



2021 Student Advising Program Report

In 2021, safety measures required by pandemic affected students and families and the work of Student Advisors. Amid many challenges, there were opportunities as well. Student Advisors continued developing and implementing creative and thoughtful ways to meet students, build relationships, and continued to deliver objective, timely, student focused information that supports decision-making by the student, for the student. Here is a snapshot of 2021:

- Student Advisors continued to deliver all workshops and presentations virtually; in 2021, **60 workshops were delivered, reaching 961 individuals**. Recorded workshops and presentations reached an additional 231, for a **total of 1,192 individuals served**.
- A planning assessment was completed by all new Foundation students; **157 students completed the assessment**, which was intended to help plan for academic, financial, physical and mental health, and basic needs matters. Student Advisors followed up with students for further planning and problem solving when assessments warranted.
- Student Advisors **provided individual guidance to 774 students and their family members**. All advising was offered virtually and Advisors connected via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, FaceTime, Google Meet, as well as by phone. Referrals were received from school counselors, community partners, as well as by students and families themselves.

Student Advisors provided information, advising, and resources to 1,966 people through workshops and individual advising in 2021.

The Student Advising's [workshop series](#) is a core component of the program's work and continue with three key workshops: *Financial Aid Basics*, *FAFSA*, and *Decision-Making: Using Financial Aid Offers to Assess Affordability*. Workshops are free and open to the public; they may be held through the Foundation but are also offered in partnership with local high schools, community organizations, and partners. Student Advisors are also invited to speak on accessibility to college, FAFSA verification, and other financial aid or affordability topics. Each workshop is created with a message of affordability in mind and provides information that is factual and time sensitive. As with individual advising, the workshops are not intended to direct or decide for students but provide them with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions for themselves.

In addition to serving as a trusted community resource for students and families, Student Advisors provide training and support for their peers, regularly informing other practitioners through professional development. Through these trainings, advisors work to create a larger community of providers equipped with critical knowledge, approaches, and resources to support students most affected by the deep inequities in the postsecondary system and financial aid policies.

In the second year of the pandemic, it was not safe to deliver large group workshops in-person and many people, especially students, were fatigued of virtual workshops. School requests were down, as counselors sought other methods of reaching and engaging families (see Appendix A). Student Advisors created videos that were shared with counselors and uploaded to the Foundation's YouTube channel.

Workshop/Event Type	Number of Workshops/Events	Participants
Decision-Making: Using Financial Aid Offers to Assess Affordability	10	52
Financial Aid Basics or Financial Aid Basics 2.0	14 ¹	405 ²
FAFSA: Workshops & Completion	5	111 ³
Professional Development ⁴	7	274
Scholarship Foundation Information Presentations	9	151 ⁵
Hybrid/Miscellaneous Workshops	10	108
Transition Tuesday Workshops	5	91 ⁶
Total	60	1,192

One of the new efforts undertaken in 2021 was a series of short workshops called ***Transition Tuesdays***. Student Advisors developed short workshops for 91 attendees last year on topics important for first time college students, which included:

- Finding and Reading Tuition Bills
- Understanding Tuition Payment Plans

¹ Includes a Financial Aid Basics video presentation, created for Kirkwood High School.

² Includes 31 views from the Financial Aid Basics video presentation, created for Kirkwood High School and 82 view from the Foundation's YouTube page.

³ Includes 22 views from the FAFSA video presentation on the Foundation's YouTube page.

⁴ Includes three sessions at the 2021 Advising Institute, which were facilitated by a member of the Student Advising Team.

⁵ Includes 96 views from a Scholarship Central and Loan Overview video on the Foundation's YouTube channel.

⁶ Includes views for Transition Tuesday videos, which have been posted on the Foundation's YouTube channel.

- Completing Student Loan Entrance Counseling
- Creating a Graduation Plan: Credit Hours and Considerations
- Finding and Accessing Resources on Campus

Persistence Advising

Student Advisors work closely with students funded through the Foundation's loan and grant programs, offering additional support beyond the financial assistance. Each student is assigned to an advisor and can seek additional support based on their individual needs and circumstances. Over the past two years, persistence advising has been essential for students. No two students, or their needs, are the same. Advisors listen to students' questions, concerns, challenges and then work with them individually to locate answers, find resources, and problem solve, all with the goal of supporting students to graduation and beyond.

In 2021, Student Advisors supported students in persisting to graduation in these ways:

- All 157 new Foundation students received and completed a planning assessment, which sought to help students think critically about their needs. The assessment addressed important aspects of students' academics, finances, community living and learning, and other basic needs. When warranted, advisors followed up for additional planning and problem-solving.
- Emergencies related to COVID persisted in 2021 and the Foundation continued to deliver microgrants directly into the hands of students. Advisors recommended **16 students for microgrants, totaling \$13,590 distributed quickly in just-in-time support.**

In total, the Foundation's team of four full-time Student Advisors met with 774 unique students a total of 2,972 times over the year.

2021 Accomplishments and Goals for 2022

The Student Advising program continues to grow and transform in response to the needs of students and the community.

In 2021, the Advising Program:

- Once again offered the Advising Institute, providing professional development on financial aid and advising topics, as well as quality mental health care and the importance of shared language to Foundation staff, community partners, counselors, and other advisors.
- Created new methods of reaching students by hosting grant information sessions on Foundation grant programs, delivering the Transition Tuesday mini workshops, and coordinating student panels to connect students with their peers for advice and counsel about navigating to or through college and career.

In 2022, the Advising Program will:

- Return to in-person advising, while continuing to support community health and safety.
- Finalize plans and begin to implement a significant new effort to support Foundation students' mental health.

Conclusion

The numbers reported here tell an incomplete story. So much of the work of Student Advisors is not quantifiable. It is not possible to measure the value of attentiveness, compassion, empathy, and the ability, or willingness, to help problem solve. Yet, Student Advisors find that students circle back in future years with new questions or the need for additional support. Frequently, students share information on the Foundation's advising services with their friends, classmates, or family members. Advisors know the value of the relationships built with students and the depth and longevity of those relationships.

At the close of 2021, the Student Advising Team said goodbye to two dear colleagues, as **Félice Martínez** and **Robert Sagastume** relocated to live outside the St. Louis. In January, the team welcomed [Ricky Hughes](#) and [Grace Carlson](#), who bring their enthusiasm and expertise. Student Advisors are starting to return to in-person advising and look forward to the chance for more as the year progresses. Most importantly, Scholarship Foundation Student Advisors continue to believe in students and are ready to listen to students' concerns, answer their questions, provide unbiased information, and offer support as students make their way to and through college.

Appendix A

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED *

	2019	2020	2021
Number of participants in workshops and trainings	5,446	2,589	1,192
Number of students receiving individual advising services	1,453	1,460	774
TOTAL DIRECTLY AFFECTED	6,899	4,049	1,966

**There are duplications likely in these figures. Individuals may attend more than one workshop. Individuals attending workshops may receive individual advising. Those participating in individual advising may meet multiple times during the year.*