ENGAGING THE FRONT LINES OF ADVISEMENT: BACKWARD DESIGN AS A CRITICAL & IMPACTFUL PRACTICE

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Photo: Etta Candy Funko Pop

WNY Advising Conference, Niagara Falls, NY, February 12, 2020

TODAY'S PRESENTATION

- Introduction and Brainstorming Activity
- Defining "the front lines of advising"
- Intro to backward design
- Cross-training as key to student support
- Share, compare, and analyze

THE FRONT LINES OF ADVISEMENT

WHO DO YOU THINK THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE ARE ON THE "FRONT LINES" OF ADVISEMENT?

BRAINSTORMING:

- Who would you define as "on the front lines" in your advising operation?

- When a student comes in the door to your advising center, what do they experience?
  - What are your intake processes?
  - Who welcomes the student to the space? What else does that person do?

WHO ARE ON THE FRONT LINES?
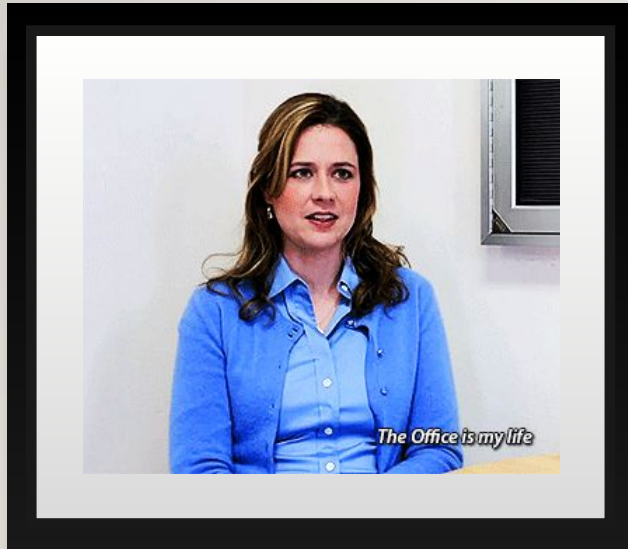
- Administrative Assistants / Academic Assistants / Staff

- Advising Staff

- Faculty

- Students
  (Themselves, Work-Study, Peers)

TITLES DON'T MATCH THE ROLE

Students come to the front lines first!

WHY ARE THE FRONT LINES CRITICAL?

Students' first contact is essential

Unfortunately, those on the front lines often experience:

- Lack of training
- Limited access to important resources
- Lack of respect
- Lower pay
- Feeling that they are undervalued

BACKWARD DESIGN: OVERVIEW & PRACTICE

BACKWARD DESIGN

Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, 2011)

- Focus on <u>understanding & transfer</u> of learning & long-term goals

- "What would <u>real use</u> of the content [training/processes] look like?" (p7)

- How does the <u>design</u> lead to desired outcomes?

STAGES OF BACKWARD DESIGN

- **Stage 1:** Identify Desired Results

- **Stage 2:** Determine Acceptable Evidence

- **Stage 3:** Plan Learning Experiences & Instruction Accordingly

(Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, 2011)

IDENTIFY DESIRED RESULTS

- Start with your goals:
  - Advising
  - Institutional
  - Departmental
  - Individual
- What are you asked to do?
- What do you want to accomplish?

DETERMINE ACCEPTABLE EVIDENCE

- What evidence demonstrates a job well done?
  - Steps?
  - Tasks?
  - Outcomes?
  - Improvements?
- What evidence is meaningful?

PLAN LEARNING EXPERIENCES & INSTRUCTION ACCORDINGLY

- Determining the Path
  - What steps are relevant?

- What's required to accomplish your goal?
  - Tools
  - Access
  - Efficiency

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STAY ON TARGET

- Who needs to be involved?

NASPA / ACPA COMPETENCIES

Progressive Professional Development

- Foundational: Required for the Job

- Intermediate: Proactive Exploration "Critique & Synthesis"

- Advanced: Leadership & Guidance Engaging Others

FRONT LINE STAFF BACKWARD DESIGN & EQUITY

- Advising is More than What Happens in an Appointment

- Who can Accomplish the Task?
  - Are Staff Roles Equitable?
  - Overworked?

- Training Needs / Learning Style / Funding?

