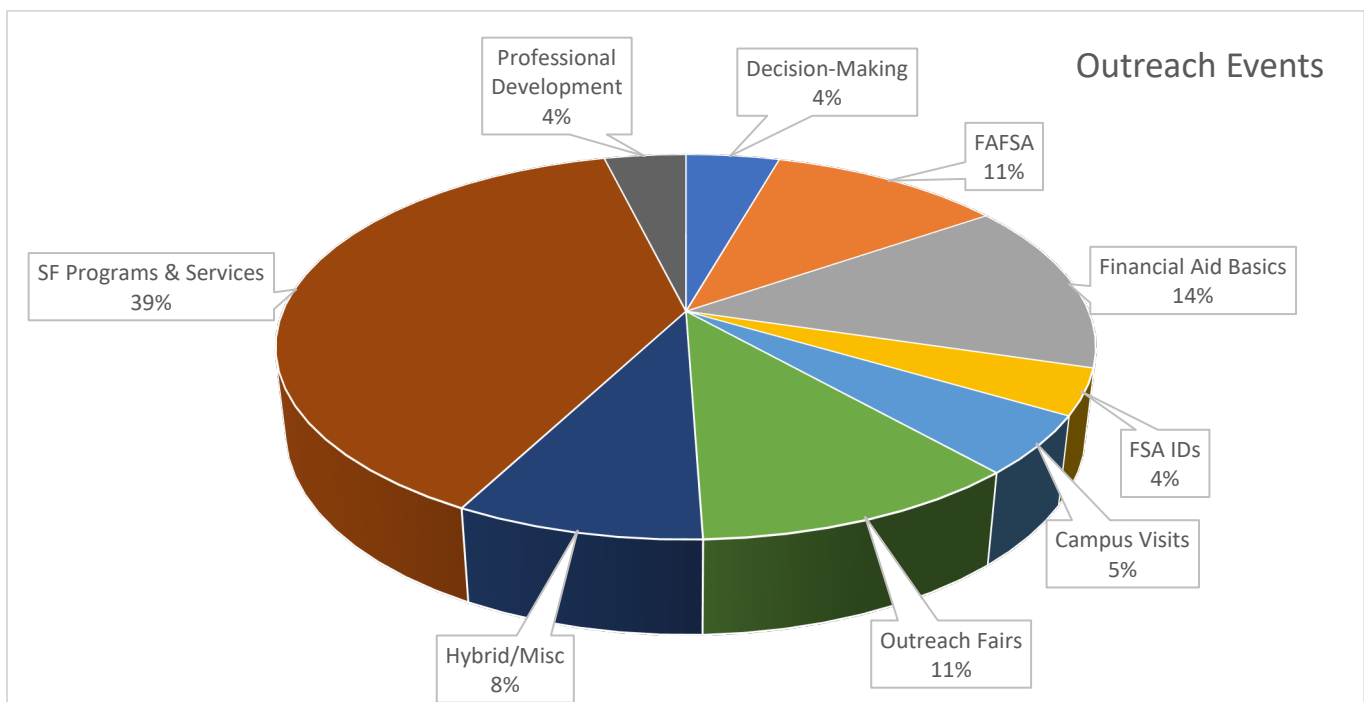


2023 Student Advising Program Report

The Student Advising Program experienced growth, evolution, and change in 2023, as The Scholarship Foundation continues to respond to students’ needs and strengthen programs and services to support students on the path to and through college. Student Advisors enhanced breadth of services, advising a greater number of students and families, as well as depth, offering new supports and strengthening existing ones.

- In 2023, the Student Advising team traveled throughout the region and beyond, delivering workshops both in-person and virtually, to students and families, providing educational opportunities and delivering information necessary for informed decision-making. In total, **177 outreach events** were provided, reaching **4,621 individuals**.
- In a year that brought significant changes to the financial aid landscape, Student Advisors provided training and professional development through **seven workshops**, reaching **182 professionals**.
- Over the course of the year, Student Advisors provided individualized advising to **1,147** students and their family members. Reflecting the depth of the support offered by advisors, there were **4,119 activities** with these individuals over the course of the year.

Student Advisors engaged with **5,950 individuals in 2023**, providing necessary information and timely resources, and supporting informed decision-making by students.



