EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: COHORT ADVISING PROPOSAL

March, 2015

The Proposal:

To adopt the cohort advising model, which we have piloted since fall 2013, as the University's pre-major advising program. The model, which blends group and individual meetings with freshmen, and individual meetings with sophomores, is informed by the 2012 recommendations of the cross-disciplinary Academic Planning Task Force Working Group on Advising (See Appendix 1) and aligns powerfully with the recently adopted University Learning Goals. The mixed model is capacious, and offers opportunities for ongoing faculty training, support, and program assessment.

The Model:

The cohort model offers incoming students a blend of group and individual meetings with their academic advisor during their first semester with us. Freshmen register for an advising day and time during summer orientation, through one of five cohorts: Boler, Education, Exploratory/General, Humanities and Social Sciences, and STEM. They meet their academic advisor for lunch during Fall Convocation, and have three more group meetings during the fall semester. Individual appointments should begin as early as week two or three, and continue as needed by student or determined by advisor, at least through priority registration. Individual appointments will continue until the student declares a major in the spring of sophomore year.

The Rationale:

- Scholarship on student retention consistently notes the value of good advising and close student contact with faculty as key in promoting student persistence to graduation. Our four year graduation rate of 62-65% could be improved by stronger advising at the outset of a student's academic career.
- The cohort model facilitates regular contact between students and faculty advisors during a critical six-week window at the beginning of the term, which the literature indicates is the period in which students decide whether or not the University is the right fit for them. Our retention of students from first to second year, which has ranged over the past decade from a low of 81% to a high of 89%, would also benefit from this increased intentional investment in faculty-student contact early in the fall.

- The model offers a flexible platform for the consistent delivery of critical academic information and programming to first-year students. It meets the needs of students by providing opportunities to review general logistical information and more in-depth conversations about academic direction.
- The model makes more visible the very hard work of faculty who are advising freshmen and sophomores, enables the assessment and recognition for these labors, and supports ongoing and enhanced faculty development in advising.

The Alternative:

Given the University's need to assess all programs for efficacy and continuous improvement, a return to individual advising for freshmen and sophomores would not entail a return to the unstructured and unassessed pre-2013 model. The pre-major advising program, whether delivered through the mixed or the individual model, requires the same set of learning outcomes recommended by the APTF and shaped by the Advising Office into a rubric to be used for advising freshmen and sophomores. (The rubric is included in the full proposal). The individual advising model does not provide students with the highly visible structure and incentive to meet with faculty so marked in the cohort model.

In sum:

The cohort model, an evolving program for advising incoming students, is in the best interest of our freshmen. Faculty advising freshmen will continue to have opportunities for training—in workshops, on line, through readily available resources—and for continuous input and program assessment.

**PROPOSAL FOR THE ADOPTION OF COHORT ADVISING
FOR FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORES**

Maryclaire Moroney
Associate Dean, Academic Advising
March, 2015

Background:

From 2010-2012, the Academic Planning Task Force Working Group on Academic Advising met to review our current advising programs and recommend improvements. The final report from this group, submitted to the Provost in May, 2012, is appended to this proposal.(Appendix 1: APTF Final Report) In the fall of 2013, the University piloted an experimental program informed by the APTF recommendations. Instead of the model of individual advising (about which, more below), we used the findings and recommendations of the APTF to create a template within which a blend of group and individual meetings increased student contact with faculty and improved academic planning for students. This blended model focused on heightening students' connection to a particular area of study, increasing contact between students and their academic advisors during their first months at the University, and shaping the conversations taking place during those inaugural meetings. Based on feedback from students and faculty offered that year, the model was revised for fall 2014. *The current proposal requests that faculty approve the adoption of the cohort model for our pre-major advisees, with ongoing faculty oversight and modifications built into the assessment process. The rationale, which will be discussed in greater detail below, is in part to improve persistence and retention at the University by improving students' experiences with their advisors during the early part of their academic careers. Scholarship on student retention consistently notes the value of good advising and close student contact with faculty as key to promoting student persistence to graduation.*

The model:

During summer orientation, students register for an advisor, along with a day/time, in one of five cohorts:

- Business
- Education
- Exploratory/General
- Humanities/Social Sciences
- STEM

In a perfect world, each advising section would be capped at 10 students (on logistical realities for Boler, STEM, and special programs like Arrupe and Honors, see below). Faculty will meet their advisees at Fall Convocation for introductions and an initial conversation about the roles and responsibilities of advisors and advisees at the University. Three more group meetings follow, interspersed with individual appointments, which should begin as

early as week two or three and continue as needed by the student and requested by the faculty member. Individual appointments should continue until the student declares his/her major in the spring of sophomore year. Freshmen who need a new pre-major advisor because their degree interests have changed are reassigned in the spring term to a faculty member who has capacity to take on another FR/SO advisee. Similarly, a fall semester sophomore who needs an advisor in a new area of interest will be accommodated as quickly as possible, and certainly prior to registration for spring classes.

67% of the faculty who participated in the program this fall agreed or strongly agreed that they got to know their freshmen better through this model than they had through individual advising alone; 58% agreed or strongly agreed that advising conversations for spring registration had improved as a result of the program. (Appendix 2: Cohort Advisor Survey) Although there is more work to be done to address faculty concerns about resources and load, it is clear even at this early date that the program has real potential for improving student outcomes.

Rationale:

There are three reasons for faculty to support ongoing institutional investment in and improvements to our pre-major advising program: *improving student retention, using faculty time and institutional resources more efficiently*, and *enabling assessment.* Some historical context is important here as a framework for the discussion of these elements. We have used some version of our individual advising model since formal academic advising was instituted at the University in the 1970s. In that model, faculty could opt to advise anywhere from 0-20 freshmen and undeclared transfer students annually by indicating to the advising office how many (if any) incoming students they were willing and able to take. Although some attention was paid to matching students to faculty in their area of interest, the driving force behind the distribution of students was the cap on the faculty member's advising load for that academic year rather than any larger, articulated vision for faculty advising.

Advising is a teaching responsibility, and like other teaching duties is largely driven by department and program needs. Faculty in departments with the largest numbers of graduate students and majors to advise have potentially more limited capacity to devote to pre-major advising than departments with fewer students. Furthermore, departments vary in their expectations concerning advising. Thus pre-major advising, as a University need, has historically been a responsibility unevenly shared, with some faculty and departments assuming disproportionately heavy loads. (Appendix 2) A related feature of the older program, worth mentioning here, was its reliance on faculty willingness to advise students intending any major in either CAS or Boler. Though laudable in theory, in practice, this did not always serve students in business or the sciences well; in these programs, one or more missed prerequisites can add a semester or a year of coursework (and cost) to the student's degree.

There were and continue to be other challenges as well to the optimal functioning of the pre-major advising program. Until quite recently, there have been only a few intermittent and modest efforts to encourage faculty development as advisors; not coincidently, the recognition and reward for individual work in advising (of any kind) has been confined, to date, to the brief query on the annual self-evaluation concerning one's "philosophy of

advising." This changed somewhat last year with the introduction of the annual O'Hearn Award for advising, but the overall lack of recognition and reward for this important faculty role remains a problem. In addition, although some questions concerning advising in general are part of many departments' senior exit interviews, these are not consistent across departments and programs. No University-wide assessment plans, no mechanisms for feedback, and no clear goals for any of the academic advising programs at the University were proposed until 2012, when the Academic Planning Task Force put forward its recommendations to the Provost. Despite these significant challenges, John Carroll faculty have a long track record of demonstrated commitment to our students' success, and we spend countless hours assisting with academic planning, providing career/professional counseling, and tending to students who are struggling.

Advising first-year students is labor intensive. It can involve non-academic matters, when students seem to need counseling on matters of personal adjustment or family circumstances rather than on course selection and persistence. It can also entail hard conversations about a student's level of preparation and aptitude for a particular area of study. Given the multiple pressures on faculty time and energy, identifying strategies to establish and maintain productive contact with all incoming student advisees, without unduly burdening an already stretched faculty, is a necessary and important facet of our institutional effort to support robust enrollment and graduation rates. Having clearly articulated shared goals for the pre-major program is a key step in evaluating the best options for achieving the outcomes we seek. The rest of this proposal will lay out the pedagogical and logistical pillars of pre-major/cohort advising at the institution, under the three categories (retention, efficiency, assessment) listed above.

RETENTION:

No advising program will be effective if students do not recognize it as something more substantive and personally meaningful than an electronic release for registration. Of course students have always had the opportunity to meet with their academic advisor prior to the registration conversation, but did they consistently avail themselves of this opportunity? Did we see them regularly, or at all, in the months between the chaotic scrum over lunch at the start of the term and the week (or even the day) of priority registration? If we agree that one-on-one meetings between students and their advisors are critical, how, then, to arrange for consistent student participation in advising meetings? Although the majority of the relationship building between students and faculty will take place in the one-on-one conversations over the course of four semesters, the cohort model gives that relationship work some immediate momentum by including advising on students' fall semester schedule, which highlights the value we place on academic advising, encourages students to see their advisor as a valuable resource for their success, and offers faculty the opportunity to orchestrate conversations introducing students to the values and expectations of the University—a win for everyone. The hybrid model proposed, in short, relies primarily on the individual contact between students and faculty, but facilitates those contacts at the beginning of the fall semester with a series of short group meetings designed to introduce important policy and curricular information, and begin the long process of discernment. In addition, the hybrid model provides a platform for future experimentation with

the consistent delivery of important curricular and co-curricular programming for first-year students—particularly important now that FYS is no longer part of the core.

For the past decade, John Carroll has consistently lost between 11-19% of its first-year class by the start of sophomore year, and our four year graduation rate has hovered around 65%. The scholarly literature on student retention suggests that students decide **during the first six weeks of the semester** whether or not the school is the right fit (Khrin, p. 3). In addition, the literature also consistently indicates that academic advising, in the form of regular contact with faculty, is a critical retention tool (Kuh 69-71). With the departure of FYS from the curriculum, it is more critical than ever for us to ensure that our freshmen are noticed, guided by, and connected to our full time faculty, emphatically and visibly, as early as possible in their time here. If we want our students to make strong connections to full time faculty during their first year here, we cannot simply assume that those connections are being formed in the classroom. We need to ensure that students have multiple opportunities and incentives to spend time with the permanent faculty in their prospective major as soon as possible. Thus, any consideration of the content and delivery of our advising program also entails an examination of its place in maintaining vibrant enrollment and high rates of degree completion. **Strong connections between faculty and students lead to better informed conversations about academic planning, co-curricular enrichment, troubleshooting, and overall institutional fit.** Academic advising is a critical venue for these conversations, though of course it is not the only one.

Closely related to this intensified effort to connect students to faculty is an equally important effort to invest students themselves more fully and actively in their own education. The APTF recommends as sound pedagogical practice that our advising programs promote student "integration and reflection" on their learning, and support more considered and intentional course selection and academic planning. The APTF also recommends encouraging students to become more active shapers of their own educational destiny. The mission statement the APTF crafted for advising summarizes these goals: "The primary mission of the academic advising program is to develop meaningful plans through personal, educational, and vocational discernment." The cohort advising program for 2013-2014 speaks to this agenda, as faculty introduced students to the curriculum, discussed the value of the liberal arts, and initiated conversations about vocational discernment and academic planning. The Office of Academic Advising has further distilled these recommendations into three Student Learning Outcomes for the pre-major advising program, which we invite faculty to use to guide their work with freshmen and sophomores:

1. *Responsibility* (Knowledge and Action):
   - Be familiar with University curriculum and policies
   - Know how to run a degree audit, and do so regularly
   - Monitor own progress towards degree completion

2. *Reflection*
   - Align academic plan with interests, goals, talents, values
   - Recover from mistakes; change plans as necessary
   - Establish an appropriate and realistic plan which leads to on-time declaration of major in the spring of sophomore year

3. *Engagement* (external, social)

- Build connections with the University community
- Make full use of University resources

The key benchmark for the success of the pre-major advising program is the number of students who declare an appropriate major, with a realistic plan of study, by the end of sophomore year. This focus on academic goal-setting as an expression of a student's vocational discernment and realistic self-assessment aligns well with the recently approved University Learning Goals, but also has the practical advantage of supporting on-time graduation from the institution.

GREATER EFFICIENCY IN USE OF FACULTY TIME AND UNIVERSITY RESOURCES:

The APTF document suggested that the University "periodically consider alternative advising models (such as advising as a seven-week course for all new pre-major students with a common syllabus)" as part of an ongoing commitment to improve student outcomes. This suggestion appears in the context of concerns about the significantly uneven distribution of the advising load, noting the need for advising to be "shared equitably across faculty members," with a method of distribution which will be transparent. The question of how to advise 790+ freshmen each year both effectively and efficiently, using the static resources we have available, has no single simple answer. Among other factors to consider is the tension between our desire for an equitable distribution of the pre-major advising load and the need felt by both students and faculty to get the "right" disciplinary match as quickly as possible. The attached charts offer a view of the advising loads from 2010-2014, which reflect the particularly heavy burden carried by faculty in STEM and Boler. A disproportionate number of incoming students intend STEM (especially BL) and business relative to the number of faculty in those areas, leading to the disparity among faculty advising loads. On the other hand, the majority of undergraduate degrees awarded by the University are Bachelor of Arts, so faculty in the humanities, education, and the social sciences do end up counseling the majority of undergraduate majors, though by a slim margin. (JCU 2014 *Fact Book,* pp. 62-63) While the cohort model calls attention to these disparities, it can also offer creative opportunities for collaborative support, cross-disciplinary training and partnerships.