- Demonstrate Relevance / Benefits

ACADEMIC COMMONS

MATH CENTER

ADVISEMENT
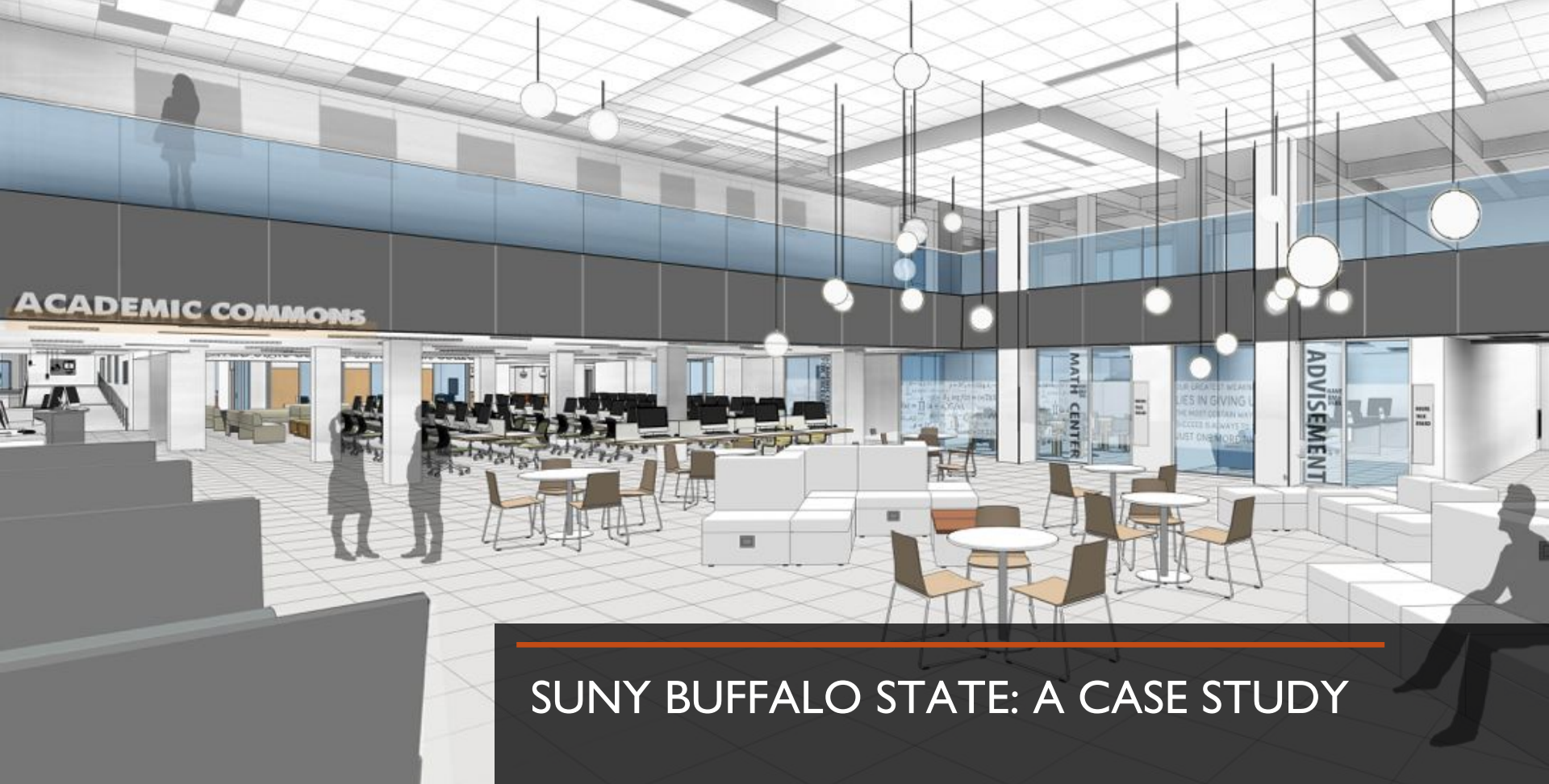
SUNY BUFFALO STATE: A CASE STUDY

THE ACADEMIC COMMONS AT BUFFALO STATE IS…

- A $16.1 million project to renovate the library to create a centralized hub for student academic support

- The Academic Commons contains:
  - Advising Center
  - Writing Center
  - Math Center
  - All subject-specific tutoring
  - Student Accessibility Services
  - EOP's tutoring services
  - Library services
  - IT support desk
  - An "Ask Us" concierge desk

"ASK US" DESK

- Envisioned as a central referral service
- Students and administrative support workers will circulate through to staff this desk
- The "blue sky" vision is that students should be able to come with any question and get the help they need

ADVANTAGES TO STUDENT WORKERS AS FRONT-LINE STAFF

- Students often find peers more credible and trustworthy
- We can learn from students and use their feedback to refine our services
- Student workers have an opportunity to:
  - Build their résumés
  - Develop problem-solving skills
  - Develop interpersonal and "soft skills" valued in today's workforce

CROSS-TRAINING IN A ONE-STOP MODEL

- **"I just have a quick question…"**
  - Peeling back the layers of the onion

- **To cross-train, we are planning to:**
  - Develop a shared knowledge base for FAQ
  - Establish a "memorandum of understanding" for service principles among units/areas
  - Employ job shadowing to develop a better understanding of processes, policies, and practices

CHANGE THE WORD "STUDENTS" TO "FRONT LINE STAFF"

"The research is very clear on this point: _____ who really develop and 'own' an idea are more likely to successfully interpret new situations and tackle new problems…"
(Wiggins & McTighe 2011, p. 113).

GENERATING BUY IN

- Involve Your Staff
  - Listen to your staff
  - Let your staff set goals?

- Demonstrate Connections to Goals

- Efficiency
  - Gain champions
  - Asynchronous Support

SHARE, ANALYZE, CONTEMPLATE CHANGES

SHARE, ANALYZE, CONTEMPLATE CHANGE

- How could you employ backward design to enhance front-line staffing / advising practices on your campus?

- How can you utilize your position to effect change?

TAKE THE FRONT LINES SERIOUSLY

Limited ability to change without:

- Institutional / Structural Change
- Supportive Staff / Faculty / Administration
- A Voice at the Table

QUESTIONS & CONTACT INFO

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REFERENCES

- Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J, (2005) *Understanding by design: 2nd edition.* Assn. for Supervision & Curriculum Development (ASCD), Alexandria, VA.

- Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J, (2011) *The understanding by design guide to creating high-quality units.* Assn. for Supervision & Curriculum Development (ASCD), Alexandria, VA.

- ACPA, NASPA, (2015), *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators.* Washington D.C., ACPA/NASPA.

- ACPA, NASPA, (2016), *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators: Rubrics for Professional Development.* Washington, DC.: ACPA/NASPA.

- Videos For Further Reference:

  - Grant Wiggins UBD 1 of 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4isSHf3SBuQ&t=
  - Grant Wiggins UBD 2 of 3 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgNODvvsgxM&t=
  - Jay McTighe What is UBD https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8F1SnWaIfE&t=