had ACT scores < 24.
4. *HSGPA and retention rates.* For the 2016 cohort the mean HSGPSA was 3.45.A total of 72 of the 156 had HSGPA < 3.49 and of this number 24, or 57 percent, did not return the following fall.
5. *Centenary Fall Semester GPA.* The fall semester cohort mean was 3.01. Of the 156 students in the cohort, a total of 20 had GPAs < 2.00 while 32 achieved a GPA of 2.49. Of the 32, 15 did not return the following fall and this number accounted for 36 percent of

the attrition. For departing students, after first term their GPA was 2.55 and a very low 2.07 for those that did not return the following fall.

6. *Subgroup differences in retention rates*. Not surprisingly, retention rates for specific student sub-groups in the 2015 cohort varied considerably as evidenced by the following comparisons:

- Males 64 percent; Females 84 percent
- Black 62 percent
- Hispanic 67 percent
- Pell Eligible 71 percent
- TOPS 72 percent
- Athletes (*55 percent of the cohort*) 70 percent & Non-Athletes 77 percent. The lowest retention was in the following Men`s sports: Baseball, 71 percent; Swimming, 63 percent; and, Tennis, 67 percent.
- Non-returning students` Estimated Family Contribution was $8,349 lower than returners.

Based upon these available data, for first-time, full time, freshmen cohorts, it was not surprising that the major high-risk factors and characteristics associated with lower rates of retention were:

- Lower ACT scores
- Males
- Minority (Black and Hispanic)
- HSGPA less than < 2.99
- Students with lower Estimated Family Contributions (EFC)
- Student athletes in certain sports
- Students with first term GPAs < 2.49

Centenary enrolls some students that are financially, academically and socially needy, including Pell eligible and first-generation students with very low Estimated Family Contributions (EFC). The school also enrolls a large number of NCAA Division III athletes that now comprise 45 percent of the entering cohort.

While Centenary`s academic profile confirms that it is a selective Liberal Arts institution, its recent retention rates are much lower than would be predicted for students with these academic characteristics. Peer institutions maintain retention averages around 83 percent and higher.

While the College has clearly implemented several recent highly innovative initiatives, it has not incorporated in a comprehensive fashion some empirically validated best practices for improving student engagement, learning and success. These include such initiatives as:

- Calibrated schedules and *proactive advising* for all at-risk students.
- Consistent *early feedback* on academic performance during the first 3-4 weeks of the semester as well as giving all first-year students mid-term grades rather than deficiencies for those that are underperforming.
- Enhanced, *relational advising* especially in the first and second years.
- An early-alert / early intervention system that *proactively* identifies those students most in need of academic enrichment.
- Academic support services directly *aligned and integrated* with the most common “higher risk” courses routinely taken by first year students.

In November 2017, when the Committee reviewed the data related to the College’s retention consultation, the need for comprehensive advising was striking. It discussed several opportunities such as the need for advisor training, peer mentoring, and the need for for better face-to-face relationships. Many students are reluctant to meet in person with advisors and professors. Few students go to office hours anymore, and aside from with majors in the departments, there seems to be a lack of casual interaction around campus. The report also drew a sharp focus on first-generation students as well as other students with comparable risk factors. Our goal is to be proactive and identify students in advance.

When the Committee reconvened in January 2018, it discussed moving forward with a topic selection oriented around integrated advising. The Committee acknowledged a need to accomplish several objectives. It needed to gather documents to help define the parameters of integrated advising so that information could be shared with faculty, staff, and students as a way to build support for the QEP; faculty would need to be reminded that academic advising would be a subset of integrated advising; and a pilot program would be developed to focus on first-generation students in a way that placed the student at the intersection of Academic and Student Affairs with the overall goal of increasing persistence to graduation.

Pilot Study

[nb: add graphic materials throughout this section to help reader interpret data]

After reviewing the persistence and retention data, the College decided to conduct an Integrated Advising pilot study that centered on first-year, first-generation college students. The goal was to provide personalized and holistic support for identified students by connecting them with resources and opportunities to promote student success. We began with the following definitions:

- *Integrated Advising:* Leveraging relationship building to provide personalized, proactive, and holistic support to meet the individual needs of each student; coordinating resources provided by faculty, staff, and peers to assure student success.
- *Case Management Approach:* Utilizing the Director of Integrated Advising to be the relationship manager between the institution and the student (“bridge builder”).

- *First Generation College Student:* Student whose parent(s)/legal guardian(s) have not completed a bachelor's degree.

