



Supporting Student Conversations with SSC

Strategies and Scripting to Promote Desired Actions

April 19, 2016

Navigating GoToWebinar



Basic Logistics

Click the orange button to hide or show the control panel.

Click the blue button to make the presentation full screen.

To Participate

Enter other questions or comments in the question box and click "Send."

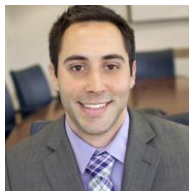
A screenshot of the GoToWebinar interface. On the left, a vertical control panel contains three buttons: an orange arrow pointing right, a blue square with a white border, and a blue circle with a white person icon. Lines connect these buttons to the text boxes on the left. The main interface has a menu bar with 'File', 'View', and 'Help'. Below it are two panels: 'Audio' and 'Questions'. The 'Audio' panel has 'Audio Mode:' with two radio buttons: 'Use Telephone' (selected) and 'Use Mic & Speakers'. The 'Questions' panel has a text input field with the placeholder '[Enter a question for staff]' and a 'Send' button. At the bottom, a banner reads 'How to Schedule a webinar?' with 'Webinar ID: 202-981-385' and the 'GoToWebinar™' logo.

Today's Presenters



Lindsay Miars
Associate Director

LMiars@eab.com
202-266-6877



Brian LeDuc
Dedicated Consultant

BLeDuc@eab.com
202-568-7480



Steven Antalvari
*Director,
University Advising*



1 What Makes Student Conversations Challenging?

2 Guiding Students to Action with Better Outreach

3 Navigating In-Person Conversations

What's Behind Declining Grades?

Grades Often Just an Indication of Deeper Issues in a Student's Life

Root Causes Differ for Each Student, But With Similar Outcomes





Students Don't Always Read Emails

University Communications Getting Lost in Students' Inboxes

Millennials Can Check Email Anywhere...



85%

Of 18-24 year olds own a smartphone

...But Read and Respond Selectively

Results of BGSU Communications Survey (315 students)



54%

Of respondents said they don't always read emails from the university or academic departments



39%

Of respondents said they don't always open emails from their advisors



University Email Tends to Be:



Passive

Emails do not require action, or merely direct students to self-service portals



Generic

Impersonal e-mails are easy to ignore and contribute to "white noise"



Wrong voice and tone

Language in messages is often unfriendly and administrative



Not mobile-responsive

Emails not designed to be read on a smartphone appear clunky, confusing

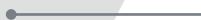
Difficult to Prompt Student Action

Significant Gap Between Opening an Email and Following Its Instructions

The Communications "Funnel"



Student Opens Email



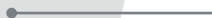
Can track with open rate in many email programs including SSC-Campus

Student Reads Email in Full



Difficult to track

Student Takes Action



Can track some actions (scheduled appointment, registered for courses, etc.) in SSC-Campus

Observed drop-off can be more than half



Once in Your Office, They Don't Always Listen

"Cognitive Perseveration" at the Root of Many Challenging Conversations



Cognitive Perseveration

Repeating an action even after learning that it produces a poor outcome; a form of "never quitting" that is unhealthy and unproductive

Predicts eventual academic failure, especially in males

Examples



A freshman feels pressure from parents to become an engineer, but has failed three math courses



A sophomore who was rejected twice from the music performance program wants to audition again



A junior is determined to apply to medical school, but currently has a 1.7 GPA

Contributing Factors



Parent pressure



Lack of cognitive flexibility



Not aware of alternatives



General under-preparedness

A Framework for Leveraging Data



How Advisors Have Used SSC to Overcome Cognitive Perseveration



Preempt

Identify students before a difficult conversation becomes necessary

- Establish and communicate clear, data-driven guidelines for admission into selective programs
- Identify and reach out to students not predicted to succeed in their current or desired major



Persuade

Build urgency, convince the student to change or act

- Explain to a student their predicted risk level/risk score compared to successful peers
- Use missed/upcoming success markers to show a student the hill they will have to climb



Reframe

Get the student excited about a tailored "back-up" plan

- Use risk predictions in the Major Explorer to build a student's confidence about success in an alternative major
- Start a conversation using SSC career data

1

What Makes Student Conversations Challenging?