Freshmen and sophomore years should involve productive exploration rather than aimless wandering. Identifying the right program(s) of study as expeditiously as possible is one of the developmental task for students in these years. What the mix of group and individual counseling options offers students is an array of both broad conversations concerning potential areas of study (along with the personal and professional opportunities available through those areas), and targeted, tailored conversations designed to elicit more detailed information about a student's personal strengths, weaknesses, and goals. If we take seriously our obligation to offer our students the nuts and bolts conversations about University curricula and policies, as well as the deeply personal conversations about how the individual student can make use of what we have available, then real value accrues to the group meetings, which are vehicles for conveying information consistently to the freshmen class (and, in targeted ways, to students in specific disciplinary divisions), and addressing questions which are of general interest. For faculty, especially those who have 15-20 freshmen to advise, some such vehicle, supported by Canvas and other digital forms of outreach, provides the opportunity to reinforce tactical and technical information, so protecting time during one-on-one meetings to build a relationship with the advisee and to discuss that advisee's specific needs and concerns. While students and faculty

agree, in theory, on the need for individual advising meetings, students themselves do not become aware of the value and importance of the advising relationship unless it is called to their attention loudly and clearly at the outset of their career. The efficiencies gained through consistent and reliable advising become apparent over the course of a student's career here, in the form of on-time declaration of the appropriate major, and on-time completion of degree. By the same token, academic drift is costly for both students and the institution. What happens between freshmen and senior years as students explore the curriculum, acquire some self-knowledge, and commit to a degree program that is right for them, should be reflected in an advising program which supports clear decision making and facilitates four-year degree completion.

ENABLING ASSESSMENT:

No matter how we construct the pre-major advising program, we need to attend to matters of assessment. Assessment will benefit both faculty and students by providing feedback for improvements and recognition for excellent work. With the learning goals listed above (Responsibility, Reflection, Engagement), the assessment options range from student self-reporting on annual surveys (.e.g, "Can you run a degree evaluation? Are you familiar with the requirements for your intended major?") to data on major declaration taken from Banner. Todd Bruce has reviewed the initial draft of assessment items and plans for advising and is prepared to assist with implementation. For faculty, the cohort model offers the opportunity to make visible to department and deans the work being done, not only with majors, but also with the undecided and the undeclared. The assessment plans will vary somewhat, depending on the outcome of the faculty decision on the hybrid model for pre-major advising, but the fundamental goals, expressed through the APTF recommendations and restated above, will enable us to establish benchmarks and evaluate both direct and indirect measures of student learning.

Works Cited

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John Carroll University

Academic Planning Task Force

Advising Working Group

Final Report

~~Draft of~~ May 2~~1~~4, 2012

Working Group Members

Laura Atkins, Rebecca Dinnen, Malia McAndrew, Catherine Miller (past member), Maryclaire Moroney (co-chair), Doug Norris, Kyle O'Dell, Mindy Peden (past co-chair), Naveed Piracha, Cynthia Marco Scanlon, Tom Short (co-chair), Elizabeth Stiles, Andy Welki, and John Yost.

Charge

Our working group's charge appeared in the Academic Planning Task Force (APTF) Phase I Report:

> *Specifically we recommend the committee consider:*
>
> *A. Examining how we can make course alignment more viable both within and between academic programs and the core curriculum to promote: a more holistic and **integrated** sense of their relationship to each other, more **intentional** course selection, and more **individualized** programs of study.*
>
> *B. Determining how advising can facilitate a more **intentional, integrative**, and **individualized** selection of courses.*
>
> *C. Whether to use E portfolios or some other system that asks students to take greater responsibility for demonstrating how they are meeting the institutional learning outcomes and how they are designing their own personal and career goals.*
>
> *D. Whether the current model of course registration should be modified?*

Charges Attended To and Other Issues That Emerged

> We began our work by assigning to members of the group chapters selected from the book *Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Handbook* (2nd ed). Some members prepared

summaries of the chapters they read, and we discussed the readings in our meetings. These readings formed a common foundation for the rest of our work.

After considering our charge and the readings, we decided that our main tasks would be to formulate a mission statement, to develop goals for the JCU advising program, and to consider alternative models for the advising program.

Accomplishments

We developed the following mission statement:

> *The primary mission of the academic advising program is to empower individuals to develop meaningful plans through educational, personal, and vocational discernment.*

We also developed goals in three broad categories: Expectations, Efficacy, and Technology. The goals are listed below.

Expectations

1. Our advising program will facilitate reflection and integration of learning.

2. Individual students will remain responsible for their own academic programs, with guidance from advisors.

3. There will be an centralized, University-wide academic advising center to coordinate advising across campus.

   a) The academic advising center coordinator will be a permanent and full-time position.

   b) The center's staff will articulate the advisor role and advisee responsibilities.

   c) The center's staff will support pre-major, major, graduate, and special audience advising.

   d) The center's staff will provide advisor training and opportunities for development that are available to all faculty members and is consistent across academic units.

   e) The center will provide mandatory training and development for new advisors, including new faculty members.

   f) The center's staff will maintain consistency in follow-up with regard to warnings and notifications.

   g) The center will provide referrals for individual students to other offices within the University, as appropriate, including Financial Aid, Housing, and the Counseling Center.

4. All faculty members will share in the responsibility for advising. The advising load will be shared equitably across faculty members, and the process of assigning the load will be transparent.

5. Advising and participation in development opportunities for advising will be recognized and assessed as part of each faculty member's teaching responsibilities. There will be consistency and transparency in recognition and compensation for advising.

6. The institution will periodically consider alternative advising models (such as advising as a seven-week course for all new pre-major students with a common syllabus).

Efficacy

The following resources will be considered and absorbed into the JCU advising process. Assessment information will be gathered by the Academic Advising Center and then used to maintain and improve the quality of the advising program. The APTF working group recommends that the Academic Advising Center be charged with the following responsibilities:

1. ~~We will~~ To monitor the rate at which students are satisfying program requirements, and verify that sufficient opportunities exist so that students can satisfy their requirements.

2. ~~We will~~ To monitor retention of students from semester to semester and from year to year.

3. ~~We will~~ To document each student's advising experience in a consistent manner.

4. ~~We will~~ To regularly survey students and advisors about the effectiveness of the advising program.

5. ~~We will~~ To regularly benchmark our advising program with peer institutions.

6. ~~We will~~ To monitor the load on faculty advisors and monitor whether the changes in the advising load are associated with the success of the advising program.

7. ~~We will~~ To coordinate and disseminate the dimensions of senior exit information as they reflect on the advising program.

Technology

Appropriate technology will be made available to facilitate advising. This technology should include the ability to:

1. Outline program requirements and indicate whether they are satisfied.

2. Facilitate communication between advisors and advisees

3. Maintain electronic trails of documentation, including degree audit reports and e-portfolios.

4. Make available online resources to support advising.

5. Pursue pathways through which students can be reached, such as e-portfolios and social networking opportunities.

In light of our group's charge, we recognize the importantance of considering electronic documentation, such as e-portfolios. We chose to develop general goals for technology rather than to emphasize any specific format.

Recommendations

We recommend that the university, and in particular the College of Arts and Sciences Associate Dean for Advising and the Boler School Dean's Office, work toward implementing the goals listed above.

Our hope is for a transparent and effective coordinated university-wide advising program, to maximize guidance and assistance for students and to provide appropriate support and recognition for advisors.

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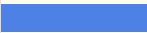
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Report of Cohort Advising Survey - Advisor

Last Updated: 01/27/2015

1. Please check the category of your cohort group:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Humanities and Social Sciences		12	31%
2	STEM and Allied Health		13	33%
3	Business		7	18%
4	Education		3	8%
5	Undecided		4	10%
	Total		39	100%
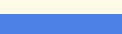
Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.33
Variance	1.65
Standard Deviation	1.28
Total Responses	39

2. What, if any, was the attrition rate of students changing to another cohort group?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	None at all		28	72%
2	A few		10	26%
3	Less than half		0	0%
4	More than half		1	3%
	Total		39	100%
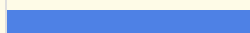
Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	1.33
Variance	0.39
Standard Deviation	0.62
Total Responses	39

3. Were the students in your cohort placed in the appropriate general cohort group for their academic interest?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Extremely well placed		4	10%
2	Very well placed		23	59%
3	Moderately well placed		10	26%
4	Mostly misplaced		2	5%
5	Not at all well placed		0	0%
	Total		39	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	2.26
Variance	0.51
Standard Deviation	0.72
Total Responses	39

4. Four cohort group meetings and one individual meeting were recommended. Would you say that your cohort had too many meetings, too few meetings, or about the right number?
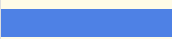
#	Answer		Response	%
1	Way too many		3	8%
2	One too many		13	33%
3	The right number		20	51%
4	One too few		1	3%
5	Way too few		1	3%
6	Suggestions		5	13%

Suggestions
The first two meetings were too close together
One on one meetings necessary sooner and more often than I expected.
the Borromeo students already have other activities that make them a "cohort" so much of this is redundant for them
need one at the toward the end of semester
but spread them out over more than 5 weeks; my undecided students were not ready to talk about vocation so soon; need more time to develop that

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	6
Total Responses	39

5.   How would you rate the attendance at your group cohort meetings?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Excellent attendance		14	36%
2	Mostly well attended		19	49%
3	Moderate attendance		4	10%
4	Fluctuating attendance		2	5%
5	Sparse attendance		0	0%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Total Responses	39

6. Possible reasons for sparse attendance?
Text Response

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	0

7. Please rate the effectiveness of the proposed objectives of the first cohort meeting: Introduce...

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Very effective		6	15%
2	Effective with most students		26	67%
3	Effective with half of students		3	8%
4	Ineffective with most students		2	5%
5	Completely ineffective		0	0%
6	Presented alternate materials to the group		1	3%
7	Comments		2	5%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Total Responses	39

8. Please rate the effectiveness of the proposed objectives of the second cohort meeting: Introduce and discuss the purpose and value of the core curriculum in the liberal arts.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Very effective with students		3	8%
2	Effective with most students		23	59%
3	Effective with half of students		6	15%
4	Ineffective with most students		4	10%
5	Completely ineffective		0	0%
6	Presented alternate materials to the group		1	3%
7	Comments		3	8%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Total Responses	39

9. Please rate the effectiveness of the proposed objectives of the third cohort meeting: Introduce and discuss academic and other campus resources that support student success.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Very effective with students		3	8%
2	Effective with most students		19	49%
3	Effective with half of students		8	21%
4	Ineffective with most students		4	10%
5	Completely ineffective		0	0%
6	Presented alternate materials to the group		2	5%
7	Comments		7	18%

Comments

We had good discussions and I think the stduents got comfortable with me. I never tried to judge how much information they retained.

I think this could be combined with one of the other meetings.

Once again I found myself duplicating the effort of each of the other cohort advisors I spoke with.

students did not take it seriously

They did not attend.

Handled collectively through BSOB

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Total Responses	39

10. Please rate the effectiveness of the proposed objectives of the fourth cohort meeting: Discuss midterm progress and goals, vocational discernment, and reflections on the term.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Very effective with students		4	10%
2	Effective with most students		11	28%
3	Effective with half of students		14	36%
4	Ineffective with most students		7	18%
5	Completely ineffective		0	0%
6	Presented alternate materials to the group		1	3%
7	Comments		6	15%

| Comments |
|---|
| We had good discussions and I think the stduents got comfortable with me. I never tried to judge how much information they retained. |
| I'm not sure that vocational discernment is an area of expertise for many faculty members. Perhaps Career Services would be a better resource in this area. |
| Once again, each advisor is left to find and gather all of this material. The advising office should provide it online in one easy to locate place. |
| I had individual meetings on these matters, along with general BSOB meeting |
| too soon, occurring when students are still getting used to classes, campus, etc.; also, with my undecideds, too difficult to talk about in a group, since they had such varied directions |
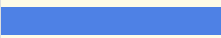
Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Total Responses	39

11. Please rate the effectiveness of the proposed purpose of the fifth, individual, cohort meeting: Individual

advisor/advisee meetings for priority registration and for devising an academic plan.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Very effective with students		18	46%
2	Very effective with students		13	33%
3	Effective with half of students		5	13%
4	Ineffective with most students		1	3%
5	Completely ineffective		0	0%
6	Presented alternate plan to student		0	0%
7	Comments		7	18%

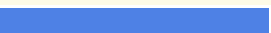| Comments |
|----------|
| Most of the students came prepared with a plan. Definitely more often than in the past, but I did not attempt to quantify it. |
| This should read effective with most students. |
| see comments for meeting two through four. |
| Categories one and two above are the same |
| Typo above - effective w/ most |
| registration, fine; academic plan, difficult at that point with undecideds; again, too early for some of them |

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Total Responses	39

12. Please evaluate the intended overall outcomes of the AR 101 Cohort Advising Program: Students have drafted an academic plan and understand the academic and curricular program requirements ahead.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly agree		6	15%
2	Agree		21	54%
3	Neutral		10	26%
4	Disagree		1	3%
5	Strongly disagree		1	3%
	Total		39	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.23
Variance	0.71
Standard Deviation	0.84
Total Responses	39

13. Please evaluate the intended overall outcomes of the AR 101 Cohort Advising Program: Faculty advisors know their advisees better now as a result of this intensive early exchange early in the semester

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly agree		4	10%
2	Agree		22	56%
3	Neutral		8	21%
4	Disagree		4	10%
5	Strongly disagree		1	3%
	Total		39	100%
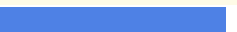
Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.38
Variance	0.82
Standard Deviation	0.91
Total Responses	39

14. Please evaluate the intended overall outcomes of the AR 101 Cohort Advising Program: Students have a good sense of the learning support services offered by JCU.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly agree		5	13%
2	Agree		19	49%
3	Neutral		13	33%
4	Disagree		2	5%
5	Strongly disagree		0	0%
	Total		39	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	4
Mean	2.31
Variance	0.59
Standard Deviation	0.77
Total Responses	39

15. Please evaluate the intended overall outcomes of the AR 101 Cohort Advising Program: The group cohort sessions generally made a difference in the quality of conversation for spring registration.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Strongly agree		4	11%
2	Agree		18	47%
3	Neutral		12	32%
4	Disagree		3	8%
5	Strongly disagree		1	3%
	Total		38	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.45
Variance	0.79
Standard Deviation	0.89
Total Responses	38

16. We welcome suggestions on making the program more effective. Please briefly state below or email to kgilway@jcu.edu

Text Response

2 of my 10 students were in my business cohort apparently because the time of session best fit their schedules, NOT because of their interest in Business. Both objected to the business-orientation of my advising, and I was unprepared to support them in their education and/or journalism career paths. We should try to avoid such mis-matches in the future, if possible.

