

Intrusive advising boosts student persistence, class performance

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Universities that have implemented proactive advising have indicated an increase in their students' grades, commitment and persistence, along with overall satisfaction.

(Phys.org) —Getting intrusive could increase student support at universities.

Kansas State University researcher Abby Tennant examined intrusive advising—working with at-risk [students](#) to identify challenges and

solutions to overcome them—in residence halls. Tennant, originally from Decatur, Ala., will earn her master's degree in college student personnel in May.

Intrusive advising, also known as proactive advising, involves faculty, staff and advisers reaching out to students early in their [academic career](#) to help identify and solve academic and [social issues](#). Proactive advising helps students connect with campus services.

Intrusive advising should be used for all first-year students and not just at-risk students, [Tennant found in her research](#). Forty-four percent of first-year [university students](#) nationwide do not go on to their second year.

Universities that have implemented intrusive advising have indicated an increase in their students' grades, commitment and [persistence](#), along with overall satisfaction, Tennant discovered.

The approach was developed in the 1970s but is making a comeback in difficult [economic times](#). With intrusive advising, universities could reap benefits like higher retention and graduation rates. Many states are rethinking funding models and awarding some money based on the number of students who earn degrees and finish courses.

"The idea is to follow up constantly with students so that they do not fall through the cracks," said Tennant, who is an assistant residence life coordinator for Kansas State University's housing and dining services. "The goal is to get to know them on a personal level and help them navigate [life decisions](#). We never want to wait until it's too late—when an obstacle turns into a crisis."

Proactive advising has proven to be effective with at-risk students, but it can work with all students, Tennant said. It also can be applied beyond

residence halls and across campus services.

"First-year students often guide themselves on their own, but they're coming right out of high school, where their hand may have been held more," she said. "No one expects these students to have everything figured out their first year of college."

The approach is a possible answer to performance-based funding as some states are considering or have implemented state funding tied to factors like [graduation rates](#).

"It is much more cost-effective to retain a student than it is for a university to replace a student," Tennant said. "When factoring in recruiting costs, universities put funding and resources into students from the day they step on to campus, so universities need to do everything they can to keep students by helping them."

Tennant said she acknowledges that proactive advising requires further investment with more personnel and time, but the method could pay off.

"If you begin school in the first three weeks and have someone who knows you personally—knows about you, your name, ambitions, challenges—you're going to see a lot more benefits come from that student, and he or she has a much greater chance to persist," she said.

Provided by Kansas State University

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