2

Guiding Students to Action with Better Outreach

3

Navigating In-Person Conversations

How Can We Break Through to Students?

Early Insight Into Their Communication Preferences

How EAB Has Collected Insight:

100+

Research interviews and concept tests with students

300+

A/B split tests to determine optimal communication strategies

9,000+

First-year students surveyed on technology and mobile habits

Students Want Outreach That Is:

1 Customized



Including a student's individual grades or goals in a message increases response rates by 50%

2 Humanized

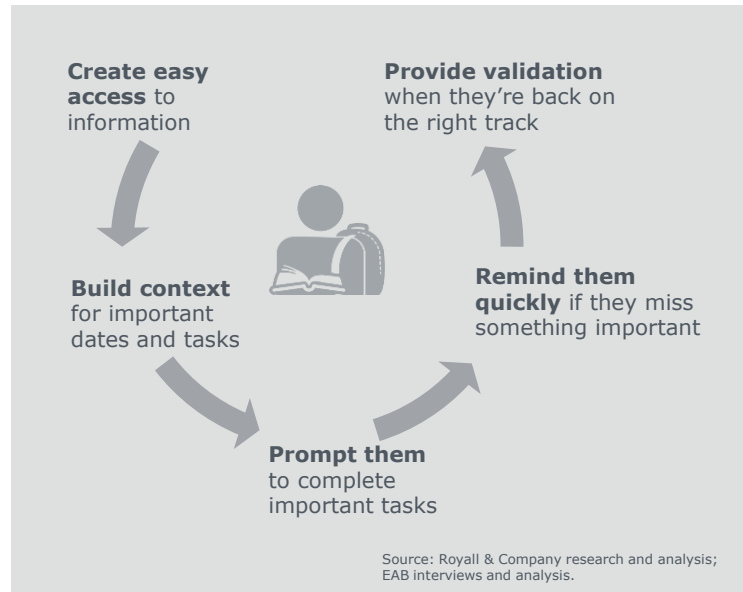


Just including a sender's name and face increases response rates by 26%

3 Dedicated



Millennials want a different look and feel for different types of communications (think apps)



Applying Insight to Email

Strategies to Get More Students Through the Communications Funnel

The Communications “Funnel”



Student Opens Email



Strategies

- *Consider Your Subject Line*
- *Be Persistent*

Student Reads Email in Full



- *Use Direct and Student-Centered Language*
- *Consider Including Other Voices*

Student Takes Action



- *Include a Clear Call to Action*
- *When Possible, Add Direct Links to Schedule Appointments, etc.*

Cutting Through Inbox Noise

Two Strategies for Higher Open Rates

Consider Your Subject Line

Nine Options for Effective SLs

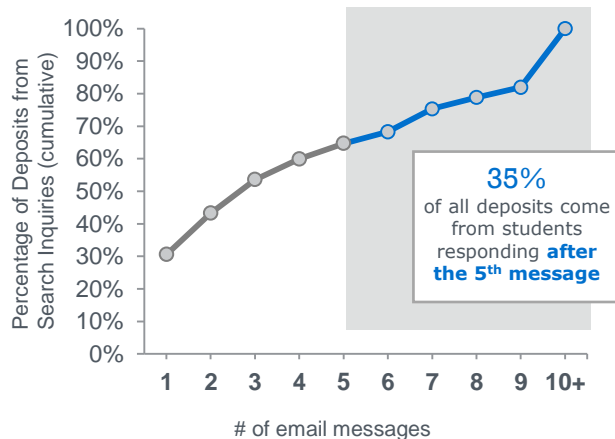
Snappy	<i>Oops—you missed your registration deadline!</i>
Direct	<i>Concerned About Your Midterm Grades</i>
Urgent	<i>URGENT: Your Academic Plan</i>
Authoritative	<i>Next steps to get you back on track</i>
Conversational	<i>Let's chat about Chemistry</i>
Mysterious	<i>You qualify for a new program!</i>
Guiding	<i>How the Tutoring Center can help your GPA</i>
Action-oriented	<i>Schedule some time with me this week</i>
Interrogatory	<i>Is there a reason you have not yet registered for next semester?</i>

