

## **CAP report on first-year advising, winter/spring 2018**

The Committee on Academic Policies was tasked with providing the faculty with a recommendation on whether the current model of first year advising (cohort advising) should be retained or discarded. Faculty will vote on this matter during the winter/spring 2018 semester. If the faculty elects to discard, the College of Arts and Sciences will revert to the previous one-on-one advising model. BSOB will retain their current hybrid model.

Most of the data summarized in this report are drawn from the "Survey of John Carroll University Faculty's opinion on pre-major academic advising" completed by the Office for Academic Advising. The Office conducted this survey in September, 2017. The survey was open to all full-time faculty. Fifty-six faculty responded, seven in BSOB and the remainder in CAS. Three of the respondents had never taught AR 101.

The office conducted two different polls, one for BSOB and another for CAS. That was because BSOB had adopted a modified cohort advising model that combined cohorts with a full-time, non-faculty advisor for first-year students. That's why there are two reported results for BSOB, whose faculty rated the original cohort model **and** the newer modified model.

The retention rates are drawn from the JCU Fact Book.

### **Cohort advising survey results**

BSOB results (7):

Effectiveness (**old system**): 2.57

Workload (**old system**): 4.14

Effectiveness (**new system**): 3.71

Workload (**new system**): 2.29

CAS [sciences] (20)

Effectiveness: 3.63

Workload: 3.22

CAS [everyone else] (27)

Effectiveness: 2.96

Workload: 3.41

**Most common substantive comments:**

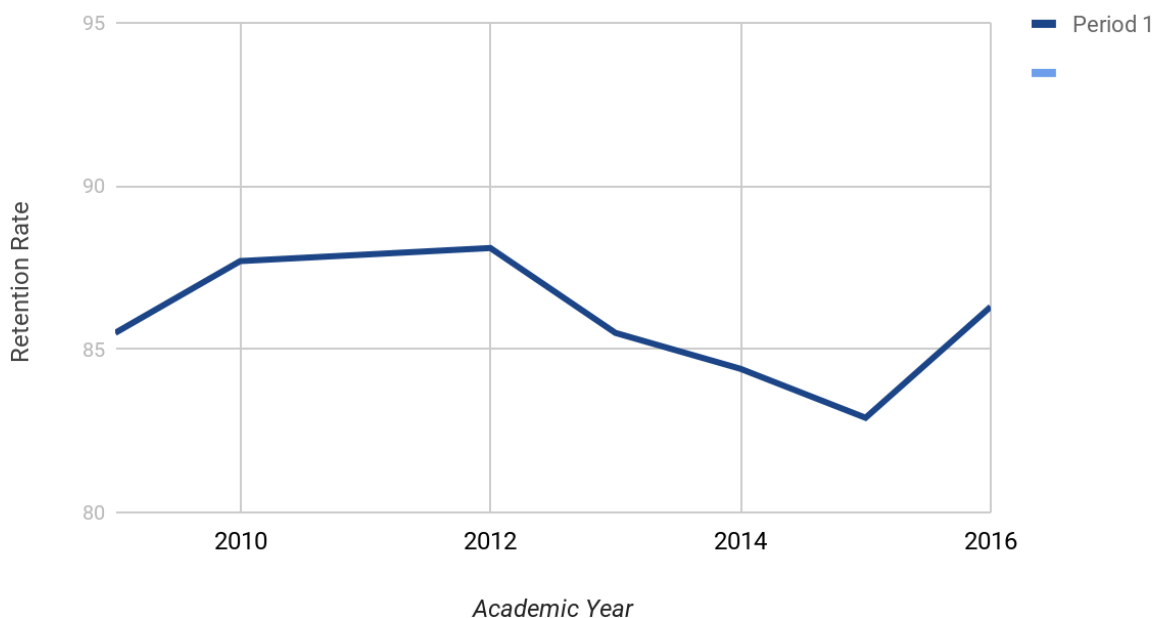
Strengths: getting to know advisees early in their academic career; explaining important issues once, to a group, instead of multiple times to individuals; exposing students to views and questions from their cohort

Weaknesses: cohorts lack cohesion because of diverse student interests; no compensation for instructors; lack of fairness (some cohorts are very large, others small); no way to enforce attendance; lack of clarity about expectations for advisers; advisers do mostly grunt work (scheduling) instead of mentoring.

Does advising influence our retention rates? Who knows? Anyway, here are JCU's retention rates from 2009-16. Cohort advising began in 2013.

|      |       |
|------|-------|
| 2009 | 85.5% |
| 2010 | 88.7  |
| 2011 | 87.1  |
| 2012 | 88.1  |
| 2013 | 85.5  |
| 2014 | 84.4  |
| 2015 | 82.9  |
| 2016 | 86.3  |

Retention, 2009-16



When considering their vote on whether to maintain cohort advising, faculty should be aware that, regardless of the result of the election, the Office of Academic Advising intends to propose that the university hire full-time advisers. These staff would be responsible for several foundational tasks: class scheduling; mastering Banner; and introducing them to university resources; among others. Faculty would be responsible for mentoring and post-major declaration advising. That proposal has not been issued by the Office of Academic Advising, so it is not addressed in this report, and CAP has no recommendation on it.

CAP recommends that the faculty maintain the cohort advising system. Although not without defects, cohort advising is an improvement over the previous model in which faculty met with all their advisees one by one. The lack of equity between advisers in different disciplines is a concern, but this issue has been addressed effectively in BSOB, and it's a problem in the old system, too. On balance, the cohort advising system is a modest improvement over the old one.