Four meetings before the individual meetings was overkill. Two meetings before the individual meetings would be just right.

I personally like the cohort model. It helps incoming students get to know a few other students who are going through the same things. It seemed to help all of us get to know each other better. I think it has helped students feel more comfortable contacting me after the fall meetings occurred. However, I do think that most of the goals can be met with one less group meeting, especially since this is not counting as an actual course for students or faculty. Also, it is very difficult to advise students who have interests in areas that are completely outside of a faculty member's expertise. Overall though, I would like to see the program continue as research shows that students are more likely to stay enrolled when they have made positive connections with faculty & their peers. If the expectation for faculty is to take on a new cohort every other year, I think this is manageable considering the potential benefit for our incoming students.

I received 15 advisees for my cohort; I felt I was able to be more personal and helpful with a smaller number like I had last year (5 students).

It worked better than I expected, actually. I wish students were better placed, though. For example, one of my students wanted to be a biology major!

I will be helpful to have some guideline and specific things to do in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th cohort meeting.

My biggest problem was in recognizing my advisees. Is there a way to link the ID pictures to the class roster, so that I could "study" prior to the next cohort meeting?

My biggest worry about the cohort program is that advisees had exactly the same questions during their individual meetings that they would have had without any cohort meetings. I feel nothing is gained in the cohort meetings. Advisees simply are not ready to process what we discuss in those meetings.

None of my cohort switched, even though some changed interests. My personal belief is that our role in pre-major advising is to help them find what they want to pursue, whether it is our area or not. If a shuttle them off at the first sign of a major outside my department I don't think I'm modeling well the value I have for the liberal arts. I think an over emphasis on major identification and advising can detract from the experience of students. As an advisor I can learn and consult with others and/or have my advisee consult with others and do some leg work as well. I would also like to see more consistency in expectations (e.g. BSOB with a different process than CAS, PT vs FT faculty...). I do think that the notion of scheduling meetings and expectations for attendance is a good think. In the old days that is what happened on an individual basis, but that went away with the switch to Banner. Set the expectation with students (and faculty) that advising is important and that in-person meeting times are expected.

Talking with other advisors, it became evident that the first meeting was not consistent among the advisors. Some covered everything (which was probably too much) and others covered little if anything (some met just to say "welcome" with no substance to the meeting) The distribution of students was far from equal.. Some advisors had an overload, while others had only a few students.

The office of advising should gather all material that they would like the advisors to present and

make it available online. In fact, please provide detailed information and examples for each of the advising sessions. Each cohort advisor I spoke with felt themselves having to hunt for information to present. This is incredibly an ineffective use of faculty time.

There are a couple of errors in this survey form - a missing text entry box, and a duplicated response box.

The students had more difficulty than I predicted creating a four year plan and some politely resisted it. All of them felt overwhelmed doing it.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	13

Table 1. FrSo Students, Advisers, Advisers with FrSo Students, FrSo student per adviser with FrSo (Advisers without FrSo are not included in this average)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
FrSo students	1666	1841	1789	1893	2108
Advisers	182	182	180	182	184
Advisers with FrSo	151	152	164	162	160
FrSo/Adviser	11.0	12.1	10.9	11.7	13.2
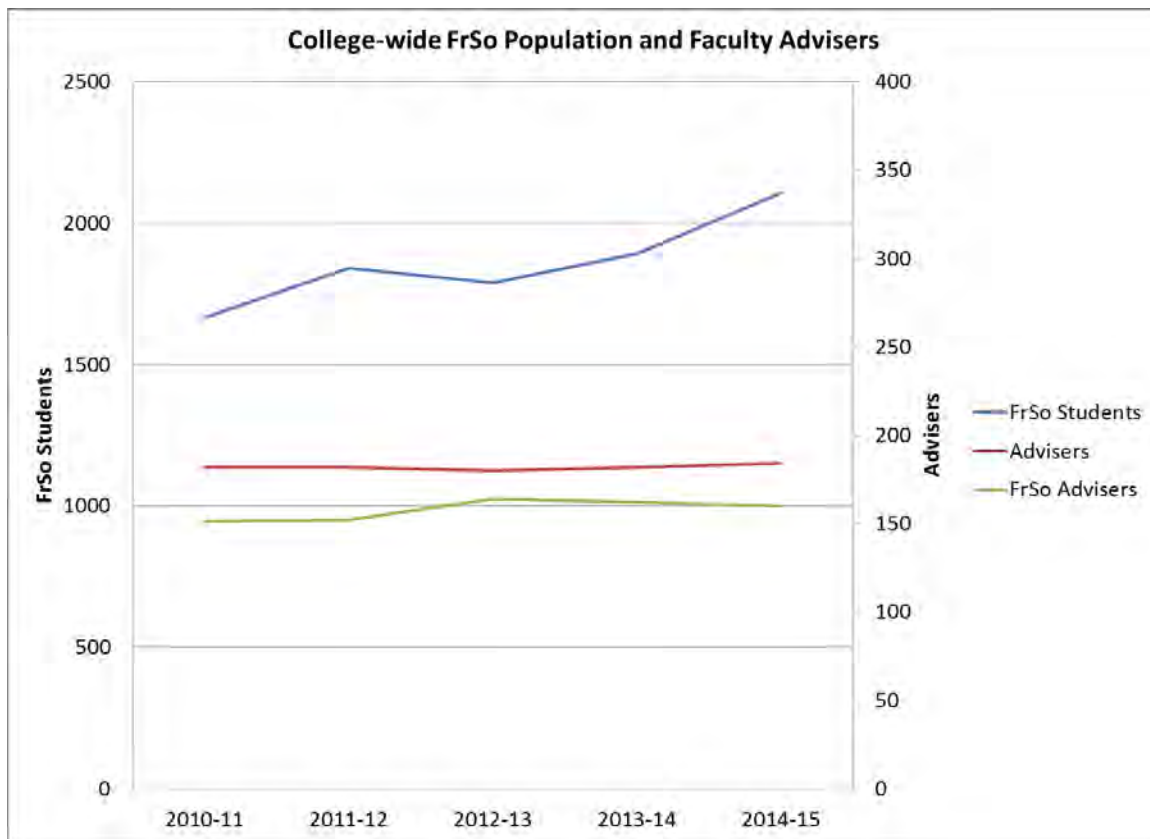
College-wide FrSo Population and FrSo Student/FRSO Adviser Ratio

College-wide Distribution of FrSo Advising Load

College-wide Distribution of FrSo Advising Load

College-wide Detrended Distribution of FrSo Advising Load (2010-11 Student Population)

Number of Advisers vs. Number of FrSo Advisees

Legend: 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15

College-wide Detrended Distribution of FrSo Advising Load (2010-11 Student Population)

Number of Advisers vs. Number of FrSo Advisees
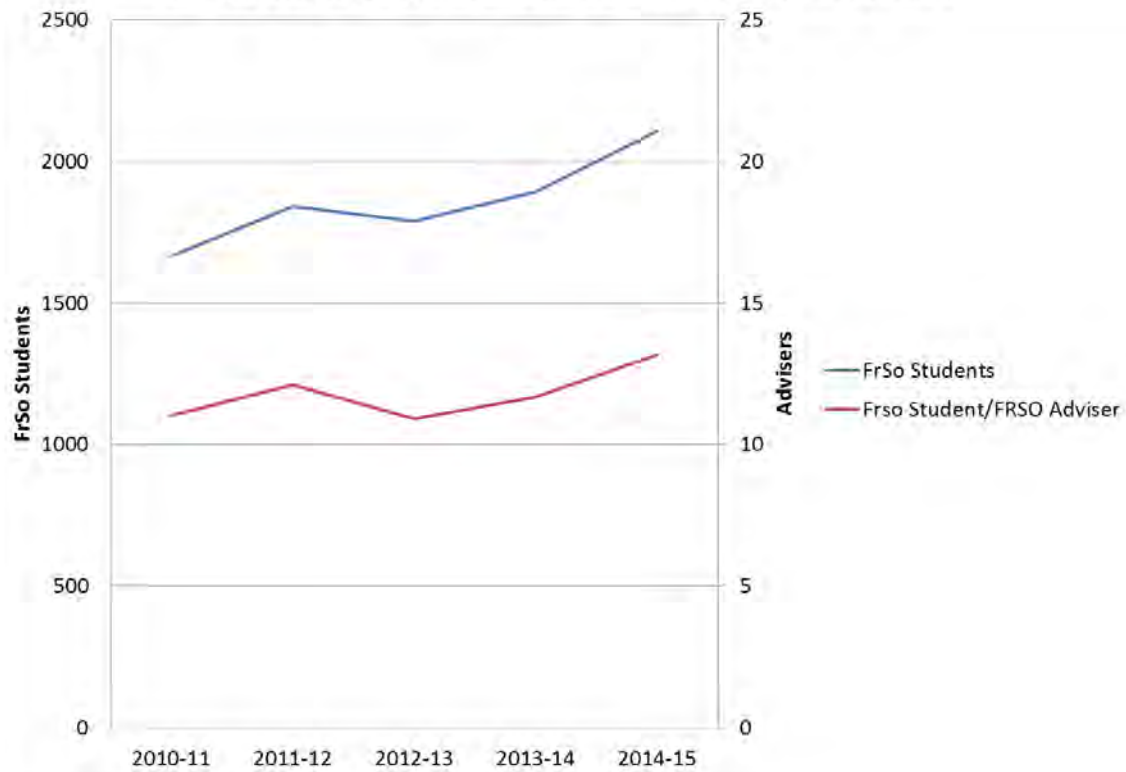
Legend: 2010-12, 2012-13, 2013-15

Table 2. FrSo Students, Advisers, Advisers with FrSo Students, FrSo student per adviser with FrSo (Advisers without FrSo are not included in this average) for Boler School of Business
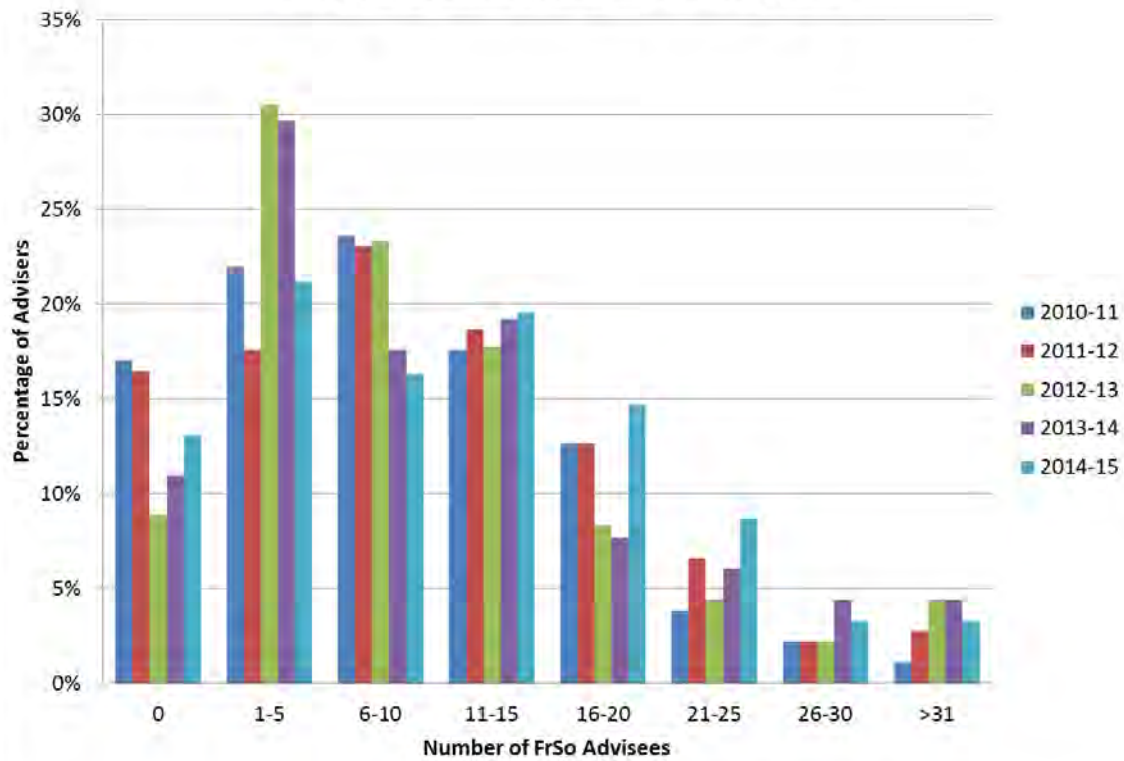
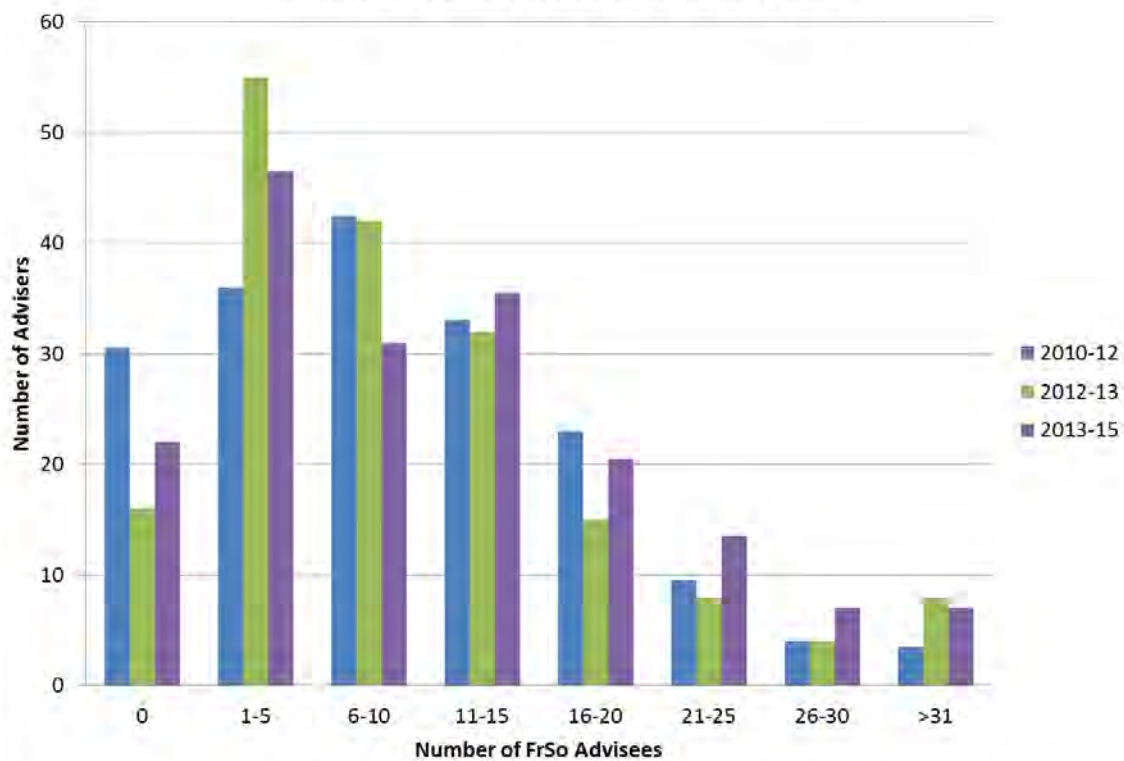|	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
FrSo students	421	494	560	604	726
Advisers	36	33	30	31	35
Advisers with FrSo	30	28	26	29	35
FrSo/Adviser	14.0	17.6	21.5	20.8	20.7

BSoB FrSo Population and Faculty Advisers

BSoB FrSo Population and FrSo Student/FRSO Adviser Ratio
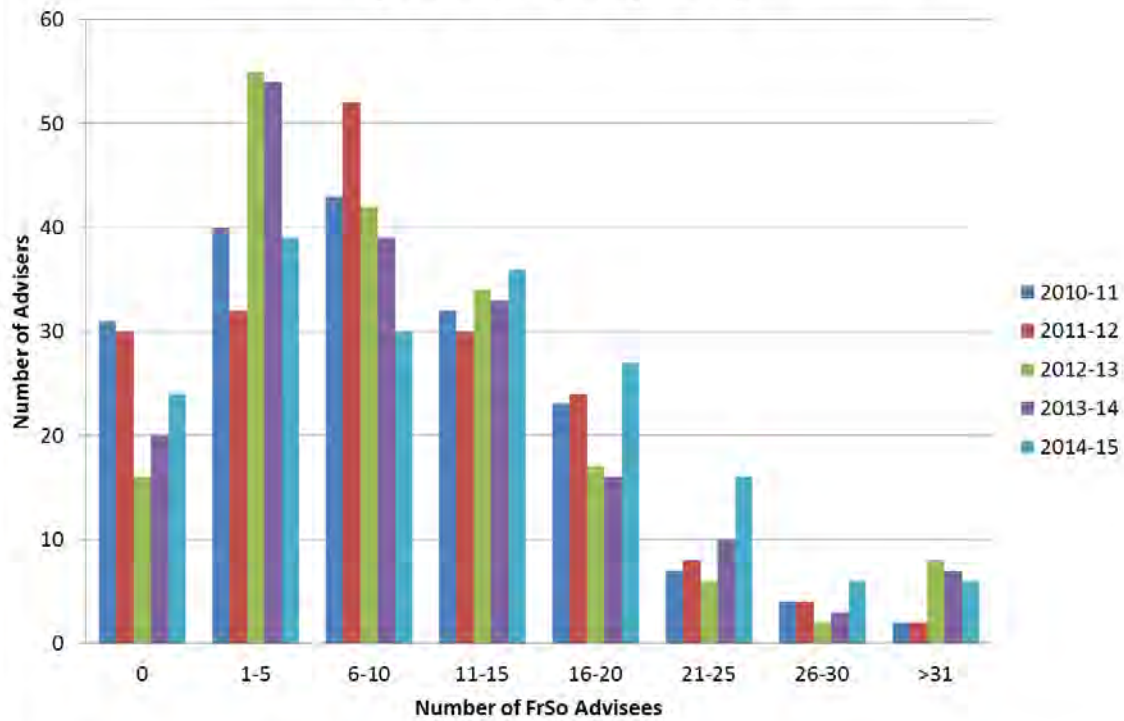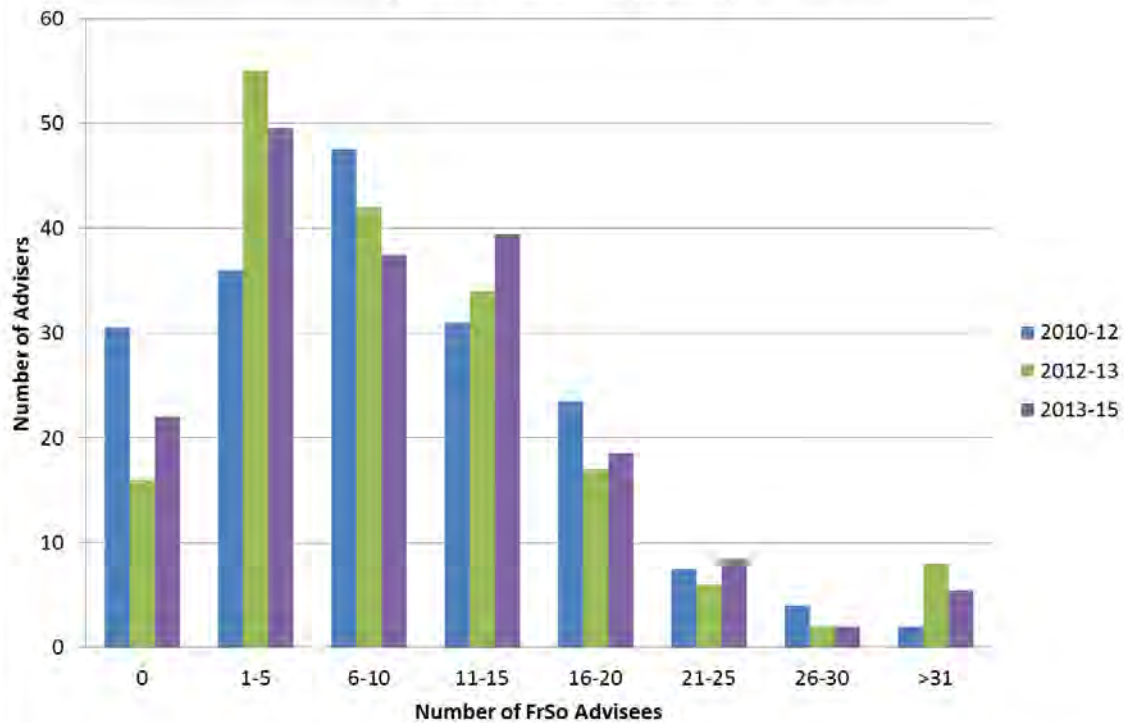
BSoB Distribution of FrSo Advising Load

BSoB-wide Distribution of FrSo Advising Load

BSoB Detrended Distribution of FrSo Advising Load (2010-11 Student Population)

Number of Advisers vs Number of FrSo Advisees

Legend: 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15
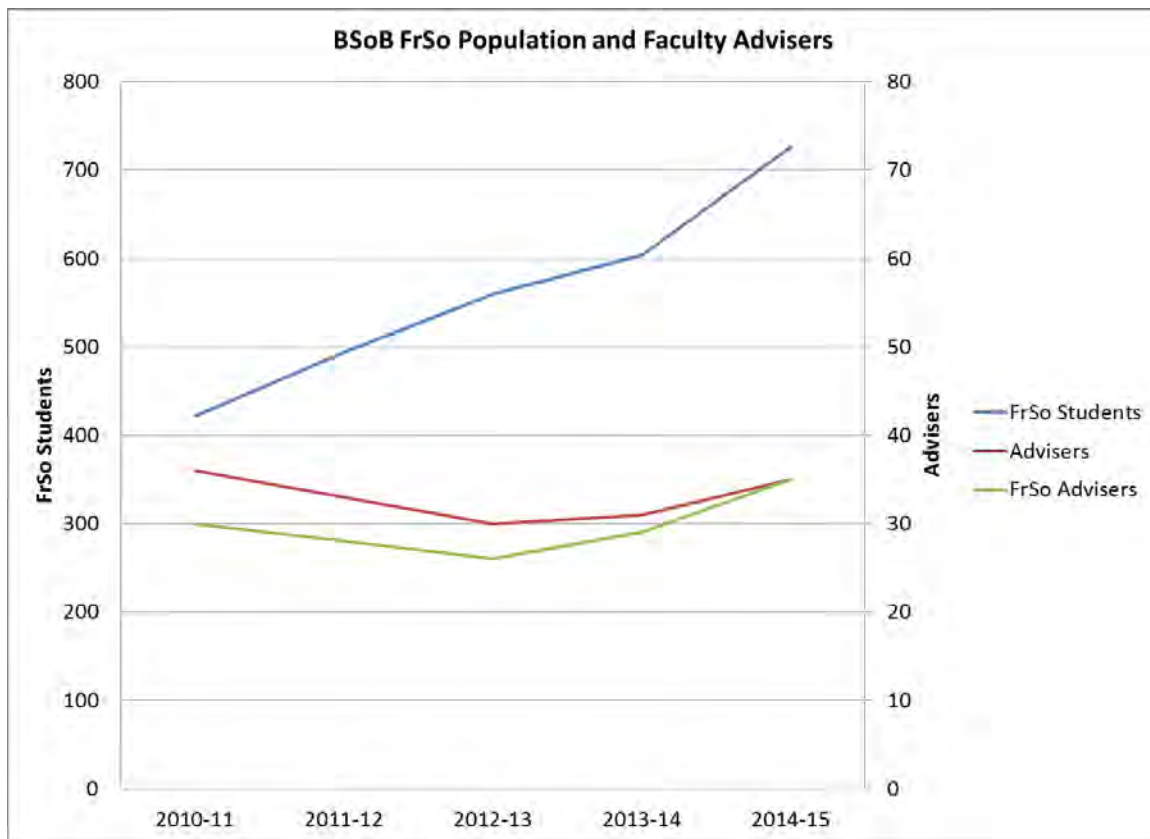

BSoB Detrended Distribution of FrSo Advising Load (2010-11 Student Population)

Number of Advisers vs Number of FrSo Advisees
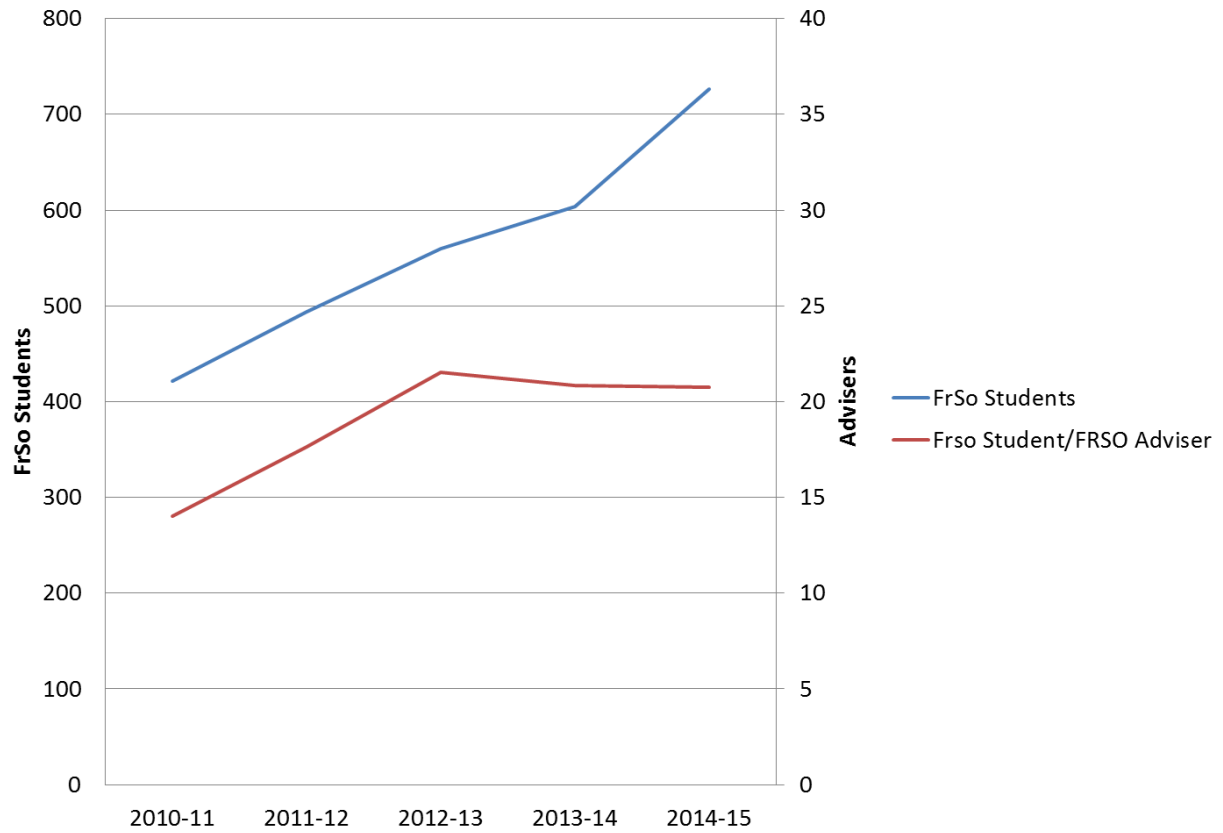
Legend: 2010-12, 2012-13, 2013-15
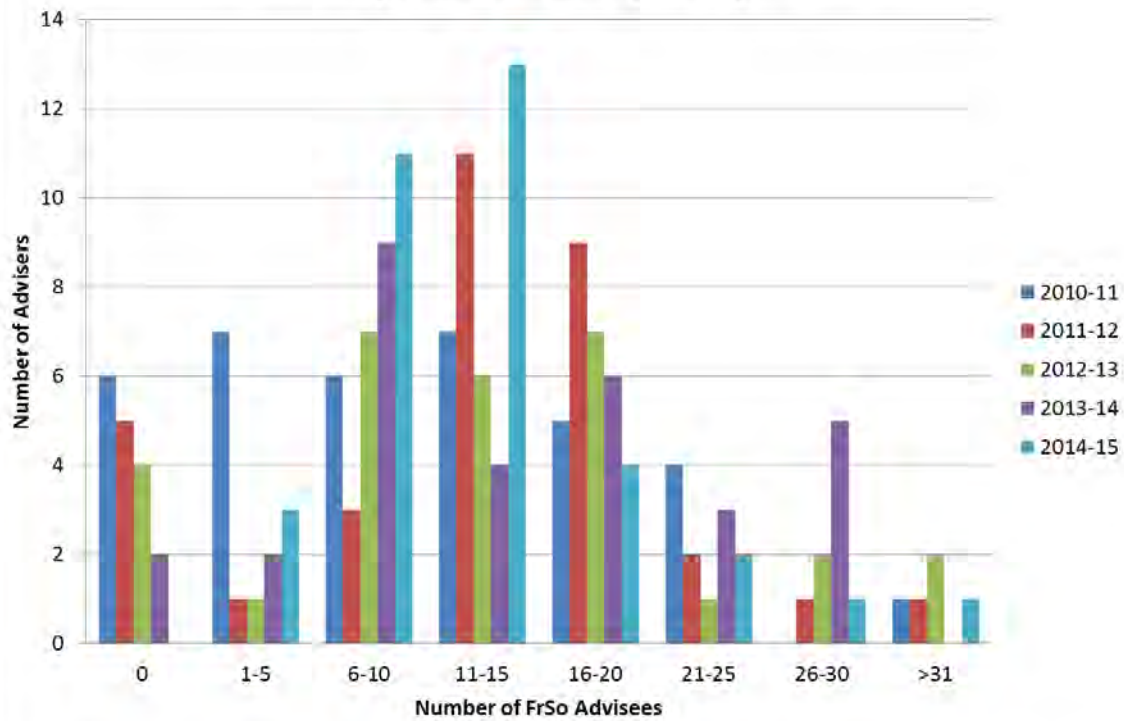
Table 3. FrSo Students, Advisers, Advisers with FrSo Students, FrSo student per adviser with FrSo (Advisers without FrSo are not included in this average) for STEM area