Be Persistent

Students May Not Take Action Until 5+ Emails

Response by Email Contact

(Entering Class 2015)



royall & company

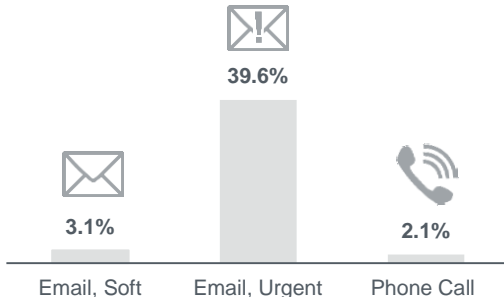
Convey Your Message Quickly and Compellingly



Language and Tone Should Be Urgent and Student-Centered

Urgent Tone Improves Student Response Rate

Response Rate by Outreach Approach *Targeted Campaign Initiative at CMU*



Focus on the Student and Their Goals, Not on Rules or Policies

Impersonal Copy

"Whitehouse University cares about your success and offers a number of resources for students in need of additional support. Students have found the tutoring center to be critical in improving their GPA for admission into certain selective programs."

Student-Centered Copy

"I care about your success and noticed that your math midterm grade is not up to standards for the Business School, which you want to apply for next semester. You should schedule an appointment with the tutoring center."

Consider Including Other Voices

The University of Michigan's Customized Peer Success Pushes

- Testimonial features recent student who earned better grade than predicted (based on GPA and SAT/ACT)
- Profiled student is matched with message recipient based on **gender, motivation** for taking course, and—most importantly—**academic history**

Advice is **actionable** and **customized** based on student's current performance in course

Students Just Like You Advice from your peers after the first exam



We interviewed past Physics 120 students who performed well in the course to see what advice they'd give to someone like you after the first exam. Here's what one had to say:

Blythe is currently a Sophomore student and took physics for life science majors because, like you, she is preparing for the MCAT.



*Blythe
Danner
Pre-Med,
2014*

"Don't lose hope! Go over what you got wrong and talk to someone in the UM Science Learning Center about how you should have approached those problems.

Another strategy I found helpful was to complete additional practice exams, focusing on the concepts I had trouble with on the exam. The good news is that, as you learn the new material, you now have a sense of how it might be turned into an exam question!

It is still early in the course and you can still do well!"

Include a Clear Call to Action (“CTA”)

SSC-Campus Allows for Direct Appointment Scheduling

What the Student Sees

Please schedule your advising appointment.

Hello Aislin Bastedo:

You have been requested, by your advisor, to schedule an appointment with them. By clicking the link provided, you can simply select a time that works with your schedule, save it, and an appointment will be created for you.

Note from Advisor:

I am concerned that your GPA has fallen below 2.5. I find that students really struggle when their GPA drops below that point. Please schedule an appt with me using the link below and we can discuss your options.

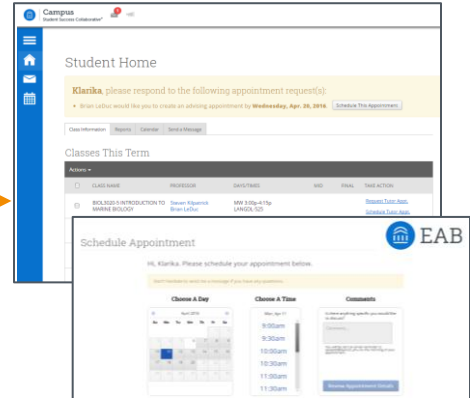
[Schedule Advising Appointment](https://whitehurst.campus-training.eab.com/a/7YcsM5N8lf)

You can also copy and paste this address into your web browser:

<https://whitehurst.campus-training.eab.com/a/7YcsM5N8lf>



Campus
Student Success Collaborative™



Other CTAs: Schedule Tutoring Appointment, Register for Courses, Pay Outstanding Balance [Include Links!]