To organize the program, the College created a designated position, the Director of Career Exploration and Integrated Advising, and promoted Beth Duet to develop the Integrated Advising initiative. Duet took a case management approach to advising and created teams of faculty, staff, and peers to work with students. To facilitate team collaboration, she designed an integrated advising wheel (see Appendix XX) as a way to capture and document the unique team that had been assembled for each student in the pilot. First-year, first-generation college students were identified and randomly divided into control and treatment groups. They were further grouped based on institutionally identified risk factors. Risk data was collected from the following categories:

- Deposit Call Follow-Up List
- Student Support Team (SST) Referral
- HSGPA < 2.99
- ACT < 22
- Fall GPA < 2.49
- Fall GPA (no Centenary in Paris) < 2.49
- Conduct Referral
- Low EFC (Expected Family Contribution)

Based on these risk factors, the treatment and control groups were coded into three tiers:

- Tier 1 = Multiple Risk Factors (4-6), Highest Need
- Tier 2 = A Few Risk Factors (1-3), Medium Need
- Tier 3 = Low Risk (0), Lowest Need

At the beginning of the Spring 2018 semester, there were forty-four first-year, first-generation students. The students were randomly divided into treatment and control groups and then subsequently placed in tiers based on risk factors. In the treatment group, there were six students in Tier 1, nine students in Tier 2, and seven students in Tier 3. In the control group, there were five students in Tier 1, seventeen students in Tier 2, and 0 students in Tier 3.

Once the tiers were established, the Director of Integrated Advising sent a “YOU CAN DO THIS! Spring 2018” email to the Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 students as a way to encourage and uplift students and to offer information about the Integrated Advising program. For students in Tier 1, the Director of Integrated Advising scheduled a needs assessment meeting. Integrated Advising teams were created according to student choice and the needs identified, and the Director of Integrated Advising facilitated individual meetings with faculty, staff, and resident advisors to assure their willingness to serve on student teams and also to identify individual team leaders. Some students in Tier 1 did not respond to these support efforts, and so alternate intervention plans were developed for those who did not attended a needs assessment meeting. Tier 2 students were monitored throughout the semester with interventions as needed. All tiers received emails with information regarding the drop deadline, encouragement to speak with academic advisors, and positive support and resources as the end of the semester approached.

At the end of the Spring 2018 semester, the Director of Integrated Advising measured the success of the pilot program. In terms of GPA, the Tier 1 treatment group showed an average grade change in GPA of -.02 from Fall 2017 to Spring 2018, after interventions were implemented. The Tier 1 control group showed an average grade change of -.6825 from Fall 2017 to Spring 2018. However, the Tier 1 control group GPA dropped .6625 more than the treatment group. The Tier 2 treatment group had an average cumulative GPA of 3.26 after Spring 2018, while the Tier 2 control group had an average cumulative GPA of 2.89 after Spring 2018. The GPA of the Tier 2 treatment group was .37 higher than the control group. The Tier 3 treatment group, those with no institutionally-defined risk factors, had an average cumulative GPA of 3.49 after Spring 2018. Collectively, these were the first-year, first-generation students that we retained.

There were also students who were difficult to retain for a variety of reasons. The Tier 1 treatment group had one Leave of Absence (from the Spring 2018 semester) recommended by a medical team in the student's home community. The student addressed necessary health concerns and returned to the College in Fall 2018. The Tier 1 control group had one Leave of Absence as well. This student was on academic probation, and at the end of Spring 2018, the student decided to transfer to another institution. At the close of the Spring 2018 semester, the Tier 1 treatment group had one student placed on academic probation and one student placed on academic suspension. The student on academic suspension refused help from any source and was released from the athletic team partly because of this. The Tier 1 control group had two students on academic probation. Overall, the treatment group had four students who did not persist at Centenary. The control group had eight students who did not persist. As this table shows, retention was notably higher in the treatment group than the control group and nearly matched the first-year, continuing-generation students.

First-Time Full-Time Students (Freshmen Cohort)	# of students enrolled in Fall 2017	# of students enrolled in Spring 2018	# of students enrolled in Fall 2018	Fall 2017 to Fall 2018 retention rate	Spring 2018 to Fall 2018 retention rate
Control Group (First Gen)	24	23	15	62.50%	65.22%
Treatment Group (First Gen)	23	22	18	78.26%	81.82%
Non-First Gen First Year Students	126	117	100	79.37%	85.47%

For comparison, the cumulative GPA for all first-year, first-generation students was 2.91. The treatment group had a cumulative GPA of 3.02 and the control group had a cumulative GPA of 2.84. The treatment group's cumulative GPA was .18 higher than the control group. The cumulative GPA for the entire freshman class was 3.01. The pilot program treatment group of first-year, first-generation students had a cumulative GPA of 3.02, or .01 above the average of all first-year students. The pilot program control group had a cumulative average of 2.84, or .17 below the class average of 3.01. The entire group of first-year, first-generation students had a cumulative GPA of 2.91, or .10 less than the first-year class as a whole.

The Integrated Advising pilot program for first-year, first generation college students at Centenary College (Spring 2018) was a small-scale initiative that began to explore and utilize a case management approach to help students in an identified population reach their potential for collegiate success. The identified risk factors placed the students at highest need in Tier 1. The Tier 1 treatment group showed stronger academic improvement than the control group. The retention rate for the entire treatment group was somewhat higher than for the control group. One student with significant improvement in GPA from Fall to Spring (+.58) had a mentor (student assistant coach with whom rapport was already established) in addition to intervention by professors and coach, which illustrated the program's ability to utilize an alternative plan within Integrated Advising to meet individual student needs. Although another student had to take a medical Leave of Absence, this student had a great deal of support from the team lead who was an RA. This illustrated that chosen peer mentors with whom the students have a relationship can make a meaningful difference, especially as part of a holistic team. RAs are paid staff of the College and are aware of confidentiality guidelines.

Final Topic Selection

The QEP Topic Selection Committee received two complete proposals (for Integrated Advising and for Speaking & Writing course development); however, it considered five additional topics based on faculty recommendations and/or data review. The Committee also considered restructuring the First Year Experience; streamlining the General Education core; a campus wellness initiative; an information literacy program; and a campus-wide internship initiative. The QEP Topic Selection Committee met on Wednesday, January 24, 2018, and recommended the topic "Integrated Advising" for the 2019 Quality Enhancement Plan. The Committee recommended Integrated Advising for several reasons: 1) The Strategic Plan calls for an Integrated Advising program; 2) Substantial data, particularly the retention consultation report, support the need for such a program; and 3) Integrated Advising focuses on improving student success, a criterion highlighted by SACSCOC Standard 7.2.

Mission Alignment

Centenary College's QEP is closely aligned with its mission to integrate "academic and co-curricular programs . . . [to] support students in their development and encourage them to become leaders." This mission is a call to action for the College to prepare each student to attain their educational, career, and life goals. It is also an acknowledgement that our students live in a highly residential setting where academic and co-curricular activities often overlap. While at many institutions academic affairs and student affairs are distinct silos, at Centenary, every effort is made to break down the barriers that cordon off the total student experience.

Alignment with Strategic Plan

In Fall 2016, the College began development of a new strategic plan. It was crafted with broad campus and community input so that its vision of the College's future reflects the various constituencies that we serve. A key principle of the plan is that "Centenary College will provide a compelling, comprehensive, accessible, and effective educational experience inside and outside the classroom." Given the highly residential nature of the College, combined with our commitment to create a more holistic student experience, we have undertaken the initiative to "integrate residential and co-curricular programming and policies with academics to ensure student engagement, success, and retention" (Centenary College Strategic Plan 2017). To accomplish this objective, the strategic plan commits the College to developing an "integrated advising program" and conducting an external review of our retention program. In October 2017, the College completed the initial phase of the retention study. The QEP Topic Selection Committee included that data as part of its overall review of institutional data.

Alignment with Other College Initiatives

The proposed Integrated Advising QEP will augment and support several recent initiatives that impact the first-year experience at Centenary. In Fall 2014, the College created the Centenary in Paris program that gives all first-year students the opportunity to begin college by taking a rigorous, immersive, and engaging college course in Paris, France. Every year since, first-year students and their professors have plied the streets of Paris building relationships and lasting connections. First-year housing assignments are connected students' Paris class so that they live and learn in close proximity, which is an intentional effort on our part to connect students to the College and to one another. As an important data point, students who succeed in their Paris class are more likely to persist at Centenary.

In addition to Centenary in Paris, which is taken during the August immersive term, all first-year students enroll in a common course for the Fall term. Woven into the fabric of Centenary College is its commitment to a common course for first-year students. Such courses represent a high impact practice for student engagement and, at their best, introduce students to the critical reading, analysis, and writing skills that they will need to be successful in college. In Fall 2017, the College restructured its first-year experience course from a one-semester course to a two-semester sequence that was added to our Trek program. The College's current QEP is a program called Trek, which is oriented around three graduation requirements: career exploration, service learning, and intercultural engagement. Those requirements are usually completed during a student's second, third, or fourth year. To build greater continuity into the program, in Fall 2017, the College's First Year Experience seminar required of all first-year students was redesigned as a year-long, two class sequence TREK 115 & 116) and the first set of Trek requirements. The goal of this integration was to create a Trek curriculum that spanned a student's college life cycle and that guided them in the development of their beliefs and values and the attainment of their educational, career, and life goals.

Beyond these programmatic efforts to foster students' commitment to the College and to one another, the College has created simple, internal initiatives to better track students' academic progress in the first year. Since Spring 2016, the instructors of all first-year students have been asked to submit feedback on attendance, participation, grades, and any concerns at the fourth week of the semester. The Assistant Provost for Student Support collects this data and redistributes it to first-year advisors and athletic coaches who follow up with students and frequently coordinate with the Assistant Provost, the students' faculty, and administrative staff who may be positioned to address students' needs, thus approximating the integrated advising system that, through this QEP, we intend to formalize. Students who present difficulties at the fourth week are shared with the Student Support Team, which is organized to support the academic success of Centenary students. The Provost and Dean of the College has encouraged faculty to give frequent, low stakes testing early in the semester as a way to build resilience in students. At the eighth week of the semester, mid-term grades are reported, and the process described above is repeated.

In terms of mission integration, connection to the College's strategic plan, and as represented in current practices, these various alignments demonstrate the College's ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation process.

Literature Review and Best Practices

The goal of this literature review is to better understand how the integrated advising process can impact student success. We want students to be engaged in their curricular and co-curricular activities. We believe that such engagement leads to increased self-efficacy and persistence in college. We know that the advising process provides the best opportunity to teach the student about the college, its curriculum, and its resources. Traditionally, academic faculty advisors have guided students on their path to completion, but increasingly, students seek advice from sources beyond their academic advisor. Our plan to create advising teams that surround and support the student is informed by the review that follows. This QEP represents a focused effort to impact first-year students to build relationships that the student can continue as they progress toward graduation.

Student engagement as a concept is well-defined in the literature and comes from a respected theoretical base. Astin’s writings on student involvement contribute heavily to Kuh’s concept of student engagement through their contribution to the theoretical framework (Kuh et al., 2001; Kuh, 2004). They also provide evidence of the importance of active involvement on student learning and development (Astin, 1977; Astin, 1993). Kuh defines student engagement as “the quality of effort students themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes” (Hu & Kuh, 2002, p. 555) or “the time and energy students invest in educationally purposeful activities” (Kuh et al., 2007).

Student engagement has been linked to a number of positive student outcomes. Empirical studies have demonstrated a positive association between student engagement and learning (Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004), critical thinking (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006), grade point average (GPA) (Carini et al., 2006; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2007), Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores (Carini et al., 2006), and student retention (Hicks & Lerer, 2003; Hughes & Pace, 2003; Kuh et al., 2007). Hu and Kuh (2002) contend that student engagement is “the most important factor in student learning and personal development during college” (p. 555). Engagement and college impact are so closely associated with each other that Pascarella (2001) suggests that the best way to measure the quality of a college or university is by how well it enhances students’ academic and social engagement (p. 22). Similarly, Kuh, Hayek, Carini, Ouimet, Gonyea, and Kennedy (2001) contend that the direct impact of engagement on the overall student experience is such that “indicators of student engagement can serve as a proxy measurement of quality” (p. 2). In their seminal 2005 review of literature on how college affects students, Pascarella and Terenzini conclude that “engagement is the critical determinant of the impact of college” (p. 602).

In the late 1990s, Peter Ewell led a distinguished team of researchers in an effort to develop a way to measure and quantify student engagement outcomes (Kuh et al., 2001). The result was NSSE: the National Survey on Student Engagement. Its accompanying student survey instrument, The College Student Report, has now been administered at over 1,200 schools nationwide in order to assess levels of student engagement (NSSE, n.d.). The questions and associated benchmarks serve not only to measure but also to operationally define the behaviors, practices, and attitudes associated with engagement. The benchmarks are broken out as subscales consistent with Astin’s Involvement Theory, Chickering and Gamson’s good practice framework, and the psychometric factor analysis of the pilot survey (Kuh, 2004).

The first year of college sets the foundation for all future educational activities, so study of “the first college year provides the necessary foundation for successful assessment activities” and is “a means to the desirable goal of maximizing student learning and growth (Swing, p. 4). Engagement during the first year of college predicts later levels of involvement and institutional commitment (Berger & Millem, 1999), so understanding and promoting engagement among first-year students would likely impact future as well as current outcomes.

Self-efficacy (SE) refers to a student’s perception of whether they can perform a task (Bandura 1977, 1997, 2006). This is important for retention, because individuals who believe that they can do something are generally more likely to be resilient and put in more work to achieve a goal. In an academic setting this translates to students who are able to manage their school life more efficiently. (Chemers 2001, Margolis 2004, Zimmerman 2000, Satici & Can 2016, Self-regulated learning SRL, Domenech-Betoret 2017). Students with higher levels of self-efficacy are less likely to buckle under academic stress, and be less afraid of failure, which makes them more likely to stick through a difficult task instead of giving up. Self-efficacy is also related to better perceived control over their situation, whether academic or personal (Domenech-Betoret 2017).

By contrast, low self-efficacy is linked to avoidance and withdrawing from academic duties. Students with low self-efficacy tend to give up quickly in a difficult situation because in their minds, it is “too hard,” and they cannot succeed. It seems therefore, that increasing a student’s feeling of self-efficacy is important as they are confronted with difficult academic tasks and real-world decisions about their future.

Feelings of self-efficacy can generally be developed in many specific ways, but at present there are four acknowledged categories of experiences from which self-efficacy levels are derived (Ahmed 2015):

1. Mastery experiences, or previous personal successes. This is thought to be the most powerful effector.
2. Social persuasion, which includes positive peer pressure or verbal reinforcement.
3. Vicarious experiences. This entails seeing others succeed, though it only applies to successes of those who are identified as being in a peer group.
4. Somatic/emotional states. This includes stress and other internal factors.

There are also subcomponents of SE that include maintaining an Internal Locus of Control, persistence, and competence; the latter stems not only from knowing things, but also possessing better judgement about what is and is not known, as well as a more complete understanding of expectations (Domenech-Betoret 2017).

Higher academic SE is correlated with positive classroom experiences and past successes. By contrast, things that are correlated with lower academic self-efficacy include negative experiences in the classroom, lower socioeconomic status, and certain areas of study (natural sciences, fine arts, and health sciences are included).

Self-efficacy has been tagged as a predictor of academic success (Zajacova 2005), and measuring self-efficacy may be important for several reasons, including:

1. To provide quantitative data about whether a particular method is working to enhance self-efficacy (including persistence and retention);
2. In addition to other criteria to help to identify at risk students if administered early enough; and
3. It may also give information about what steps to take to improve self-efficacy by identifying specific areas that need attention.

Self-efficacy assessments seem to generally consist of surveys given as a four to five-point Likert scale, such as the following: *"I can figure out anything if I try hard enough."* Participants are asked to what degree they agree or disagree (Erickson 2016). There are several validated surveys which can measure SE as related to a particular task – termed specific self-efficacy, or SSE – as well as general self-efficacy (GSE). It is thought that GSE is well-correlated with SSE (Panc 2011, Chen 2001). Assessment tools that measure SE have been shown to increase GPA and persistence in the first year of college (Cooper 2014).

The advising process is also a means to connect students to their institution and be provided educational support (Campbell & Nutt, 2008; Nutt, 2003). Academic advising is also recognized by students as an important and essential part of their decision to remain in college (Cooper 2014). Early research in the field of academic advising showed that student retention was linked to students' academic and non-academic learning environments (Astin, 1977; Tinto, 1975). Historically, retention was seen as the responsibility of students and their faculty advisors. More recently, retention has been reframed as an effort of the entire institution with academic advising at the center of the endeavor (Nutt 2003). For students, the principal academic contact is with faculty and faculty advisors, which are essentially synonymous at Centenary College. However, we also acknowledge that students get advice from multiple sources across campus (Stapley and Bieber, 2017), so how does the College provide a consistent message from multiple sources while being able to advise students in a way that addresses their academic, career, and life goals?

We have determined that an integrated advising model will best address these goals. Integrated advising will leverage relationship building to provide personalized, proactive, and holistic support to meet the individual needs of each student while providing as much information as possible to faculty academic advisors. Integrated advising will form a partnership between a professional advisor, the Director of Integrated Advising, who will serve as a case manager, and academic advisors combined with additional support services across campus. The Director of Integrated Advising will coordinate team-based support for first-year students. The case management approach will allow the Director of Integrated Advising to build bridges between the institution and the student and coordinate resources that are provided by faculty, staff, and peers to promote student success. This approach requires shared responsibilities: a shared responsibility between the advisor and student and a shared responsibility at the institutional level for support services between academic affairs and student affairs. Under this model, the student, not the advisor, is at the center of the advising hub. The academic advisor becomes a spoke on the wheel, just as all other resources that are available to students (Burton & Wellington, 1998).

A case management approach to integrated advising is a promising avenue for increasing retention and reinforcing student success, especially for underprepared students. Case management involves deepening relationships with students and creating intentional referral systems between faculty, academic advisors, and other student support services. Such proactive advising is a key component of successful case management (Pierce 2016).

Case managers follow a specific operational process. These are “identifying and attracting clients, intake and assessment, developing a coordinated service plan, advocating on behalf of the client while brokering and linking different services together, implementing and monitoring service delivery, and continually evaluating and adjusting the service delivery plan while determining outcomes clients are or are not achieving” (Smith, 1995, p. 2). In an integrated advising system, the Director of Integrated Advising, as case manager, is in a position to address the holistic needs of the student, which makes them central to promoting student success. Advising must be purposeful and proactive and is best accomplished in collaboration with campus partners to provide on-going support and interventions (Buyarksi & Ross, 2002). Significant interaction during the first year allows for the creation of individual student profiles, which can better address students' particular needs. Developing a pre-advising assessment for each student provides more complete information for the academic advisor.

[nb: add literature review of academic advising process at Centenary.]

[nb: add literature review that includes QEP target audience: first-year students]

Best Practices

[nb: add narrative to explain best practices]

For working with At-Risk Students

- Establish caring and sustained relationship
- Reachable Goals
- Realistic, Hopeful Pathways
- Engaging School and Community Setting

For Student Engagement and Retention

- Mandatory class attendance policy (report students who miss two successive classes.
- Advisors should meet individually or in small groups with 1st-year students within two weeks of the start of the semester.
- Make effective use of the first class session to build a culture for learning in the course.
- Encourage students to become engaged in a campus activity or program they find meaningful.
- Include goal-setting and career-planning guidance as part of advising sessions.
- Actively engage students in first-year courses and seminars.

- Academic and social support

Goals, Student Learning Outcomes, and Strategies

We are matching our Integrated Advising approach to the needs of our first-year students so that we provide very substantial and proactive support for students who experience high levels of challenge while encouraging independence in students who are thriving.

We will also work with students to develop higher levels of self-efficacy. For our first-year students who need a very high level of support to help them be successful, the concurrent development of their belief and confidence in their own ability to succeed will prepare them to become more independent as we gradually and intentionally step down our proactive support efforts as they proceed into their second year of college and beyond. Our QEP focuses on and provides services to first-year students, but it equips them with the efficacy, practices, and connections they will need to be successful in subsequent years.

Philosophy: Academic advising must be embedded within a larger context of integrated advising and is predicated on a strong and strengthening connection among student development, academic affairs, and other areas of campus. Through better communication with each other and an assessment of student needs, we will strategically reach the followings goals.

Goals:

1. Increased persistence
2. Improved cumulative GPA
3. Increased level of student engagement
4. Higher levels of self-efficacy

Plan:

1. Assess risk coming in and adjust level of support to level of challenge.

2. Case management approach, including the creation of student-directed individualized support teams **for our most high-risk first year students.**
3. Build self-efficacy through recognized best practice so that they will continue to succeed independently as integrated advising becomes less intrusive in later years.

We are already supporting these students. Fifteen different faculty and staff members might be trying to help a struggling student. Can we help the student more effectively and efficiently if we make an intentional and strategic effort to do so together as opposed to each of the fifteen of these folks trying to help without knowing what each other are doing?

Actions and Implementation Timeline

[nb: add narrative]

Implementation Process

The determination of integrated advising tiers will be based on a pre-college student assessment derived from a number of qualitative and quantitative factors that can determine potential academic risk. They include:

Qualitative Factors	**Quantitative Factors**
Admission Counselors	ACT <22
Coaches	HSGPA <2.99
Music/Choir	Finances/EFC (Pell Eligible)
Deposit Calls	1st-gen status
Academic Attainment goals	Race/Ethnicity
Pathways	Gender
Self-Efficacy	Work off campus
Motivation	Student Survey
Expectations	Parent Survey
Disconnect	CIP Participation
Mental Health	Late Deposit

Students are assigned to tiers that offer key differences in support.

- Tier One
    - High Risk
    - Individualized Support
        - Needs Assessment
        - Assignment of team members to student directed teams
            - Create team lead
            - Routine Interventions
            - Ongoing assessment of students (see below)

- Tier Two
    - Medium Risk
    - Institutional Support
        - Referral to Student Support Team
            - Interventions as needed
            - Ongoing assessment of students (see below)
- Tier Three
    - Low Risk
    - Institutional Hospitality
        - Ongoing hospitality/nudges
        - Interventions as needed
        - Access to all current services
        - Ongoing assessment of students (see below)

Ongoing assessment of students will occur throughout academic year based on several additional factors:

- Academic performance
    - CIP grade
    - 4th-week check in
    - Mid-term grade report
    - Semester GPA
- Involvement on campus
- Conduct referral
- Non-registration for next semester
- Class attendance problems
- Personal problems
- Lack of response to communications
- Did not move onto campus
- Transcript request
- Concern raised by staff/faculty
- NSSE
- Efficacy assessment
- High Impact Practices (HIP) participation

The following chart represents the preliminary actions and interventions for first-year students in the integrated advising program.

	Integrated Advising Action	Intervention
MAY	Begin Engagement Coaching	Make phone calls to 1st-year students
JUN	Continue with engagement calls for late deposits	
	Review Pre-enrollment data assessment and begin sorting students into tiers	
JUL	Continue with engagement calls for late deposits	
	Assign students to tiers of support	
AUG	Continue with sorting and engagement calls for late deposits	
	Finalize tiers of support	
SEP	You Can Do This! email	Send "You Can Do This!" email to 1st-year students to encourage and uplift and offer information about Integrated Advising to Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 students
	Needs Assessment Meetings scheduled for responsive Tier 1 students	Contact Tier 1 students to schedule
	Form Integrated Advising teams (with Advising Wheel) for Tier 1 students	Director of Integrated Advising schedules and facilitates individual meetings with faculty, staff, and RAs to ensure their willingness to participate; identifies team lead
	Alternate intervention for non-responsive Tier 1 students	Develop alternative plans for those who did not attend a Needs Assessment Meeting by a certain date
	4th-week check-in	Collect information on 1st-year students and share with advisors and coaches
	Deliver support	Strategic targeted support (STS)
OCT	Tier 2 Needs Assessment	Collect institutional data from CIP grades, SST report, and 4th-week check-in and formulate needed interventions to support student success
	Facilitate ongoing communication with Tier 1	Facilitate ongoing communication as needed with team leaders
	General communication with 1st-year students	Email to all 1st-year students: drop deadline details; encourage them to speak with their academic advisor; provide positive support; share resource information

	Tier 3 Needs Assessment	Determine where there is need and intervene
	Mid-Term Grade Report	Contact students with deficiencies; share deficiency information with advisors and coaches
	Post-enrollment data assessment	Reevaluate Tier 1 based on mid-term grades
	Deliver support	Strategic targeted support (STS)
NOV	Facilitate ongoing communication with Team Leads	
	Facilitate ongoing communication with Tier 1	
	General communication with 1st-year students	
	Deliver support	Strategic targeted support (STS)
DEC	Post-enrollment data assessment	add end of semester grades to data review
	Support registration for Spring	
	Communication to 1st year students	
	Spring semester begins	
	Update Tiers 1, 2, & 3	Assign tiers (add or remove) based on Fall semester analysis

QEP Organization Structure (Resources and Budget)

See Appendix B for Organizational Structure

Assessment Strategy

[nb: Add full discussion of assessment strategy and schedule.]

Assessment Methods

1. Self-Efficacy
   a. Direct Assessment: Pre and Post Self-Efficacy Survey
   b. Direct Assessment: Rubric completed by Integrated Advising team that includes assessment of student's academic program plan, co-curricular engagement, and personal goals.
2. Engagement
   a. Direct Assessment: Usage statistics
      i. Meetings with integrated advising personnel
      ii. Use of academic support resources, as needed
         1. Tutoring
         2. Workshops
         3. Counseling
   b. Indirect Assessment: BCSSE, FSSE, and/or NSSE:
      i. Providing support to help students succeed academically
      ii. Using learning support services
      iii. Advising module questions

Assessment Schedule

- GPA: Mid-Terms and End of Terms
- Engagement: End of Terms?
- Persistence: Fall to Fall

- Self-Efficacy: Selected NSSE questions

Summary

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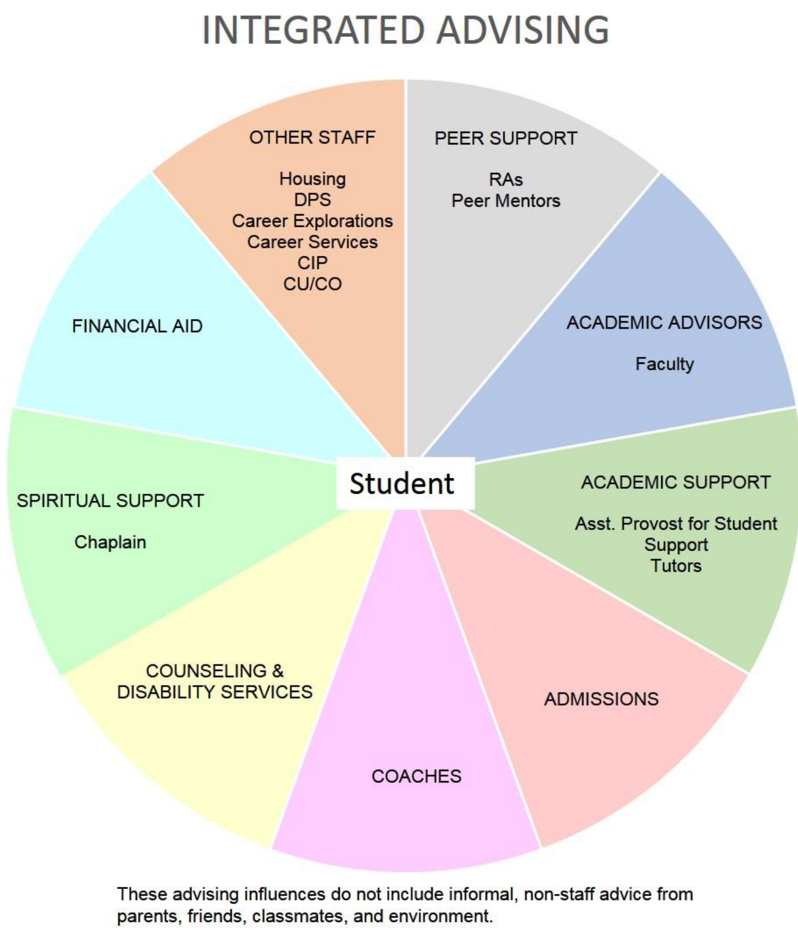
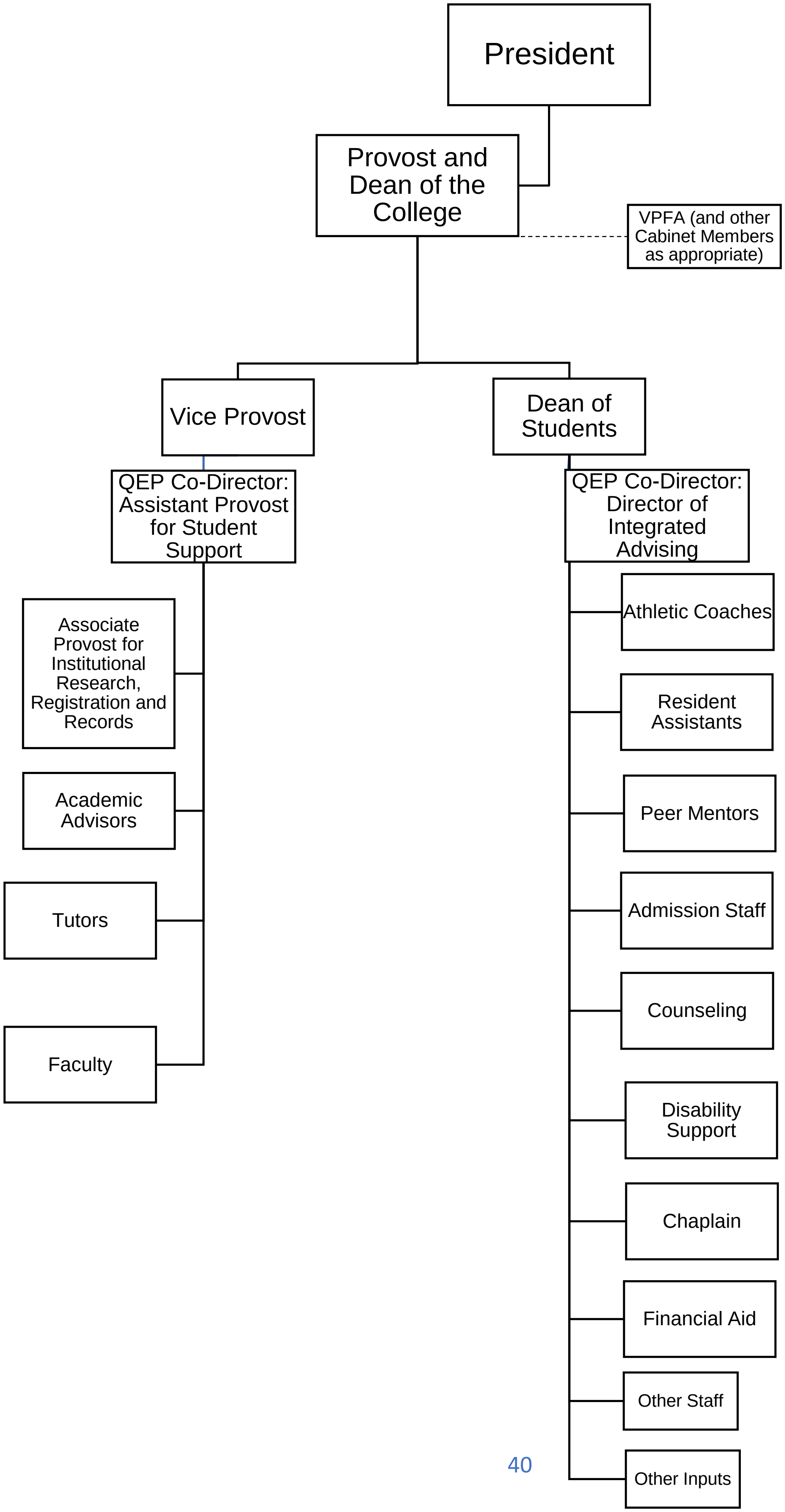
Appendices

Appendix A

Advising Wheel



Appendix B: QEP Organizational Chart


President
Provost and Dean of the College
VPFA (and other Cabinet Members as appropriate)
Vice Provost
Dean of Students
QEP Co-Director: Assistant Provost for Student Support
QEP Co-Director: Director of Integrated Advising
Associate Provost for Institutional Research, Registration and Records
Academic Advisors
Tutors
Faculty
Athletic Coaches
Resident Assistants
Peer Mentors
Admission Staff
Counseling
Disability Support
Chaplain
Financial Aid
Other Staff
Other Inputs