Four years ago, the work of advisors shifted significantly due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Although the height of the pandemic has passed, the toll it has taken on students remains. Student Advisors have worked tirelessly to (re)connect with students and families, and 2023 data indicates that effort is proving successful.

	2019 ¹	2020 ²	2021 ³	2022 ⁴	2023
#Of Workshops/Events	162	97	60	104	177
# Of Individual Students Advised	1,453	1,460	774	1,024	1,147
Total # of Individuals Advised	6,899	4,049	1,966	3,436	5,950

Persistence Advising

Each Scholarship Foundation student has an assigned Student Advisor; advisors build relationships with students, providing personalized support and advising throughout college. Advising is **not** “one size fits all.” Each relationship is unique, which allows advisors to respond to individual needs and tailor support and resources.

- Every newly awarded Scholarship Foundation student completes a planning assessment over the summer. This assessment guides students to critically evaluate their plans related to academics, finances, community living and learning, and basic needs. In 2023, each newly awarded student completed this assessment, with **122** requiring follow-ups to confirm or refine plans and identify resources or support.
- The Scholarship Foundation’s mental health program, [Flourish](#), which grew in 2023, pays the cost of therapy for Foundation students currently enrolled in college. Students are now eligible to receive **up to 24 sessions** per year. To date, **15 students** have participated and had therapy costs paid through Flourish. The program continues to grow and evolve to respond to students’ mental health needs. A larger number of students have expressed interest in participating, but myriad reasons prevent some students from completing the intake process, selecting a provider, or attending therapy. Efforts to better understand these barriers, and address them, is a priority in the year ahead.

Trends

Because Student Advisors interact with a large and diverse group of students each year, the program identifies trends, or themes, and responds in real time to students’ needs and addresses their experiences. In the past year, Advisors have observed the following:

- Students’ mental health needs continue to increase, and students are increasingly proactive about naming those needs and seeking support.
- Students have many financial responsibilities beyond their college costs; they have part-time work in high school and college to pay for their expenses, and to contribute toward household expenses.

¹ [2019 Advising Report](#)

² [2020 Advising Report](#)

³ [2021 Advising Report](#)

⁴ [2022 Advising Report](#)

- There is a large need to support students in mixed-status households⁵ through the financial aid application process, with careful attention to their safety, clear information, and empathy.

Advisors' experiences and interactions with students serve as a reminder that no two students are the same and many have lived experiences that do not fit into the prescribed assumptions made by colleges, government, and society at large.

Accomplishments and Goals

The Student Advising Program had a big year in 2023. The biggest accomplishments were:

- Expanding the team of Student Advisors from four to six advisors (as of Jan 2, 2024), including the addition of a bilingual advisor, who speaks Spanish fluently.
- Serving as content experts on a range of matters, but especially on the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), as the form underwent a significant overhaul. Advisors not only educated students and families, but provided professional development to on the form, and related topics, to counselors and advisors around the state of Missouri and beyond.

There remains a great deal to do, and 2024 has begun with a fast, busy start. Looking ahead, Student Advisors will:

- Continue to respond to the disastrous, delayed launch of the 2024-25 FAFSA and put students first, always, through direct support, as well as training and support for practitioners working with students in schools.
- Create opportunities for 2024 high school graduates to receive information, assistance, and planning support over the summer. Efforts to ensure students planning to enroll in college for 2024-25 will be more necessary than ever this year, due to the complications with the FAFSA and resulting delays in financial aid offers from colleges.
- Promote Flourish and continue to expand the number of students served through the program.

Conclusion

There is ample evidence that pathways for accessing college, and persisting to graduation, remain laden with significant barriers. Higher education and financial aid systems often reinforce racial and economic inequities; the Advising Program continues to ensure resources are directed towards students most likely to be impacted by these inequities and strives to support equitable outcomes for students.

Student Advisors are increasingly needed, not only for their financial aid and process expertise, but for personal relationships. The value of compassionate, thoughtful, and honest advisor-student relationships is immeasurable, especially in the face of systemic barriers that exist in the path of many students. Our commitment to students remains steadfast and in 2024 we will continue to listen to their stories, center their experiences, collaborate with them to identify next steps, and build relationships.

⁵ A mixed-status household is a family whose members include individuals with different citizenship or immigration statuses.