Sample Outreach Script #1

Sent to: Pre-Nursing Sophomores with GPAs between 3.0 and 3.5

Objective: Support Pre-Nursing Students Just Below Threshold of Entry to the Nursing Program (Including Creation of Parallel Plans)

Subject: You qualify for our new program!

Dear <FirstName>,

Welcome back! We hope that you had an amazing summer and that you all rested up and ready to start the fall 2014 semester.

As you know, the Nursing program has a competitive admissions process based upon grades earned. Over that last couple of years, the average cumulative GPA for students that have been accepted to the Nursing Program has been **3.7 and above**. You are receiving this email because we've noticed that your cumulative GPA at UNC is currently <GPA 3.0 to 3.5> which qualifies you to take advantage of our new program designed to give pre-nursing students an additional layer of support by meeting with a specialized advisor.

[Use this link to schedule a program appointment](#) or respond to attend one of the office hours listed below.



Sample Outreach Script #2

Recipients: Students Struggling in the Chemistry Major (GPA > 2.5) Who Did Not Respond to First Round of Outreach

Objective: Persuade Student to Schedule Appointment with Advisor ASAP to Discuss Options

URGENT – Chemistry Plans

Hi <<FirstName>>,

I am writing to follow up about an email I sent a week ago. Most science-related industries generally look for students with a 2.8 GPA or higher. I noticed that you currently have a <<Cumulative GPA >2.5>>. I would like to meet with you in person to discuss your goals and create action steps together. **Please use the link below on or before Wednesday, October 22 to schedule an appointment during the week of October 27.**

If you have decided to switch majors, please respond to this email and let me know so that I can work with you to ensure that the department does not put an advising hold on your account.

Have a great day!



Sample Outreach Script #3

Recipients: Students Who Have Not Registered (Third Follow-Up)

Objective: Motivate Students to Register Immediately

Is there a reason you have not yet registered for next semester classes?

Name,

Your registration window closes **April 1 (tomorrow) at 11:00 am**. To have the best opportunity to get the classes you want, you need to [register before the window closes](#).

If you are not able to complete your scheduling by 11:00 am tomorrow, you will have to wait until Schedule Clean-Up (April 27–May 8) and you are less likely to

If you need assistance, please let me know.



Sample Outreach Script #4

Recipient: Individual Student Who Changed Their Major After a Difficult Conversation with the Advisor

Objective: Affirm the Student's Decision and Help Them Maintain Momentum

Subject line: Excited for your new journey!

Hi **FirstName**,

I noticed that you successfully changed your major in the system from Mechanical Engineering to Environmental Studies. Congratulations!

As we discussed, I think this major is a great fit for you based on your interest in alternative energy and sustainability issues and your strong performance in your science classes to date.

Are you familiar with the [career services office](#)? I would recommend you visit to learn more about opportunities in the field of sustainability. If you are interested, **let me know before the end May and I can put you in touch with one of my colleagues who is a career counselor there.**

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What Does the Literature Say?

Many Theoretical Approaches to Difficult Conversations

Transformational Leadership Theory

Inspire and motivate students to work toward a new goal or “backup” plan

Theory of Social Validation

Confirm and support first generation students in their decision-making process

Solution-Focused Counseling

Use strategic questioning to lead students to the best path forward

The Five Stages of Grief

Prepare for and help students cope with an emotional response to involuntary change

Chaos Theory

Approach career planning conversations with the understanding that long-term outcomes can’t always be predicted

Growth Mindset

Teach millennial students to be resourceful and grow from failures or setbacks

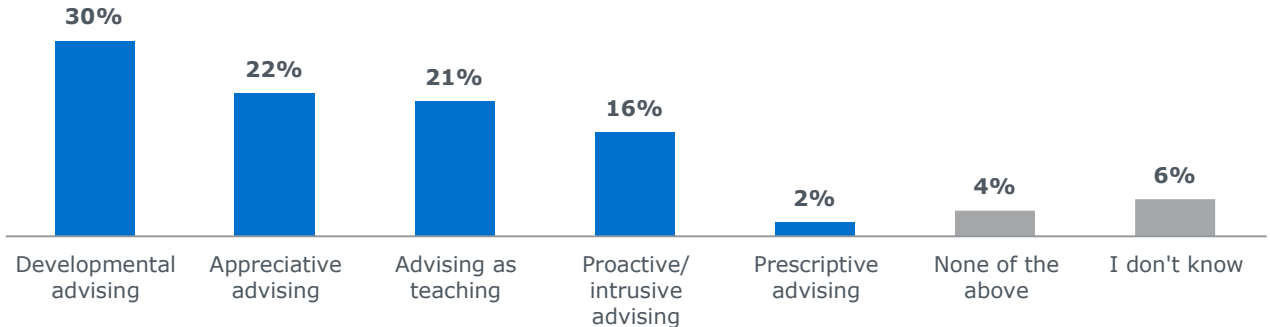
Non-Verbal Communication

Be conscious of the manner in which you are communicating, including tone and body language

Often a Matter of Preference

Advising Philosophy Informs In-Person Approach

Which Theory MOST Aligns With Your Own Advising Philosophy?
 SSC Survey of 1,213 Users, February 2016



In-Person Approach

Supportive



- Positive, student-centered guidance
- Coaching bolstered by **data**
- Helping a student “put the pieces together” through inquiry and discussion



- Deliberate intervention initiated by advisor
- Tone is firm but supportive
- Transparent about obstacles and what the **data** indicates
- Prescriptive about next steps

Direct

“Root Cause” Approach at Kent State University

Appreciative Advising Forms Basis for Effective Conversations



Steven Antalvari

*Director,
University Advising*



Guiding Principles

Do!

- Actively listen
- Be genuine
- Reframe
- Imagine
 - Pair strength with area for improvement
- Innovate
 - Develop a proactive vision statement (goal)
- Connect

Don't!

- Jump to conclusions
- Band Aid
- Provide a direct solution
- Dictate
- Tell the student to “figure it out”



Diagnose What's Going on Behind the Scenes

Where Do We Start? Where Do You Go From Here?

Start with the Positive (Appreciative Advising)

- Start with the positive (Appreciative Advising)
 - Spend a few minutes relationship building
 - Make notations in advising system about their family, job, pets, kids, interests, etc.
 - Students are more likely to “open up” with someone they trust

Transition to Academic Discussion

- Lead with their strengths (Inquire – AA)
 - “Your progress in your minor has been very strong”
 - “You have done really well in your Psychology courses”
- Tie a strength/s to academic success
 - Inquire about progress in general
 - “You have excelled in several courses, but I notice there are a few courses/subject areas in which you have struggled”
 - “What is it about the class that prevented you from getting the grade you really wanted?”
 - Assist the student in “putting together the pieces”

Empower the Student to Move Forward

Introducing the Parallel Plan

Introducing the Parallel Plan (Never Call it “Plan B”)

- Introduce the idea over a couple of advising sessions
 - If a competitive major, set the expectation in the first appointment (orientation initial appt.)
 - Reaffirm the expectation in second appointment, but connect student with resources and assistance
 - Third appointment – parallel plans are not new ideas, but it can now be reintroduced

