QEP Stakeholder Survey Themes

Theme 1: Advising and Student Success

Objective

Develop consistent advising networks and pathways to support student success from the point of admission through graduation.

What is the rationale?

Student advising can take many forms: developing a course plan for their program, supporting students through crises, and professional development. Strong advising is integral to student success and retention for first year students and transfer students as they progress toward their degree. Advising across campus in any of these areas is inconsistent and depends on the training and capabilities of individual faculty and staff. With the increase in transfer students and students with transfer credits, advising has become more complex, creating a need to develop clearer and streamlined advising pathways. UNCSA has on-campus expertise to develop and support this strategic direction.

What could this potentially look like?

- Dedicated staff to deliver comprehensive advising to all students from the point of admission, intention to enroll, registration periods, and through their entire academic career progress of those students through graduation
- Support and monitor students with academic/arts warnings or those on academic/arts probation
- Develop structural clarity and improvement for advising and academic support systems
- Additional structural solutions for supporting advising through collaboration between OATL, Student Affairs, student records specialists, associate deans within the arts schools, academic affairs, admissions, and registrar's office.
- Faculty training and preparation for how to use the tools of advising effectively.

How could this align with the Strategic Plan and other institutional priorities?

- Institutional sustainability
- Health and Wellness

What evidence is there to support this QEP direction?

- Faculty and staff observations
- Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP)
- External Review faculty/ staff focus groups and committee reports
- Student Exit Survey

Theme 2: Building Community to Impact Belonging

Objective

Framed as a student success initiative, "This is your campus!", this QEP topic would be focused on building school spirit and a sense of belonging by breaking down silos based on arts majors.

What is the rationale?

Creating a sense of belonging positively impacts student mental health and wellness which leads to a higher rate of student success. Typically, students have not had time to engage in activities and hobbies that develop relationships with students outside their art schools. The Collaborative Scheduling Initiative (CSI) recognizes the importance of building time into students' schedules to support these engagements. Students have expressed in focus groups that they want to interact with students in other schools to develop networks, interdisciplinary opportunities, and larger support artistic networks. UNCSA has on-campus expertise in Student Affairs, the Office of Community and Belonging, and the CSI Committee to develop and support this strategic direction.

What could this potentially look like?

- Campus-wide events not tied to a specific art
- Programs that build pride in being a UNCSA student
- Culturally relevant curricular and co-curricular experiences
- Building and expanding traditions as touchpoints for students to connect such as orientation, and welcome events orientation and AOC Annual Events
- Events by students for students

How could this align with the Strategic Plan and other institutional priorities?

- Health and Wellness
- Institutional sustainability
- Interdisciplinary work in the Arts
- Maintaining Industry Relevance

What evidence is there to support this QEP direction?

- According to Student exit survey responses, a factor for increases in student withdrawals is a lack of support networks and community.
- SGA and GSC focus groups
- External Review student focus groups
- Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP)

Theme 3: Career Readiness

Objective

Elucidate current career competencies taught on campus, develop a common core of these competencies across all conservatories, and teach students to articulate their transferable workforce-ready skills.

What is the rationale?

Students need to understand and describe how their arts training is applicable to many career paths. Graduates' ability to articulate the value of their skillset to employers is important for post-graduation student success and program return on investment for students. Students need to develop skillsets in professional networking to support their career development. Career preparation is already happening on campus, but career preparation curricula are not consistent across art schools and are not delivered at the level of intention or depth that students and alumni feel they need. Research supports implementation of career readiness initiatives in higher education, and UNCSA has on-campus expertise in the Office of Career Readiness to develop and support this strategic direction.

What could this potentially look like?

- Identify career competencies taught in each course so that students can articulate how coursework develops their career readiness
- Identify career competencies that are developed in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities
- Create UNCSA-specific Career Readiness Competencies that embed expectations of student learning and professionalism from the vantage point of a conservatory and include best-practices of career readiness (examples: resilience, networking, appropriate and necessary use of technology for artists, etc.)
- Teach common skills in existing career development courses across the art schools
- Train students in area specific and institution-wide professional networking strategies
- Use technological advancements to prepare this generation to face AI.

How could this align with the Strategic Plan and other institutional priorities?

- Maintaining and expanding industry relevance

What evidence is there to support this QEP direction?

- Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP)
- SGA and GSC student focus groups

Theme 4: Centralized Internship Coordination

Objective

Create an overall structure for and development of internship opportunities.

What is the rationale?

Students are looking for opportunities to learn real-world skills and develop connections to industries. Creating an institutional infrastructure for internship opportunities would expand student skills, help launch their careers, and provide a stronger return on student return on investment. There is currently no centralized internship coordination, and internship coordination is not consistent across conservatories. The inconsistency leads to uneven internship experiences, oversight, monitoring and tracking student learning outcomes, contractual obligations, risk management, and institutional data collection. Anecdotally, we know that students are participating in internships, but information about internships is not being captured in UNCSA systems of record. Internship coordination would help UNCSA more fully understand organizations that we have relationships with so that partnerships can be strengthened.

What could this potentially look like?

- Develop relationships with organizations to strengthen internship opportunities
- Provide students with orientation for internships and continued training on how to leverage internship experiences to gain employment.
- Identify internship experiences that UNCSA can support and facilitate these for students
- Ensure each conservatory has an internship coordinator who is assisted by a campus-wide coordinator.
- Paid internships, which aligns with NACE research

How could this align with the Strategic Plan and other institutional priorities?

- Maintaining and expanding industry relevance
- Interdisciplinary Work in the Arts

What evidence is there to support this QEP direction?

- NC-SARA
- Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP)

Theme 5: Courses for Non-majors

Objective

Improve access to and development of courses for students to develop interest and skills outside of their discipline and/ or concentration.

What is the rationale?

The current siloed nature of conservatories has not made it easy for students to gain experiences in other areas. Students have consistently and repeatedly expressed a desire to take classes outside of their respective conservatories Some students have expressed a disconnect between what faculty and alumni communicate about the need to develop a broad range of skills, and the specificity and restrictions of their conservatory training. Creating course(s) for non-majors in each conservatory would open this curriculum to students from other conservatories and serve as a potential launching point for high school students. These courses would give students opportunities to explore other areas, develop skills to become multi-hyphenate artists, and be responsive to changes in arts industries. UNCSA already has some interdisciplinary courses that could be built on.

What could this potentially look like?

- Create an interdisciplinary arts minor, with an eye toward a future interdisciplinary major
- Technical production seminar for students to gain hands-on experience with on-campus facilities and equipment to support development of industry skills for future employment. Skills would support student-initiated projects and/ or school-specific productions.
- Cross-school curriculum such as, Lighting for Artistic Expression, Film for Stage and Streaming, etc.
- Summer cohort program for students to explore course
- Expand access to courses already available for non-majors: Dance History I and II, Intro to Lighting Design, etc.
- Interdisciplinary curriculum co-taught by faculty from the art schools and DLA that culminates in a capstone project or performance experience

How could this align with the Strategic Plan?

- Maintaining and expanding industry relevance
- Interdisciplinary Work in the Arts

What evidence is there to support this QEP direction?

- SGA focus group
- External Review student focus groups
- Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP)