TILLAMOOK BAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

“They genuinely want students to succeed”

TBCC student

SERVICE AREA REVIEW FOR ADVISING AND ENGAGEMENT JUNE 2025

Service Area Review for

Advising and Engagement

Service Area Description

Tillamook Bay Community College Advising and Engagement is dedicated to the guided pathways model of the 4 pillars of success. The Advising and Engagement team provides recruitment and retention options to help students clarify, enter, and stay on the path to obtaining their maximum educational benefit. Our goal is to engage each student equitably by giving them the tools they need to excel in college.

Program Area Details

Staffing:

4.5 FTE which includes Director of Student Success, 2 Success Coaches, 1 Engagement Advisor, and 1 half-time Transfer Advisor. (This is a *shared position with Oregon State University)*.

Duties:

Director of Student Success 1.0 FTE

The Director of Student Success is responsible for providing vision, leadership, strategic direction and administrative oversight for the comprehensive development of equitable student achievement.

The Director of Student Success (DSS) ensures standards of communication are met by advisors including commonality of messaging to students. The DSS is also responsible for maintaining budget oversight of both Engagement and Advising. The DSS is under the direct supervision of the Vice President of Student Services.

Full Time Success Advisor 2.0 FTE

Under the guidance of the Director of Student Success, the Success Coach Advisor is responsible for the recruitment and maintenance of all credit seeking students. New applicants meet with their advisor and then both student and advisor maintain that relationship until the student graduates, changes Learning Community, and/or transfers.

The advisor is responsible for creating and maintaining New Student Orientations each term building on the Guided Pathways model of retention as represented in Learning Communities. Success Coaches are responsible for career advising as well as

academic and they are responsible for maintaining updated career information for their advisees.

Engagement Advisor 1.0 FTE

The Engagement Advisor is responsible for working closely with the Director of Student Success in implementing effective recruiting strategies, prospective student communications, and outreach programming. This role assists in the overall development of student organizations and the implementation of student activities while working collaboratively with student leaders, club advisors, and administration. The EA will implement a schedule related to the planning, organizing, and supervising the delivery of activities for students in various scholarship cohorts as well as the student body as a whole. The EA works closely with Success Coaches to ensure common messaging across the various cohorts. The Engagement Advisor role is also crucial in developing, planning, and producing activities and events designed to help students belong and bolster their confidence to stay on the path of education. The EA will also provide advising assistance for the full-time advisors.

Half Time Transfer Advisor .5 FTE

Under the guidance of the Director of Student Success, the shared OSU/TBCC Open Campus Advisor is responsible for connecting with all High School students in TBCC's district, which includes Tillamook High School, Neah-Kah-Nie High School, Nestucca High School, and the Wilson High School students, who are now located in the THS campus.

The Transfer Advisor is also the main contact for TBCC students wanting to transfer to another college in Oregon and/or wanting to transfer to TBCC from elsewhere. This position plays a critical role in recruitment of new students and is vital for maintaining and creating pathways for transfer students who do not know what their options are after TBCC. This position is also in charge of planning and executing college tours for TBCC students, and monitoring changes in degrees from institutions TBCC works with for students, including but not limited to OSU.

Goals Achieved and Evolution of the Team

The effect that the Title III grant has had on Advising cannot be overstated. Prior to Title III, Learning Communities were disorganized, did not have leadership and were just a title without anything behind it. Due to T3 funding and with the guidance of Eileen Casey White as the T3 Director, the advisors were able to focus on the

development of strong Learning Communities, working with faculty to firm up the leadership of each Community and planning events focused on the various communities. They had panels of community members to answer student questions regarding careers, including underwater welding, psychologists, and science and health professionals. They also developed a series of workshops including "How to Study", "How to write a resume", etc.

With the help of Title III funds, we were able to hire two Success Coaches fully funded by T3 for the first two years of the Grant and then incrementally less until TBCC takes over full financial responsibility. The coaches made exponential progress on collaborative creation of the Advisor Handbook and Desk Manual. These two achievements have allowed for common messaging to students from all advisors and have produced a more cohesive unit of advising. For example, if a new advisor did not know what to do in week 5, the Desk Manual, which is divided up by weeks, would show that students need to be contacted regarding midterms etc. There are also links in the Manual for scripts of what should be said, depending on the subject matter and depending on whether the communication is email, phone, or hopefully someday, text. Focusing on Learning Communities as the cohort advising model for each advisor allows for individuality in advising styles while continuing to generate a common verbiage for communication to students and staff. Completion of an Advisor Handbook and Desk Manual is an achievement that other departments have yet to tackle.

Title III funds were also used to support Coaches in Professional Development, allowing them to obtain NCDA credentials, which put them in the professional advisor classification. The Advisors were also critical in building strong student communications based on their learning communities. They built SharePoint sites for each Community as well as tailoring online New Student Orientations to each Learning Community. They have also developed a strong pattern of participation for in person New Student Orientations. All of this work was created on top of the Coaches' main job, which is advising.

When the new position of Director of Student Success was created, it left a hole in the Engagement work of Student Services. The Director and the Success Coaches took on the Engagement responsibilities, adding more to the Coaches' roles. Then the Coach for MIT and Business was promoted into the Coordinator of MIT, which left another gap in advising. While the MIT coordinator position still advises MIT students, the Business Learning Community had to be passed on to one of the existing Advisors.

These gaps led to the development of the Engagement Advisor position. This position is 75% Engagement and 25% Advising.

With the investment from Title III, the direction of the Director of Student Success, the hard work and dedication of the Advisors, and the addition of the Engagement Advisor and Open Campus shared position, TBCC Advising has moved into a top-notch team. The task now is to refine the shared knowledge of the team and continue to make it a unifying voice for keeping students first in everything they do.

Staff Professional Development

Advising professional development has weighed heavily in the past on NCDA and NACADA trainings and conferences. These training courses are great for beginning advisors but since the current advisors have been here for more than 3 years, some different trainings will be looked at for future Professional Development including Master's classes to improve neurodivergent advising knowledge, specialized leadership training courses, leadership advising for Student Government and holistic case management, and ACUE Fostering a Culture of Belonging course for the Engagement Advisor. All advisors will be required to attend equity lens training as well.



What are other colleges doing?

On December 13, 2024, the Director of Student Success conducted a Zoom interview with Ben Kaufmann, the Dean of Academic Foundation and Student Success representing Oregon Coast Community College. OCCC is of a comparable size to TBCC, and they have a Success Coach model similar to TBCC's. Ben supervises Success Coaches and was very cooperative in sharing information. Ben believes that OCCC's:

"*Strongest asset and best over-all redesign was the inception of the Success Coaches rather than 'advisors;…".*

OCCC's Success Coach model is very high touch with and for students- they have many points of contact from enrollment to graduation. The success coaches at OCCC admit, enroll, coordinate Financial Aid, Career Education Plans, and formal degree audits for all students. This creates a complete wrap around that helps prevent students from falling out of contact and being prepared with enough credits to graduate.

Ben's struggles are with stable staffing, as of the interview he had one Success Coach on staff and himself available for advising. He also mentioned that if he could purchase anything it would be for training and help with their ERP system. Enterprise Resource Planning or ERP is a system that has all the tools needed to process and run the college infrastructure including HR, accounting, Financial Aid etc., but not the staff or training to help frame the day-to-day working of the departments. It is easy to commiserate regarding the lack of consistent and improved training for Jenzabar here at TBCC.

When comparing advising at TBCC to OCCC it is hard to imagine that the Success Coach model from OCCC would work at TBCC. The main concern is that Success Coaches would be doing some of the registrar's work as well as some financial aid, and while that does increase the touch points for a student, it also increases the chances of mistakes, not to mention the pressure it could put on individual coaches. If TBCC were to embrace that model it could result in reduced staffing as well. Ben said it well when he was asked if he could change anything what would it be and he responded: "staffing consistency".

The second community college I contacted was Colorado Northwestern Community College (CNCC). Brett Caskey, the Vice President of Student Services, responded to my questions via email on January 12, 2025. I chose CNCC because they have a small student body of close to 1000 students, but they have at least 8 different sports teams, 15 or more clubs as well as dorms. So many moving parts for such a small school!

Mr. Caskey had some very thoughtful and thought-provoking answers, including his responses to their advising model, which is that CNCC has two professional advisors that advise by program, similar to our use of Learning Communities. They also have several faculty advisors which are assigned to students based on degrees. Mr. Caskey said:

"Advisors and students ideally meet with each other once a semester, typically for registration purposes."

Engagement questions are where it got very interesting. Caskey said.

" One of things that helps us engage with students is strategic placement of holds to force students meet with us to make sure they are on track for their courses and degree programs." and "Clubs and organizations are complicated at CNCC.

While the list of options available is long, engagement in some of them fluctuates year to year" **he continued.**

TBCC's engagement successes and disappointments are very similar to Mr. Caskey in that yes, student participation fluctuates term by term, it is hard to pin down what students want to be engaged in, and Learning Community specific events can ***sometimes*** **provide increased attendance but not always.**

When asked, what he would purchase for his team if he could purchase anything, he said, more staffing. Finally, I asked: "What are your long-term goals" and he responded,

"One long-term goal for advising is to have professional advisors completing audits of all students (regardless of if they are assigned to them or not) each semester to make sure students are taking the correct classes towards graduation. Another long-term goal is to develop an advising philosophy that is more academic; ideally, I would like Advising to develop student learning outcomes to match academic programs."

This answer is worth considering here at TBCC. Our Success Coaches already do term audits for all students to make sure they are on the right path; however, the idea that advising should be more academic with a goal of developing student learning outcomes is intriguing. It would be usable data, which is a plus, however it would require a big lift from advisors. I am not sure our faculty would support "Academic Advising" from non-faculty, which could be the biggest hurdle.

There seems to be no magic bullet from either school regarding Advising model success or Engagement success. Disappointing but not surprising.



"You have to sign up online."

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges/Threats (SWOC)

As part of the Advising and Engagement Program Review a SWOC analysis was undertaken. Staff, faculty, and Success Coaches were asked to give anonymous feedback on each area. Below is a compilation of various people's views including instruction, opportunity programs, coaches, and facilities.

Strengths:

- **Communication**
- **Knowledge**
- **Friendly, welcoming**
- **Dedicated to jobs**
- **Put students first**
- **Small campus**
- **Very tight-knit and can verify and communicate information quickly**
- **Dedicated advising staff with experience in student development**
- **Use of early alert system**
- **Active participation in guided pathways**

Weaknesses:

- **Internal fighting,**
- **Not following protocol (going beyond the direct line of communication for issues)**

- **Disorganization at the institutional level**
- **Contradictory info from different sources**
- **Other departments refuse to help us**
- **Our ideas and concerns are minimized**
- **We have ideas for a better functioning college, but we don't have time, power or energy to solve the larger problems**
- **Limited experience in academic and career advising and with college systems- this causes misunderstandings and misinformation which can lead advisors to rely on personal experience rather than advising theory**
- **Lack of evening/weekend advising hours for working students**
- **Insufficient collaboration with career services or job placement**

Opportunities:

- **Funding,**
- **More direct support from leadership**
- **Team conversations with leadership**
- **Backing to do the work we know we can do**
- **Funding**
- **Opportunities for campus visits**
- **Instructional support for attendance and participation in curriculum, and faculty workgroups**
- **There's an opportunity to modify the open coach/advisor position in a way that meets more department needs**
- **Use of AI tools for degree planning, nudges and communication**
- **Expand peer mentoring programs to supplement advising**
- **Opportunities to expand intrusive advising for at-risk groups**

Challenges/threats:

- **Funding**
- **Lack of inter departmental communication**
- **Changes to directives that seem to be currently working**
- **Admin changes at the Federal level, i.e. funding, DEI etc.**
- **Community support could lessen=less money and opportunities for students**
- **Burden of responsibility for student success falling on advising and engagement**
- **Pace of higher ed processes**
- **Rising mental health needs that may exceed advisors' training or capacity**

- **Competition from for-profit or online institutions with aggressive advising models**
- **Shifts in federal funding**



SWOC summation:

The growing mental health needs of students, time allocation burdens, and the slow pace of institutional change increase the pressure on the advising staff. Internal conflict, disorganization, and poor adherence to protocols hindered overall effectiveness but with the addition of the Engagement Advisor much of the disorganization and conflict has been removed. Staff members at times still feel undervalued, and struggle with the lack of support from other departments. Additional challenges include insufficient availability during evenings and weekends for students and navigating the need for increased technological software and training with the reality of the technological inconsistencies. Despite these issues, there are notable opportunities for growth, such as increased funding, leadership support, and expanding holistic advising practices. Some reworking of staff roles to enhance cross-department collaboration could also lead to improved services and greater efficiency.



New Building (facilities):

In 2023 the Success Coaches moved from their cubicles in the Office of Instruction to the office suite on the second floor, room 206. This move put the Coaches next to the Learning Lounge and closer to classrooms and study spaces. This move has strengthened the communication between students and the Coaches, as the coaches are now more easily accessible by students and by instructors when needed. The suite offers a bit more privacy for FERPA protected conversations with students. The previous accommodation offered no privacy for student-coach communication.

The new building needs to be addressed concerning Advising and more specifically, Engagement. The Advising suite is currently in Room 206, That location is anticipated to change with the finished construction of the new building next door. The new space for Advising and Engagement needs to be centrally accessible to all students. The re-do of the Student Service area will hopefully include private offices for one-on-one advising, a small conference room for group sessions, and a front desk for walk-in support. Advisors need to have access to up-to-date computers, telephones, and secure access to student records. While the current space meets most operational needs, increased student demand has strained capacity, particularly during peak registration periods. Additional offices or a larger waiting area would enhance service delivery and student satisfaction.

Communication with students is always a challenge but with students now in two buildings, it will change the way A&E communicates. It will add pressure on already overburdened IT to create effectual ways for staff in different buildings to communicate, especially around student events, and it will be imperative that

communication between students-instructors-coaches is working efficiently for students.

New Goals and Plans

1-The creation of a Lead Advisor position for 2026-2027 as a grade 17. (Advising Coordinator)

This is a position that could address two challenges that stand out in the SWOC including:

- ***Burden of responsibility for student success falling on advising and engagement.***
- ***Increased advisor workload without proportional resources.***

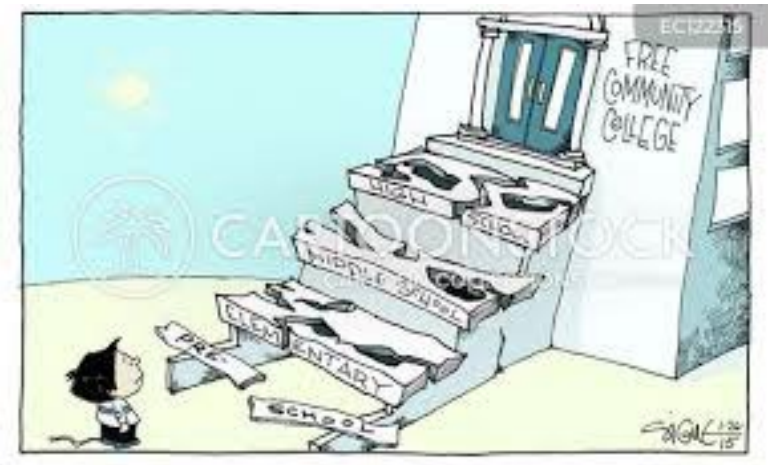
Coaches/Advisors have increasing responsibilities added to their workload, including Title III reporting, Dual Credit advising, continual IT modifications and challenges. Coaches have an increased responsibility to assist with the continued requests to support instruction including degree maps, scheduling, student-facing documents, and workgroups that do not move towards meaningful change. More pointed is the continually perceived idea that student success is the responsibility of Advisors. An Advising Coordinator could help shift some of the responsibility of dealing with faculty and communication and messaging to and from Advising.

2-With the development of a new Career Center focused on assisting students and community members in exploring career options in Tillamook County as well as in Oregon and beyond, a full-time Career Advisor (FTE 1.0) will need to be hired to manage the Center under the direction of the DSS. Funding and existing building redesign is unknown at this time however the importance of a Career Center goes beyond the financial constraints currently existing.

Budget

The budget for Advising and Engagement is modest but will need additional room for expansion as student participation and events become larger and more frequent. The advising budget will need room for a Lead Advisor as well as a position for the new Career Center that will begin as a position that shapes the center, makes connections in the community and finds the best contacts for students and then as the center grows the position will grow into career advising and internship preparation.

Overall Evaluation



The overall evaluation of Advising and Engagement is positive. It is a department that has grown in knowledge, ability, and outreach and with the right guidance and teaching will continue to focus on the stumbling blocks in front of students and solutions to ease students' burdens and fears while at TBCC. Advising and Engagement is dependent on the needs of the students and the ability of the college to intercede at higher levels for funding and training. The Guided Pathways model will continue to be at the forefront of all new A&E plans for student advising and cohort management.

Final Thoughts

To improve communication and a sense of belonging with students, Coaches purchased a button maker, thermal printer, and craft supplies. Whether it's buttons, stickers or decorating a graduation cap, these items, while seemingly insignificant or trivial, help to bring students together. This review should end with some positive statements from our students garnered from the 24-25 Student Belonging Survey answering the question "How have college staff helped you feel like you belong on campus?" (Acknowledging that "staff" encompasses more than just Advising and Engagement.).

- **When they have events they always invite me to come over, whenever I walk in the campus they are kind and respectful to me. They always support me with what I need.**

- They've made me feel wonderful. They're accommodating, trustworthy, polite, and caring, and they always listen to what is bothering me.
- They were all super helpful from the beginning, I was a little nervous and they walked me through everything.
- they treat me equally with all other students.
- They make themselves available and are eager to help with a kind professional courtesy that makes you feel like you matter
- They have made me feel like I belong by telling me about job opportunities and taking an interest in my future plans.
- They have been very helpful when it comes to the feeling of belonging since they all have treated me like family.
- They believed in my passion and assisted me by providing options for classes and information about transferring after completing TBCC.
- They are very welcoming, very nice, and always try to help the best they can.
- They are really helpful and really inclusive
- They always answer my questions or direct me to someone who can. They're always so kind
- There is lots of inclusion of Latino students and it's super awesome to feel the support. There is always events in the main foyer to relieve some stress as well!
- Never making me feel less for my personal struggles that get in the way of college.
- Everything the staff has done has been pretty out of this world as far as my college expectations go. Super helpful, welcoming, always available. It’s been such a treat to be welcomed back to the education system.
- Everyone is super nice and smiley and it’s easy to talk to anyone on campus. Makes the environment feel comfortable
- College staff have helped me to feel that I belong on campus by always being kind, having a willingness to help me with anything school related (and sometimes not school related), and just showing a genuine interest in who I am as a student and a person.