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
FrSo students	531	625	594	609	665
Advisers	47	45	48	47	48
Advisers with FrSo	44	44	48	45	46
FrSo/Adviser	12.1	14.2	12.4	15.5	14.5

STEM FrSo Population and FrSo Student/FRSO Adviser Ratio

STEM Distribution of FrSo Advising Load

STEM Distribution of FrSo Advising Load
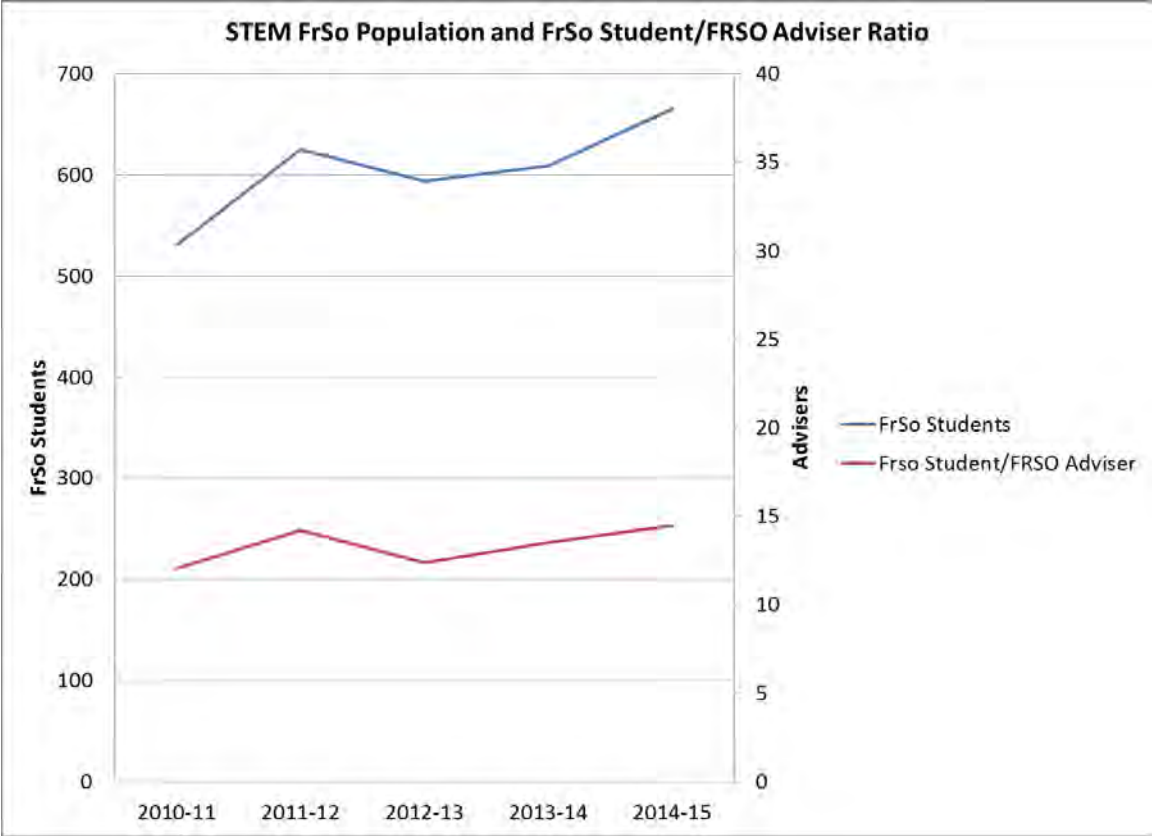
STEM Detrended Distribution of FrSo Advising Load
(2010-11 Student Population)
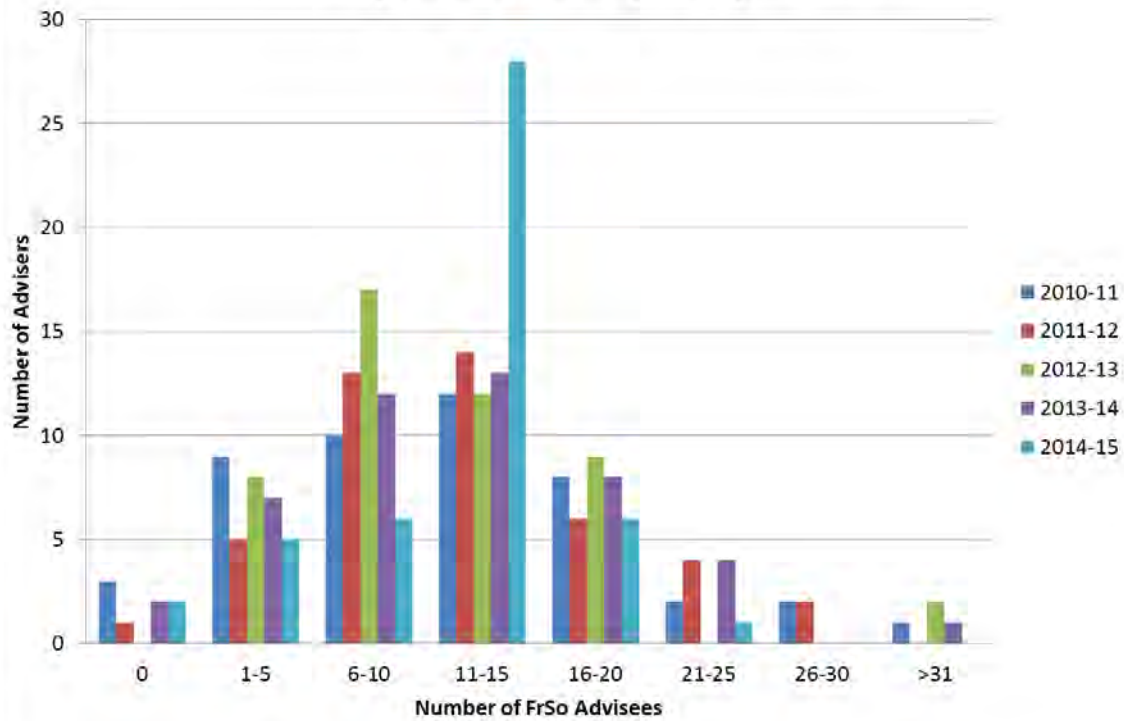
STEM Detrended Distribution of FrSo Advising Load
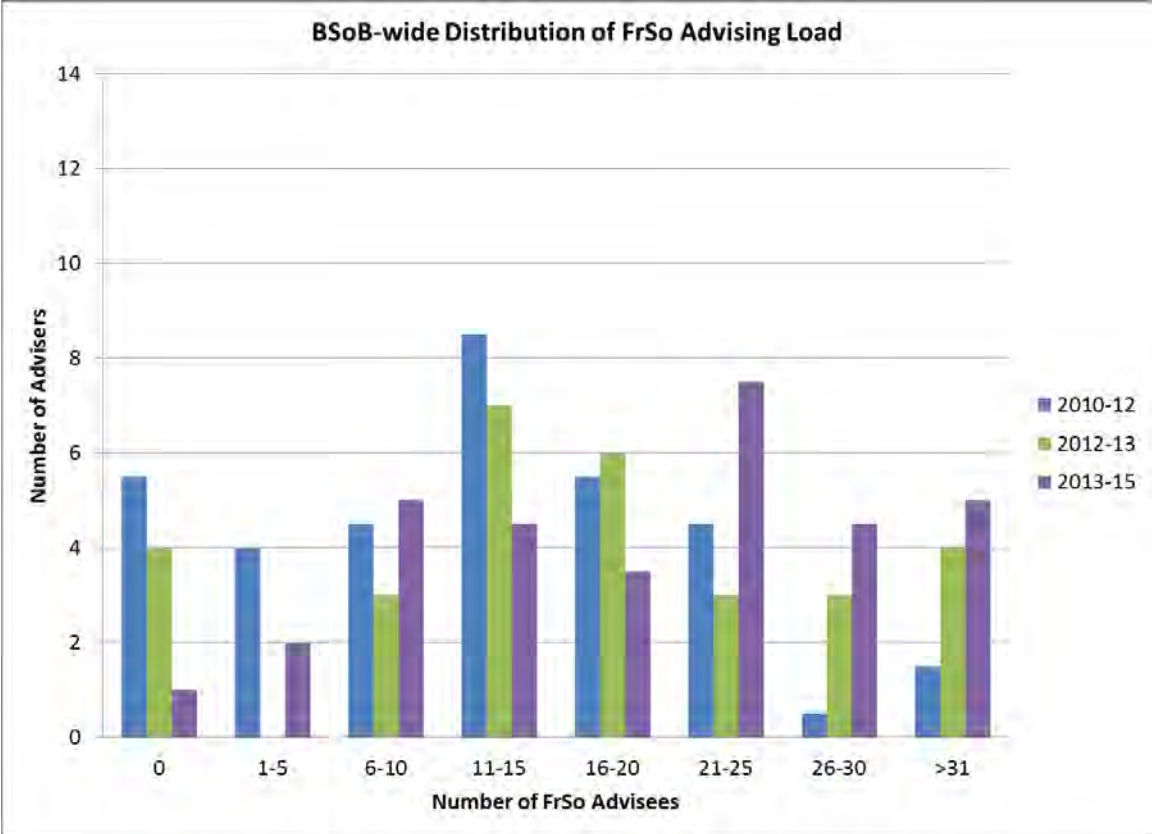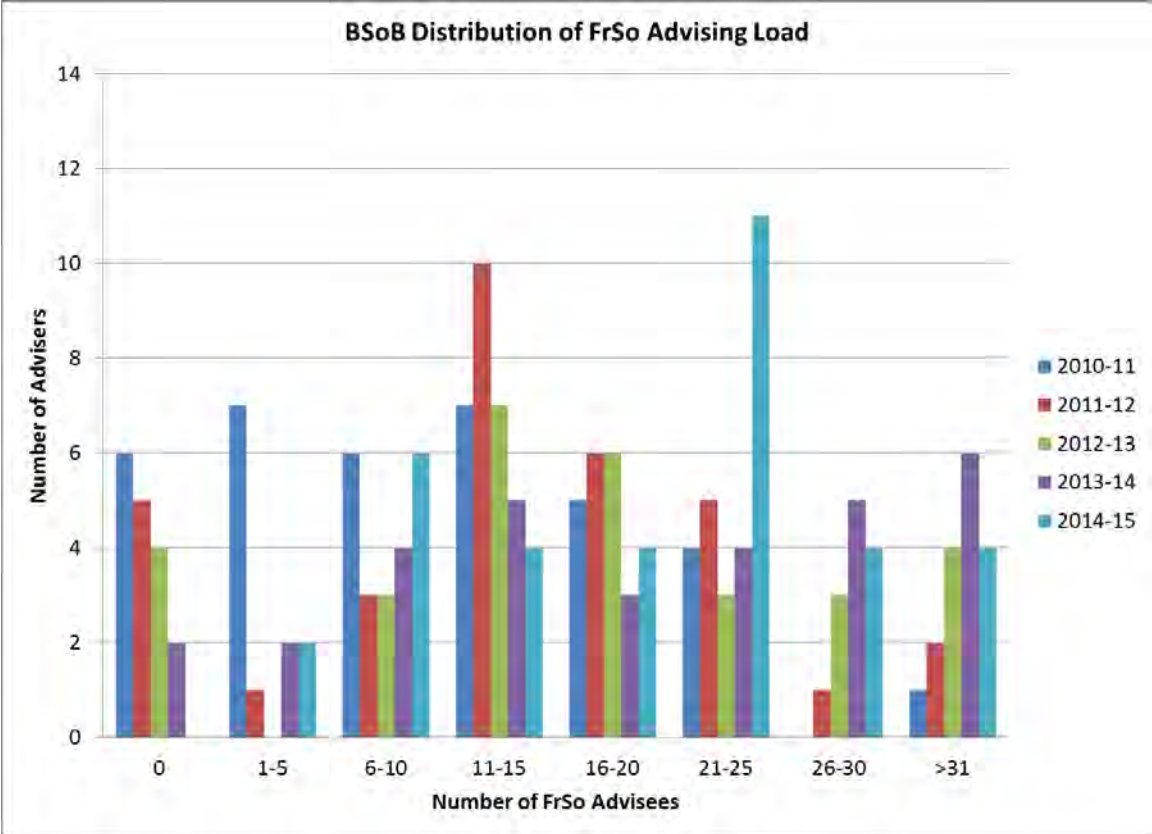(2010-11 Student Population)
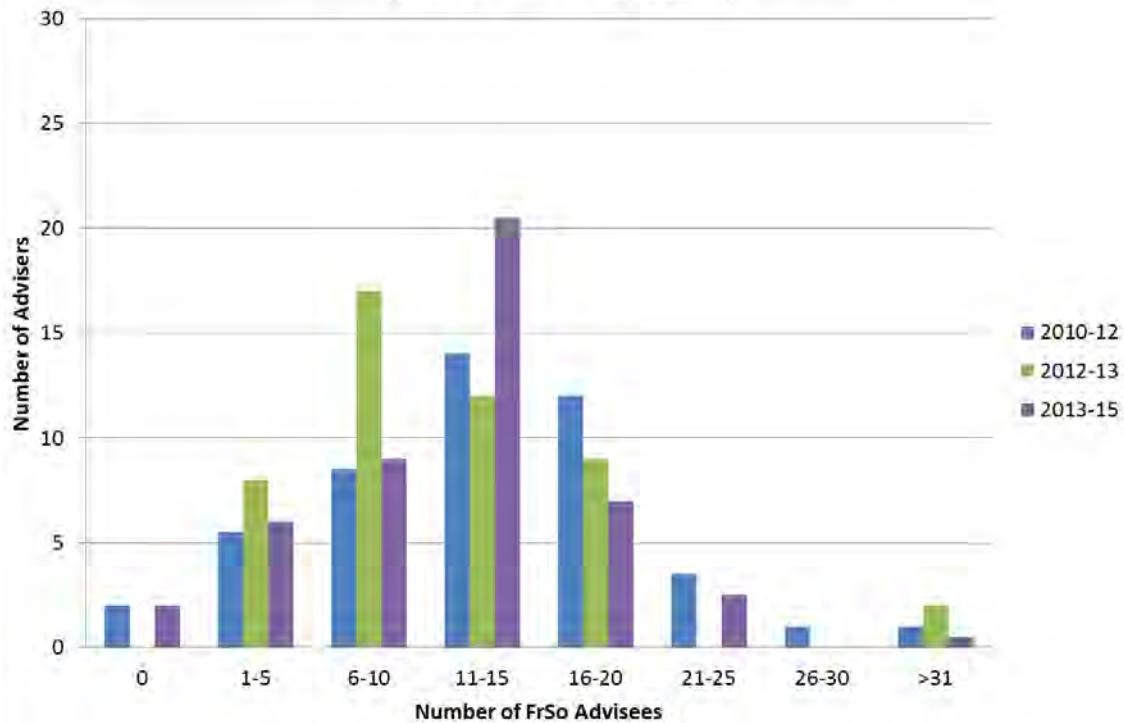
Table 4. FrSo Students, Advisers, Advisers with FrSo Students, FrSo student per adviser with FrSo (Advisers without FrSo are not included in this average) for Humanities/Social Studies

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
FrSo students	714	722	635	680	717
Advisers	99	104	102	104	101
Advisers with FrSo	77	80	90	88	79
FrSo/Adviser	9.3	9.0	7.1	7.7	9.1
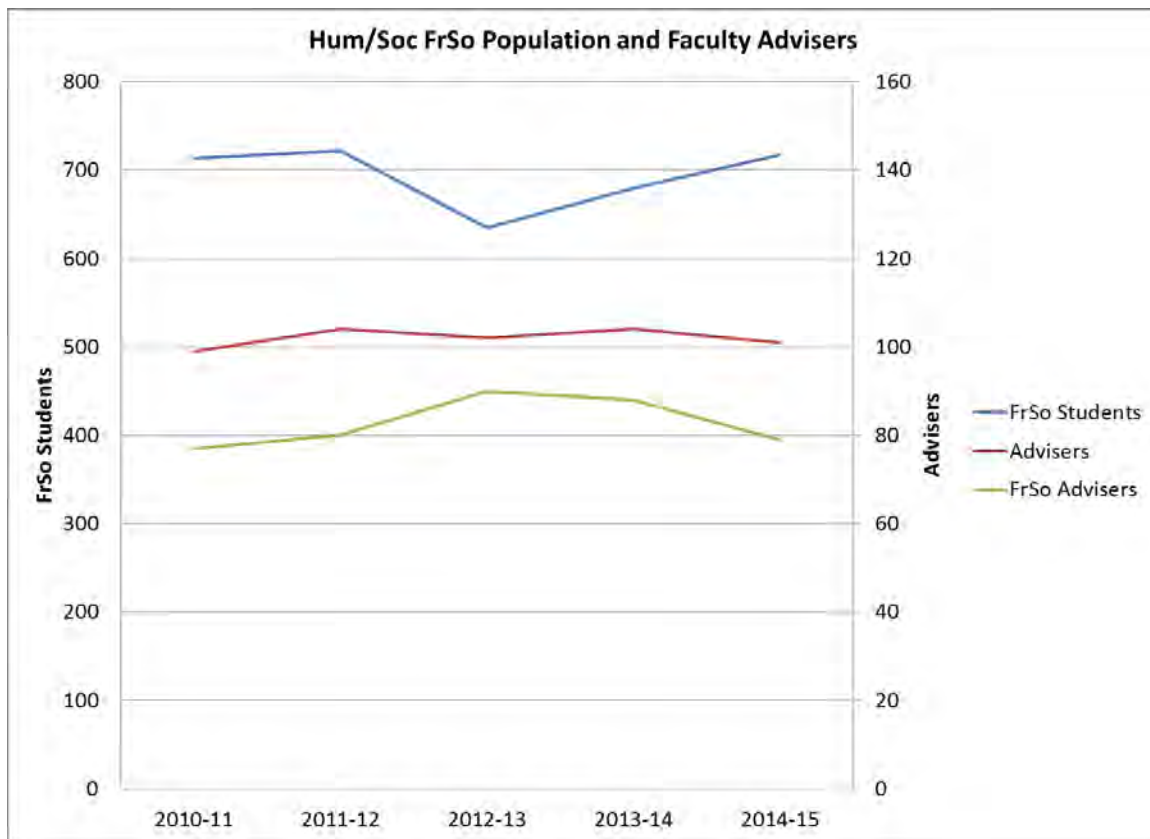
Hum/Soc FrSo Population and FrSo Student/FRSO Adviser Ratio

Hum/Soc Distribution of FrSo Advising Load
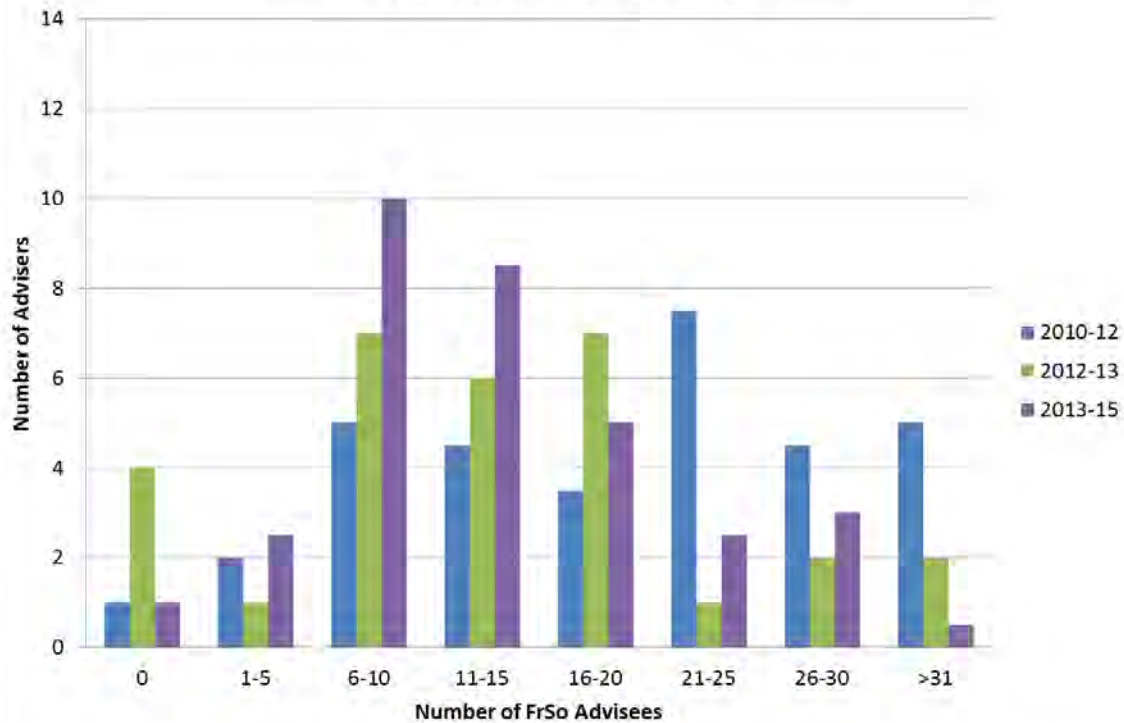

Hum/Soc Distribution of FrSo Advising Load
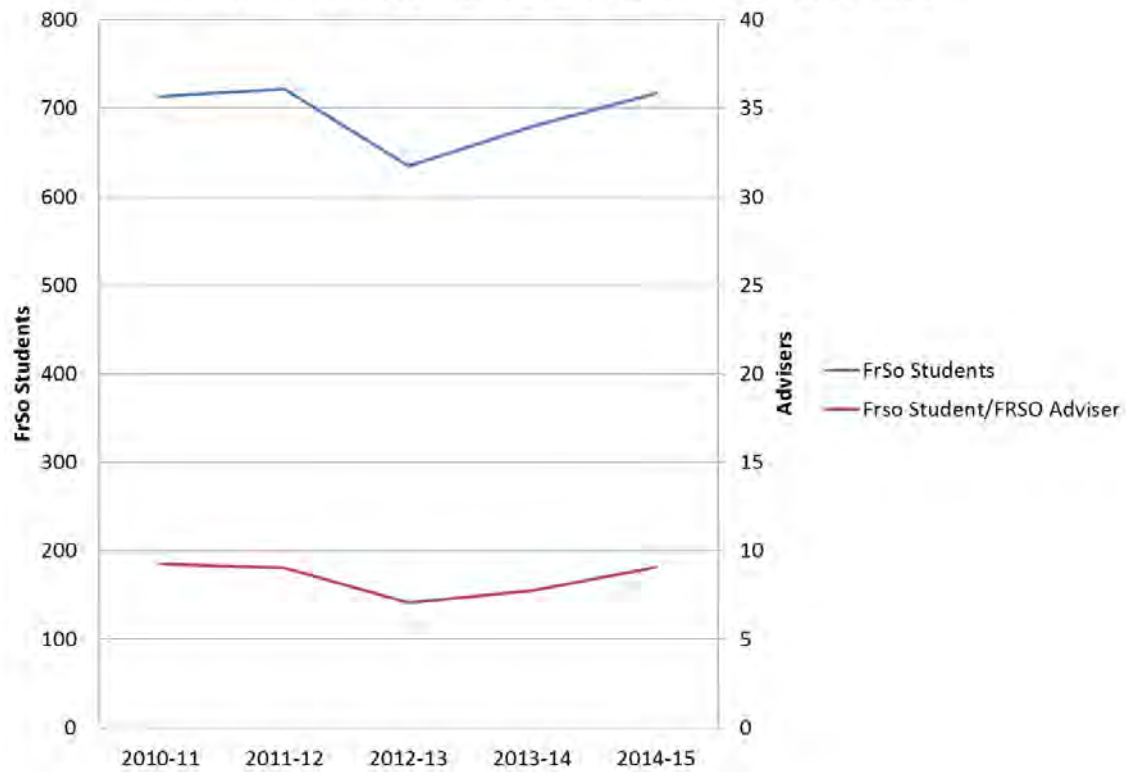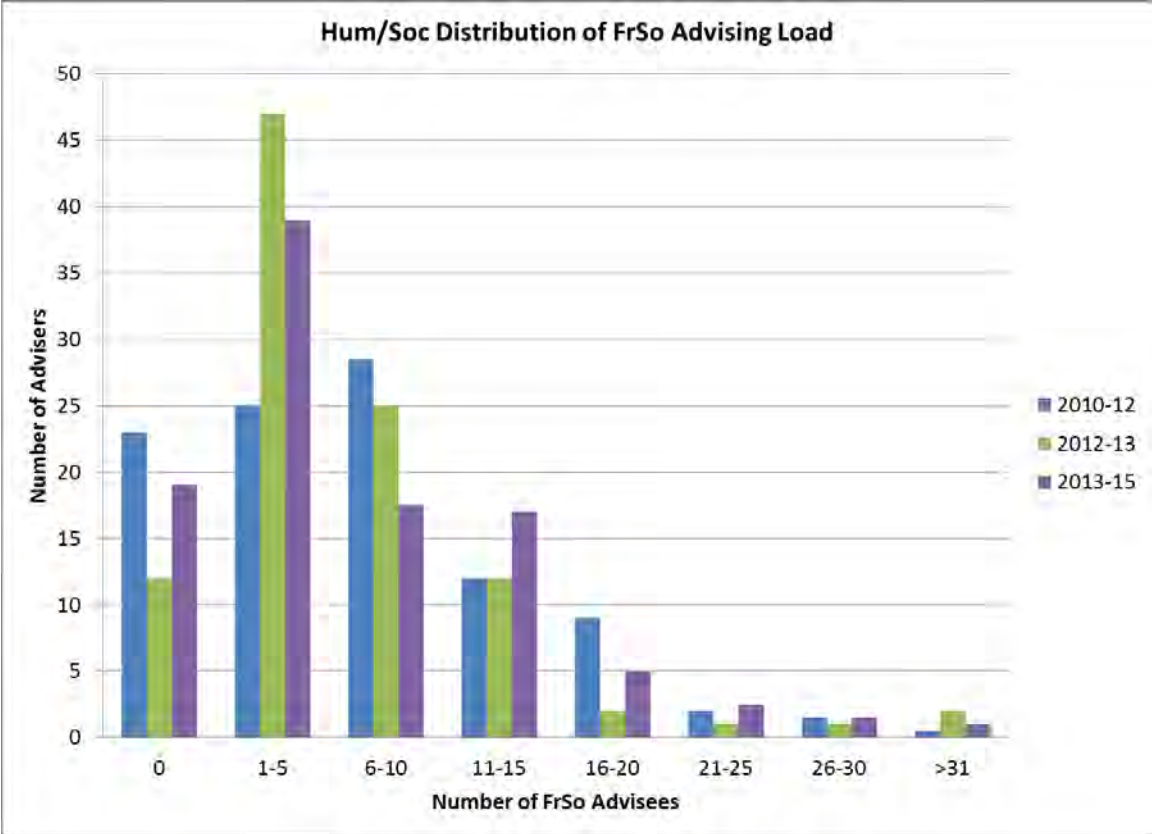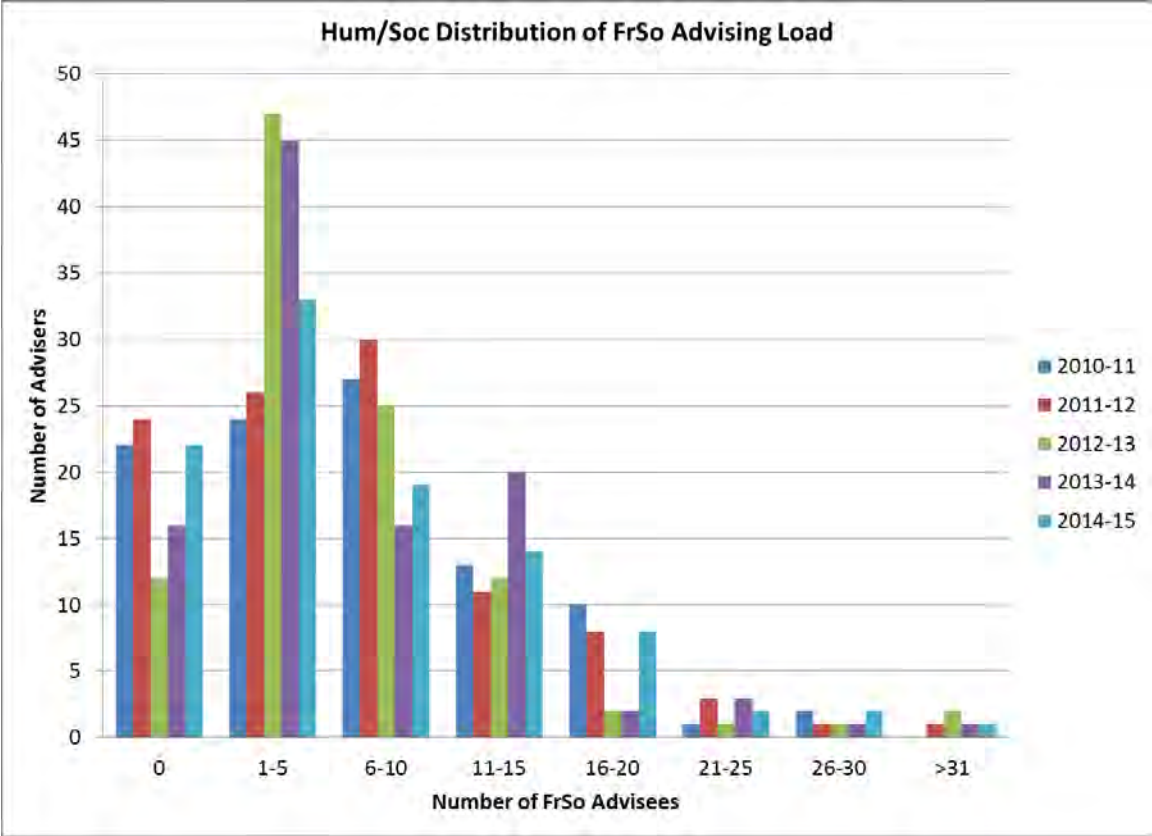
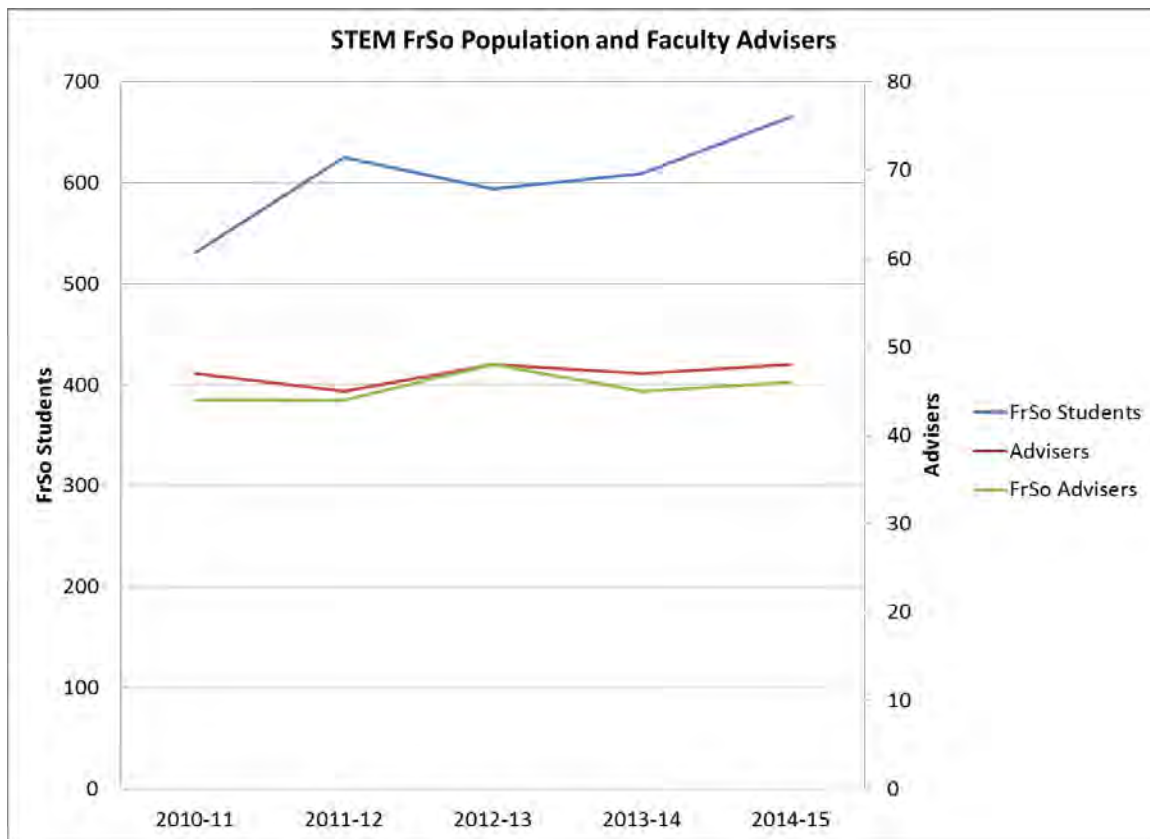Hum/Soc Detrended Distribution of FrSo Advising Load
(2010-11 Student Population)

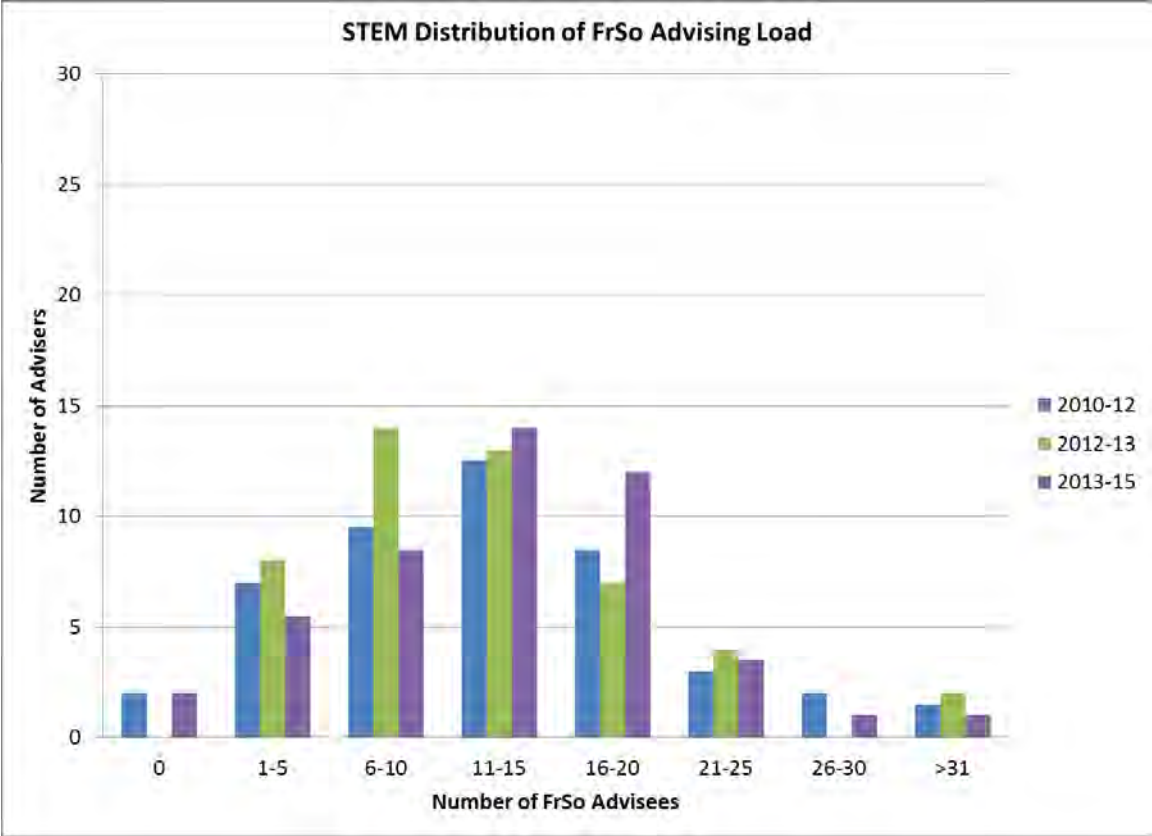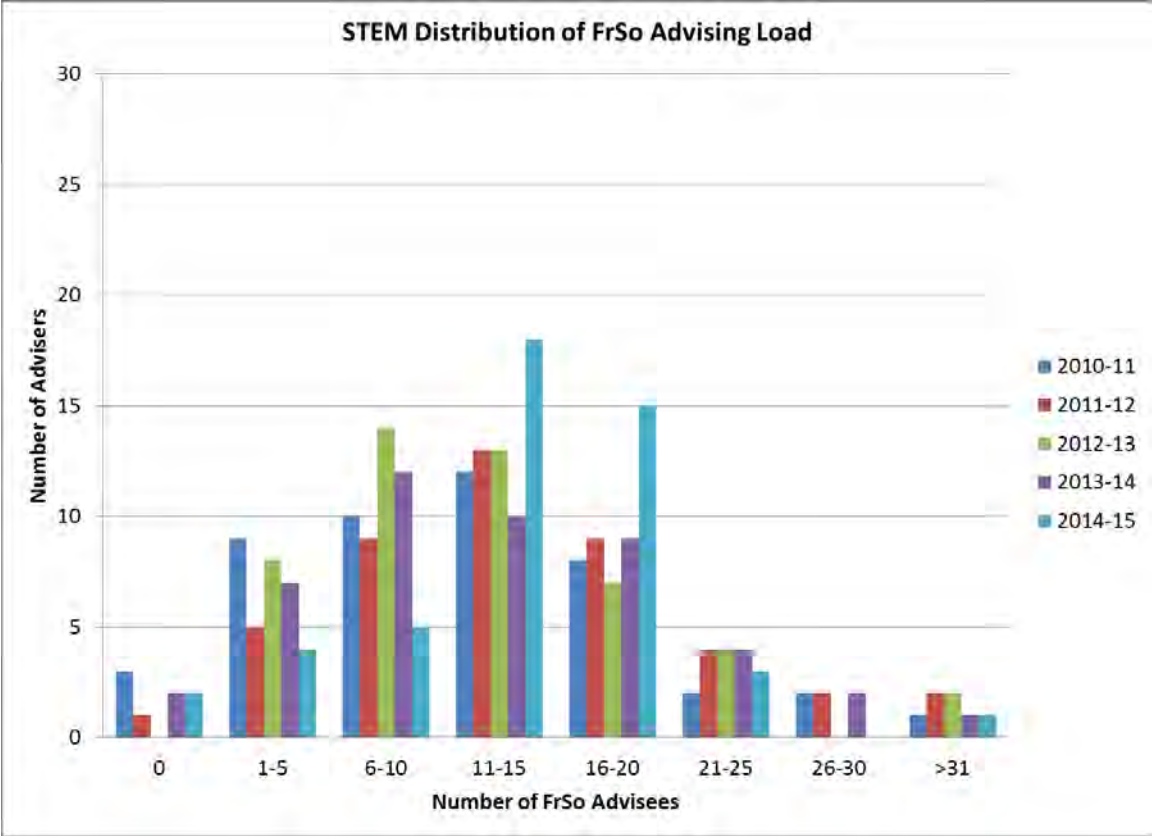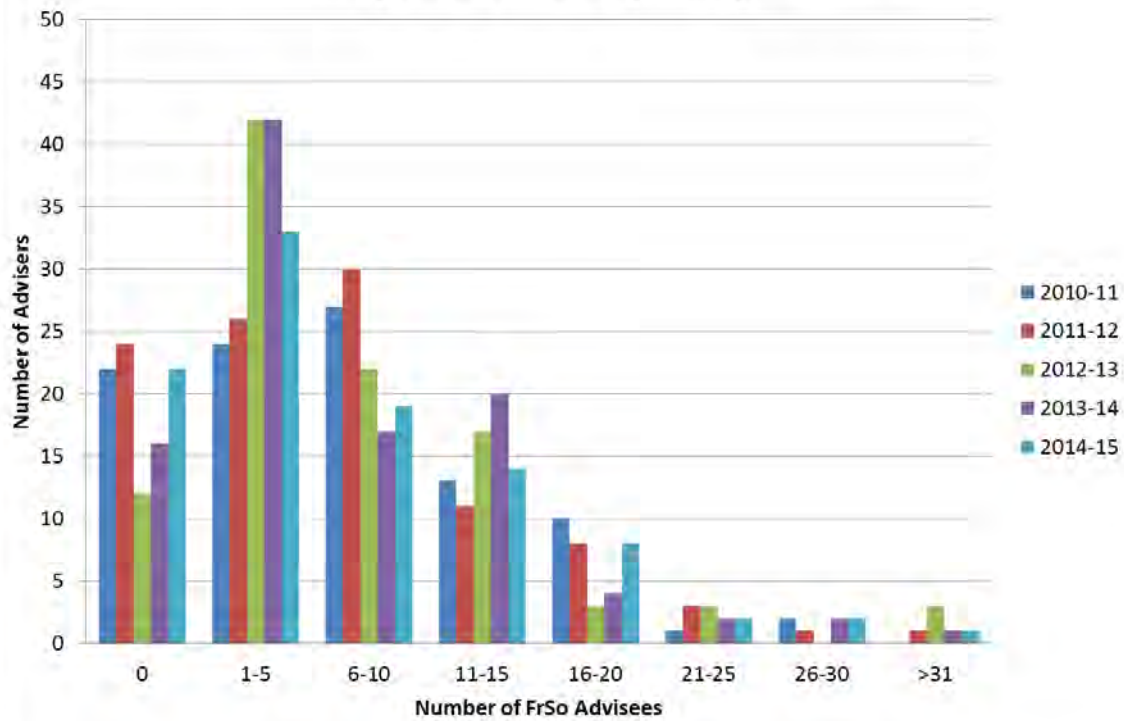Hum/Soc Detrended Distribution of FrSo Advising Load
(2010-11 Student Population)
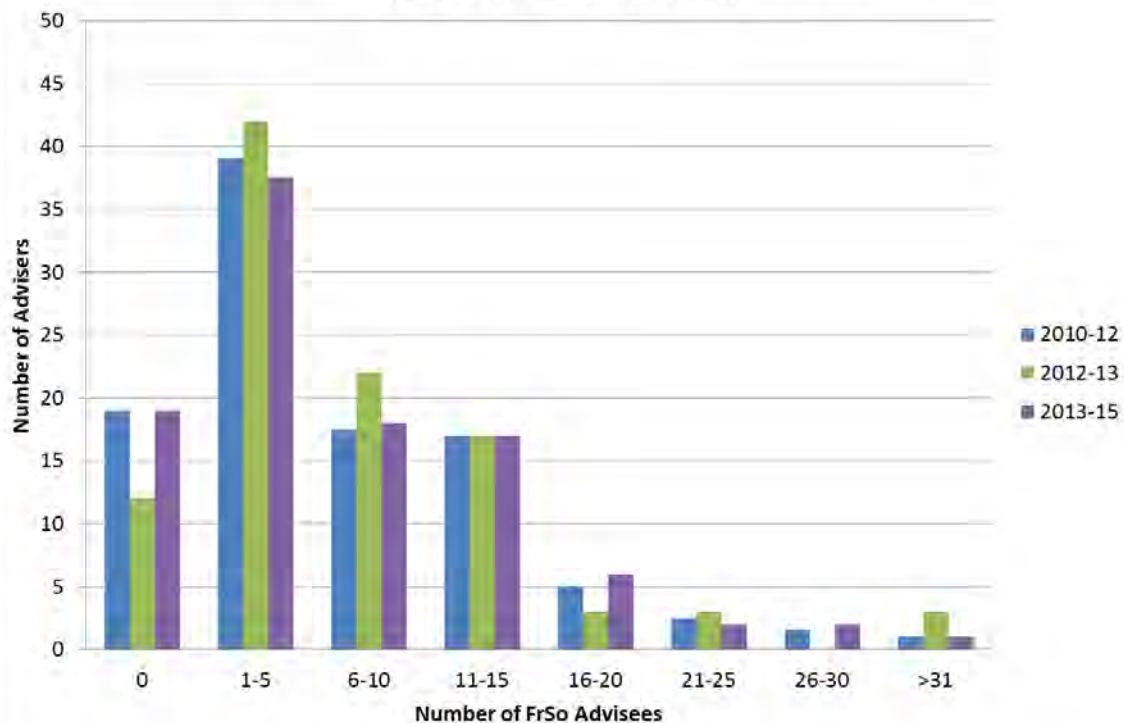
COHORT ADVISING SURVEY RESULTS -   ADVISORS 201330-201410

# of comments	General category of comment	Suggestions and outcomes
4	Cohort advising very time consuming	count as part of course load or pay stipend, forced to advise, functioned as professional advisors
2	Not all cohorts met equally	large group vs small group
7	advisee-cohort match concerns	unmatched majors, too many advisees honors & transfers in separte cohorts
5	Advising Curriculum concerns	academic plan questioned
4	Cohort advising schedule concerns	Space out mtgs, less mtgs
4	More 1-1 advising vs cohort	use SRs as advisors
7	Satisfied with program	Improvement over individual FR advising
5	Extremely Satisfied with program	
2	Appreciated support -	anticipates improved advising
2	more advisor resources needed	more training, more access to major requirements

Student Survey Results

Please rate the effectiveness of the 5 Cohort Section meetings.

	Not at all explained / or not at all helpful	Somewhat explained / or somewhat helpful	Thoroughly explained / or very helpful
1. Introductory lunch, expectations in cohort advising program	13	31	53
2. The purpose of the core curriculum of my liberal arts education was explained to me:	12	31	54
3. Discussion about vocational discernment, majors, and career paths helped me:	22	27	48
4. Discussion of resources and opportunities available (AR 120, Learning Commons, etc.) helped me prioritize programs and options.	23	24	50
5. Discussion of academic options for next semester, ongoing until graduation, helped me craft an academic plan.	22	21	54

ADVISING LOADS.

ADV_DEPT	FRSO	AMAJ	GRAD
Boler Dean's Office	41	33	
Accountancy	4	32	
Accountancy	7	5	
Accountancy	9	30	
Accountancy	9	0	
Accountancy	9	31	
Accountancy	2	15	
Accountancy	4	22	
Accountancy	24	31	
Art History & Humanities	5	3	
Art History & Humanities	5	0	
Art History & Humanities	5	2	1
Art History & Humanities	3	0	
Biology	5	29	7
Biology	1	12	3
Biology	18	15	4
Biology	14	22	3
Biology	6	31	
Biology	25	45	
Biology	15	29	3
Biology	8	19	42
Biology	0	7	1
Biology	0	0	1
Biology	19	20	
Chemistry	8	7	
Chemistry	9	11	
Chemistry	13	11	
Chemistry	11	10	
Chemistry	14	11	
Chemistry	14	9	
Chemistry	22	15	
Chemistry	15	7	19
Chemistry	9	0	
Classical & Modern Languages	1	7	
Classical & Modern Languages	3	9	1
Classical & Modern Languages	3	5	
Classical & Modern Languages	0	15	
Classical & Modern Languages	3	8	
Classical & Modern Languages	5	0	
Classical & Modern Languages	1	4	
Classical & Modern Languages	0	2	
Classical & Modern Languages	8	4	
Classical & Modern Languages	3	0	
Classical & Modern Languages	1	2	
Communication & Theatre Arts	0	20	
Communication & Theatre Arts	15	37	1

ADV_DEPT	FRSO	AMAJ	GRAD
Communication & Theatre Arts	9	5	
Communication & Theatre Arts	14	7	
Communication & Theatre Arts	0	22	
Communication & Theatre Arts	0	0	48
Communication & Theatre Arts	11	12	
Communication & Theatre Arts	11	12	1
Communication & Theatre Arts	5	5	
Communication & Theatre Arts	8	7	
Communication & Theatre Arts	14	23	
Communication & Theatre Arts	17	23	
Communication & Theatre Arts	0	3	5
Counseling	0	0	59
Counseling	0	0	39
Counseling	0	0	36
Economics and Finance	4	5	
Economics and Finance	6	13	145
Economics and Finance	45	25	
Economics and Finance	9	5	
Economics and Finance	7	15	
Economics and Finance	10	3	
Economics and Finance	12	34	
Economics and Finance	23	29	
Economics and Finance	17	25	
Economics and Finance	35	41	
Economics and Finance	0	4	
Economics and Finance	14	22	
Education & School Psychology	6	0	29
Education & School Psychology	0	0	7
Education & School Psychology	6	1	11
Education & School Psychology	1	12	1
Education & School Psychology	0	2	30
Education & School Psychology	0	8	7
Education & School Psychology	0	0	28
Education & School Psychology	3	4	18
Education & School Psychology	9	15	17
Education & School Psychology	12	0	10
Education & School Psychology	0	1	90
Education & School Psychology	0	0	71
Education & School Psychology	1	1	1
Education & School Psychology	14	11	11
Education & School Psychology	1	14	
Education & School Psychology	27	29	139
English	0	4	
English	1	4	
English	7	0	
English	0	4	

ADV_DEPT	FRSO	AMAJ	GRAD
English	6	12	1
English	12	6	
English	1	3	
English	4	21	2
English	12	13	
English	25	7	
English	1	6	
English	3	10	
English	0	1	53
English	0	3	
History	9	12	
History	7	16	15
History	13	9	2
History	4	3	
History	16	7	
History	0	2	
History	0	5	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	23	29	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	25	30	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	23	37	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	12	28	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	6	35	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	2	0	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	33	23	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	41	7	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	6	19	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	12	57	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	19	0	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	8	7	
Management, Mkting, Logistics	20	32	
Mathematics-Computer Science	14	1	2
Mathematics-Computer Science	10	26	26
Mathematics-Computer Science	12	8	3
Mathematics-Computer Science	0	10	
Mathematics-Computer Science	6	2	5
Mathematics-Computer Science	13	6	9
Mathematics-Computer Science	12	18	
Mathematics-Computer Science	11	10	2
Mathematics-Computer Science	23	24	
Mathematics-Computer Science	13	4	2
Mathematics-Computer Science	15	2	
Military Science	1	0	
Military Science	3	0	
Philosophy	0	1	
Philosophy	3	3	
Philosophy	2	1	

ADV_DEPT	FRSO	AMAJ	GRAD
Philosophy	13	0	
Philosophy	12	6	
Philosophy	7	1	
Philosophy	4	0	
Philosophy	18	17	54
Philosophy	6	0	46
Physics	14	4	
Physics	12	6	
Physics	6	1	
Physics	8	3	
Physics	11	5	
Political Science	0	2	
Political Science	9	19	
Political Science	15	8	
Political Science	12	25	
Political Science	1	0	
Political Science	9	12	93
Political Science	2	15	
Political Science	3	8	
Psychological Sciences	6	18	
Psychological Sciences	8	20	1
Psychological Sciences	10	17	
Psychological Sciences	15	24	2
Psychological Sciences	20	11	
Psychological Sciences	16	30	1
Psychological Sciences	9	29	1
Psychological Sciences	20	12	
Psychological Sciences	13	21	
Sociology & Criminology	12	13	
Sociology & Criminology	11	14	48
Sociology & Criminology	0	1	1
Sociology & Criminology	3	6	
Sociology & Criminology	1	1	
Sociology & Criminology	17	22	1
Sociology & Criminology	10	11	
Sociology & Criminology	14	13	
Sociology & Criminology	3	8	
Sport Studies, PE	58	77	6
Theology & Religious Studies	1	5	1
Theology & Religious Studies	1	1	1
Theology & Religious Studies	2	0	1
Theology & Religious Studies	18	9	27
Theology & Religious Studies	1	0	1
Theology & Religious Studies	0	0	5
Theology & Religious Studies	0	0	1
Theology & Religious Studies	0	0	1

ADV_DEPT	FRSO	AMAJ	GRAD
Theology & Religious Studies	2	2	1
Theology & Religious Studies	0	1	
	1628	2098	1304

March 27, 2015

To Mike Nichols, Chair of CAP:

This letter is to express strong support for the Cohort Advising Proposal. It would continue an advising model that incorporates crucial practices for student success and persistence. Most importantly, it offers:

- early, regular contact between advisors and students;
- a platform for furnishing students with information and support in the critical first weeks of their undergraduate career and beyond;
- a means of fostering further programmatic enhancements to advising that can also incorporate cross-university collaborations.

The literature indicates that not only is faculty contact instrumental in student retention, but that students decide within the first weeks of the semester whether or not to stay at their university of choice. Cohort advising addresses the need for attention to this initial decision window by establishing individual rapport between faculty and new students, building connections between students, and initiating discussions about academic requirements, support mechanisms, and curricular and co-curricular opportunities.

The avenues that cohort advising provides for faculty-student interaction and building community among new students are especially vital in the absence of First Year Seminar. Furthermore, in the attention the cohort advising model pays to identifying ways to chart and enrich individual undergraduate experiences, it goes beyond improving student retention and persistence and contributes to student thriving.

There will need to be adjustments to the model to add curricular, co-curricular, and pedagogical support. But these are manageable improvements that Academic Advising--in cooperation with number of offices across campus--are very willing to undertake. In fact, the newly-specialized advising workshops planned for early May, the creation of a new advising handbook, and plans with Student Affairs to develop programs on co-curricular aspects of the student experience show that improvements are already in the works. Building on the structure piloted over the past two years, an expanded and refined cohort advising model will position John Carroll to enhance student success, improve graduation rates, and more fully realize the promise inherent in our mission of educating the whole person.

Sincerely,

The Provost's Council