Student Success Forum

MINUTES | SEPTEMBER 14, 2026 | 1:30 PM - 2:37 PM

MEETING OVERVIEW

The first meeting of the restructured Student Success Forum introduced the Office of Student Success structure and shared updates from the Student Success Persistence Council, University Advising Council, Student Success Action Committee, and Cowboy Success Team. Discussion focused on coordinating student communications, reducing duplicate outreach, clarifying roles, and connecting students with Financial Aid when enrollment changes may affect aid. The group identified next steps related to initiative tracking, advisor training, communication planning, and referral messaging.

1. Office of Student Success and Forum Overview

- The Student Success Forum was introduced as the restructured successor to DSAS and as a venue for sharing information about student success initiatives and fostering broad discussion.
- The Office of Student Success structure includes student success architecture and governance, coordinated academic advising housed in the colleges with exploratory advising through the OSS, and programmatic supports such as supplemental instruction and TRIO programs.
- The supporting committee structure includes the Student Success Persistence Council, University Advising Council, Student Success Action Committee, Student Success Forum, and Cowboy Success Team.
- A planner or “parking lot” will be created on the Student Success Forum Teams site to show where initiatives are housed and help track progress.

2. Committee and Initiative Updates

- The Student Success Persistence Council is examining First Six Weeks outreach challenges, including list sorting, repeated contacts, tracking from identification through outreach and impact, and financial barriers. The council is also aligning retention discussions with the strategic plan and the 2026 retention report.
- The University Advising Council is focusing on consistency in advising practices across colleges and campus. Updates included increased student engagement with Cowboy Charlie and using intentional conversations as a way to examine the effect of advising conversations on retention rather than evaluating individual advisors.
- The Student Success Action Committee is working on academic alerts, six-week grade visibility and a proposed “hand raise” feature that would allow students to identify when they need support.
- The Cowboy Success Team is continuing work on faculty mentoring and role clarity among academic advisors, career coaches, and financial planning coaches so responsibilities are not duplicated.

3. Student Communication Preferences and Coordination

- Focus groups conducted in Stillwater and Tulsa found that students prefer communication from advisors, professors, colleges, departments, and major-related areas rather than broad, general messaging.
- Students favored targeted information that is relevant to degree completion, concise messages with hyperlinks, social media, and opportunities to select the topics that interest them.
- The group emphasized using advisors and professors thoughtfully as communication channels because students value those relationships and excessive messaging could reduce their effectiveness.
- Duplicate outreach remains a concern, particularly when students receive similar financial messages from multiple offices within a short period. Coordination should include Financial Aid, advising, the Bursar, admissions, and other offices that communicate with students.
- Kelli Leach is developing a communications plan, and Rita will provide a timeline of messages sent to students. Kelli and Amanda will also review click-rate information for Rita’s emails.
- The planning process should account for next-semester enrollment communications, so timing and potential overlap can be reviewed.

4. Financial Friction Points and Advisor Role Clarity

- Financial Aid asked that students considering any course drop or enrollment change be referred to Financial Aid so staff can review the student's individual aid profile and explain potential implications before the student decides.
- The discussion noted the overlap between academic and financial considerations when a student is deciding whether to withdraw from a course or remain enrolled. Academic advisors may discuss academic effects, but Financial Aid must evaluate aid-specific consequences based on the student's record.
- The group discussed the 67 percent completion requirement and the importance of referring students when an enrollment change could affect satisfactory academic progress or full-time status.
- Advisors should not seek individualized financial advice on a student's behalf because Financial Aid may need information that was not included in the advisor's question. Students should be connected directly with Financial Aid for a complete review.
- Participants requested consistent tools such as talking points, a short email template, text snippets, or referral language that advisors can share with students.
- The proposed approach will be brought to the Student Success Action Committee and University Advising Council for review. Financial Aid will develop talking points for advisors, and the group will consider how faculty communications about dropping courses fit into the process.

5. Enrollment Change Communications

- The group considered adding language about possible financial aid ramifications to communications associated with drop deadlines and academic alerts.
- Participants discussed a targeted message for students who recently changed enrollment, directing them to speak with Financial Aid about how the change may affect their aid. The message should go only to the appropriate population rather than to every student.
- An automated message after a course add or drop was discussed, but the group also noted the need for thoughtful, active communication and careful timing during the current year.
- Advisor training will be important so referrals are consistent and so communication volume does not create an unmanageable increase in Financial Aid contacts.

6. Action Items

OWNER	ITEM
Celeste	Create a planner or "parking lot" on the Student Success Forum Teams site to organize initiatives and track progress.
Chico	Develop advisor training related to six-week grade visibility in Slate and the connection to Banner.
Kelli	Develop a coordinated student communications plan that incorporates input from Financial Aid, advising, the Bursar, admissions, and other offices and reduces duplicate outreach.
Rita	Provide the timeline of student communications for review of timing, overlap, click rates, and effectiveness.
Kelli / Amanda	Review click-rate information for Rita's emails.
Financial Aid	Develop talking points and referral language for advisors and provide feedback on a targeted message for students who add or drop a course.
Student Success Action Committee	Develop a standard Financial Aid referral process for students considering dropping or withdrawing from a course or making another enrollment change.
University Advising Council	Review the proposed Financial Aid referral process, including advising-note referrals, email templates, and text snippets.
Shannon / Chris	Consider the timing and content of drop-deadline and academic-alert communications, including language about possible financial aid ramifications.

The meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.
Minutes recorded by C. Powell