



MUS Advising Fellows

As an essential component of the Montana University System's Success Agenda's, OCHE has supported strategic initiatives meant to enhance the impact of holistic advising on student success outcomes. In ongoing support of advising and recognition that holistic advising increases key student success outcomes including retention and graduation, OCHE is recognizing excellence in holistic advising and fostering advising communities through the MUS Advising Fellows. MUS Advising Fellows are current staff or faculty who have advising responsibilities (including academic and success advising) and who demonstrate excellence in holistic advising that leads to enhanced student success.

Holistic advising in the MUS leans on frameworks like NACADA's "[Definition and Scope of Practice for Academic Advising](#)," Achieving the Dream's [Holistic Student Supports toolkit](#), and the Community College Resource Center's "[Framework for Advising Reform](#)" (or SSIPP advising) for evidence-based advising that provides in an intentional and structured approach, utilizing both academic and non-academic supports to promote achievement of academic goals, student development, and timely degree attainment. MUS holistic advising includes the essential aspects of the SSIPP framework: **sustained** support to students over their academic pathway; **strategic** deployment of supports based on student need and interest; **integration** of advising with other student services and supports; **proactive** advising that identifies and reaches out to students who are in need; **personalized** advising from corps of advisors who know students and their needs. Supports and approaches may include advising that:

- Intentionally provides academic and non-academic supports and resources to help students achieve their educational goals; that actively connects data and technology systems to create seamless experiences for students; and that is designed to provide a range of service intensity based on student need.
- Promotes intentional student learning about their academic curriculum, structures, processes, and cultures;
- Integrates academic and career-connected advising, goal setting, and decision-making;
- Explores students' strengths, skills, and interests to inform academic and career pathways;
- Develops students' skills in connecting self-knowledge and intellectual development to decision-making that informs academic and career pathways;
- Leverages data and technology tools to monitor student progress on key academic, financial, and student experience benchmarks;
- Implements systematic approaches that identify students who are not meeting key academic and non-academic benchmarks and proactively provide support;
- Implements structured and intentional referral systems to refer and connect students to specialized supports that include, for example, mental health, wellbeing, basic needs, financial, academic, career, or other supports;
- Implements intentional and structured guidance and connection to resources or activities that promote intellectual and social belonging and career purpose;

- Actively designs and puts into practice assessment models aimed at advancing holistic advising and student success goals of retention, degree completion, and future education and/or workforce placement.

Eligibility

Any MUS staff or faculty with direct advising or advising supervision responsibilities is invited to submit a proposal. Advising duties may include traditional academic advising or success advising.

Award & Recognition

MUS Advising Fellows will be awarded and recognized for exemplary approaches to holistic advising practices and exceptional commitment to bettering outcomes for all students. Selected MUS Advising Fellows will be announced in September 2026. In addition to recognition, fellows will also receive a \$1,500 award and up to \$500 to directly support activities of their advising community of practice.

Expectations and Goals of MUS Advising Fellows

The MUS Advising Fellows program seeks to build communities of practice to advance holistic advising in support of supporting student success. As MUS Advising Fellows, advisors commit to building and sustaining communities of practice by:

- Designing and facilitating an Advising Learning Committee (COP) of 6-10 advisors (faculty or professional staff) at your institution working to advance holistic advising approaches or strategies that align with institutional advising goals and that are evidence-based in supporting improved retention and on-time graduation;
- Participating in MUS Advising Fellows program events;
- Developing and submitting resources that promote adopting and enhancing holistic advising practices that emerge from the COP and sharing resources across the MUS;
- Participate in a system-wide advising events to share approaches, findings, best practices that emerge from the advising community of practice.

Advising Communities of Practice

Each MUS Advising Fellow will design and lead an academic-year long advising community of practice (COP) that seeks to advance components or strategies of your institution's holistic advising model. COPs should focus on learning about, adopting, testing, and assessing specific evidence-based holistic advising strategies or approaches. Holistic advising strategies or approaches should be those that have **direct and measurable impact** on key student success outcomes related to advising. Advising Fellows will collaborate with advising directors and other campus student success leaders to identify and develop learning outcomes and an COP facilitation plan that advances key goals of institutional advising. Fellows will recruit for and lead a community of practice comprised of 6-10 advisors at your institution that will work in support of these goals. Fellows will have up to \$500 in stipend funds to support COP activities. At the conclusion of the academic year, each Advising Fellow will develop a resource (white paper, praxis guide, learning modules, etc) based on the activities and outcomes of the advising community of practice. Advising Fellows will share these resources in a common MUS hub available to other advisors and advising communities across the system.

To Apply

Complete applications must be submitted by September 30. Applications must include the following:

1. A [brief online application form](#).
2. A **letter of application** (no more than 2 pages) that includes a proposal for the advising community of practice (to be submitted via the application form). Letters should address your vision of holistic advising at your institution and a proposal for the advising community of practice including the learning outcomes for the community, how learning outcomes will be assessed within the COP, and how the work in the COP advances holistic advising at your institution.
3. A **letter of support from an institutional leader connected to advising** (such as a Director of Advising, AVP or VP of student success, provost, academic Dean, etc) addressing how the proposed community of practice advances institutional goals around holistic advising.

Requirements for Participation

Selected advising fellows must:

- attend the MUS Advising Fellows orientation (date TBA).
- recruit 6-10 advisors to participate in CoP and hold at least one CoP meeting during fall semester;
- have plan for conducting a community of practice including learning outcomes and proposal for how COP will contribute to holistic advising at your institution.
- participate in MUS Advising Fellows check-ins (1-2x/semester)
- contribute resources addressing learnings, best practices, and implementation considerations emerging from the CoP.
- complete all administrative paperwork including expense reporting and reimbursement by deadlines to receive award and stipend.

Selection Criteria

Selection for MUS Advising Fellows will be based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated commitment holistic advising that directly supports key, measurable student success outcomes, including intellectual and academic development in field of study, retention, graduation, and career development.
- Proposal for a well-designed COP including clear learning outcomes and description of how COP will support participating advisors in developing, adopting, and assessing holistic advising practices or approaches;
- Alignment of proposed COP activities with institutional advising goals;
- Demonstrated commitment to holistic advising approaches that promote success for all students;
- Potential impact to enhance holistic advising among participating advisors and across the institution more broadly;
- Commitment to contributing learnings from COP to the larger MUS advising community by submitting resources and participating in MUS advising-related activities.

More Information & Questions

For more information, please visit: <https://www.mus.edu/che/arsa/musadvisingfellows/>

Please direct questions about MUS Advising Fellows to Ciera Franks-Ongoy, Student Success Program Manager, cfranksongoy@montana.edu or Crystine Miller, Executive Director of Student Success, cmiller@montana.edu.