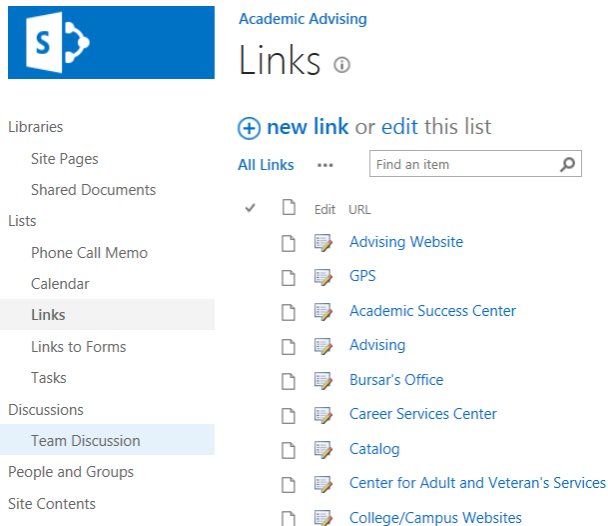
Parallel Plan Discussion

- First ask why
 - What made you decide major “X”?
- Reframe their interest
 - So you chose Nursing because you want to help people. What is it about helping people that interests you?
 - Have you ever thought about helping people as it relates to your strengths in “X”?

Next Steps

Directing Students to the Appropriate Resources

Resources Available to Students on SharePoint Site at Kent State



The screenshot shows a SharePoint page for "Academic Advising" with a "Links" list. The left sidebar contains navigation options: Libraries (Site Pages, Shared Documents), Lists (Phone Call Memo, Calendar, Links, Links to Forms, Tasks), Discussions (Team Discussion), People and Groups, and Site Contents. The "Links" list includes:

- ✓ [] Edit URL
- [] [] Advising Website
- [] [] GPS
- [] [] Academic Success Center
- [] [] Advising
- [] [] Bursar's Office
- [] [] Career Services Center
- [] [] Catalog
- [] [] Center for Adult and Veteran's Services
- [] [] College/Campus Websites

Other Resources & Follow Up Tips

Provide warm hand-off to other departments/support centers so students follow through

Send affirmation emails after student has taken action ("congrats," "keep it up")

Students "don't do optional"—consider mandatory, structured follow-up tasks

What If You Prefer a More Direct Approach?

“Cheat Sheet” for Referencing SSC Data in Student Conversations

Magee Chantos

Overview Success Progress Reports / Notes Class Info Major Explorer More

Course Grade 4	Repeated Courses 1	Withdrawn Courses 6	Missed Success Markers 4	Cumulative GPA 2.4
Total Credits Earned 85.00		Credit Completion % at this Institution 77%	Predicted Risk Level Medium	

Sociology
College of Arts & Sciences
Major History

STUDENT ID: 797091093
CLASSIFICATION: Junior

Success Markers

The student has missed guidelines for progress. Acting on them can help get the student back on track for successful completion.

Completed
 Missing
 Upcoming

4 missed markers

Notification	Outcome
ENGL1102 or ENGL1103 Recommended grade: C (1 course) Complete between 15 and 30 credits	Did not register for any course
MATH1101 or Higher Recommended grade: C (1 course) Complete between 0 and 15 credits	Needs attention 2 Attempts
SOCI1101 and SOCI1160 Recommended grade: B- (2 courses) Complete between 15 and 30 credits	Needs attention 1 Attempt
SOCI3010 and SOCI3030 Recommended grade: B- (2 courses) Complete between 45 and 60 credits	Did not register for any course

Sample Scripting

“I’m noticing that you’re not performing well in some critical courses. What’s going on with these SOCI courses? These are supposed to be pretty easy for you.

At this university, students who get below a B- in SOCI1101 and SOCI1160 are predicted to be less likely to graduate in the Sociology major. You want to be above that threshold, and it looks like you earned a D in SOCI1101, but haven’t cleared SOCI1160.

You will need to focus on your SOCI courses going forward if you want to stay in Sociology. What goal are we working towards when you graduate?”

Please Fill Out the Exit Survey!



- As you exit the webinar, you will be directed to an evaluation that will automatically load in your web browser.
- Please take a minute to provide your thoughts on the presentation.

THANK YOU!

Please note that the survey does not apply to webconferences viewed on demand.



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2445 M Street NW, Washington DC 20037

P 202.266.6400 | F 202.266.5700 | eab.com